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Beside You In Time

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I'd gone to see a friend's band play at a local bar in Danville, or that's what I was telling myself. Beer and bands were my forte in those days, but Danville wasn't my usual stomping ground. Of course I was there to support the local metal scene and get properly inebriated, but a very specific ulterior motive had plotted my course this night. As I would later discover, fate is not without a certain tenacity. I'd met a girl some months earlier, during a very tumultuous time in my life. We had a lot in common. She was fun and beautiful, with piercing green eyes that spoke to me before our first words. It was not to be yet, but I knew somehow, that this song hadn't ended.

A week or so before we had started talking again, I told her that I'd be in town and asked her to the show. Unfortunately, she was two hours away and wouldn't be home for several hours.

"Well, I'll be there for a while. Text me when you're home?" I asked.

"Ok :)") was the reply.

Although I could tell she wasn't convinced, I had acquired a grin that seemed stitched onto my face for the remainder of the night.

I arrived at my destination strutting in like a peacock, electric enthusiasm dancing through my veins. The Illinois night air was thick and humid, like an unwelcome blanket, the orange glow of mercury vapor lamps casting ephemeral shadows against the stoic buildings. The usual crowd had already begun to pile in, jostling like slow moving pinballs. Stale sweat, incense, and beer were jockeying for position in my nose. Amid the double bass drum patterns hammering under waves of distorted guitars and searing vocals, I ordered my usual and settled in next to the stage.

Around one in the morning, I found myself behind the bar in a sort of after-party. After helping load the bands' gear, we stood around talking and drinking. I'd mentioned my potential rendezvous, but the grin was starting to fade along with my optimism. The Guinness had begun to taste as bitter as defeat. I sulked back in for one last drink before departing, red brick walls peering down like silent mocking sentinels. The guys were trying to cheer me up as I nursed the last bottle, when a text came through. My eyes shot to it, and the grin was painted back on as I opened the message.

"Home now. Still around? :)")

"On my way. :)")

Bolting back into the van, I shoved the remainder of my drink into the nearest hand and said my goodbyes. They knew what had changed my mood, and the usual words of male encouragement were bouncing around like a beach ball.

Twenty minutes later, I shared the first night of the rest of our lives with my love. Time stood still as my eyes locked into those beautiful, fierce green pools, and standing there at the moment, it didn't matter how long it took. It was our moment. She was there and still is. Beside me in time.