

FADE IN:

INT. TOM'S HOUSE, HALLWAY - NIGHT

A long, wide hallway. Sunlight spills in from two open doorways. A burgundy traveled carpet, cheap woodpaneling. The wall is covered with framed photos of different sizes. All of family. His family. Tom's. What was then and now. Images of relatives. We will learn their names and stories later. Now they are just pictures. THE CAMERA travels across the little scenes of Tom's past. Mom, dad, sister, brothers, all from years gone by. Grandma's, grandpa's, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews. Graduations, vacations. Time gone by too quickly. We HEAR:

TOM (V.O.)

How do you explain family? What it does? Those people that reflect both the good and bad in you. That one word said at precisely the right moment that sends you screaming for the door.

We stop in front of a picture; TOM and his mother, BEE. A trip they took.

In fact several pictures of what looks like the same trip are on the wall.

TOM (V.O.)

I was afraid I would become my parents.

BEE (V.O.)

Growing up is hard...

TOM (V.O.)

No kidding.

BEE (V.O.)

We all do it at different times...

TOM (V.O.)

Sometimes late in life.

CLOSE ON:

A picture of Bee. At 67, she looks younger than her age. A glass of wine in her hand, the responsibilities of her world are far behind. She smiles; beaming, bright and open.

BEE (V.O.)

Maybe too late.

TOM (V.O.)

Game over...

BEE (V.O.)

It's not an easy road...

TOM (V.O.)

But that's...

BEE (V.O.)

Life.

We stop in front of an old black and white picture; a Cape Cod beach at sunset. Complete beauty. The rays of the light reflect on the gently breaking waves. We HEAR the sound of the ocean lapping up onto the sand. It's low at first then it crescendos into full power and rhythm as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CAPE COD BEACH, 1940 - DAY

The waves move in sync with the sound we have been hearing.

BETH CARLISLE, (Bee, to everyone) 7, walks along the beach. She drags her bare toes in the sand, making designs as she moves.

Bee turns past us and we see that we are at the:

SEASIDE HOTEL, CAPE COD, 1940 - DAY

A group of summer cottages to rent by the day, week or month. A few vintage cars in the parking lot.

Bee's parents unpack their car, an Edsel, taking suitcases from the trunk. Her mother, EDNA, waves to Bee to come back to the car.

EDNA

(calling off to her)
Bee!! Bee, honey!

Bee sighs and heads toward them.

Just then, dodging past Bee, races her sister DORIS, 10. Their eyes meet. No denying this glance. The chase is on. Doris zips toward the Manager's Office. Bee takes off after her.

Edna shakes her head. "Ah youth." She goes back to helping her husband unload the car.

INT. SEASIDE HOTEL, MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Tiny, clean, charming. Genuine imitation green leather seats. The office is divided into two parts; the line of demarcation is the manager's counter. On one side sit a couple, MR. and MRS. MARKS, who own the hotel. Leisurely dressed, they listen attentively to the radio; the latest news about Hitler and Germany.

The other side is a small waiting area; another two matching green chairs, a rack with brochures of sights of interest; places to fill the days while you're summering away your time. There is also a Coke machine.

Their young son, WALLY, 10, sits on the counter top, dangling his legs. Tom Sawyer has nothing on him. He's bare footed, in swimming trunks, and is all boy.

Doris runs into the office. Bee's right on her tail. Bee freezes at the door. Her eyes lock on this boy. Wally's attention is also fixed. The screen door swings closed quickly with a slam. Bee jumps. Wally laughs.

Bee shyly looks around the room for her sister. Doris is standing next to the Coke machine.

Wally looks away. Playing not interested. Bee slowly meanders toward her sister. The girls are now acting very grown up for this new stranger; sophistication with dirt on it's face.

DORIS
(to Bee)
Got any change?

Bee shyly shakes her head.

Wally hops down off the counter and goes over to them.

WALLY
(quite the little man)
Whereabouts you ladies from?

