

WANDERING THE COAST

by

Harper Rose Zimmermann

HONORS THESIS

Submitted to Texas State University
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for
graduation in the Honors College
May 2021

Thesis Supervisor:

Jordan Morille

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For my Brothers, Matthew and Paden. Thank you for always being my pushes and supports when you never realized it, my drive is thanks to you two.

For my Parents for supporting me through all my endeavors and for giving me opportunities that I will forever cherish.

For the Honors College, to giving me a space to explore my interests and helping me search for my truest story.

For Jordan, helping me through all my scripts and pushing me to write even when I didn't think if I was the right person to tell the story.

ABSTRACT

Family trips were always a memory that *Millie* kept close to her heart. She replays the songs *Dad, Clint*, used to shuffle through. She connects the stars every night just like *Forrest* taught her. She challenges herself to the car games *Henry* made up. Millie looked at these items as building blocks to her being, but now things are starting to be seen from a different perspective. Her brothers are showing her just how much her memories were one sided and how she hasn't always been willing to look from another's point of view.

This is a work of revelation about how you have to keep seeking information from all angles. The world you live in is not only your world. It's not just your story. Seeking a different outlooks on situations is the way to improve life, but you have to stay open to what people are showing you. This work is to help uncover questions and/ or emotions that you may not have realized were there because you were only seeing the situation in one way.

Wandering the Coast

By

Harper Zimmermann

harperzimmermann@gmail.com
814.403.1692

INT - CAR - DAY

MILLIE, 10: messy haired and sleepy faced, stares out side the backseat window watching the trees pass.

CLINT, 45: "Dad": rugged, and FORREST, 14: boy next door type, sit in the front seat.

FORREST

Right here, it says "turn left at the stop sign and THEN turn right"

CLINT

That's all fine and dandy but I know how to get around.

FORREST

I'm just telling you what it says.

Their voices fade in the background. Millie turns her head and looks at AIDEN, 8: child version of Eric Forman , who is reading postcards in the seat beside her.

She smiles at him.

INT - MILLIE'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

An alarm clock sounds throughout. MILLIE, 24: dark haired , wakes up staring at the white slate ceiling. Her hand slaps the top of the alarm. She sits up in the bed.

She looks over at the journal laying next to her.

She opens in and writes down something before tossing it to the chair.

She gets out of bed.

She knocks on the connecting door to the other room.

MILLIE

Are you up?

HENRY

(through the wall)

Yeah.

MILLIE

We're leaving in 10.

She knocks the door one last time.

INT - HENRY'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

HENRY, 22: built with brown curly hair, rolls up from the bed and knocks on the door back to her.

He rubs his eyes and grabs his glasses from the bedside table.

He looks around the room before standing up and going to the desk.

He taps his computer on and starts scrolling through his email. He clicks on one with the subject of "Change of Plans: Updated Date". He reads the email briefly and closes the laptop.

INT - MILLIE'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Millie places her last item in her bag and shuts it.

She pulls her phone out to see an email notification with the same subject heading "Change of Plans: Updated Date". She swipes it away and puts her phone back.

She looks around the room one more time to check if she left anything. Grabbing her bag and purse, she leaves.

INT - HALLWAY - DAY

She knocks on the door next to her.

Henry opens the door bag in hand.

MILLIE

Good you're ready.

HENRY

You said 10 minutes.

He picks his bag up and closes the door behind him.

HENRY

They changed the date again.

MILLIE

To when?

He looks at the calendar on his phone.

HENRY

The 13th.

MILLIE

That's after we leave. Why does he do this?

Henry shrugs. Millie presses the down button for the elevator.

MILLIE

It's just frustrating because they know we're coming all this way for it and they can't just stick to the original plan.

HENRY

I know but it's okay, We'll be there to at least go visit his grave and to see Forrest.

MILLIE

You're right, I just know dad would want us to see everyone.

Henry nods his head.

The elevator doors open.

INT - ELEVATOR CAR - DAY

They step in and the doors close.

HENRY

Last stretch, it's a straight shot from here on.

MILLIE

Only 2 hours left. You wanna drive the rest of the way?

HENRY

Not really, you're better at directions anyways.

Millie rolls her eyes at him.

The elevators doors open.

INT - HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

They walk off into the hotel lobby. It's empty except the front desk worker.

There's a breakfast bar with packed fruits and granola bars in the corner. A coffee station is directly across from it.

MILLIE

Hand me your key I'll go check out.

