

Act One Scene 7

Seattle, WA and Cu Chi, Vietnam, 1969 and 1970

YOUNG EMILY sitting at a desk in Seattle.

CRAIG in his quarters in Vietnam.

START

CRAIG

(Writing)

August 14th, 1969. “Well, my time has finally come. I am very sad to see this part of my life end. I hated having to say goodbye. I love you more as each day goes by.”

CRAIG and YOUNG EMILY

(CRAIG writing, YOUNG EMILY reading. They speak together)

“I hope you will be okay while I’m gone.”

(YOUNG EMILY’s voice fades to nothing. CRAIG’s voice is full)

CRAIG

“I think what I’m doing is right. Perhaps I’m just mixed up, but I feel like I should be where my country needs me. Give all my love to everyone at home. PS. I’m going to number all of my letters. When we get to 365, I’ll be home.” Letter #1

(YOUNG EMILY reaches for a paper and pen and begins to write.

Lights dim on CRAIG who stays seated in his quarters)

YOUNG EMILY

August 25th. “I am going to bed now. I can’t believe you wrote your letter on the 14th and I only received it today. I guess that means you don’t have my letters yet. That makes you seem even further away. So badly I want you to kiss me goodnight. I can hear you saying “Darling” to me, and I can almost feel your kiss...but I can’t reach you. I’ll say hello to everyone for you.” Letter #11

(Lights dim on YOUNG EMILY who stays seated at her desk.

Lights up on Craig.

Lights continue to rise and fade when they are speaking.)

CRAIG

September 22nd. “Nixon is pulling out some troops and sending them home. There is talk that after Christmas there will be a number of troops leaving. I’ll be so happy if I’m one of them. I am already dreadfully tired of this muddy rice paddy over here. Now you be good, and don’t lose hope. Please remember when things get tough that I’m always thinking of you. I’ll see you sooner than you think.” Letter # 39

YOUNG EMILY

September 30th. “This is the last day of September — finally! I’ll be glad each time there is one month down and one less to go. You have 319 days left now...almost down to 300. We’re both going to make it through, if we keep ahold of each other. Hang on tight, my Craig — without you my life has no direction. I love you.” Letter # 47

CRAIG

December 12th. “Hello Darling...how’s my girl? I’m pretty depressed again this evening. One of our crew chiefs is in the hospital with three bullets in his legs. He got shot just today. I’m sick of this rotten war. I miss your pretty face. All I can think about is coming home, and it’s so far away. I was thinking today about how happy I was when you said you’d marry me. Be tough now kid, things will be okay again soon, and remember you’ve got a guy over here depending on you.” Letter # 120

YOUNG EMILY

January 1st, 1970. “The tree is down, and Christmas is back in the boxes for another year. I’m very glad to see it go. I got the letter with the pictures of you in it. Boy — those pictures did me a world of good. It made me feel all warm and tingly to see you. Next time, take off your aviators.”

(Holding up a picture)

“I miss those big blue pools of love you call eyes.” Letter # 139

(YOUNG EMILY exits)

CRAIG

February 5th. “I sit here in my room looking at the pictures you sent me.”

(Holding up a picture)

“That time and place seem a lifetime away. I can remember, but everything seems so distant — somewhere I yearn to return to. I miss you so very much, my darling. I have 192 days left.”

“You wanted to know more about what I do. I am a gunship pilot, and probably have one of the most dangerous jobs here in Vietnam. I had a really rotten day. I flew 12 hours and got shot at all day. I’m tired, but I did okay. It sure was nice to come back in and find your letter. Letter #174

END

(Lights up as YOUNG ED enters with a duffle bag at his side. He has arrived in Vietnam where he is listening to MAJOR BRIEFER over a loud speaker. Lights dim. CRAIG remains in his quarters. He is not part of this scene with YOUNG ED)

MAJOR BRIEFER(Offstage)

Gentlemen, allow me to personally welcome you to your very own war. Welcome to South Vietnam. This may not seem like a very good little war, maybe it’s a little pissant war, but it’s the only war we have, so you gotta make the most of it. As army officers, you may never have