

## **'KILLING TIME'**

Original Novel

By

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### **PART ONE**

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*time like life consists  
of moments which in themselves  
do not contain time  
(the author)*

#### **1**

He is tucking in his shirt hears a voice behind him asking 'Are you hungry?' At that he looks around sees Cindy by a picnic blanket smeared with a terrible mess of food. 'Not sure it's edible' he calls back over the distance. Beneath him steeply down about a thousand feet lies a long narrow bench of pasture. He can see milk cows or perhaps they are cattle and some sheep their faces buried in the bright green. They are feeding at the edge of the little black shadows they drag around beneath them. It looks like summer and it feels like summer. A soft breeze cools his skin bringing up the smell of summer mingled with sea. All around is sky and space. Beyond the pasture navy blue dotted with whitecaps covers the rest.

She holds out a little messy bite toward him. 'Here is a few bits' she says. 'Want some?'

He glances at her so young. She looks nervous. 'Not food' he says.

'What then?' she asks then quickly looks away smoothing the blanket. She sits down on a clean corner of it and takes a trial mouthful watching him obliquely.

He comes toward her plunging his hands beneath his belt to tuck in the last of his shirttails. 'I'm not hungry' he says.

She is trembling her small hand smudged with food. 'Again?' she says studying her fingers.

'What?'

Her eyelashes remain black and long. 'Are you forgetting?'

He can smell her stronger than food. 'Forgetting what?'

'Just hold me Richard' she says still without looking up. He is shaking his head still smelling her. 'There doesn't seem to be anything else to go on—then she says 'Put your arms around me—just for a minute.'

He sits down beside her putting one arm around her curving back and letting his hand rest behind her arm. 'Like this?'

‘Sort of.’

She feels stiff beneath his arm. ‘Cindy?’ he says. A little tremble runs through her. ‘Rest your head.’

‘Yes’ she says exhaling the word. She leans her head on his shoulder. He puts his fingers around her upper arm holding it gently. ‘Oh Richard— now it is me’ she says.

‘What?’

‘All confused.’

He looks out across the space squinting in the high sun at nothing in particular— a feeling of patience pouring out of him.

They sit together each alone his arm around her loosely. Neither speaks. He feels only kindness for her. When he sees a little teardrop squeezed out from under her lashes he lifts his hand cupping it to soothe her hair and person beneath. After a time she stands and then him. He watches her as she packs up the mess and follows her when she walks away leaving the beautiful hilltop. Where they are going he has no idea. At the car she throws the spoiled blanket into the trunk. He sees her panties still stuck to it silk among the food the color of cream. Carefully she stows her cameras and gear not wanting help while he waits. When they have both gotten in and shut the doors he speaks— ‘Where are we going?’

‘Home.’

‘So— we both live in the same place?’ He looks at her gripping the wheel at the edgy tension of her. She nods. ‘Are we lovers?’

‘No.’

‘What about Paul?’

She turns to him searching his face. ‘We are still together.’

He looks at the road.

‘All these last months—Paul—me—taking care of you—seeking ways—anything to cause a miracle—make you remember. Do you know? Can you tell me? Any of it?’

‘Taking care of me?’

‘We have been trying to help you!’

Her exasperation in his stomach. It feels as though someone else has borrowed his body and been using it in his absence. ‘Why?’

‘Then you don’t remember?’

All he can do is look at her. He begins counting up the days— begins frowning. ‘Yesterday it was

cold— rainy— maybe November? You were printing for a show.'

'Mon Dieu! You cannot remember that!'

'Why not?'

'You don't remember things Richard.'

He shrugs his shoulders. There is still a patience surrounding him an ease he cannot explain. It seems unjustified in the face of her nervous state but coming from within remains strong. He goes back to his counting in the plenty of time. 'What month is this?'

'July.'

He frowns again counting silently on his fingers then slightly smiles as at solving a puzzle. 'I've just lost eight months. What the hell is going on here?'

'You will not remember this either. Tomorrow you will not remember anything that happened today Richard. That is the way it is— that is the way it has been— that is the way you lost the months. You had them you just could not hold on to them. And you will not be able to hold on to this either. None of it.'

'Why not?'

'You have amnesia Richard. You had an accident. You hurt your head. Since then you have never remembered a single new thing—ever.'

'Have we done this before then?'

'What?'

'You know.'

'Picnic?'

'No.'

She edges closer to it. 'You mean— us...?'

'Making love. Or was it fucking?'

'Oh Richard don't do this— don't do this to me. Don't start remembering now.' She starts the car and drives ahead through tears.