

A black heart-shaped balloon is the central focus, tied to a white string that lies on the ground in a field of tall, green grass. The background is a dense forest of trees. The text 'A Fine Day' is written in a white, stylized font at the top.

A Fine Day

Jeff Hayes

1

A Fine Day

Edge of a vista abyss



JEFF
HAYES



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Dedicated to Mona
Her attentiveness keeps
this author true to course.

And a special shout-out to CS
for the inspirations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| <u>A Fine Day</u> | 1 |
| <u>About Jeff Hayes</u> | 19 |
| <u>Connect with Jeff Hayes</u> | 20 |
| <u>Summary</u> | 21 |

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A FINE DAY

CHAPTER I A Fine Day

This is a true story in so far as related to the location. Concerning the events, my memory remains a bit faulty with regard to the particulars. The accuracy of the telling I leave among yourselves to decide.

Standing at the edge of a spit of land, a broad lake was before her. This was land's end, jutting out to form one edge of an arc defining a cove. Wind blew at her hair. She pulled the chaos back into order, pushing the escaped locks under a woolen cap. The cap! Rolf had bought it for her before Christmas. The occasion had been the evening they went to the street market. Events remained clear but for the details. After the purchase, there had been an argument and he had walked off. The topic has since been forgotten. Another in a series of manufactured situations Rolf would contrive to rationalize a

A FINE DAY

reaction. Days passed into the new year before he again tried his key in the lock. Foolishly, she allowed herself to be on the other side when it turned. Another episode ended, returning to reset. The proper coldness she was at ease with of two bodies in one bed was resumed with this man. Ages ago it seemed, across a blur of time: the events strung together as beads on a string.

She adjusted her footing on the slippery rock. It was worn smooth here. The bag remained beside her on the ground. The content's weight kept it upright. Another gust of wind blew into her form, pushing her a step forward. She reflexively took a half step back.

In the distance, the wind was blowing white caps across the lake surface. The massive walls of glacier cut rift channeled force through this narrow valley. Wind was only one of the manifestations. On the far shore the rock wall rose straight out of the water to a towering vertical height. She had to tilt her head to see the ridge, and had done that several times while walking out to the point. The ridge line snaked away to disappear around a corner. Eventually it joined the other side of the split chasm, which rose equally high. This had once been a mountain of a single granite rock. Ice and time have had its way with it, carving the peak twain.

A FINE DAY

She stood upon a rock wave of deep rubble bed fragments remaining after the glacier's retreat. To her left the shore rounded away distant, out of the cove. On that shore a deep forest grew to the water's edge. The trees were crowded together impossibly dense. A denseness that absorbed light before any could reach the mossy undergrowth. Only mushrooms thrived in such a gloom. Though she couldn't remember being here, it was familiar, as though the panorama had been known countless times—and what had been before.

Standing here, there was purpose before her. She thought of it as a conclusion. A first time standing at this shore, at this point, on these smooth rocks. She chided herself: focus. The purpose before her was quiet in the bag. It would wait. When she was ready, it would obey what was asked of it. There was stillness in thoughts here. Time was hers. Focus.

Tranquility had been with her since the early morning. This was an unusual experience, not commonly known. The typical day-to-day was a blur of thoughts and words and actions. Stillness, while not wholly unknown, remained elusive. Even when others would find relaxation after a lovely heavy meal, she could not. Her portions would be of such quantity a large man would be shy of piling on. Those around the table with an average constitution would naturally become groggy after such excessive consumption. She, however, would carry on talking

A FINE DAY

a nervously animated performance before the dull glassy eyes of her audience. Even espresso would not slow her hyperactivity down.

