

**Your main commentary should be focused on *time and tense*. Other topics may also be addressed.**

'Ira, look at me a second.'

Lucy had waited until her father seemed his most lucid. She sat across from him in his room. Ira had broken out his old vinyls today. There were covers with a long-haired James Taylor on Sweet Baby James and another of the Beatles crossing Abbey Road (with a barefoot and therefore 'dead' Paul). Marvin Gaye wore a scarf for What's Going On and Jim Morrison moped sexuality on the cover of the original Doors album.

'Ira?'

10 He was smiling at an old picture from their camp days. The yellow VW Beetle had been decorated by the oldest-girl bunk. They put flowers and peace signs all over it. Ira was standing in the middle with his arms crossed. The girls surrounded the car. Everyone wore shorts and T-shirts and sun-kissed smiles. Lucy remembered that day. It had been a good one, one of those you stick in a box and put in a bottom drawer and take out and look at when you're feeling particularly blue.

'Ira?'

He turned toward her. 'I'm listening.'

20 Barry McGuire's classic 1965 antiwar anthem, 'Eve of Destruction,' was playing. Troubling as this song was, it had always comforted Lucy. The song paints a devastatingly bleak picture of the world. He sings about the world exploding, about bodies in the Jordan River, about the fear of a nuclear button being pushed, about hate in Red China and Selma, Alabama (a forced rhyme, but it worked), about all the hypocrisy and hate in the world - and in the chorus he almost mockingly asks how the listener can be naive enough to think that we aren't on the eve of destruction.

25 So why did it comfort her?

Because it was true. The world was this terrible, awful place. The planet was on the brink back then. But it had survived - some might even say thrived. The world seems pretty horrible today too. You can't believe that we will get through it. McGuire's world had been just as scary. Maybe scarier. Go back 30 twenty years earlier - World War II, Nazism. That must have made the sixties look like Disneyland. We got through that too.

We always seem to be on the eve of destruction. And we always seem to get through it. Maybe we all survive the destruction we have wrought. She shook 35 her head. How naive. How Pollyannaish.

She should know better. Ira's beard was trimmed today. His hair was still unruly. The gray was taking on an almost blue tinge. His hands shook and Lucy wondered if maybe Parkinson's was on the horizon. His last years, she knew, would not be good. But then again, there really hadn't been many good ones in

40 the past twenty.

'What is it, honey?'

His concern was so apparent. It had been one of Ira's great and honest charms - he so genuinely cared about people. He was a terrific listener. He saw pain and wanted to find a way to ease it. Everyone felt that empathy with Ira - 45 every camper, every parent, every friend. But when you were his only child, the person he loved above all else, it was like the warmest blanket on the coldest day.

God, he'd been such a magnificent father. She missed that man so much. 'In the logbook, it says that a man named Manolo Santiago visited you.' She tilted 50 her head. 'Do you remember that, Ira?'

His smile slid away.

'Ira?'

'Yeah,' he said. 'I remember.'

'What did he want?'

55 'To talk.'

'To talk about what?'

He wrapped his lips over his teeth, as if forcing them to stay closed.

'Ira?'

He shook his head.

60 'Please tell me,' she said.

Ira's mouth opened but nothing came out. When he finally spoke his voice was a hush. 'You know what he wanted to talk about.'

Lucy looked over her shoulder. They were alone in the room. 'Eve of Destruction' was over. The Mamas and the Papas came on to tell them that all 65 the leaves were brown.

'The camp?' she said. He nodded.

'What did he want to know?'

He started to cry.

'Ira?'

70 'I didn't want to go back there,' he said.

'I know you didn't.'

'He kept asking me.'

'About what, Ira? What did he ask you about?'

He put his face in his hands. 'Please. . .'

75 'Please what?'

'I can't go back there anymore. Do you understand? I can't go back there.'

'It can't hurt you anymore.'