

JULIE

LITERARY NOVEL EXCERPT: *RETRIBUTION: A CAPE COD LOVE STORY* BY CHRIS PICCONE

Start story entering front door and asking brother about dad's mood.

Summary: When Anthony Mancuso falls in love with Liz, a wealthy femme fatale on Cape Cod, the naive college student straps himself into an emotional roller coaster that leads him to realize how far he will go for love.

Chapter 1

sounds like → 1970s school film voice-over!
"Each winter Monarch butterflies migrate 3,000 miles south to Mexico..."

Each spring, thousands of college students migrate to Cape Cod in a frenzied hunt for summer work. They descend upon the managers of every restaurant, hotel, and ice cream shop from Sandwich to Provincetown like ravenous gulls diving into a bait ball. Once employment is secured, the excited students begin a frantic search for lodging, often cramming themselves with fifteen to twenty other wild, young partiers into the small cottages of the skinny peninsula. They then spend the rest of their lives reminiscing over these summer memories, bringing their families to the Cape for a week's vacation and trying to recapture that summer feeling.

True!

As a year rounder, I never worried about a summer job or having to sleep on a dirty floor. I lived with my parents in Pocasset, the first town off the Bourne Bridge, and with half a semester left of college, I remained debt free by working year round as a delivery driver for the Lobster Pound Fish Market. Waking at four each morning and finishing deliveries in time for classes kept money in my pocket and me away from the vices so common to the weathered few who haunted the Cape past tourist season.

But the Pound's owners sold out to a land developer, and the little market was now closed. After three years of employment, I faced May 1990 with \$124 in my bank account and no leads for any full-time work.

Insert timestamp elsewhere.

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I stopped at the Wareham Playhouse hoping to find my friend Heather, the playhouse manager. During my first winter, I had trouble adjusting to the desolate Cape in winter, and the counselor I had seen recommended getting involved in something. The little theatre helped battle the depression that slunk into me after the tourists drove over the bridges and only the plaintive cries of seagulls remained.

CUT
Use later.

seeped
settled?

Heather, who worked at the Christmas Tree Shop, had promised to look for jobs in one of her company's Cape stores, but I would have to catch up with her later; the playhouse's lot was empty.

Over the Bourne Bridge with its eight-foot-high fencing, I thought of the suicides so many of the Cape's year-rounders attempted after drinking or drugging at such low ceilinged bars as the Whaleback and the Port of No Recall. I, too, had called the Good Samaritan Hotline on a frozen January night during my first Cape winter.

Driving up Shore Road, my anxiety built at the thought of my father's disappointment if I told him I remained jobless much longer. A career Air Force officer, Col. Mancuso had been heavy handed and acid tongued when his expectations weren't met, and around him, I always felt I was walking on eggshells. I knew I would find a job, but I worried that it wouldn't be good enough to satisfy him.

Think
this upon
crossing
threshold
of house

All was quiet on my street and my parents' driveway was empty. The retired neighbors were playing bridge at the rec center or finishing their three-hour lunches at the Corner Cup across from St. Brendan's Catholic Church. My brother had an hour left of school and my parents were still at work.

Why does
he come home
during the day?
Go to
Get 2
and 1/2
CUP
sandwich
observe
Describe
people
year-rounders' life here.

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Our shingled ranch facing south never held warmth, and the lack of windows on either end kept the Cape's summer breezes out. Four years ago, with my father retiring from the military, my parents bought the house in a panic. We were living in New Jersey, but with my grandmother's health failing, my parents packed up the family the summer I graduated high school and moved us into the home a month before I began commuting to the nearby university. My grandmother who lived four miles away died three months later.

Wearing black and mourning for weeks, my parents lamented my grandmother's passing like the pious, melodramatic Roman Catholic Sicilians they were, and their home reflected the hard stoicism to which they held firm. Spindly, darkly stained Colonial furniture and thick European antiques collected from their travels gave the home a cold museum-like stagnation. Heavy brass bongs of the art deco grandfather clock in the breezeway suggested the tramp of time, yet the home remained a mausoleum where life stood still as a testament to firm Puritanical resolve against a hostile world.

In the quiet of the kitchen, I made a sandwich and read through the day's Cape Cod Times. Even the Cape was feeling the 1990 recession, and the help-wanted section offered little for summer employment.

Read newspaper in restaurant. Use this as time stamp.

