



Through The Years

Z.A. Maxfield

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Reedited and Updated version of a free series written in 2008

Ethan Holmes and Barry Moffit have been in love since they were kids. These stories -- re-edited for quality content and given a Winterheart Designs cover -- were written in 2008, in part as a protest over the passage of Proposition 8 in California. They follow the course of Ethan and Barry's love affair in ten year intervals from the moment they first admit it, at prom in 1978, to a major breakup and reconciliation in 1988, to a family vacation in Hawaii that turns into more in 1998, and election night 2008, a time of deliberation and decision.

This version includes the *bonus* holiday (also previously published) story "The Cursed Noel."

Through The Years Details

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Author : Z.A. Maxfield

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From Reader Review Through The Years for online ebook

Valerie ✶M/M Romance Junkie✶ says

We all have our hard limits. Sadly, this book hit mine very early on. There was nothing that could overcome that with me.

Jerry says

I love long term relationships. I love to check in and see how the boys are doing as different elements in life affect them. Love ZAMs work. Loved this short, sometimes bitter, snippets of a long term relationship.

Vfields Don't touch my happy! says

As I was reading this one I kept thinking of adjectives that would best describe it. Odd, different, a literary study or a just plain funky styled story about two men who have loved each other their entire lives. It is told in episodes and not much to my dismay, not in chronological order.

Karen says

I actually read this back in 2008 when it was posted on Ms Maxfield's website but it's a short read and I really like her stuff so I took the time to download this when it showed up on ARe as a free read.

I really enjoyed this the first time and found it every bit as endearing this time around as well. Through the years follows the progression of Ethan and Barry's relationship starting in 1978 at their high school graduation and gives up a glimpse at their lives every 10 years. It's not all hearts and flowers and sweetness. At times Ethan is a total idiot and at other times Barry is oblivious to how little attention he pays to the relationship. Both of these men do damage as a result of their actions or inactions. It's not because they don't care...no if anything these men care about each other a great deal. They care enough to fight...with each other and for each other. They don't always get it right and when that happens they learn from their mistakes and they move forward hopefully making things better.

There's a realism to this relationship that isn't always seen in stories. For all of their love they see and acknowledge their flaws and that of their partner and they love each other whether you consider it to be in spite of their flaws or as I like to think because of them.

I'd like to say that I wish Ms Maxfield had expanded this to be a full length novella or maybe even a novel, but I have the feeling that if she had we'd lose some of the magic that this story seems to embrace because of the way it weaves so loosely through the lives and times of these two men.

So instead I'll just say that for me through the years was short, it was sweet and it was perfect.

Ami says

I love established couples. And I love stories about couples that span for years. Through The Years has that. It is a collection of short stories that are previously being offered for free on Z.A. Maxfield's website. I never read the short stories when they were free, so this collection is new for me.

1978 tells the story of Ethan and Barry in high school. Although Ethan and Barry are good friends, Ethan is part of the jock crowd. Barry, uhm, not so much. Barry oftens use his smart mouth on the jocks and gets him into trouble. On that prom night, Barry gets beaten again. When Ethan helps him, Barry just has enough and confronts Ethan. Which ends in interesting result.

1988 tells about the MAJOR breakup between Ethan and Barry. Barry moves out and ends up missing in Burma. This is practically Ethan's tale -- how he ends up realizing how Barry means for him. He has a breakdown and keeps wishing for Barry to return home safely. It has the most angst of all the stories, I think.

1998 is the happiest story of all the collection. Ethan and Barry have a vacation in Hawaii with their family -- and decides to establish their relationship a little bit more.

2008 tells about the night of the upcoming voting of Prop 8. Ethan has a surprise for Barry, but Barry doesn't react like Ethan expects. I admit I don't really understand Barry's reason for his refusal. I kind of wish he doesn't react that way.

The Cursed Noel is the story about Ethan and Barry's first Christmas together. Since I just finish a story in a more present timeline, going back to their earlier time throws me off a bit. But the ending is precious :)

All in all, it is a lovely collection ... it is so good to read about couple that has been together for 30 years (that short separation in 1988 doesn't count *lol*)

Denise H. says

[*I hate cheating - I had it done to me and I do not think it can be justified. (hide spoiler)]

Tami says

[why wouldn't you want to marry your partner of 30 years? You did the "handfast"-thingy with him, and all the legal stuff? So what's your problem? That felt artificial to me. (hid

Heather K (dentist in my spare time) says

Kindle freebie 8/11/15

Elizabeth says

Book had elements I hate. Cheating is a big no no for me. It's well written and probably could be a novel so for that 3???

