

Love in time wrap

By Robin Chung

It's funny how a life is made up from several key moments. Moments that end up so decisive that everything can be rooted back to them. Sometimes I wonder what it would be like to go back in time with the knowledge I have now. Just to do everything different and change the dull existence I'm in now. "Zach, come down here! There's someone to see you." A voice screams from downstairs.

"Coming!" I shout. That was my standard response. It's an instant conversation stopper and for that alone I loved it.

I sigh and look out of the window. It's dark out and raining, like always. Sometimes when I'm down I love to spin my chair to create a feeling of light-headedness. And launch. As the room blurs I notice the lifeless decorating I'd managed to create over the past three years. A cardboard closet, a cheap unwanted one on sale. My snow-white bed, I use it to sleep and dream. And another closet even though I don't even need the storage space. It usually takes a few spins before I manage to face my original direction, a plain desk in front of the room's one and only window.

It feels dark and empty. I guess my feelings were lost somewhere along the way. If I'd have to guess I'd say it all happened in a summer's day back in 2008.

Local high school, September 12th, 4th year. I was a student aged 16 when I started my fourth year of high school. In a building I thought I disliked so much. Again meeting the same old stairways, the patterned walls and that handicap elevator only freshmen used.

From across the room I looked at the familiar faces all smiling and having fun. I love to watch people, analyze them. First person I spotted was a red head with a Quasimodo like posture. I remember how in freshmen year he always used to lean on the soda machine. He did that for the entire year, twice per day. Good days! But then he moved along and gave way to a beautiful creature I'd been eyeing ever since the year had started in August.

Her brown hair flowing just passed her shoulders, although sometimes she'd put her hair in a knot. Her smile brightened up even my darkest of days. She was easy to spot too. Even in a large crowd she'd be the only one carrying a purple shoulder bag sporting a small *Friis* logo and dark colored shoulder straps. I later learned that it was a Swedish brand made for the general public; I don't think they make them anymore.

At times she looked in my direction I just know it. But I was yet to find the courage to actually make a move and try my luck. I wasn't very good at it either, because I'd never laid eyes on someone so perfect I had zero experience in approaching girls. And that in a time that friends all started to share stories I could never imagine being in myself, like now.

"You should've been there yesterday. We were drinking and I totally passed out!" He paused for a second, as if he was still astonished by it. "And when I woke up we started playing *spin the bottle*. Six girls man! It was so awesome. And afterwards we went upstairs and you know..." My friend told me. Out of

our little group he was the popular kid. The guy that flashed a smile at every corner to greet yet another friend. And while I normally appreciated his company and stories, this time I was distracted. He noticed.

“Dude, you’re really quiet today. Were you even listening to what I said?”

It took a moment till it all sunk in. “Sure.”

The girl with the purple handbag stood up and walked to the lockers, accompanied by a couple of her friends. She was never alone.

“Zach, come down here now! It’s very important!” Mother yells in her highest pitch yet, pulling me right out of my happy place. Again I had to leave my summer’s memory to find a cold empty room. The sound of raindrops hitting the tiled rooftop confirms my suspicion.

“Okay coming. Just have to turn my computer off.” I press the button to see the panels of Google searches disappear. It always takes a minute. In a world where computers reflect keywords like *aluminum*, *touchscreen* and *glass* my computer still brings up memories of *plastic*, *white* and *curved screen*. It gets the job done I guess, unlike me three years ago.

As the break ended, my friend and I took the stairs to attend a class about religion. The teacher, a kind and wise old madam, taught us the story about Rome and the king that used his power to get the girl he loved. A tale that even got a song called “hallelujah”.

Like every break time, the hallways were crowded with students ranging between the ages of 12 – 19. A funny idea that some students still jammed to the tune of Pokémon, while others drove a car to school, a crappy one of course. Snaking past the students I reached class 101. It was based in the new wing that was built just recently to accumulate the flush of new students. I loved going there because the desks were usually safe of leftover gum and, unlike most other classes, the ambience felt really nice.

I joined the line and looked to my left to see the back of room 101. My brain shut down. I saw the brown haired girl staring right at me. She sat comfortably in her chair, her friends next to her not paying much attention. Our eyes met. For the first time ever I couldn’t think. Literally. All my worries flushed away like snow in June. I was exactly where I wanted to be and it felt wonderful.

“From that moment on I could describe her eyes in absolute detail:

Enchanting deep green eyes.” Every time I recapture that moment everything else becomes unimportant. But it will always stay a dream and unlike reality, dreams disappear in the morning. Reality is always there.

“Zach, your time machine is here! You must come down now and sign for it or else he’ll leave!”

Oh yeah, my time machine, forgot all about that. I look in the mirror and spot the lines on my face. My tired eyes and short lips, I can’t remember the last time I smiled. Old and unwanted like an old newspaper in the subway. If only I had made my move three years ago. Maybe then everything would be different? I hear the front door open and take one final look in the mirror. This is the moment. What will it be?