

Outline of *The Day I Became an Autodidact*

FIFTY-SEVEN DAYS TILL SCHOOL (Summer 1982, pp. 3–17)

WHAT I HOPE TO DO: *Get a Head Start on Reading Everything Ever Published*

WHAT I DID: *Fell in love with a University of Kazan dropout, a fellow who couldn't pass his law examinations, and a lad who spent more time in debtors' prison visiting Dad than in school. Not to mention a few less famous, if better educated authors than Leo, Gustave, and Charles.*

SCHOOL (Decline, Fall, and Graduation) (School Year 1982–83, including book tour, pp. 21–37)

WHAT I HOPE TO DO: *Get through this part of life as quickly as I can and hope that, because of this speedy living, I can take a little longer later on with the parts I like better.*

WHAT I DID: *Enough.*

LIFE (at last) (Early Summer 1983—Trip to London, pp. 41–53)

WHAT I HOPE TO DO: *What I Want To Do.*

WHAT I DID: *Met Proust. Started a novel. Abandoned a novel. Fell out of love (as Matthew's first London taxi pulled away from the curb and he waved). Fell back into love (as our car pulled away from the Los Angeles airport and I waved). Started a play (to continue where life left off).*

LIFE WITHOUT PATTERN (Rest of Summer 1983, pp. 58–62)

WHAT I HOPE TO DO: *Just about everything.*

WHAT I DID: *923 pages of Charles Dickens, 196 pages of Henry James, 458 pages of Ernest Hemingway, and 19 pages of my own.*

UNCONVENTIONAL CHOICES (Fall 1983, including trip to Chicago, pp. 65–85)

WHAT I HOPE TO DO: *Make as many as possible.*

WHAT I DID: *Had a bumpy first date with Dostoevsky. Began to live civilization. Became a playwright (at least for one night on a moving train).*

COMING TO GRIPS WITH NO FACTS (Winter/Spring 1984, including trip to NY, pp. 90–112)

WHAT I HOPE TO DO: *Be born in 1905 (1908 also perfectly acceptable).*

WHAT I DID: *Became: An optimist (I would rather have hope about the theatre than be right about the theatre). A contemporary (of Greeks, Romans, and screwball comediennes). An autodidact (for all the rest of my life).*

SUMMER NOT SO DIFFERENT FROM FALL (Summer 1984, including trip to Hawaii, pp. 115–31)

WHAT I HOPE TO DO: *Enjoy summer without school as much as I've enjoyed fall, winter, and spring without it.*

WHAT I DID: *Realized what I had.*

FRESHMAN YEAR FROM A DISTANCE (Fall 1984, pp. 135–57)

WHAT I HOPE TO DO: *Love So Much Today I Don't Need Tomorrow.*

WHAT I DID: *A novel (the beginning). A mystery (the end). A little bit of life (the bumpy middle).*

THE SECOND HALF OF FREEDOM (Winter/Spring 1985, pp. 161–97)

WHAT I HOPE TO DO: *Leave home without leaving my room.*

WHAT I DID: *Found another view from my room.*

INTERMISSION IN ENGLAND (Summer 1985, pp. 201–20)

WHAT I HOPE TO DO: *Write a bar play if it takes getting drunk to do it.*

WHAT I DID: *What I had hoped to do.*

REHEARSAL FOR REAL LIFE (Fall 1985, including Christmas trip to England, pp. 223–41)

WHAT I HOPE TO DO: *Prove I can play the real thing.*

WHAT I DID: *Auditioned for the part I wrote for myself in my own play and got it. Anything wrong with that?*

LIFE (at last and again) (Winter/Spring 1986 and return to England for summer, pp. 245–78)

WHAT I HOPE TO DO: *Live up to It.*