On weekends, I still waited tables at Canalside, the restaurant overlooking the Eastern mouth of the Cape Cod Canal, but my father wouldn't stand for me working only two shifts a week. He believed money flowed from the pockets of the seer-suckered tourists, and according to him, a portion of that money needed to funnel into my pocket.

I headed to Falmouth, and by 5:00 I had filled out applications from three hotels and four restaurants.

"Come back in a couple of weeks," the sallow eyed manager told me after glancing at my applications.

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But I knew they didn't want me; I lived twenty minutes ⁿNorth, just off the main artery onto the Cape. They knew I would be battling traffic every day to get to work.

* START HERE!
year
number

I pulled into my parents' driveway just as the last of the afternoon light began to fade. Supper would be ready, and my father would be expecting results. The front door slammed, and the pudgy figure of my brother came out to greet me. Seven years younger, Vinnie, in the pimply faced, full throws of puberty, was my scout, reporting on my father's mood before I entered the home.

"Hey bro!" Vinnie welcomed, voice cracking. "Find a job?"

"Nothing yet. How's dad?"

Common
needed in
Direct Address

"Fine. Downstairs watching the news," Vinnie answered. "He's in a good mood."

"I'm trying, Vinnie. I really am."

We walked into the kitchen where our mother stooped over the stove.

"Hello Anthony. Good to see you," greeted my mother. At forty-three, she reveled in the role of martyr, long ago resigning herself to suffering through life and expecting little else. Overweight and passive, she had adopted the slow amble of acceptance; her dreams of driving a Mercedes convertible down Cranberry Highway a distant memory she repeated often to ensure we all understood what she gave up to raise two boys.

Add physical description
of Dad. Contrast to
Mom. Jack Sprat
or something
military next.

"How did it go today?" she asked.

"Seven applications; we'll see."

"It's in God's hands now," Mom replied. "Sal, time to eat."

"Anything today, Anthony?" My father asked as he sat down at the kitchen table.

"Some leads," I answered before we all bowed our heads.

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“Dear Lord thank you for these gifts which we are about to receive and the family gathered before us tonight. In Jesus’s name we pray,” recited my father as he had done ever since I could remember.

“And please help Anthony in his search,” my mother added.

“Have you spoken to Mr. Lorette at the post office yet?” asked my father before I had a chance to pass the pasta bowl.

“Dad, I told you the post office doesn’t hire summer help.”

“I know what you told me,” he snapped. “I just don’t understand why it’s taking so long.”

Delete.

Before I could answer, he blurted,

“I’m trying,” was my only response.

“Your friend, Jim, found a job at the marina yesterday,” my father continued. “I saw his mother at church last night.”

“Jim’s uncle works at the marina. He got Jim the job,” I answered. I became irritated as my parents picked apart my job hunting attempts, but I held my frustration, afraid an outburst would only set my father off.

“Are you looking in the right places at the right times?” asked Mom.

“You see me looking through the papers... coming back with applications.”

Always suspicious, my father looked at me as he pushed a stalk of broccolini around with his fork. Twenty years as an Air Force officer created a demanding parent whose expectations of his sons never seemed attainable.

Delete.

“I told my professors I was going to miss classes tomorrow,” I announced. Dad stopped moving his food around his plate. “To look for a job.”

Julie

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"What else can I do?" I asked. "I can't make people hire me."

"Well, I guess that's that," he declared before rising with his plate in hand. As expected, I cleared the table and helped my father wash the dishes while my brother rumbled downstairs to do homework. Mom followed him to fold laundry.

"Where are you going tomorrow?" Dad asked.

"Down Cape. Hyannis, Yarmouth, Chatham, something's gotta be around there."

"Don't be picky. When I was your age, I worked the tobacco fields in Connecticut," he began.

"It wasn't easy."

"I know, Dad. You told me. Right now, I'll take anything."

"So many businesses are understaffed in the summer; they have to bring in all those Europeans," he said, shaking his head. "I just don't understand why you can't talk one of those places into hiring you."

I knew where he was headed. Whenever my father waited in line too long at a checkout or had slow service at a restaurant, he blamed young people for being too uppity to take the menial jobs. Now he had an unemployed college son, the very scapegoat he had blamed so frequently in the past.

