

Sleepless in Park City

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We'd gone on a sunset hike to the top of this mountain overlooking the town I grew up in, and it was very beautiful, and we were sitting on this rock, and they leaned over and kissed me and I remember thinking that I'd never felt anything that big before. This was the first time I was in love.

The summer I was 17 I was really in love and was working at an ice cream parlor and at this point had a very strict midnight curfew and was also very frustrated by how much I felt like I was sleeping because it felt like it was cutting into the time I could spend being in love

I found this thing on the internet called Polyphasic sleep cycles, where you sleep distributed over six 20 min naps per day, and the idea is that after your body adjusts you go directly into REM sleep, so you actually get more REM sleep than you do in like a standard 8 hour sleep cycle. And I was like perfect, I can take 6 20 min naps over the course of the day and have all night to be in love and it won't interfere with my life at all.

I felt like I really needed to do it because the person I was in love with was going to Canada at the end of the summer, moving to Canada,

So they'd just graduated high school and were starting college.

and so it felt like a very bounded period of time to like be as in love as possible.

So the first like two days I like missed a lot of naps because I couldn't sleep. I was having so much trouble falling asleep. And after like 48 hours of sleep deprivation I started to get audio hallucinations.

I'd hear a lot of like bell type noises

For a while it sort of felt like my vision was closing in a bit.

The only way to describe it feels like a mildly unpleasant psychedelic trip.

It was like a really rough 5 days

First, the hardest part was going to sleep, and then the hardest part was waking up from the naps

I felt like I needed to sleep like all the time

I would set a super loud alarm far away from me so I would have to get up to turn it off..

We did it together, which helped with waking up from the naps, because we could like call each other, or like take naps in the same place.. You have to wake up! Yeah, it was a fun sort of like communal project.

But after about a week and a half I felt like pretty acclimated to it— I think we both started to just immediately go into REM sleep

And then we had all this time.

I spent like the whole summer going to sleep at my curfew at 12, and then sneaking out of my house at 12:25 after I woke up from a nap. I lived on the second floor and but could climb down my porch from my bedroom window.

We'd go on a lot of like midnight walks. Utah in the summer is like very beautiful. Um, so yeah we like walked around a lot. We'd sit on roofs and climb trees, it was like very wholesome and young love. ~~And, my parents thought I was being ridiculous, my friends were like indulgent because I was very gushy about being in love.~~ Yeah, I mean I didn't see that many other people that summer because I was working during the days and hanging out with Alex all night, basically.

On like a typical day I would nap between 6 and 6:20 in the morning, go to work from 8 to 4, I had like 2 20 min breaks when I was working which was part of why I was like oh this is perfect. Nap between 10 and 10:20, and then between 2 and 2:20, between 8 and 8:20, and then midnight.. Am I mixing up this math? It's not..

There was no like way to differentiate the days, because there was no like block of time that was separating one day from the other, so it felt like very fluid and dreamlike, Which, when I think about that summer makes it feel very surreal. it felt like we had this intimate secret, like you could just be awake all night and do whatever you want and that felt very special and like it just belonged to us.. There were a lot of meteor showers that summer so we would like stay up and watch all the meteors from the park around the corner from my house

I think my dad knew that I was sneaking out and I don't think my mom knew until the end of the summer when I got caught, and was grounded for the first time ever in my life. It was the week before Alex left and I'd snuck out and we'd gone to this party, and their parents were like very chill and my parents were very not um and one of my friends who'd gone to the party had also snuck out and her parents caught her sneaking back in and called my parents, and my parents were very displeased that I had snuck out of my house to go to a party, and then I was grounded for the whole week before Alex left. Which was a sort of tragic end to the summer.

I saw them once before they left, because my dad didn't really understand what grounded meant, and so I was like can I go say goodbye to my friend who's leaving forever and my dad

was like yeah of course so I went to go say goodbye to them. We'd met at a coffee shop and they were leaving the next morning and I showed up and was characteristically very weepy. Neither of us expected that we would see each other ever again really um and so it felt very much like the end of things.. We both sort of knew that going into the summer and that felt like part of the motivation for this bizarre sleep schedule it felt like a very bounded amount of time. Idk we spent like an hour standing outside their car not really being able to leave.

But yeah that was the end. And then I went home, and it was terrible and I sat on my floor for the entire rest of the time that I was grounded and reverted back to a normal sleep schedule.

I would wake up in the middle of the night for like a long time.. I actually still do I'm not sure if that has anything to do with it or just other things but yeah I would wake up in the middle of the night, and it would be really hard to sleep for more than like 2-3 hours at a time. Um, but then I started school again the next week, and sort of had to go back to a more typical sleep schedule.

It was definitely easier to adjust out of than into which makes sense, I just don't think it's very healthy for you.

[music]

That summer feels very, sorry of encapsulated. Like it feels very different from the rest of my life. And sort of impossible to integrate.

Part of the importance of it felt like its boundedness. So neither of us ever considered trying to do anything over distance. We really like didn't stay in touch all that much.

It felt like a way of exerting agency over how I was exerting my time. And it was obviously like one of the more extreme ways of doing it but it felt very important as a seventeen year old.

I think that one of the worst things you can do to a young person is to deny their agency and the seriousness with which they take their own desires. And having the space and the time in sort of a vacuum to take my own desire very seriously felt incredibly formative.

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