

Title: Final Moments of a Fling
Type: Short Story (Excerpt)
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It's a Thursday evening and the third summer of our trilogy. We never cross paths for longer than 24 hours at a time. As soon as the clock strikes 7am, one of us always vanishes. This year, we exist for two evenings in a row. It's the longest we've been in the same setting at the same time. In these brief enchantments, the romance is kept alive. I proudly show any friend who will listen the photo I have of us in his quarters, a vignette frozen in time.

Afro, wild from slumber

Hues of wooden brown

Fingers gently tugging

Skin exposed

Floating guitars

A glowing orb

"You guys look fucking unreal," remarks a friend. She has a point in the sense that the girl immortalized in this photo no longer exists. Bright eyed and bushy tailed, I survived off of foraged fruits of affection. My appetite has since grown bigger.

This year we've returned to Montreux on separate quests. Mine, a maze of finding myself. His, still a mystery to me. It's the same setting where we stumbled upon each other two summers ago. Except this time I am not twenty three. Several once-upon-a-times have happened since the long, fiery braids he met at The Jazz. Pleads for affection. Surges of pride. Multiple hits have sharpened my vision like an arrow. The skin I expose now has rhyme. Each word I speak, a calculated riddle.

Just earlier in the day, we hadn't exchanged words in nearly a year. I hadn't thought about him for half of that time. That is, until my phone chimes exactly three times at 7:42pm. A name that still causes waxing eyes after moons of silence.

[Chime One] A landscape photo of Lake Geneva swaddled by the Swiss Alps

[Chime Two] "It's that time of year again"

[Chime Three] "Are you here?"

So it begins again – the third installment of our fantastical affair. The wheels in my head turn as I concoct our story for the evening, my imagination a crystal ball. In an hour's time, I'll be in the arms of my pseudo Prince Charming. Not feeling, but sensing. Barely present, remembering.

[Chime Four] "I understand if you never want to talk to me again, but this place holds such beautiful memories"

That *is* what we do best: make beautiful memories. However long I have him for this time, I know I can hold on to this souvenir forever. A dream when I'm nostalgic. A nightmare when I'm alone. Is it possible that in his fantasy I only exist in July? In me, he sees summer and jazz. Water and skin. He hears sound not words. I unravel myself to these rudimentary elements, abandoning all else that makes me whole for the sake of the story.

Perching on the lakeside, I await his arrival. He looks the same as when I saw him last summer, a centaurian creature of mannish stature and boyish pleasures....