HAVE HIM GET FRUSTRATED BY DAD AND LEAVE,
TIE HIS ANXIETY TO THE BRIDGE AND THE GOOD SAMARITANS
SUICIDE HOTLINE — NOT GOING TO BE ANOTHER STATISTIC.
HAVE HIM MAKE A DETAILED OBSERVATION AND SAY, "MY
JOURNALISM PROFESSOR WOULD BE PROUD OF MY WRITING."
ANY MALE FRIENDS WITH WHOM TO HANG OUT OR SEARCH FOR WORK?
THIS HAS POTENTIAL BUT NEEDS MORE
AND ACTION TO MOVE FORWARD. A POWERFUL DIALOGUE

keep
Military
Dad wash
dishes?
Delete
majority

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Ed

Summary: When Anthony Mancuso falls in love with Liz, a wealthy femme fatale on Cape Cod, the naive college student straps himself into an emotional roller coaster that leads him to realize how far he will go for love.

Chapter 1

Each spring, thousands of college students migrate to Cape Cod in a frenzied hunt for summer work. They descend upon the managers of every restaurant, hotel, and ice cream shop from Sandwich to Provincetown like ravenous gulls diving into a bait ball. Once employment is secured, the excited students begin a frantic search for lodging, often cramming themselves with fifteen to twenty other wild, young partiers into the small cottages of the skinny peninsula. They then spend the rest of their lives reminiscing over these summer memories, bringing their families to the Cape for a week's vacation and trying to recapture that summer feeling.

readers outside New England might not know that this is a prime tourist destination every summer

I like your word choices!

this is the body jacket blurb

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connect w/ tourists driving to the Cape

stet

what's that like?

this can be a scene in his life before

there's a lot going on in this phrase! slow down. take the time to paint a little picture.

But the Pound's owners sold out to a land developer, and the little market was now closed.

After three years of employment, I faced May 1990 with \$124 in my bank account and no leads for any full-time work.

- writing is very clear
- some good word choices
- pertinent details: as they relate to him.
- slow down. take your time.
- more scenes: people, dialogue, action, reaction

does the year matter? it might seem dated to readers

again this can be a scene place closer no job

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school?

again, readers are unlikely to know the geography of the area. help them out

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4/5 May

I stopped at the Wareham Playhouse, hoping to find my friend Heather, the playhouse manager.

why?

During my first winter, I had trouble adjusting to the desolate Cape in winter, and the counselor I had seen recommended getting involved in something. The little theatre helped battle the depression that slunk into me after the tourists drove over the bridges and only the plaintive cries of seagulls remained.

where?

explain: they're leaving

me

Heather, who worked at the Christmas Tree Shop, had promised to look for jobs in one of her company's Cape stores, but I would have to catch up with her later; the playhouse's lot was empty.

in addition to... so this is for nothing

Over the Bourne Bridge with its eight-foot high fencing, I thought of the suicides so many of the Cape's year-rounders attempted after drinking or drugging at such low-ceilinged bars as the Whaleback and the Port of No Recall. I, too, had called the Good Samaritan Hotline on a frozen January night during my first Cape winter.

expand: orient around you + your situation

Driving up Shore Road, my anxiety built at the thought of my father's disappointment if I told him I remained jobless much longer. A career Air Force officer, Col. Mancuso had been heavy-handed and acid-tongued when his expectations weren't met, and around him, I always felt I was walking on eggshells. I knew I would find a job, but I worried that it wouldn't be good enough to satisfy him.

show us something

had to tell

All was quiet on my street and my parents' driveway was empty. The retired neighbors were playing bridge at the rec center or finishing their three-hour lunches at the Corner Cup across from St. Brendan's Catholic Church. My brother had an hour left of school and my parents were still at work.

these details mean nothing to us unless you give them names
- the corner cup
- St. B's - where I am

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bought the house in a panic. We were living in New Jersey, but with my grandmother's health failing,
my parents packed up the family the summer I graduated high school and moved us into the home a
month before I began commuting to the nearby university. My grandmother who lived four miles away
died three months later.

real estate ad

e.g. your
context,
chronology,
title
your
time

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the pious, melodramatic Roman Catholic Sicilians they were, and their home reflected the hard
stoicism to which they held firm. Spindly, darkly stained Colonial furniture and thick European
antiques collected from their travels gave the home a cold museum-like stagnation. Heavy brass bongs
of the art deco grandfather clock in the breezeway suggested the tramp of time, yet the home remained
a mausoleum where life stood still as a testament to firm Puritanical resolve against a hostile world.

