

# Juliana giles

[Life](#), [Love](#)



Juliana Giles DE English Doctor Fontana October 9, 2012 The First Cut is the Deepest From time to time, my mind takes me back to the glorious summer of 1964. Sometimes, it is easy for me to remember, and other times it is nearly impossible, but as I sit in this almost empty diner, my memory has never been more vivid, and it is almost as if I can feel the golden Florida sand in between my toes. I stare down into my cup of coffee, untouched, and try to remember every detail of that summer before it all fades away like it does so often. My memories are ticking time bombs, waiting to detonate and turn into tiny shards, impossible to piece back together. I reach into the crevices of my mind, into the deep corners that have sat undisturbed for so many years. Instantly, I am seventeen again. My mind turns my coarse, snow white hair into long, careless, jet-black curls that hang well below my rib cage. Time reverses my deep laugh lines as it rejuvenates my skin. I can see myself now with my long legs, tanned golden by the sun, perfectly polished nails, high cheekbones, and sparkling green eyes. I'm wearing the first two-piece bathing suit I had ever owned, light pink with tiny, precise ruffles around the edges. I distinctly remember saving every penny I could find to afford that silly old thing, doing chore after chore around my house, trying to scrounge up enough money before summer rolled around. That trip to Pensacola Beach was all me and my three girl friends could talk about during our senior year. We would jokingly call it our first taste of freedom as we complained endlessly day after day about nagging parents or seemingly never-ending schoolwork. Fresh out of high school, we walked arm in arm along the shoreline, throwing our heads back in laughter without any cares in the world. It amuses me how their names have escaped me after all these

years, yet his has not. I usually cannot remember what year it is, or, worst of all, where I am, but I could tell anyone every single detail about the night I first fell in love. It was a simmering July evening when my eyes first fell upon his face. I still catch my breath just thinking about that indescribable moment when our eyes met. I remember my friends and I tiptoeing noiselessly out of our cheap motel, hand in hand, suppressing our giggles and bellowing wildly once our feet hit the crisp Gulf of Mexico. It was while we were splashing around and throwing ourselves into the foamy waves that he and his friends wandered toward us. To this day, after all these years, I still recall analyzing his every detail and watching his every move. On a good day, I can see the strong, chiseled structure of his cheekbones and chin, the slight curve in his nose and the smallish pale freckles that were scattered upon it, the full, plump lips that he so effortlessly pulled up into a sweet yet sarcastic smirk, and, most importantly, his eyes. His eyes, the same eyes I see when I close my own, seemed to be every color I knew. They engulfed me with their light blues and greens and smothered me with their hues of gray. I found myself lost in a strange sort of fascination that I was totally unfamiliar with, and it chilled me to the bone. It was as if I was looking into the eyes of someone I had known as long as I had lived, even though they were those of a complete stranger, one I could only find comparison to in my dreams. Every fragment of my being felt drawn to his face, as if I were a simple piece of metal, weak and impressionable, and he was a strong, forceful magnet, leaving me no choice but to surrender to his power. My body not only felt compelled to him, but so did my soul. All in a moment's time, I felt my every fiber reach out for his. His simple smile and sweet

introduction left me in a complete and utter stupor as I scrambled for something intelligent to say. My thoughts had become cloudy and mangled into a sticky web of confusion and I felt my entire body flush over with a wave of embarrassment. I sent up a silent prayer, pleading for mercy, for I knew I looked foolish and soon this beautiful stranger would return to his friends and leave me, a sweaty and nervous mess, as I hopelessly fell in love with him. I gathered up every solitary ounce of courage as I dusted the sand and fear from my dripping wet body and formed a timid smile. Just a simple smile and he was mine. The next seven days were a magical blur. Every available second that I had was spent wrapped up in his arms. We would lay out on the beach until sunrise, tangled in a mess of sandy sheets and towels, our fingers laced in an unbreakable grasp. He whispered to me all of his secrets and thoughts and wishes to leave the Florida coast that was his home. We pretended that I would never have to leave him, although my departure hung above our heads like an omnipresent storm cloud, impatiently waiting to burst. On the last night I had with him, we laid on the shoreline, professing our love for one another and weeping silently until we both drifted off into a restless sleep, wishing to never wake up and go our separate ways. Decades have passed since I have touched his skin or seen his smile, yet there is not a day that escapes me that I do not think of him. I had to return home that summer, in love with a painful yet somehow beautiful memory. I eventually moved on and married a wonderful man who later blessed me with four beautiful children. I am certainly very lucky, to say the least. Despite all of the gifts I've been granted over the years, I still cannot help but wonder what my life would be like if I could return to the

coast, back to my first love. I wonder if our love would still be a wild, passionate one or if that too would fade in time, like my memory. No matter how painfully fleeting our love was, I will never cease to return to the week I spent with him and to the quiet moments we shared. He will forever remain the shooting star, the one bright picture, in my memory. My mind will eventually forget many things about my life, my family, and myself, but my heart will always return to that summer of 1964.