Bee can't believe that he has the nerve to talk to them. She is even more surprised at her sister who answers him.

DORIS
New York City.

WALLY
Use to live there.

DORIS
You did?

WALLY
Yep.

DORIS
Not any more?

WALLY
Nope.

After this exchange the air goes silent. An awkward moment. They don't know what the next topic of conversation should be. Wally breaks the ice.

WALLY (cont'd)
My parents own this place.

DORIS
Keen.

Bee is very impressed, but she tries to maintain. He's cool and he knows it. Wally looks back at his parents who are still engrossed in the broadcast.

Sure that he won't be detected, sneaking behind enemy lines, he goes behind the Coke machine, unplugs it, then quickly plugs it right back in. He hits the button and a free Coke pops down. He takes it out, uses the opener on the outside. Slicker than poop.

WALLY
(offering it to Bee)
I'm Wally... What's your name?

Bee can't answer or take the drink. Her infatuation with this new magical giant has made her turn to stone.

DORIS
(taking the drink from him)
That's Bee. I'm Doris.

Doris takes a sip then hands it to her sister. Bee is about to sip. She remembers her manners. So important for the young.

BEE
(feigning disinterest)
Thanks.

WALLY
(smiling)
Sure.

Bee drinks. As she sips and looks at Wally, there is an excitement in her eyes. She smiles back at him.

Doris doesn't want to be upstaged. She walks next to her sister and grabs her hand.

DORIS
Come on, we gotta go.

Bee doesn't move. Doris yanks her away. Bee doesn't want to go.

Doris pulls harder, gripping Bee's hand tighter.

QUICK CUT:

EXT. FOREST LAWN CEMETERY, LOS ANGELES, PRESENT - DAY

CLOSE ON:

Doris' hand. She's now 70. Her hand tightly grips her sister's hand. Bee is 67.

Bee stares into the open grave of her husband, Stan, as his casket is slowly lowered. She still has a beautiful face even though time has marched on.

Doris' husband, HOWARD, stands on the other side of Bee.

A large group of mourners stand near the grave, watching the casket being lowered. A minister presides.

MINISTER

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler...

It's a sunny summer day in California. A little too hot to be wearing all that clothing. Sunglasses, sweat and a lot of black.

MINISTER (V.O.)

Long I stood and looked down one as far
as I could, to where it bent in the
undergrowth...

Bee's three children are there.

KAREN, the eldest, 46, the achiever, a pretty woman. She stands next to her husband, ROBERT. Their twin sons; the diabolical duo, both 10, DANIEL and DAVID, are in front of them.

MINISTER (V.O.)

I shall be telling this with a sigh,
somewhere ages and ages hence:

MICHAEL, the youngest, 37, handsome, self-assured. Ego is good, but perhaps Michael has a little too much. His wife, LISA. No kids. A topic for another day.

MINISTER (V.O.)

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I...

TOM, 40, the middle child, he looks like the guy next-door. He doesn't want to be there. The word uncomfortable is not even in the running for a description of how he feels. He stands next to his wife, KELLY, a tightly wound spring. Beautiful and angular, 30's. Tom's daughter, AMANDA, 7, smart, beautiful and wise beyond her years, stands in front of him. His hand rests lovingly on her shoulder.

MINISTER (V.O.)

I took the one less traveled by...

The sweat drips down Tom's forehead.

MINISTER (V.O.)

And that has made all the difference.

Tom peers over at his mother.

The casket is in the ground.

MINISTER (cont'd)

Stan made a difference to us all. We are grateful that he chose the road he did. Father, husband, friend. We will remember him with love in our hearts. And let us all say, "Amen".

A spattering of "Amens" are heard through the crowd.

The minister turns away.

There is now that awkward moment when no one wants to be the first to move or leave, but eventually it happens and a stream of people go over to Bee to express their condolences. She is congenial, but distant. We do not hear these conversations.

