

SIDE A: The Photographer, History Professor, Mystery Novelist

Start →

(Photo of Harry's Place appears. An older couple sit at a picnic table or rustic outdoor table, THE HISTORY PROFESSOR and THE MYSTERY NOVELIST.)

PHOTOGRAPHER

Harry's Place, established nineteen twenty. Drive in, take out, affordable hot dogs, burgers and fries. The History Professor and The Mystery Novelist sit in the shade. It's a mild August afternoon. The History Professor fiddles with his wedding ring.

HISTORY PROFESSOR

So.

PHOTOGRAPHER

He says.

MYSTERY NOVELIST

Yes.

PHOTOGRAPHER

She says.

HISTORY PROFESSOR

I guess it's time.

MYSTERY NOVELIST

No point in denying it.

PHOTOGRAPHER

She takes a bite from her lobster roll. Butter drips down her chin.

HISTORY PROFESSOR

I'll have it all drawn up.

PHOTOGRAPHER

She smiles at this, a small smile. A slight breeze. They watch a hummingbird pass.

(PHOTOGRAPHER takes a photo of her, projected on the back wall.)

MYSTERY NOVELIST

I do appreciate of course, your sense of humor.

HISTORY PROFESSOR

Humor?

MYSTERY NOVELIST

Irony. Finality. History? I see how you are rounding it out, putting up book ends as it were.

PHOTOGRAPHER

He thinks for a moment of the oak bookcase in his study crammed with Civil War tomes. He never liked book ends but he appreciates her appreciation.

HISTORY PROFESSOR

Our first date.

MYSTERY NOVELIST

Yes. You wore a letter jacket. How did you ever letter in anything?

HISTORY PROFESSOR

It was out of pity. You were cold. Wearing a tiny dress. I draped it over you.

PHOTOGRAPHER

She remembers the moustache he tried to grow. He thinks of her seventeen year old legs. They settle into an unsettled silence. That was then. But now—Now--

HISTORY PROFESSOR

I'll move into the cottage.

MYSTERY NOVELIST

No, no.

HISTORY PROFESSOR

I insist.

PHOTOGRAPHER

He says goodbye in his mind to his oak bookcase and the red couch in his study. She feels the pull of the novel she's writing. How to get her heroine out of the water. Do boats just come along? Does she float for a while? Was she perhaps a champion swimmer? Reminds herself to look up how long it takes for hypothermia to set in. Instead what she says is

MYSTERY NOVELIST

What will we tell the kids?

HISTORY PROFESSOR

Jonathan will take it in stride. But Marjory. I worry about Marjory.

PHOTOGRAPHER

She doesn't tell him that Marjory already knows. Over the phone. Last week. Marjory pleaded. Marjory cried.

(MARJORY appears in spot, in pain.)

MARJORY

Mother, please. Don't do this. He loves you. You love him.

MYSTERY NOVELIST

It wasn't enough.

MARJORY

Are you fighting?

End