When at last she would excuse herself from the table, the dinner companions would be glad of the respite, though it was only a brief interlude. She would find her way to the WC and directly into a stall. Before her would be the porcelain receptacle. The routine was a practiced one. A yanked handful of toilet paper was prepared, laid in balanced layers, equal distance, without a wrinkle. This upon she would kneel as though before an altar. And in a way, it was. With a hand pulling her thin blond hair back, the movement began. It started with a relaxation in the lower gut. When the focus became upon the meal stretching at the stomach, the strong convulsion waves would begin to build. There was a pleasure in the sensation of the tightening as the cycles increased. When they became of sufficient intensity, the waves were released, squeezing the stomach, ejaculating the contents in a vomit fountain directed into the depths of the bowl. Practiced distance was maintained against any splash back. This was usually a sufficient precaution. A second wave followed the first immediately, seeking release. The gut was explored, as though evaluating if there was any offering remaining. When a sufficient volume was discovered, a third squeeze would pass this remainder. Satisfied, a fresh pull of tissue was dabbed and blotted. The swirling morass was observed for consistency

A FINE DAY

before rising. Tissue remaining was used to mop any splash overflow before the final commitment to oblivion with the flush.

At the sink, she would rinse and spit. Some mouth spray from her clutch purse was spritzed. A last check at the mirror to confirm orderliness before departing with airs. There was always the primping, to a high level of perfection. It was required. Mother had taught so. The otherwise was not tolerated with herself, or allowed of her man.

She would return into the room glowing a satisfied gloat, to the chagrin of those noticing her impending arrival. Her conversation would be resumed to dominate the table, regardless of the companions' desires. Several would exchange glances wondering who had punished them with the practical joke of inviting her—had they really deserved such treatment? Ah yes, her beauty. This was payment against the cost of her presence: she was easy on the eyes, but hard on the ears.

Thus would flow the minutes into hours of the night.

Thoughts reflected back upon Rolf. He was a disorderly man, impossibly so. In the early days, when their relationship was fresh, his habits were cute, quaint even. Perhaps that's what had been his allure. He would come in late after a long evening. The clothes were left in a trail leading to the bed, where she would be waiting for him. His longed for attentions

A FINE DAY

took her away to unimaginable places, briefly. Too briefly, which did not improve. The sensations, and later, the stories he would tell her were not fulfilling. All was reasonable. All was understandable. All was all, at least to him in his earnestness.

She had been naive to his magick words, laid victim, wanting to believe. At the time, she understood that of herself. But that was the past. Now it had been corrected. Now it was right. Never again need a reoccurrence be suffered.

Thirst came to her. She drank from the small water bottle that had been thoughtlessly clenched out of shape by her hand. Opening the lid released pressure that hissed into the high altitude air. After drinking, her hand dropped back to position. The bottle creaked in snaps from the resumed grip. There was stillness in her head, but her body was wound tight, playing a strained octave.

The drive out of the village had begun in the early morning. With the starlight fade came a promise just beginning on the horizon. She was driving Rolf's car. The bag was on the floor of the passenger seat. Her face was typically kept neutral, though occasionally a frown could be detected. Some had thought she was squeezing a lemon in her backside to make lemonade; of course, no one dared speak this observation within earshot and live to tell about it. This predawn, however,

A FINE DAY

had begun with a grin. It was slight, but it had been there. Perhaps the origin was to be found in the irony of her driving his car. Rolf's precious little street racing car. The car she was never allowed to drive, but was required to be a frequent passenger of. A meat trophy exhibited before his street peers—a pin-up girl poster and just as useless.

“Yes, there is an irony in that, isn't there, Rolf?” she said, sneering at the bag.

They had met from a cold contact, there being an app for that. He had swiped right. At the time, she was standing on a crowded tram. She was going to swipe left and had all intention of doing so. It was the combination of the tram surging and the sympathetic wave of people moving in response. The right swipe had occurred in the jostling. The baseness of the moment was distracted by her anger of the disorderly rudeness. The phone was slipped back into her bag without further thought.

Rolf was thrilled this woman's response was positive: the app had spoken, so it must be so. Her picture was a pouting dour look projecting a sophisticated aloofness. The posed curves were there in ample proportions in all the right locations. Her background description was brief, confirming his thought of her as a detached beauty.

A FINE DAY

Their meeting was proposed by Rolf at a cramped dark club he did not frequent. The anticipated intimacy the space provided was not to be intruded upon by the discards of past relationships. The eagerness he communicated was petty to her; however, quick research revealed a financial résumé that brought around the invitation's acceptance. The location was familiar; it would not be her first meeting entertained there.

The bartender smiled a smirk of acknowledgment as she entered and headed directly for the back.

“Hi, baby,” he said. “Back for more? You can't stay away, can you?”