Michael and Tom split off.

MICHAEL

So, we'll see you guys over at the house.

TOM

Yeah.

MICHAEL

Great.

Michael gives his brother a hug. Tom is at a loss. How do I accept this unusual display of affection? But he tries to reciprocate.

Michael walks away.

Kelly and Amanda come up.

KELLY

(if she could be gone, she would)

How long will we have to stay?

TOM

Not long.

He strokes his daughter's hair.

KELLY

Thank God. These things are so depressing.

(bending down to her daughter)
How are you doing, sweetie? You don't want to stay long, do you?

AMANDA

It's okay.

Not the response that Kelly was looking for, but she takes it in stride.

Kelly looks off toward Bee.

KELLY (cont'd)
(feigning a mournful look)
Let's get this over with.

She walks toward the cars that are parked at the curb. Tom's eyes are still on Bee.

KELLY (cont'd)
Are you coming?

Amanda goes over to her mother and they begin heading off toward their car.

Tom takes one last look at Bee. What is she going to do?

INT. BEE'S HOUSE, CALIFORNIA - DAY

A large upper class home. Heavy walnut furniture. This is the house Bee has lived in for the last forty years, living under her husband's roof. Most of the furnishings were his taste, except for a few photos, some of which we saw in the opening scene. These remind her of happier days; her wedding picture, she and Doris at the Seaside Hotel on Cape Cod, when they were young.

DINING ROOM AREA

People are everywhere. Most of them hover around the large dining room table which is covered with enough food to feed a small army. Everyone's left with the only two things you do after a funeral; eat and talk, and eat again.

LIVING ROOM

Bee sits on the sofa, enveloped by the cushions. Two old friends; JACK and his wife, MARILYN, are standing over her.

MARILYN

Please call us, Bee...

JACK

Anything we can do...

Bee nods to them both.

They walk away. Tom, Kelly and Amanda make their way over to Bee.

TOM

Uh, mom?

Bee sees the whole group. But Amanda gets her full attention.

TOM (cont'd)

We need to get going. Kelly has this showing tomorrow. We gotta fly back to New York tonight.

KELLY

Sorry.

She looks at her daughter-in-law. Not the woman she would have chosen for her son.

BEE

(to Tom)

How are you doing?

TOM

Great, fine.

BEE

Really?

TOM

... I mean, well, I hadn't seen him in quite a while anyway.

BEE

That wasn't his fault.

Tom goes silent. It's a game he does not feel like playing right now.

Bee holds his gaze for a moment then turns away, hugs and kisses her granddaughter.

BEE

I love you, sweetheart.

AMANDA

Love you, grandma.

KELLY

(another attempt at sincerity)

If you want to come to New York we'd be
happy to have you.

Karen walks up to them.

KAREN

You guys leaving already?

Tom tightens up. He can feel he is about to be judged and
sentenced.

TOM

Well...

Kelly gives him a defining glance.

TOM

Yeah, we got to go. I'll give you a
call soon.

Hugs all around.

Tom and his family go toward the door.

ENTRY WAY

Tom looks over his shoulder one last time at his mother and
sister. What is it he wants to say? Maybe he knows, but
can't.

Kelly and Amanda are walking through the doorway. Tom and
Bee exchange a parting glance. He follows Amanda out.

LIVING ROOM

Karen sits down next to Bee.

KAREN

She's such a...

Bee stops her from finishing what she also feels.

BEE

He's your brother and he loves her.

KAREN

No he doesn't. He just needed someone.

BEE

We all do.

Karen spots her boys about to knock over a punch bowl.

KAREN

I'll be right back.

Karen rushes away. Bee watches Karen make her way through the living room crowd toward her sons. As we watch Karen:

DISSOLVE TO:

THE CAMERA IS ON BEE as this world becomes a blur of images; in all the graphic, slow slurring motion that today's effects can create. Grandchildren racing between the adults, people eating, laughter, all mesh into a loss of time.

