

# The Rambler

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Edition II

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Residing thousands of miles from my family, we maintain a concerted effort to uphold frequent communication. Of late, I've resolved to revive a habit that, until very recently, was a regular occurrence in my quotidian accomplishments. Rather than send a brief text message, sterile e-mail or rambling voice message, I'll write letters.

Writing a letter isn't just a matter of pen, paper and stamp. It requires dutifully seeking stationery both appropriate for the letter's recipient and indicative of the ambiance I want the reader to imbibe. And with summer upon us, I knew exactly what I wanted and where to locate it. The most exquisite collection I've found is at the delightfully decorated and beautifully stocked Sugar Paper at The Country Mart. The boutique is bright and sweet down to its pink lacquered floor and houses everything from boxed sets of stationery to individual greeting cards to gift wrapping paper. Lovelier still is the convenience of perusing an in-store catalog if one can't seem to find exactly what one wants on the shelves. Luckily, the Jack and Lulu note cards with which I'm faithfully in love were in stock. Their Neapolitan striped coloring conjures images of ice

cream of the same name and what better imagery than frozen treats when opening a letter on a long, hot summer day?

Box of note cards in hand, I stopped over at the post office for obvious and not so obvious reasons. Requisite postage was on my agenda, but the letters required a little more. I like to add an extra morsel of entertainment to envelopes headed homeward. The post office, in all of its immaculate convenience had the perfect ingredient for just such a gesture: packets of radish, mustard, hibiscus and snow pea seeds to enclose with my letters, encouraging green thumb summer activities at the receiving end. Lucky for the literate me, as the obliging clerk totaled the cost for postage and gardening accoutrements, a shelf of books for sale caught my eye. Swiftly encouraged by my conscience, I purchased *The Catcher in the Rye* to catch up on my classics.

As I drew close to completing my usual loop around The Mart before settling into an outdoor bench with stationery and pen, a force stronger than magnet to metal pulled me into Calypso Home (and who am I to combat such a force?). Walking into Calypso Home is like walking into the visual fusion of *Vogue*, *Architectural Digest* and the adventitious recesses of Rudyard

Kipling's imagination. The class and elegance abound but there is a spicy glaze of exotic wonderment one might expect from an Eastern bazaar or the home of a British ex-patriot. After a roundabout in the visual smorgasbord, I reluctantly released myself from the magnetic pull. I didn't get very far, though, before I began wondering how easy it would be to convince myself writing at a desk might come easier if I was sitting upon the lovely zebra print Sophie armchair I'd just ogled.

A few moments later, seated in the courtyard eagerly writing correspondence, I speculated if in this world of quick communication, the art of letter writing will eventually have been replaced by the art of abbreviating one's thoughts into a condensed, spiritless text message. Optimistically I hope that the romance and personal grace of it all will have a true renaissance. And though it seems that the world outside 225 26th Street might be speedily passing by with all of its hurried technology, inside The Mart there is a consistent, wonderfully predictable feeling of relaxation, appreciation of intimacy and the most seamless sense of community. Hopefully I was able to infuse my Jack and Lulu note cards with just such a *mélange*...