HENRY

(pulling the key out of his wallet)
Alright, you want coffee or anything?

MILLIE

Grab me a water and I'll be good.

He hands her the room key and walks away towards the coffee station.

Millie walks over to the front desk assistant.

MILLIE

Hi, I'm here to check out of 210 and 212.

SARAH

Great. How was your stay?

MILLIE

Perfect for the night.

Millie hands Sarah the hotel keys. Sarah takes them and begins inputting information into the system.

SARAH

Where are you heading off to now.

MILLIE

Northeast Pennsylvania.

SARAH

It's beautiful this time of year there.

Sarah looks up and smiles at her. Millie is looking out the hotel doors at the sunflowers beginning to bloom.

MILLIE

Yeah, this was always my favorite time of the year growing up.

EXT - FRONT LAWN [15 YEARS EARLIER] - DAY

7 year old Millie sits in the grass, there are sunflowers all

around her she picks through them, carefully.

Forrest, 11, comes out the front door slamming it behind him. He comes behind her and tugs on her ponytail.

MILLIE
(hitting his calf)
What was that for.

FORREST
I wanted to, that's why.

Clint stares from the front screen door, Henry stands behind him.

He sits down beside her and starts to pick at the flowers.

INT - HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

SARAH
How long did you live there for?

MILLIE
My kid years.

She looks back at Henry.

SARAH
You're all set now. Have a great rest
of your trip.

MILLIE
Thank you, have a good rest of your
day.

Sarah hands the receipt to her and waves her off.

Henry walks over to Millie and hands her a water bottle. They walk out of the hotel.

EXT - PARKING LOT - DAY

Henry places their bags in the trunk of the car, as Millie gets in the driver seat and readjusts the chair.

MILLIE
(drinking)
When we get into town we're gonna go
straight to Forrest's, right?

HENRY

Yeah, should I text him now?

MILLIE

I would, to make sure he'll be awake.

Henry shuts the trunk and walks over to the passenger seat.

EXT - MILLIE'S CAR - DAY

He gets into the car and is texting.

HENRY

Done.

Henry tucks his phone away in the cup holder.

Millie starts the car and drives off.

EXT - CLINT'S CAR [14 YEARS EARLIER] - NIGHT

CLINT is looking in the rearview mirror.

Little Henry and Little Millie both have postcards in their hands while they're sound asleep.

Forrest lays in the passenger seat asleep as well. Clint places his hand on Forrest's head as he sleeps and lightly shakes his hair.

Forrest moves his head slightly and shifts in his sleep.

FORREST

Are we almost there?

CLINT

Just a bit longer, stay asleep.

Forrest stays quiet.

Clint takes his hand off of Forrest's head turns the music up ever so slightly.

He gives one last glance to Henry and Millie in the back seat they both are hugging the postcards. He smiles and continues to drive.

EXT - MILLIE'S CAR - EVENING

Millie pulls into Forrest's driveway and parks.

A two story old home with modern flair is lit up infant of them. The landscape is well kept and there is a cobblestone walk way that leads up to the front door.

She nudges Henry awake.

MILLIE

We're here.

Henry lifts his head and stretches.

Millie gets out of the car and unpacks the trunk.

HENRY

His car isn't here.

MILLIE

He's getting food. The garage is unlocked for us.

Henry hops out of the car and helps her unpack. Grabbing their bags and walking over to the garage door, he slides open the garage door.

They walk through and go inside the house.

INT - FORREST'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

They walk into the kitchen and place their things on the floor next to the island counter.

Millie walks around to the fridge and looks through it for something to snack on. She is scanning it: water jug, strawberries, German chocolate cake, lunch meats, and salad mix.

She grabs the strawberries, washes them off and sits at the dining table to the left of the fridge.

Henry pulls his computer out and scrolls through emails yet again.

INT - FORREST'S KITCHEN [5 YEARS AGO] - DAY

CLINT, 53, sits on his computer at the island. Millie, 19, is on the other side mixing ingredients in a bowl. She has milk, eggs, and a cake box surrounding her.

Forrest, 23, and Henry, 17, walk in through the side garage door.

Henry is holding a box in his hands.

HENRY

Dad we found the postcards.

Clint turns around and reaches out for the box.

Henry hands it over to him, while Forrest goes to take a lick out of the cake mix bowl with his finger.

Clint pulls out a handful of postcards. He places them on the table and puts the box on the ground.

Henry starts to shuffle through some.

CLINT

I know there's more from your mom and I's trips somewhere, but these will do for now.