Before Bee realizes it, this effected world has passed her by. Only a few guests remain.

DISSOLVE TO:

BEE'S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Bee is brought back by the hand of her sister on her shoulder. It's three hours later. Doris sits down next to her on the sofa, puts Bee's hand in hers.

DORIS

I think we're going to get going. Are you alright?

BEE

Yeah, fine... I'm fine.

DORIS

Listen... Howard and I have talked about this... We really want you to come and live with us on the Cape.

Bee is about to say something, but Doris stops her before she can speak.

DORIS (cont'd)
Don't answer right away...

Bee stifles her defense.

DORIS (cont'd)
Just think about it.

Doris kisses her sister on the cheek.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB - DAY

Bee drives her car into the circular driveway and gets out.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB, LOBBY - DAY

Bee comes into the posh lobby, walks to a large desk. EDDIE, the guy behind the desk, is typing away at a computer. He's young and definitely not short on energy. He pops up when he sees her.

EDDIE
(big smile)
Can I help you?

BEE
I'm Bee Hayden. I've come for my
husband's things. Stan Hayden.

EDDIE
(befuddled)
Your husband's things?

BEE
From his locker...

He looks around, under the desk. Nothing.

EDDIE (cont'd)
(still big smile)
I don't see anything. What was that
name again?

Bee is trying to hold it together. His energy isn't his fault, but that doesn't stop it from being annoying.

BEE
Stan Hayden...

The manager, LEW, sees the situation and hurries over to them.

LEW
I'm so sorry, Mrs. Hayden.

He glances at Eddie.

LEW (cont'd)
Eddie, I'll take care of it.

EDDIE
I can find it if you just tell me...

LEW
(cutting him off)
That's alright.

Eddie reluctantly goes back to his computer.

LEW (cont'd)
(confidentially)
He wasn't here last week when Mr.
Hayden...

He realizes this is the wrong topic of conversation and changes his tone.

LEW (cont'd)
Uh, his things are in my office.

EXT. COUNTRY CLUB - DAY

Lew helps Bee carry Stan's things to her car. She opens the trunk. He places Stan's golf clubs in the trunk. Bee holds a tweed jacket and a gym bag. She places them inside.

LEW
We're all going to miss him.

BEE
Thank you.

It's difficult for her to look at these things. Tears begin to fill her eyes. She slams the trunk closed.

INT. BEE'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - DAY

She is on a rampage. She throws the jacket in the middle of the room, then proceeds to grab all of Stan's clothes from the closet, angrily tossing them in a pile on the ground.

As the last of his clothes hits the pile, she crumbles in a heap next to them, trying to catch her breath. She surveys it all and begins to sob.

BEE

(railing at the world)

I didn't want this!!

(softer)

I didn't want any of this.

INT. BEE'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM - DAY

Bee sits at her dining room table.

Every inch of the table is filled with paper work. Bills, checkbooks, his will. Documents she had forgotten or never knew existed. She has to start somewhere.

Finally the spirit moves her. She opens a small metal box, pulls out her birth certificate, marriage license, adding them to this paper mountain.

Suddenly her face changes. She removes a frayed, old pink ribbon with a sea shell dangling on it.

CLOSE ON:

The sea shell.

THE ROOM

She touches it gently as it sways in her hand. For the first time in weeks her burden actually seems lighter.

QUICK CUT:

EXT. SEASIDE HOTEL, CAPE COD, 1945 - DUSK

We HEAR the waves of the ocean.

Wally, 15, holds the new pink ribbon and strings the sea shell onto it. He surveys it with pride, then looks up at Bee, 13. She stands at a distance in the parking lot, leaning against her father's car, patiently waiting. She does not see him.

Wally walks toward her.

In the reflection of the side mirror, Bee sees him coming toward her. She smiles to herself, trying to stay calm and keep her heart still. Finally as he gets closer, she turns and smiles at him.