2 meanings
/

so, no one's home...

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HW

first mention of this

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four restaurants.

which is where in relation to him

scenes

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applications.

they're all sallow-eyed

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“Dad, I told you the post office doesn’t hire summer help.”

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“I’m trying,” was my only response.

“Your friend, Jim, found a job at the marina yesterday,” my father continued. “I saw his mother at church last night.”

“Jim’s uncle works at the marina. He got Jim the job,” I answered. I became irritated as my parents picked apart my job hunting attempts, but I held my frustration, afraid an outburst would only set my father off.

“Are you looking in the right places at the right times?” asked Mom.

“You see me looking through the papers... coming back with applications.”

Always suspicious, my father looked at me as he pushed a stalk of broccolini around with his fork. Twenty years as an Air Force officer ^{had} created a demanding parent whose expectations of his sons ^{were} never seemed ^{un}attainable.

“I told my professors I was going to miss classes tomorrow,” I announced. Dad stopped moving his food around his plate. “To look for a job.”

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Jenn's Comments

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Chapter 1

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like this phrase

- You should clarify here how long he has been a year rounder

~ Anthony Mancuso

on page 3 you refer to time as 5:00 - 1:00 consistent

hyper

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What first winter? I thought no one sat there.

- I thought she managed the playhouse?

Is Heather significant to the story?

Is this significant?

Probably

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LITERARY NOVEL EXCERPT: *RETRIBUTION: A CAPE COD LOVE STORY* BY CHRIS PICCONE

“That a good idea?” Dad stated more than asked. School had been a sensitive subject since the second semester of my freshman year when I enrolled in only Tuesday and Thursday classes thinking I could balance my studies and full-time work. I earned four D’s and one B and the eagle-eyed vigil of my father who never let me forget my failure.

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“Down Cape. Hyannis, Yarmouth, Chatham, something’s gotta be around there.”

“Don’t be picky. When I was your age, I worked the tobacco fields in Connecticut,” he began.

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“I know, Dad. You told me. Right now, I’ll take anything.”

huh? /
“So many businesses are understaffed in the summer; they have to bring in all those Europeans,” he said, shaking his head. “I just don’t understand why you can’t talk one of those places into hiring you.”

I knew where he was headed. Whenever my father waited in line too long at a checkout or had slow service at a restaurant, he blamed young people for being too uppity to take the menial jobs. Now he had an unemployed college son, the very scapegoat he had blamed so frequently in the past.

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The summary mentions that Anthony falls in love with Liz. After reading the exchange between Anthony and his father over summer work, I can understand why he needs a kind shoulder to lean on. The dialogue is quite good. I don't know how long the discomfort between Dad and Anthony will be effective, but to this point it works. It makes me uncomfortable. This is a common theme in literature – the war between dad and son, and mother and daughter. Everyone can relate.

*But, you have to get to the meeting of Liz and Anthony fairly soon.
Let the roller coaster begin.
Good luck*

Summary: *When Anthony Mancuso falls in love with Liz, a wealthy femme fatale on Cape Cod, the naive college student straps himself into an emotional roller coaster that leads him to realize how far he will go for love.*

Chapter 1

Each spring, thousands of college students migrate to Cape Cod in a frenzied hunt for summer work. They descend upon the managers of every restaurant, hotel, and ice cream shop from Sandwich to Provincetown like ravenous gulls diving into a bait ball. Once employment is secured, the excited students begin a frantic search for lodging, often cramming themselves with fifteen to twenty other wild, young partiers into the small cottages of the skinny peninsula. They then spend the rest of their lives reminiscing over these summer memories, bringing their families to the Cape for a week's vacation and trying to recapture that summer feeling.

As a year rounder, I never worried about a summer job or having to sleep on a dirty floor. I lived with my parents in Pocasset, the first town off the Bourne Bridge, and with half a semester left of college, I remained debt free by working year round as a delivery driver for the Lobster Pound Fish Market. Waking at four each morning and finishing deliveries in time for classes kept money in my pocket and me away from the vices so common to the weathered few who haunted the Cape past tourist season.

*START with
Character
Bring in setting work
& Backstory work
Later*

LITERARY NOVEL EXCERPT: *RETRIBUTION: A CAPE COD LOVE STORY* BY CHRIS PICCONE

But the Pound's owners sold out to a land developer, and the little market was now closed.

