

My days in Norway were usually very cold. It wasn't until I was born that my father had a second fire place installed in our house. It was bigger than all my friends' houses. It was a beautiful log cabin style home with two stone chimneys on both side and a dark green roof. There were many windows on the house which always put the sunlight on my face early in the morning. Either that or my father woke me up before the sunrise. My home had four bedrooms, two with their own bathroom and two downstairs. Every bedroom had luxurious furniture and the finest quality beds. Downstairs we had a very nice kitchen. We had an electric stove for making the creamiest soup in Norway, and a dark wood table which was always covered with satin tablecloths. In our library through the French doors leading out of the kitchen, we had shelves and shelves of books. I only read a handful of them by the time we left. There was also a radio, record player and a piano. That's where Oscar (my best friend) and I played Mozart and Beethoven.

Our log cabin was surrounded by forest on three sides and the front was cleared of all trees. The forty -foot pine trees, scared me when I was a boy. Up the road from my house was a bunch of row homes with pointy roofs and a window at the top of each one. That's where Oscar lived.

We spent most of our time at my house. We always played the piano or climbed the trees in the outskirts of Bergen, which was only five minutes away from downtown. I remembered living in my big house in Bergen like it was last week or so. Bergen was one of the larger cities in Norway. It was a beautiful city located on the water. There weren't any tall buildings or big businesses. It was made up of small shops, businesses and row homes. The town was big for the time and I didn't want to be anywhere else.

Well that all changed on January 18, 1928. I came home from school. Nothing was off or different than the day before. When both my parents confronted me at the door I knew something was wrong. My father said

“Sit down Henry we need to talk.”

“What's going on?”

“We're moving to America.”

“What do you mean moving to America?” I said.

“I’ve been transferred to a new branch in America. It’s a big promotion. We will be moving in June. I thought it might be better if I told you sometime in advance so you could prepare.”

“But we live here dad! All our family, friends and our way of life is here in Norway?”

“I know Henry, but it’s either that or I don’t have a job. If we don’t move they will fire me and then we will be poor.”

“I need some time to think... father may I be excused?”

“Yes.”

As I got up and left the room, I looked at my mother. She looked very worried. I didn’t come out of my room until supper. I didn’t say a word, only to compliment my mother on her cooking.

The next day, I told Oscar the news and he was at a loss for words. After he snapped out of his shock he said,

“Well we shouldn’t waist the six months you have left. Meet me at the lake 2:00 tomorrow.”

I said, “Alright” and went home. I met Oscar on the lake the next day like he told me to do and in his gloved hands were a few pieces of lined paper. I asked him

“What’s that?”

He replied “Lists of things to do before you go.”

After we finished the first thing on the list that day, those six months passed by like a cold artic wind. Every day he had something really fun planned. It kind of put a light in that big dark thought of moving. Before I knew it, it was June, 1st . My house was put up for sale and we started packing. It was bought the following week. It’s traumatic for a twelve year old boy to be going through so much change in such little time.

We couldn't take any of our furniture on the boat. I didn't know why, but I figured it would be best not to ask. I already said goodbye to all my family and my only friend Oscar who did the last thing on the list himself. He made me a card with a picture of the time we went ice fishing when I caught a huge fish and sold it for 5 dollars. He said,

"Thanks Hen for being my friend. I don't really know who will be my friend now but at least I know who will be in the future."

"I'll see you again someday Oscar."

Those were the last words I said to Oscar for a very long time.

It took us seven hours to get from Bergen to Oslo and another half hour to get to the port. We hauled our six big luggage bags to the ticket booth and my father paid for our tickets and went to the steps with the man waiting. He looked miserable and tired. With a look of displeasure on his face and his eye brows angled down. We handed him our tickets and as soon as he saw them he perked up immediately. He offered to take our bags and led us to our room with a smile on his face.

"Right here on the left and don't hesitate to tell someone if you need anything."

"Thank you sir."

My father said, as he handed him \$10, and off he went. When we walked into our room it had a very soft carpet, two beds, and two dressers. The bedspreads were white, unlike my blue ones at home. The furniture wasn't carved or fancy at all. My mother noticed my gloomy face and handed me two books. They were both hardback covers. The first was empty with lines and the second was *The Great Gatsby* written by F. Scott Fitzgerald. My mother told me that I was to write about my experiences while on the ship and the other was to educate me on the jazz age in America, which was being experienced at that time.

It was very interesting. I read it over and over again. My first day on the boat was very boring. My father strictly told us to stay only on the upper deck. That's what I did. All day I looked over the edge of the boat. If I was lucky I saw some fish or something, you honestly couldn't tell from that high up. On the third day, I just couldn't take it anymore watching and waiting; watching just to see waves! And not even getting a drop wet! I was

ready for war. I marched my way up the steps to my room where my parents were located. I was ready to give them a piece of my mind until, I looked through the door to see a girl reading a very large book. I opened the door and walked very slowly toward her. Completely forgetting my frustration, wondering what to do, getting within a few feet of her. It took me a good three minutes to walk thirty feet until I was there. I sat down next to her and said,

“Hi. Do you speak Norwegian?”

“Yes I also speak Swedish.” She said with a smile.

“I have never seen you before. Where did you come from?”

I pointed towards my room and explained that I’m always outside.

“What are you reading?”

“I’m not reading I’m studying. My parents make me do a lesson each day.”

“Uh what’s your name?”

“(Rosslyng) Heather after a flower my parents saw hiking in the fall.”

“Oh that’s a nice name.”