QUICK CUT:

EXT. BEE'S HOUSE, AUTUMN/SEVEN MONTHS LATER - NIGHT

A November rain. Rain drops and heavy wind rush through the trees. Autumn leaves float to the ground. We see a "FOR SALE" SIGN.

EXT. BEE'S HOUSE - DAY

CLOSE ON:

The big red letters underneath the sign, which say, SOLD.

INT. BEE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Boxes are everywhere. She's packing up her life. A few more boxes to go, a few more shattered bits of memories, each object a complete history unto itself. Why the hell did they keep so much crap?

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE, KITCHEN, DALLAS - DUSK

The sounds and energy of this house are almost deafening. The TV is on in the background. The twins, David and Daniel, sit at the dining table doing their home work as Karen prepares dinner.

We see her husband, Robert, through an open door, sitting in his office at his computer monitor.

Karen talks to Daniel as she stirs the sauce on the stove.

KAREN

So what do you think it's about?

DANIEL

I don't know. Some old guys got together and wrote it.

DAVID

(correcting his brother)
The constitution.

DANIEL
(repeating with annoyance)
Constitution.

KAREN
So what does that mean?

She tastes her sauce and shouts to Robert.

KAREN (cont'd)
Almost ready!

ROBERT (V.O.)
Okay!

The phone rings. Daniel pops up on his knees to check the caller ID. It rings again.

CLOSE ON:

The caller ID. It reads: "Stan Hayden"

KITCHEN

DANIEL
It's grandma.
(turning to his mother)
Hey, will grandma's caller ID change
when she moves to Cape Cod?

DAVID
Of course it will, stupid. She'll be
living in Massachusetts.

KAREN
(sternly to David)
I don't appreciate that and neither
does your brother.

DAVID
I...

KAREN
Yes?...

DAVID
(to Daniel)
Sorry.

Daniel smiles. Every little victory helps.

DAVID (cont'd)
That's alright, I don't really care.

David hands his mom the phone. Karen, in the midst of everything, doesn't really want to answer the phone. She especially doesn't want to talk to her mother, who has been such high maintenance lately.

But the dutiful daughter takes the receiver.

KAREN
What's up, mom?... No, well, I'm just getting dinner ready... That's okay...
What? Oh you are?... That's great...
Huh...
(surprised)
Em... I really have to talk to Robert about it...

Robert has snuck into the kitchen. He kisses Karen's neck from behind.

ROBERT
Talk to me about what?

He tastes the sauce with his finger.

KAREN
(covers the mouth piece of the receiver)
She wants her car with her on the Cape.

ROBERT
So.

KAREN
She wants me to drive there with her.

Both the boys at once.

DANIEL
What!!

DAVID
You can't go!

DANIEL
No way!

ROBERT

Guys!

KAREN
(to the boys)
Hey, big ears! Cut it out! Is anyone
talking to either of you?

DANIEL
No.

DAVID
No.

KAREN
Then good, fine. Daddy and I will talk
about it. Thank you both for your
input.

INT. KAREN'S HOUSE, HALL - NIGHT

Robert and Karen step away from their son's open doorway.

ROBERT
Night, night...

Robert turns off the hall light.

DANIEL (V.O)
Leave the light on.

Robert turns the light back on.

KAREN
Go to sleep.

They go into their:

BEDROOM

And get ready for bed.

ROBERT
How many days would you be gone?

KAREN
I don't know. How long would it take to
do the trip?

ROBERT

Nine, ten I guess. Depending how many miles and all that.

Karen goes into the bathroom.

KAREN (V.O.)
There's no way I can do this, right?

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Robert joins her in the evening ritual of brushing teeth and relieving the bladder.

ROBERT
It's up to you.

KAREN
(spitting; sarcastic)
Thanks... Nine or ten days in the car with my mother?
(rinsing)
I don't know.

ROBERT
(smiling)
As long as you remove all sharp objects.