After three years of employment, I faced May 1990 with \$124 in my bank account and no leads for any full time work. *(Earlier you suggested that there were lots of summer jobs on the Cape. Why the difficulty in getting a job?)*

Leaving my journalism class on Thursday afternoon, I thought of where I would look for jobs. I avoided I-95, preferring the slower route through the sleepy fishing villages of Fairhaven, Matapoisset, and Rochester. The depression and hollow loneliness that haunted me through the Cape's dark winter had lessened as the days grew longer and lighter and I felt optimistic as I drove home.

I stopped at the Wareham Playhouse hoping to find my friend Heather, the playhouse manager. During my first winter, I had trouble adjusting to the desolate Cape in winter, and the counselor I had seen recommended getting involved in something. The little theatre helped battle the depression that slunk into me after the tourists drove over the bridges and only the plaintive cries of seagulls remained. *(You need to show that you're not a native Cape Codder at this point. The depression isn't a symptom of year-rounders. The end of summer is usually met with relief.)*

Heather, who worked at the Christmas Tree Shop, *(I thought she worked at the playhouse.)* had promised to look for jobs in one of her company's Cape stores, but I would have to catch up with her later; the playhouse's lot was empty. *(If nothing happened, why mention it. Save the relationship for later, when it will add to the story.)*

Over the Bourne Bridge with its eight foot high fencing, I thought of the suicides so many of the Cape's year-rounders attempted after drinking or drugging at such low ceilinged bars as the Whaleback and the Port of No Recall. I, too, had called the Good Samaritan Hotline on a frozen

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antiques collected from their travels gave the home a cold museum-like stagnation. Heavy brass bongos (*smoking device?*) of the art deco grandfather clock in the breezeway suggested the tramp of time, yet the home remained a mausoleum where life stood still as a testament to firm Puritanical resolve against a hostile world. (*This paragraph reeks of adolescent whining. Try to tone it down and revise.*)

In the quiet of the kitchen, I made a sandwich and read through the day's Cape Cod Times. Even the Cape was feeling the 1990 recession, and the help wanted section offered little for summer employment. (*Okay, you're in the house eating a sandwich. Note later on--*)

On weekends, I still waited tables at Canalside, the restaurant overlooking the Eastern mouth of the Cape Cod Canal, but my father wouldn't stand for me working only two shifts a week. He believed money flowed from the pockets of the seer-suckered tourists, and according to him, a portion of that money needed to funnel into my pocket.

when did he get home? I headed to Falmouth, and by 5:00 I had filled out applications from three hotels and four restaurants.

"Come back in a couple of weeks," the sallow eyed manages told me after glancing at my applications.

But I knew they didn't want me; I lived twenty minutes North, just off the main artery onto the Cape. They knew I would be battling traffic every day to get to work.

I pulled into my parents' driveway just as the last of the afternoon light began to fade. (*Now you're just arriving home. When did you make the sandwich? You have a time element problem here.*) Supper would be ready, and my father would be expecting results. The front door slammed, and the pudgy figure of my brother came out to greet me. Seven years younger, Vinnie, in the pimply faced, full throws of puberty, was my scout, reporting on my father's mood before I entered the home.

LITERARY NOVEL EXCERPT: *RETRIBUTION: A CAPE COD LOVE STORY* BY CHRIS PICCONE

January night during my first Cape winter. *(Don't leave an important element, like a possible suicide, hanging like that. It's an important part of this guy's personality.)*

START HERE →

Driving up Shore Road, my anxiety built at the thought of my father's disappointment if I told him I remained jobless much longer. *As a* career Air Force officer, Col. Mancuso had been heavy handed and acid tongued when his expectations weren't met, and around him, I always felt I was walking on eggshells. I knew I would find a job, but I worried that it wouldn't be good enough to satisfy him. *(Parental pressure is a good element if it continues as a driving force in the plot.)*

All was quiet on my street and my parents' driveway was empty. The retired neighbors were playing bridge at the rec center or finishing their three hour lunches at the Corner Cup across from St. Brendan's Catholic Church. My brother had an hour left of school and my parents were still at work. *(Thus you had the house all to yourself. Good. What were you going to use the time for?)*