FORREST

We found those out in the shed, not sure why they were stored there.

CLINT

Well when you said you wanted the house I moved some things around so they wouldn't be in the way.

Forrest nods towards him.

Henry is still going through each postcard, looking at them front and back and reading what's written on them.

He is holding one of Dallas, TX in his hand and is reading the back.

Millie looks at the back of the card with withered and brown picture of Dallas.

MILLIE

Dallas does not look that anymore.

CLINT

Sure doesn't, that was from your mom and I moved out of Dallas.

HENRY

It's moms handwriting on the note "Leaving for now, but we'll be back"

Henry places the postcard down on the table and proceeds to shuffle through the others.

CLINT

Your mother loved it there.

MILLIE

I think thats the reason I moved, Mom
always talked to lovingly about it.

Clint just smiles and continues to look through the cards with Henry, while Millie and Forrest work on the cake.

INT - FORREST'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Millie has now finished the container of strawberries and Henry is laying on the couch flipping through channels.

Forrest walks in the garage door with a bucket of chicken in hand and a bag of sides.

FORREST

You guys couldn't even put your bags
upstairs?

Henry looks up from the couch.

HENRY

Some things never change.

FORREST

I guess they don't.

Millie stands up from the table and gives Forrest a hug.

Forrest sets the food down on the counter while she's hugging him and then hugs back.

MILLIE

It's good to see you.

FORREST

You too, how's Texas treating ya.

MILLIE

Fair enough, and with him-

She nods her head over to Henry

MILLIE

there, things are a bit easier.

He pulls her away from him by the shoulders and smiles.

HENRY

Yeah yeah, we haven't seen each other
get over it. Are we gonna eat now?

Forrest pulls the bag off the counter and places it on the
dining room table.

FORREST

Get up then, I'm not serving you.

Henry hops over the couch and grabs three plates from the
cabinet and Millie grabs three glasses while Forrest is
pulling out food from the bags and uncovering the chicken
bucket.

Henry places down the plates and sits down.

Millie fills the glasses with water and then follows suit
sitting next to Henry.

Forrest sits across from them two and they all begin to serve
themselves.

INT - FORREST'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

2 hours later

The three of them sit around laughing. The food is almost
complete gone, there are multiple empty bottles across the
table, and the water cups are only partially drank.

FORREST

I never knew why he would wake us up
at the break of dawn to get on the
road but yet would want a talking
buddy, we were like 10 none of us were
gonna stay up.

He takes a drink from his glass while chuckling to himself.

HENRY

I'm not quite sure, I got used to
staying up with him though.

MILLIE

Is that why you wake up at the crack
of dawn everyday?

HENRY

I'd assume so.

Henry sits quite for a moment, but drinking from his water.

MILLIE

My favorite things on the trip were
always the hotel rooms.

Forrest sets his drink down before chuckling.

FORREST

And how we would stop an hour before
getting to the place so he could find
the best bargain?

MILLIE

Yea we'd always stop at the side of
the road rest stops and we'd play on
the jungle gyms while he would find
these extravagant places for like half
off.

FORREST

Nah, y'all would play.

EXT - REST STOP [14 YEARS EARLIER] - DAY

Millie and Henry are seen playing on the jungle gyms in the
background.

Forrest is sitting with Clint while Clint scrolls through his
computer looking at different websites.

CLINT

Look how far this one is from the
beach.

Forrest is searching on his maps at the distances.

FORREST

It says its about a 20 minute drive.
(pointing at the screen)
It also has connecting rooms which is
really nice. I like that one best.

CLINT

We can do better.

He continues to scroll.

Forrest is staring at his siblings from afar.

Clint begins to speak before realizing that Forrest isn't listening to him.

CLINT
(snapping at him)
Are you listening?

Forrest looks back at him.

FORREST
Do you need my help?

CLINT
Yes I need your help. You're my travel partner.

FORREST
What if I don't want to be.

Clint {glares} at Forrest before fully turning to him.

CLINT
That's too bad, you're the oldest Forrest and you have responsibilities because of it

FORREST
Well I didn't ask to be the oldest

Forrest storms off.

Clint watches, his shoulders drop as he lets out a sigh.

He continues scrolling until he eventually goes back to the top and books the one Forrest had liked earlier.

INT - FORREST'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

The table is now cleared of food but the bottles have accumulated a bit more.

Henry has his head down on the table as if they were playing heads up seven up.

Millie is pacing in the area behind Forrest and Forrest is taking a gulp of his glass.