Karen's not laughing. She goes back into the bedroom.

ROBERT (cont'd)
What about your brothers?

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

KAREN
She hasn't asked them yet.

Robert comes out of the bathroom and turns out the light.

ROBERT
You see, you are special. She asked you first.

KAREN
(in her own world)
I can't. I couldn't drive with her. Even if there was a way to juggle everything...
(turning out the last light)

I just can't.

EXT. LBJ HIGHWAY, DALLAS - DAY

It's bumper to bumper traffic. Michael, trying to maintain his composure, sits in his car waiting for this mini eternity to end.

INT. MICHAEL'S CAR - DAY

Michael is dressed in his mandatory shirt and tie. His jacket laid neatly over the passenger side seat. A brief for his upcoming trial next to it.

He gets tired of waiting and tries to move his car into the next lane. No one will let him in and he's late for his nine o'clock.

He bangs on his steering wheel in frustration.

Finally he manipulates his way into the snail-like speed of the next lane.

His cell phone rings.

MICHAEL

Hello?... What?... Wait, I can't hear you... Say that again...

(realizing who it is)

Hi, Mom... Yeah?... I don't know... I have several cases that could go to trial soon.

His face changes completely from frustration to discomfort as he listens.

MICHAEL

... I assume you already talked to Karen... Well... yeah I'd love to help you out... Look, Tom's still unemployed right?

(with just the right amount of sarcasm)

I'm sure he could fit it into his busy schedule... If he turns you down, let me know and I'll give him a call...

Someone tries to cut him off. Michael is about to curse, but controls himself.

MICHAEL (cont'd)

Look. I gotta go... I'm late. Maybe we can talk on Sunday? Bye.

He turns to the car that tired to pull in front of him, smiling, he flips him off.

QUICK CUT:

INT. BEE'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - DAY

Bee has just hung up the phone. Suitcases and boxes still abound.

Her address book is open on the bed next to her. After a moment, she reluctantly dials.

We HEAR the phone ring a few times until the answering machine picks up.

AMANDA (V.O.)

We can't get to the phone right now. So please, leave a message...

INT. TOM'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM, NEW YORK - DAY

THE CAMERA starts on the answering machine.

AMANDA (V.O) (cont'd)

And we'll call you back.

We HEAR the beep tone.

BEE (V.O)

Tom, are you there? Pick up? It's me... I have a... well... If you're not busy, I need a favor...

THE CAMERA MOVES ACROSS THE ROOM.

What can you say. It's a New York apartment. Not enough room really for one let alone a whole family. The surroundings are surprisingly sparse considering the number of people that occupy the space.

Tom sits in a chair, listening. He's unshaven, still dressed in his pj's, even though it's the middle of the afternoon, a cup of coffee in his hand. It doesn't look

like one of his best days. He stares off, not really listening.

BEE (V.O)(cont'd)
Well, uhm... I told you about moving
in with my sister.

Tom would turn the machine off if it didn't mean having to get up and walk all the way across the room, so he does the next best thing. He gets up and heads toward the bathroom.

HALLWAY

He shuffles his feet as he moves, to keep his house slippers on. Past two closed doors. Probably the bedrooms which must be large closets.

He goes into the:

BATHROOM

to relieve himself and begins to do so.

He can still HEAR Bee's voice over the trickling of piss.

BEE'S (V.O) (cont'd)
I want to drive my car to the Cape.

There is a mirror that hangs over the toilet. Tom examines what he has become in it's reflection.

BEE (V.O.)
I just don't want to go by myself...
Will you come with me? I'll pay for all
the meals and hotels and things...
So... Call me. I love you, honey.

She hangs up. We HEAR the dial tone and rewinding from the machine.

Tom flushes the toilet.

He turns on the faucet, grabs his tooth brush. It's the only one in the stand. He slowly takes the Crest children's tooth paste and uses it.

As he brushes, he gazes at the Crest container. He loves his daughter.