Our shingled ranch facing south never held warmth, and the lack of windows on either end kept the Cape's summer breezes out. *Four years ago, with my father retiring from the military, my parents bought the house in a panic. We were living in New Jersey, but with my grandmother's health failing, my parents packed up the family the summer I graduated high school and moved us into the home a month before I began commuting to the nearby university. My grandmother who lived four miles away died three months later. (All of this is important backstory. Introduce the kid and his sudden and unwelcome transition from N.J. to the Cape. But, if he's the son of a lifetime military officer, he must have been transferred a million times. He'd never get used to it, but he'd know how to deal with it. Read the GREAT SANTINI, by Pat Conroy. It deals with military families similar to this one.)*

Wearing black and mourning for weeks, my parents lamented my grandmother's passing like the pious, melodramatic Roman Catholic Sicilians they were, and their home reflected the hard stoicism to which they held firm. Spindly, darkly stained Colonial furniture and thick European

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“Hey bro!” Vinnie welcomed, voice cracking. “Find a job?”

“Nothing yet. How’s dad?”

“Fine. Downstairs watching the news,” Vinnie answered. “He’s in a good mood.”

“I’m trying, Vinnie. I really am.”

We walked into the kitchen where our mother stooped over the stove.

“Hello Anthony. Good to see you,” greeted my mother. At forty-three, she reveled in the role of martyr, long ago resigning herself to suffering through life and expecting little else. Overweight and passive, she had adopted the slow amble of acceptance; her dreams of driving a Mercedes convertible down Cranberry Highway a distant memory she repeated often to ensure we all understood what she gave up to raise two boys.

“How did it go today?” she asked.

“Seven applications; we’ll see.”

“It’s in God’s hands now,” Mom replied. “Sal, time to eat.”

“Anything today, Anthony?” My father asked as he sat down at the kitchen table. *(When did he come home. Any anxiety when he came in the door?)*

“Some leads,” I answered before we all bowed our heads.

“Dear Lord thank you for these gifts which we are about to receive and the family gathered before us tonight. In Jesus’s name we pray,” recited my father as he had done ever since I could remember.

“And please help Anthony in his search,” my mother added.

“Have you spoken to Mr. Lorette at the post office yet?” asked my father before I had a chance to pass the pasta bowl.

“Dad, I told you the post office doesn’t hire summer help.”

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"I know what you told me," he snapped. "I just don't understand why it's taking so long."

"I'm trying," was my only response. *(Good exchange. Sets a tone.)*

"Your friend, Jim, found a job at the marina yesterday," my father continued. "I saw his mother at church last night."

"Jim's uncle works at the marina. He got Jim the job," I answered. I became irritated as my parents picked apart my job hunting attempts, but I held my frustration, afraid an outburst would only set my father off. *(Good observation)*

"Are you looking in the right places at the right times?" asked Mom.

"You see me looking through the papers... coming back with applications."

Always suspicious, my father looked at me as he pushed a stalk of broccolini around with his fork. ~~Twenty years as an Air Force officer created a demanding parent whose expectations of his sons never seemed attainable.~~ *(Not necessary. The dialogue carries the meaning. Good.)*

"I told my professors I was going to miss classes tomorrow," I announced. Dad stopped moving his food around his plate. "To look for a job."

"That a good idea?" Dad stated more than asked. School had been a sensitive subject since the second semester of my freshman year when I enrolled in only Tuesday and Thursday classes thinking I could balance my studies and full time work. I earned four D's and one B and the eagle-eyed vigil of my father who never let me forget my failure. *(Again, good observation.)*

"What else can I do?" I asked. "I can't make people hire me."

"Well, I guess that's that," he declared before rising with his plate in hand. *(New paragraph here.)* As expected, I cleared the table and helped my father wash the dishes while my brother rumbled downstairs to do homework. Mom followed him to fold laundry.

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“Don’t be picky. When I was your age, I worked the tobacco fields in Connecticut,” he began.

“It wasn’t easy.”

“I know, Dad. You told me. Right now, I’ll take anything.”

“So many businesses are understaffed in the summer; they have to bring in all those Europeans,” he said, shaking his head. “I just don’t understand why you can’t talk one of those places into hiring you.”

I knew where he was headed. Whenever my father waited in line too long at a checkout or had slow service at a restaurant, he blamed young people for being too uppity to take the menial jobs. Now he had an unemployed college son, the very scapegoat he had blamed so frequently in the past.