“You better believe it! Have you ever seen one?”

“No I haven’t.”

“Hold on I’ll get a picture of one.”

After that, Heather and I became best friends. Mostly because we were the only kids we knew on the boat.

Heather and I went on many adventures, much like Oscar and I. One of our most memorable adventures was when I broke my father’s #1 rule. Don’t leave the upper deck. One day in the middle of our journey Heather led me to a staircase that I had no idea existed.

“Come On Henry!”

“Aren’t we leaving the upper deck?”

“Yeah?”

“I’m not allowed! You know that!”

“Henry stop being a square for one moment and trust me!”

She put out her hand for me to grab. I did and she tugged me down the steps. Down down down. To the lower deck with the “Undesirables” my father told me.

“Heather, what are we doing down here?”

We came across a cross walk.

“Henry listen, don’t you hear them?”

I heard crying and a little chatter.

“Those people are treated horribly, Henry.”

“Those are people?!”

“Yes they’re poor.”

“Oh”

“They need help!”

“Heather let’s go we’re going to get in trouble!”

“Alright fine! I just wanted to show you, you could be worse off because you’ve been complaining a lot lately.”

“I have?”

“Yes! My goodness you are so oblivious!”

“What?”

“Let’s go. I’ll tell you later.”

She told me how I have been complaining about missing home, and how I feel bad for myself and how they don’t even get to bring all of their stuff with them. Heather gave me one of the most eye opening experiences in my entire life. I have never seen such a horrible thing. They were treated like dirt, like no one cared. How they put up with I still wonder to this day. Just to go to a country with almost nothing waiting for them, so that their children will have a better life. What an unimaginable sacrifice. That night after telling Heather goodnight I went straight to bed. I had to sleep that off.

A week later, it was a day before my birthday and Heather had something big planned. She wouldn't tell me what it was. She knew I didn't like a surprise that's why she did it. All day I asked over and over again, until she told me if I didn't stop I would get nothing. That ended that. The entire day I waited in anticipation wondering what she had gotten me. Maybe a toy car or a book! The possibilities were endless! The night was so long I could hardly stand it. I woke up bright and early. My parents told me happy birthday and sent me on my way. I waited at her door for her to come out. The moment of truth! I heard the door knob start to move. When the door opened with her behind it I was overjoyed. Before I had a chance to react she yanked me outside and said

“Are you crazy? My parents are still sleeping!”

“I'm sorry Heather. I didn't know”

“It's fine. Come on I need to give you, your present.”

She yanked me again by the hand to the front of the upper deck.

“Close your eyes and put your hands out.”

I did so until I felt something hit my hand.

“Alright Henry open your eyes.”

I looked down to an untitled book.

“What's this” I asked.

“It's my journal entries from when I first met you. I want you to read them and tell me what you think.”

I looked at the journal and papers and they were filled to the brim with her thoughts of me. I guess she didn't have much to write about.

“Thank you Heather! This means a lot to me.” I said with a smile.

“You're welcome.”

“I'm going to put this away. I'll be right back.”

“Alright but hurry up!”

I ran to my room and opened the book to the first page. It said,

“Today I met a boy named Henry. He seems really nice. He’s got brown hair, blue eyes and freckles. Not that many though, just enough. He’s also kind of awkward. It took him three minutes before he could get to me and say hi. Oh well. I guess he’s shy.”...

That’s when I remembered she was still out there. I hid the book under my bed and ran out. About twenty feet before I reached her I tripped and fell straight on my face. It was so embarrassing. I look up and all she could do is laugh.

“You klutz! Ha-ha!”

After laughing a little bit more she helped me up.

“What took you so long?”

“I read your first entry.”

“Did you like it?”

“Yes it was nice. Thank you Heather.”

It started to get very windy, very quickly.

“Why don’t we go inside?” she yelled.

“Alright.”

We both walked up the steps and sat next to her door where we first met three weeks ago. We watched the storm. We felt it rock the boat. It wasn’t the most pleasant feeling. An hour later her father came out. Right in my ear I heard

“Heather its time for dinner!” In a big hearty man’s voice. We both propped up as she answered,

“Hello father.”

“Hello Heather its time for dinner. Who’s this? Is he your friend? ”

“Yes he is.”

“Well, don’t be rude let’s invite him to dinner.”

“Henry would you please join my family for dinner?”

“Certainly.”

That's when I met her parents. It was kind of odd being with a different family with the same customs. Eating the same food in a different place feels taboo to me, but I put up with it. They were generous enough to invite me for dinner. After Heather's family said goodbye to me Heather took me outside hugged me and said,

“Happy birthday. Goodnight.”

“Goodnight Heather.”

In summary: When Heather and Henry dock in Ellis Island it turns out that both are going to Detroit. Mr. Stein (Heather's father) and Mr. Berckener (Henry's father) become powerful business partners in the automotive industry. Mr. Berckener was the regional manager of Volvo in Norway and became CEO of Volvo U.S.A. . . . Mrs. Stein and Berckener became big supporters in the National Women's' Party. Henry and Heather got married on July 1, 1945. They had five children. Henry inherited his father's company and sky rocketed it to a net value of \$4,000,000. In 1960, while eating an Oscar Mayer Ham sandwich, he was inspired to search for his friend Oscar. It turns out that Oscar was the outspoken owner of Oscar Mayer Wiener Company. They met again for the first time in 42 years. It seemed as if they saw each other the day before. They all became true portrayers of The American Dream and an inspiration to their children and grandchildren.