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Hillary's momentous political journey with Bill began in earnest in Sara Ehrman's Volkswagen a week after Richard Nixon and his long-suffering wife, Pat, left the White House for exile in San Clemente, California. Hillary would never forget the experience of that first lady, and her wifely passivity at the trauma her husband put her through.

For the next uneasy twelve months, Hillary, now twenty-six, would vacillate about whether to marry Bill. Ehrman, who had been an important source of wisdom and encouragement in her life since their summer together in Texas, was deeply disappointed by Hillary's decision to leave the capital for Arkansas. To her, Hillary was the "brilliant and dazzling" embodiment of the women's movement and all its promise, and she tried mightily to persuade her not to surrender a limitless future in Washington for a man—even Bill Clinton, whom she knew—and become an assistant professor at a "hillbilly" law school. "You are crazy," Ehrman told her at one point, and asked why she would do something so out of character. Hillary, of course, was deeply ambivalent, "at sea about whether she wanted to move to Arkansas," according to one of their mutual friends, torn about "how hard to be, how careerist to be," for this was 1974, and she was hardly unaffected by the feminist movement.

Ehrman asked incredulously, "Why on earth would you throw away your future?" The Democrats in Washington looked ascendant and principled. The country seemed on the verge of a new age of reform. By virtue of Hillary's role in the most important investigation in Washington since the Army-McCarthy hearings in the 1950s, she was now at the top of the heap of America's young, public-service-minded lawyers, with an undimmed opportunity (or so Ehrman thought) to take a seat at any of Washington's or New York's top law firms, leading to a partnership. And though Ehrman regarded Hillary almost as a daughter, and as "a poster child of a liberated woman," she also knew from the incessant phone calls between Hillary and Bill that they were deeply in love.

Unsuccessful at persuading Hillary to stay in Washington, Sara had finally offered to drive Hillary to Arkansas, with another friend, Alan Stone, who was a native of the state. Hillary packed her books, stereo, and clothes into Ehrman's Volkswagen and they headed south. Her bicycle, which she had barely had a chance to ride in Washington, was strapped to the roof. When they crossed the Potomac that humid August morning, its banks were ablaze in yellow and red blossoms, Lady Bird Johnson's lasting floral bequest to the nation before she and her husband had left the capital, disillusioned, with the country mired in an unwinnable

war. Hillary's final glance back was of Memorial Bridge and Lincoln's marbled temple from the Arlington Heights, after which they drove through the Virginia countryside, past Middleburg, Warrenton, Culpeper, and into the Shenandoah Mountains, then down to Charlottesville. Hillary was in a hurry to get to Fayetteville, excited at the prospect of seeing Bill, but Ehrman stopped at Monticello, the home of Thomas Jefferson, and detoured to other historical sites as she renewed her campaign to persuade Hillary to turn around.

Hillary was unflinching.

"Are you sure?" Sara kept asking.

"No, but I'm going anyway."

Hillary was sure only that she loved Bill and wanted to take a chance. "My friends and family thought I had lost my mind. I was a little bit concerned about that as well," she said later.

Fayetteville seemed even farther away from Washington than the 1,225 miles between. When they finally reached the University of Arkansas campus, a rally was underway for the Razorbacks football team. The whole town had turned out, thousands upon thousands of fans wearing pig hats and yelling *Sou-ee, sou-ee, pig, pig, pig*. "I was just appalled," Sara recalled. The following day, however, when she and Hillary went to see Bill speak at a campaign stop, Sara recognized immediately those magnetic attributes that had pulled Hillary across the mountains. Sara could see now, for the first time, something else: that Hillary was not being preposterous when she said that this young man, only twenty-eight years old and seeking his first public office, might someday be president of the United States. And for the first time, Sara sensed that Hillary had given a lot of thought about how she could become something approaching an equal partner in the venture.