New Jersey

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Summary: *When Anthony Mancuso falls in love with Liz, a wealthy femme fatale on Cape Cod, the naive college student straps himself into an emotional roller coaster that leads him to realize how far he will go for love.*

Comment [s1]: Awkward phrase

Chapter 1

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But the Pound's owners sold out to a land developer, and the little market was now closed. After three years of employment, I faced May 1990 with \$124 in my bank account and no leads for any full time work.

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—Leaving my journalism class on Thursday afternoon, I thought of where I would look for jobs. I avoided I-95, preferring the slower route through the sleepy fishing villages of Fairhaven, Matapoisset, and Rochester. The depression and hollow loneliness that haunted me through the Cape's dark winter had lessened as the days grew longer and lighter, and I felt optimistic as I drove home.

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Heather, ~~who~~ worked at the Christmas Tree Shop, ~~and~~ had promised to look for jobs in one of her company's Cape stores, but I would have to catch up with her later; the playhouse's lot was empty.

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> a scene in itself

Driving up Shore Road, my anxiety built at the thought of my father's disappointment if I told him I remained jobless much longer. A career Air Force officer, Col. Mancuso had been ~~heavy~~ ~~heavy~~-handed and acid tongued when his expectations weren't met, and around him, I always felt I was walking on eggshells. I knew I would find a job, but I worried that it wouldn't be good enough to satisfy him.

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All was quiet on my street, and my parents' driveway was empty. The retired neighbors were playing bridge at the rec center or finishing their three hour lunches at the Corner Cup across from St. Brendan's Catholic Church. My brother had an hour left of school and my parents were still at work.

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In the quiet of the kitchen, I made a sandwich and read through the day's Cape Cod Times. Even the Cape was feeling the 1990 recession, and the help wanted section offered little for summer employment.

↳ why wouldn't it? No money = no tourists

On weekends, I still waited tables at Canalside, the restaurant overlooking the Eastern mouth of the Cape Cod Canal, but my father wouldn't stand for me working only two shifts a week. He believed money flowed from the pockets of the seer-suckered tourists, and according to him, a portion of that money needed to funnel into my pocket.

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“Come back in a couple of weeks,” the sallow eyed manager ~~told me said~~, after glancing at my applications.

But I knew they didn’t want me; I lived twenty minutes North, just off the main artery onto the Cape. They knew I would be battling traffic ~~every day~~ to get to work — ~~that could make me unreliable~~.

—— I pulled into my parents’ driveway just as the last of the afternoon light began to fade. Supper would be ready, and my father would be expecting results. The front door slammed, and the pudgy figure of my brother came out to greet me. Seven years younger, Vinnie, in the pimply faced, full throes of puberty, was my scout, reporting on my father’s mood before I entered the home.

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Comment [s2]: Seems strange a college kid would talk to his younger brother as if his brother was his parent.

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Comment [s3]: Who asked for it?

“Dad, I told you the post office doesn’t hire summer help.”

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“I’m trying,” was my only response.

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Your writing is good. My question is, where is this story going? If I hadn't read the summary, I would have no idea. I think it's important for you to ask yourself, where should this story start? Right

LITERARY NOVEL EXCERPT: *RETRIBUTION: A CAPE COD LOVE STORY* BY CHRIS PICCONE

now, it starts with a summary that is more of an info dump than anything else. There's no real scene until near the end, when the character walks into the house and has to face his parents. If you want to start there, the stakes need to be higher. Have the parents threaten to kick him out in a month if he doesn't have a job, for example. The parents aren't happy with him, but nothing happens that makes the reader worry about what happens next. If he gets a job, or doesn't get a job, what's the difference?

A couple of possibilities: he's at his job (real time) and gets laid off. Now he's screwed because his parents had said that if he loses his job, he's out of the house. Or he meets his friend and maybe they had a relationship going but she breaks up with him because I don't know why, and then he loses his job and has to go home to his father who beats him, even though he's bigger than his father. Or his father beats his mother and his brother. Something.

As I mentioned earlier, the backstory—info as to how they got to the Cape—does it really matter? And if it does, bring it into the story when it matters. Or when he comes home, use a sentence or two, or conversation, to show that the house is sparse, unwelcoming. But get rid of most of the backstory. Please see Jenn Rogala's blog about backstory on our website for guidance.

In addition, I can't say I really like the character. I hardly know him, for starters, and in addition, there's really nothing to make the readers sympathetic for him. You need more drama, higher stakes. Or if we're not supposed to like him, at least something that makes the reader identify with him. It just might be that the story starts a bit later...