She kept her look forward while the memory of this man's flesh and what they had done together that passed as intimacy was remembered in her flesh. Try as she could to frown with disgust, her body had other memories. As though walking on shards of broken glass, each step drove deeper into her psyche pushing the color of arousal into her face and heat displaced below.

While still within earshot, he said, “Come see Papa for afterward. I've got what you want.” He paused before saying, “Long time.”

The words, ‘Long time’ shot through her. She stumbled a step, but by the next was back in stride.

A FINE DAY

“That’s right, baby. You show him. Back there waiting for you: the little Eager Beaver,” he said, then chuckled while continuing to polish a glass.

Walking past a wall, she thought, would provide her visual relief from the man’s stare burning into her back. But it did not. She felt him through the wall.

Without knowing, her eyes were on Rolf, who she was walking directly toward. He was alert, taking her flow in fully. Though the ambient light was red, he detected the flush across her face. The emotional simmering he assumed had origin from her eagerness for his presence. The repartee program was adjusted accordingly. Surprisingly, a chair arranged next to him was avoided; she sat across from him. Without missing a beat from this slight rebuff, the prattle of his banter began. He was in earnest before the coil spring defining her being encircled the worn wicker chair, which creaked complaining of her slight weight.

Words flowed non-stop, as though any pause would allow a crack to form through which she would vanish. Her allowed words in reply were a reflection of his own. The verbal echo gave him pause, admiring the attraction he was projecting—stroking his reflection. During a contrived strong point he touched her forearm, lingering. The connection remained to slide into a grip of her cold bony hand. The progression was expected by her, anticipating her other hand to be captured

A FINE DAY

before it indeed was. To speed up the progress, she slipped off a sandal and rubbed her foot along his calf.

“Let’s go. Take me to your place,” she said.

This induced the first silence between them of the evening.

Exiting, she would not make eye contact with the bartender. But it was clear: the smirk was there, and the stare. Her ass received a boost in temperature from the earlier encounter. She kept that with her exiting the door. But before she was clear from his sight, she rubbed a cheek and gave it a faux slap. Her gift to him to take home.

The drive had her looking out the window, sightless. The inattention did not deter Rolf. Doing what he was best at, filling silence, he kept up the one-sided talk. The sounds slipped off her as though she was layered with Teflon.

Her sight did return after they turned into a neighborhood of plush houses. Another turn and the houses became less plush. Another turn and Rolf pulled in, the garage door opening before them and closing immediately behind. By the light of the naked bulb of the garage door opener he leaned in and took the first kiss. She received him with tense lips before remembering to relax. As in the bar, acceptance was projected upon her. His hand responded, exploring to squeeze at a breast.

The excitement of sex between them that first night could best be described as the following: Let him have his

A FINE DAY

satisfaction. She laid passive. He did the work. The performance was profound, satisfying, in his imagination. What passion she found from the act was directed upon the specter of another.

It only cooled from there. She was wholly surprised when shortly after their initial encounter he insisted she move in, and even more surprised in herself when she heard her acceptance—as somebody else speaking.

Close contact did not improve the spiral of the situation between them. Indeed, the regular routine of proximity pushed the doll passion. Hours late into the evening of primping in the bathroom did not avail her escape of his needs. The bloom was off the rose with the arrival of his first tirade: That of her bony body and lack of any ass whatsoever. Stone cold frozen.

The cruel words increased in frequency and vehemence. The lack of reaction on her part exasperated his frustration. They were water on a duck as far as she was concerned.

Rolf's day-work left her the freedom of sunlight. That the bartender worked nights provoked a return to their resumed collision. They took advantage of each other's peculiar needs, fitting together as puzzle pieces in the world's jigsaw. His shift starting in the evenings would bring the session's game to a close. She, now having a key would arrive early to wake the sleeping man to begin the next mutual service round.

A FINE DAY

The cycles evolved as she wore him down in sleep deprivation and in skin. Be careful for what you wish. But it was bravado tempered by exhaustion that brought another in to share in the relief. Now triad, with the two against her one, balance was to be found.

