

LESSON 13

HOW TO TALK ABOUT TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE

"So, traveling, huh? Wicked." Rex and I were waiting outside Los Feliz, a theater downtown. I had had the little card taped on my mirror for a week before Janet finally convinced me to just phone him up already. When I called, he said his favorite band, Modest Mouse, was playing that weekend and that I should come with him to the concert. "I promise, you'll love them," he said.

"How would you know what I'd love? You barely know me," I teased.

He thought for a moment and then answered, "Well, they're cool. And you seem cool. Therefore, I pronounce a perfect fit!" I told him flattery would get him everywhere and that I'd meet him at Los Feliz at eight.

"Yeah, I've been thinking about it," I said. I pulled my coat around me a little tighter-Bay Area winters can get really chilly. And I was wearing a cute first-date outfit, which was obviously stupid in this weather, especially since I was hiding it all anyway under this big, lunky parka. "I don't know," I went on. "It's just that I don't have any desire to be in college right now. I mean, I've spent my whole life in this city. I've barely traveled anywhere else, and I don't want to just go plop myself down somewhere for another four years of school. I should go see more of the world first, I think."

Rex squinted and looked off into the distance, as if the answer was floating somewhere above the Shell gas station on the next block. "Yeah, that makes total sense," he said slowly. "There's no need to follow the crowd just because they're all jumping through hoops."

"No, I guess not." I laughed, "Of course, that's usually how I operate. I just watch what everyone else is doing and then I end up going in totally the opposite direction." Was this what I'd been so worried about? But this was so easy....

Rex turned his cute little squint in my direction. "Yeah," he said. "Walter mentioned you were like that."

I snorted. "Don't believe anything he tells you about me! I mean, Walter used to eat paste all the way up until fifth grade. In fact, I think he still does. His breath always smells kind of funny after art class."

He laughed and said, "Naw, I think he appreciates it." He smiled that crooked little smile at me. "I, for one, think being contrary is a wonderful quality in a girl."

Just then the big, goateed bouncer opened the doors and the crowd of hipsters started clambering to get in. "Come on," Rex said, grabbing my hand. "We want to get right up front." We pushed our way inside and I thought my hand might melt from sheer, total giddiness.

Fantastic. Best birthday ever.

WORDS ABOUT EXPLORATION AND ESCAPE

I've lived in the Bay Area my whole life - I'd like to be **transient**, just for once.

transient (*adj*): moving around a lot

RELATED WORDS

Growing up, my dad was a **nomad**; he never lived in one place longer than a few years.

nomad (*n*): person who moves constantly from place to place, with no fixed home

When I go hiking, I take only the most **utilitarian** things.

utilitarian (*adj*): designed more to be practical than beautiful

I'd like to go someplace **precarious** - I need to break out of my safety net.

precarious (*adj*): dangerous and unstable

My dad doesn't believe I have the **temerity** to put myself in **jeopardy** like that.

temerity (*n*): reckless confidence

jeopardy (*n*): danger

I'd like to travel and pretend I'm a **fugitive**, making up new names for myself in each city.

fugitive (*n*): someone who is escaping the law

I'd like to visit all the places where the Chinese **diaspora** has spread

to - Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, etc.

diaspora (*n*): an ethnic or cultural group that is spread out through various parts of the world

Planning an entire year abroad would be a **tedious** but rewarding task.

tedious (*adj*): boring and repetitive

I'd like to visit those parts of the world where westernization hasn't **encroached** entirely.

encroach (*v*): to intrude gradually

Once I mentioned to my dad that I'd like to make an **expedition** to Kenya.

expedition (*n*): a trip made by a group for a specific purpose (to explore, to battle, etc.)

He said I could make an **excursion** to Safeway instead.

excursion (*n*): a short trip to a place and back

When my mom **immigrated** to the United States, she was sad to leave behind her family.

immigrate (*v*): to move to and settle in a new country

When you immigrate to one country, you are always **emigrating** from another.

emigrate (*v*): to leave a country, especially your native one

I hope that spending some time away will allow me to **ruminare** on my way of life.

ruminate (v) : to think carefully and at length about something
The following words all have to do with thinking and questioning.