HENRY

(speaking into the floor)
I mean of course we all saw things
from different perspectives thats how
life works.

MILLIE

I get that, but I've just never
thought about it.

Henry raises his head while rolling his eyes at her.

HENRY

Of course you didn't you're always in
your little bubble.

Forrest groans.

FORREST

Do not start this now.

Millie stops pacing and turns to Henry.

MILLIE

What does that mean.

HENRY

It means that you've always only
thought things from your perspective.

MILLIE

Like what.

Millie pulls the chair beside Forrest out and sits down.

HENRY

The postcards.

MILLIE

What about them?

HENRY

You have some weird attachment to
them. They were never even your thing.
It was dad and I's idea to start them
but after Forrest and I found them
again you just had to needed to have
them.

Millie rolls her eyes and tries to shrug his off.

FORREST

Dad always thought he'd leave him to Henry, but when you said 'how much they meant to you' he struggled with who should get them because of how important they seemed to you.

Millie throws back a chug of her glass.

MILLIE

They are important to me.

HENRY

But they're not yours. That's the problem.

Henry claps his hadn't down on the table.

Millie jumps back, startled while Forrest reaches out to make sure none of the glasses fall.

HENRY

They were Dad and I's thing. It's the one true thing I had with him, but no you had to tell him they meant more than anything. Of course he's going to give them to his little girl.

Henry is now up and moving around the table. He begins to walk towards Millie, but turns away from her.

MILLIE

They are important, those trips meant a lot to me. They're the some of the only good memories I still have with him.

HENRY

Mil, we left at the same time in his life those memories mean just as much to me as they did you, but those postcards mean everything to me.

He begins to pick up his bags.

HENRY

You'll never understand that though.

He turns away from her and walks up the stairs.

Millie turns to Forrest.

MILLIE

Where did that all come from?

FORREST

It's always been there Mil. You've just never noticed.

Millie starts to stand up and follow him.

FORREST

That's not a good idea and you know it.

She sits at the counter stool.

Forrest gets up and collects as many bottles as possible, throwing them in the trashcan.

He claps his hand on her shoulder.

FORREST

It's okay, let him sleep it off. I'll see you in the morning.

She lays her head down on the table like Henry had earlier.

INT - BATHROOM - DAY

Millie is staring at herself in the mirror. She is in a short sleeved black dress and light make up is done with tear stains on her face.

She re-pins her hair up and brushes herself down.

She walks out and downstairs.

INT - FORREST'S KITCHEN - DAY

Forrest, in suit with the tie undone and shirt unbuttoned at the top, is sitting at the table counting out obituary cards.

Henry is in the same sort of clothing laying on the couch flipping through channels yet again.

Millie walks into the room.

MILLIE

(voice has slight quiver in it.)
Henry, you ready?

HENRY

Yeah.

Henry gets up off the couch and walks around the couch to her. He hugs her lightly and then uses his hand to ask for the car keys.

She goes to her purse and hands the keys to him.

He walks out through the garage.

Millie walks over to Forrest and lightly hugs him. He throws his arm around her shoulders.

They look at the cards in front of them.

MILLIE

He would've appreciated today.

FORREST

Yeah he would've. I'm sorry plans changed on ya'll I'm sure everyone would enjoy to see you.

MILLIE

It would be nice, but I think today was enough for me.

FORREST

Now I gotta fend for myself.

She pushes off of him while giving a small laugh. They hug for a moment before she lets go of him.

MILLIE

We're gonna go say one last goodbye before we come back to pack and head out.

He looks back at the table.

FORREST

That sounds good.

She walks away from him grabbing her purse and heading towards the garage door.

FORREST

Grab some food on your way back.

MILLIE

Will do.

INT - GARAGE - DAY

She walks towards the car when she spots a pile of Dad's things.

She goes through it slightly and lifts a picture frame up uncovering a box labeled "Postcards".

She lifts off the lid and starts to look through them. She picks out a few including the "Dallas" one and puts them in her purse.

She places the lid back on, lifts up the box and continues to walk towards the car.

INT - CAR - DAY

She opens the door, sits down and places the box onto Henry's lap.

Henry looks down at the box and over at her.

HENRY

You don't have to.

MILLIE

I know I don't.

He opens the lid as while and shuffle through.

HENRY

You took some.

MILLIE

(chuckling)

A couple, yeah.

He places the lid back on and then put the box on the floor.

He reaches over to her and gives a hug.

HENRY

Thank you.

MILLIE

I'm sorry.

THE END.