Perhaps Rolf detected her afternoon delight liaisons; regardless, from a sense of orderliness, she was careful to remove clues. Except those she purposefully did not, with a passive-aggressive intention to taunt him. More likely he was acting spitefully at her sexual rebukes. The end result was, he brought her out for cruise meet-ups less frequently. He thought of it as punishment to leave the meat trophy at home, feeling to him she was more the trophy and less the meat puppet. She was rather pleased to have manipulated this change in him so ridiculously unaware.

On an occasion coming in from a later than usual night out, Rolf went straight to the shower. His clothes were thrown in the general direction of the hamper, mostly missing the aim. She followed behind with the intention of putting the clothes in. The odor in the cloth was slight but distinctly detectable: sex produced. The smell was not of her. Nonplussed, she carried on. Rummaging through the pants pockets, his phone was retrieved. The scraps of paper were left in the pocket for the washing machine to have their way with. Turning upon hearing the steam shower generator start, she sat on the bed.

A FINE DAY

Thinking: Foolish of him to leave his phone unlocked. Did he want me to snoop this?

The text message contacts were scanned through. Business babble. Some women, flirty talk, sexting pix—yawn. Ah here, this is one: Rolf’s best car club mate. It was a long chat thread. Scrolling to the beginning, she quickly scanned through to the end; the last ones being sent just before arriving home, perhaps even from the garage.

Rolf: “I am tired of this frigid cow. She is done, kicked out, gone, gone, gone by the weekend.”

mate: “Seriously? Mind if I give her a throw, as seconds, naturally?”

“Be my guest. But I warn you: she is so cold your dick will freeze solid and break off inside her.”

“Ah man. Now that you say you are dumping her, I hope you don’t mind me saying that I’ve been pretty solid on more than one occasion when you brought her around, dressed so revealing and all. With a body so hot she can’t be that bad, can she?”

Enough, she thought.

The thread was scrolled forward until Rolf’s last: “Anorexic bitch. Like fucking a pile of wood, except with the wood you’d get fewer splinters. She’s better as your masturbation fantasy than having her in your bed. Anyway, get me the name of that bodywork guy and she is all yours, mate.

A FINE DAY

However, consider yourself warned. I don't want to hear about your frustrations with her later."

She put the phone screen-side down on the bed and laughed softly. There was a pause of silence while listening to the steam shower hiss. Rising, she said coldly, "Bulimia, you twat."

Calm, the path before her was clear as the walk would be to the vista later this sunny day. The actuality of the wind was not. Going into the garage, Rolf's camping storage was rummaged through.

The imagined vista reigned before her. The wind again pushed her a step forward, she reflexively took a half-step back. Reaching for the bag, it was pulled forward by one handle. The contents shifted, threatening to capsize.

She chided, "Oh no you don't. Behave yourself."

Lifting it, she said into the opening, "Ah. I see you are distracted. Let me help you out with that."

A soft, floppy object was retrieved from the bag. It had a natural handle shape to it. With a softball inspired windmill pitch, the object was flung. It pirouetted into the distance, over the lake. Globules of liquid separated from the object as it rotated; each a jewel of light, the reflected sunlight exaggerated their size. A gust caught at the object, causing the trajectory to jerk sharply side to side several times before the

A FINE DAY

altitude met the water. A small unimpressive splash rose and quickly passed.

During the flight, she had retrieved Rolf's head from the bag. Holding it by the Man Bun, she had directed the rigid eyes along the sailing object's trajectory.

Laughing, she said, "Anticlimactic, Rolf. Just like you always were. Perhaps your genitals will have more luck with the fishes?"

Turning the head to face her, "What's that, honey? Did you say something? Did you have something important to add? Perhaps something witty?" She turned her head as if listening for a moment, before turning back.

"Yes, well that is a little difficult, you know. All what was left to be said has been said. The remaining actions have just about concluded themselves as well. Now wouldn't you agree that is so?"

"Argh! What?! Platitudes again? Didn't I tell you before? You have no one to blame but yourself. Maybe you can tell it to the fishes, if they will put up with you."

With that, the softball wind-up pitch was again performed. The head carried better altitude than did the first pitch, but the distance was lacking. It splashed down but a short distance from where she stood. Remaining visibly bobbing in the water, it sank but a little. The eyes remained open, staring at her like a deranged swimmer treading water. The view was hypnotizing.