I don't have enough time to **contemplate** anything in my day-to-day life. I'd like to spend sometime really **delving** into a single topic. All I have to do now is **ascertain** exactly what that "something" should be. I'm not sure yet what my dad thinks about the whole thing. I'm scared to get him to **evince** an opinion. I don't think he'll quite **distinguish** how taking a year off before college isn't the same thing as slacking off for twelve months.

contemplate (v): to think carefully

delve (v): to dive into; to investigate thoroughly

ascertain (v): to decide with certainty

evince (v): to show a feeling or characteristic clearly

distinguish (v): to tell something apart from something else

I'd like to go somewhere where, for once, Americans are the **alien** presence.

alien (adj): foreign

It looks like Janet's and my paths may **diverge** at this point – she will definitely go to college.

diverge (v): to split up and go in different directions

I'd like to find a **utopia** out there where no one ever has to make big, important decisions!

utopia (n): an ideal, perfect, and harmonious place

As much as I love my family, **proximity** to them isn't a high priority for next year.

proximity (n): closeness

I don't know what I'd do if I lived in a foreign country; I suppose I could just move someplace and then **reconnoiter** while I'm there.

reconnoiter (v): to explore a place to gather information

Maybe I'll take a year off and **sequester** myself somewhere quiet.

sequester (v): to keep in an isolated place

I can **abnegate** television, shopping, and lattes in favor of an **ascetic** lifestyle.

abnegate (v): give up something

ascetic (adj): living without any worldly possessions and practicing self-denial

WORDS ABOUT MOTION

I hate the fact that people our age feel propelled into college.

propel (v): to push forward forcefully

Since I drive everywhere, I rarely exercise my **ambulatory** powers.

ambulatory (adj): having to do with walking

RELATED WORDS

The following verbs describe all kinds of moving.

circumambulate (v): to walk around something

traverse (v): to cover a particular amount of space

gallivant (v): to travel joyfully

meander (v): to move slowly and without purpose

traipse (v): to walk casually and heavily

amble (v): to walk casually and slowly

careen (v): to move at top speed

I'd like to buy one of those multi-trip train tickets and just make a **peregrination** around Europe.

peregrination (n): a long journey
If I stay here at home, I think I will stagnate.

stagnate (v): to weaken and become stale from staying in one place

WORDS ABOUT LANDSCAPES

I'd like to stand on a precipice and look down into clear, blue water.

precipice (n): a high, dangerous rock face

I'd like to get stuck in a **quagmire** and have to be fished out by a donkey.

quagmire (n): a sticky, boggy area

I'd like to visit a seaside city and watch the boats on the **quay**.

quay (n): a platform that runs along a harbor, for loading and unloading boats

My friend's older brother spent a year on a farm in Israel and learned all about **agriculture**.

agriculture (n) : the science of farming

He's now devoted to an **agrarian** lifestyle and lives in a house he built himself. He specifically picked a place with highly **arable** land, so he could produce all his own food.

agrarian (adj): having to do with farming and land

arable (adj): suitable for farming

The Mojave Desert is extremely **arid**.

arid (adj): very dry

Just thinking about it makes me feel **parched**. I need a Gatorade.

parched (adj): very dry; very thirsty

Once I tried skydiving, but I'm far too **terrestrial** a person to enjoy that.

terrestrial (adj): having to do with the earth

When I asked my brothers where they thought I should go for my year abroad, they answered, "How 'bout someplace **extraterrestrial**?"

extraterrestrial (adj): coming from a place other than planet Earth

I've always enjoyed **aerial** photography, but I could never do it myself.

aerial (adj): having to do with the air or sky

The vineyard in France was lush and **arboreal**.

arboreal (adj): having to do with trees