

Part I: Home Chapter 2

Elise sits alone on the deck of a ferry, surrounded by strangers enjoying a summer outing, yet she feels isolated and disconnected. The salty, gasoline-tinged air and the ferry's engine drown out the natural sounds of the sea, mirroring Elise's internal turmoil. She searches for familiar faces but finds only tourists, highlighting her sense of alienation from the place she once called home. Despite the discomfort inside the ferry's cabin, with its familiar yet unappealing smells and worn seats, she clings to the deck, caught between wanting to escape and the need to stay grounded in her surroundings.

As the ferry reaches open water, Elise shares a brief moment with an elderly man, borrowing a cigarette from him while struggling with the inability to contact her mother. Her repeated unsent texts underscore the strained and distant relationship between them. This emotional distance is deepened by a recent phone call with her mother, Gilda, who was preoccupied with the death of a family dog rather than Elise's upcoming graduation. The contrast between Elise's hopes and her mother's distractions exposes the fragile and complicated family dynamics that shape her experience.

Elise reflects on her mother's constrained life, marked by years of isolation and hardship, and the elusive dream of connecting with their Brazilian relatives. The narrative conveys the cyclical nature of waiting and longing, as Gilda's past years of confinement on Nantucket mirror Elise's current feelings of stasis. The ferry worker's reprimand for smoking jolts Elise back to reality as she prepares to disembark, symbolizing the end of one phase and the uncertain beginning of another as she returns to her hometown.

Upon arrival, Elise is greeted by Mr. Wagner, a neighbor whose familiarity contrasts with her recent solitude. Their conversation reveals the passage of time and the subtle

changes in relationships within the community. As Elise approaches her family home, the worn condition of the house reflects the passage of time and underlying struggles. The chapter closes with a tentative invitation to dinner, suggesting a potential for reconnection amidst the lingering tensions and unspoken challenges that define Elise's journey home.