A FINE DAY

Calm flowed from her core. Reflexively, she tilted her perspective left, enjoying the curiousness of the scene.

With a blink from his head, Rolf floated no more. He sank gently beneath the small wind ripples blown in by the changing wind direction. Blowing into her from across the lake, the gust caused her to brace into the force, unbalancing her footing backwards.

Over the wind howl, two footsteps were heard running up from behind. With a solid force, she was shoved off her feet and into the air. Sailing beyond the rocks and turning around before splashing down into deep water, the point was visible. Submerged, but treading back to the surface, the flash image was replaced with the actual: There was no other at the point. She had remained alone.

The bag was there, shivering in the wind. She treaded water considering it. As if in response to the energy of her focus, the bag sprung off the rock, picked up in a rising gust of wind. It followed a path higher into the air, higher and higher. Her concentration became distracted, losing sight of the bag. But what now filled her attention was the sky. It had changed into a foggy red. The distant rock face massif was tinted by the red fog as well. The forest below the red sky, below the red rocky chasm had remained a menacing dark. A mesmerizing darkness. From shock, the treading water movement froze mid-stroke, sinking her before she recovered: There was movement in the dark. One, two, many more, moving out of the shadows.

A FINE DAY

She called out. The shapes stopped, then hid.

Continuing to tread water, her rhythm floated within the icy cold.

She laughed aloud, and again louder. The laugh turned into a shriek as something grabbed at her foot. She kicked the grasp away and chuckled, “Rolf, you are gone.”

Again a probing grasp captured her foot. The hold was stronger. She could not kick it away. With a force equal to what hurled her into the water, she was pulled under.

Struggling, the wound spring energy of her life-force was released in a moment of animal intensity. She pulled herself back up to the surface, breaking through. The vision of the red sky and black forest were before her, unchanged.

Her vision sharpened. Along the shore, clearly she could now see: the shapes, they were watching her.

The force holding her foot had allowed this last view, spurn comprehension, a last realization of the futility of this frail form of life. Ethereal.

Without protest, she was pulled under for the final time.

Wind waves rippled, erasing the futile struggle, to crash as waves in miniature upon the shore.

“Your offering is satisfactory. It has been accepted, Daughter.”

“Thank you, Mother.”

A FINE DAY

“We welcome your return among us.”

“That brings me happiness. I have been quite lonely.”

“Understandable. However, it was your wish, as you may remember.”

“I do remember.” She paused, feeling herself again in her old form, familiar. “I had to know. If there had been a change?”

“Curiosity is understandable. The want of hopefulness I too carry inside myself since the oceans receded and we ascended.”

“Have you known disappointment as well, Mother?”

“I could not say otherwise, Daughter, but never with you. Never with us. Our time began before the ice mountains of glacier arrived.”

No more words were spoken. They moved in unison back from the shore, finding their place among the shadow of canopy, fading from sight into the forest before the light did.

The wind in sympathy changed direction, blowing new whitecaps into the old.

THE END.

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A FINE DAY

ABOUT JEFF HAYES

Jeff Hayes has been working for many years as a Software Engineering Consultant- not to be confused with his evil-twin, of no relation. Now located in Switzerland as an employee with a financial firm, he has found several hours free in his daily commute. Daydreaming out the carriage window on the green Swiss countryside, the idea came to him to consider the train commute as renting a public space office. Balancing the distraction of the fellow passengers with life within office space cube walls, thus began Jeff's side work realizing his thoughts into words.

Though many pets and a few horses have graced Jeff's life, he presently finds himself pet free, for the short term.

A FINE DAY

CONNECT WITH JEFF HAYES

Jeff enjoys talking with his readers for reflections words can bring. Their impressions can be fascinating and unexpected.

He can be reached at his website, deppli.com



A FINE DAY

Summary

[A Fine Day](#), a short story. Part, the first, in [Rabbitry, a pentalogy](#).

Standing before a precipice of her own making, the cost of a life hiding behind beauty is required to be paid in full. Could it be that the currency one acquires will not suffice on such a fine day? Would the bill collector relent, if sufficient favors are traded, to accept soiled foreign notes?

A glacier hewed mountain bears witness to the cold passage of time's resolution where some live the lifespan of a Mayfly. Others, far older, have known the rise and fall of such as these.