Christy says

"You think you're going to do the jock thing until you're through college with some kind of degree, and then you're going to leave this whole bourgeois suburban ass-clenching shit behind and get me to show you what you've been missing while you were playing it straight. No way. Bring it the fuck on, Ethan, or next time someone's kicking the shit out of me, don't bother stopping by."

What an intro to a friendship that's been on-again, off-again since Barry and Ethan were in elementary school. Well, now it's 1978, senior prom, and after graduation they're both heading in different directions. Barry is smart and pretty much a focal point for bullies. Of course, he can't keep his mouth shut and he's not afraid to be who he is. Gay. Ethan is a jock, and much more concerned with playing it safe, and keeping Barry out of trouble.

I adored the way the author wrote this story. Beginning in 1978 when Barry and Ethan finally became lovers, to 1988 when Ethan makes a huge mistake, Barry walks out, and everything goes to hell. And then 1998 when they're ten years older, more secure, and they agree that Barry needs to get back out there and be the activist he's meant to be, and finally to 2008. Thirty years they've been together, weathered the storms, explored the love, and now Ethan is breathless wanting Prop 8 to be defeated so he can legally marry his one and only.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It made me think and remember. Thank you, ZAM.

Crystal says

Provides snap shots of an established couple over a 30 year period, one scene every 10 years. I liked it. Barry's views about marriage align with mine almost exactly. Apart from the comment about straight couples' obligation to be married to protect their children's rights. Didn't really follow that line of thought. Obvs we should all have the right to marry as well as the right to choose not to marry and not be judged for it.

Macky says

Really, really disappointed that I didn't like this because I normally love Z A Maxfield stories (Crossing Borders is one of the best m/m romances I've read). It's written well but for some reason I couldn't connect with Barry and Ethan and to be honest found myself zoning out in parts, skimming bits and skipping forward to see if it got any more interesting. Unfortunately for myself it didn't!

From what I can gather the stories from each decade (1978, '88, '98 and 2008) were originally published separately (free) on her blog as a support for prop8, dealing with gay marriage being legalised in California. The xmas section at the end almost seemed like an afterthought and didn't particularly gel with the rest of the novella because where it falls in the timeline, it should have been slotted in between the first two decades.

"One mans meat is another mans poison" as the saying goes. Liked the concept but it just didn't work for me but that doesn't mean to say some one else might not love it and for 0.77p it's not going to break the bank! Sorry Z.A. I still love you though. :)* 2.5 rounded up.

Kaje Harper says

This book is divided up into sections over 4 decades, that move us through a tumultuous relationship between two men, from their early days as friends, through the ups and downs of a long relationship. I enjoy established couples, and I liked seeing Barry and Ethan remaking their lives, together and apart. There is a lot of trust, given, broken and reformed here. The men become wiser with age, seeing what really matters in their lives. There are arguments, and making-up, and times of peace.

The decision to put the little section "The Cursed Noel" at the end seemed ill-chosen. It belongs rightfully between the first two sections, and if you prefer a chronological narrative it could be read that way. Perhaps it was an intentional coda, harking back to the beginning of the relationship, but it felt like an afterthought on the tail of a satisfying last decade that wrapped up the rest of the book, and I'd have enjoyed it more in its place I think.

Either way, this felt real. These guys don't always do the smart thing, or the ethical thing, or treat each other right. And they certainly don't always agree. But the drive of the story shows that when they gradually shed all the extraneous stuff, they are each at the center of the other's universe.

Michelle says

A wonderful short story about the HEA of childhood friends turned lovers. Like watching a pair of friends grow up and old together. Got teary eyed at their "wedding" in Hawaii.

?♥? Michaelle ♥? says

3.4 Stars

I liked the *idea* of this, but maybe the short decade/chapter kept it from delving deeper into these characters lives and kept me from warming up to the MCs; about the only emotional connection I felt to it was that bit with Ethan's melt-down - because that **was** heartbreaking. Considering he'd only a few weeks earlier been caught with his pants down (literally) I wanted to hate him and his immaturity (better suited to an 18yr old than a 28yr old) and ridiculous "justification." But I couldn't; sometimes you really **don't** know what you've got 'til it's gone and wow, realizing that at the same time as thinking the love of your life is probably dead...well, I'll cut him a little slack.

Also, considering he blew up their entire relationship for Ethan's indiscretion, Barry being all "bourgeois" this and "heternormative" that toward *actual* marriage (when they're all but legally married years earlier in Hawaii) felt incredibly disjointed. I mean, what? I don't think **everyone** fighting for equality necessarily wants or needs to get married or adopt - but man, his refusal seems to have come out of left field.

Finally, hey, I learned something interesting today. For some reason I thought that the whole country was dragging it's heels to implement the minimum drinking age limit. Evidently, this is not the case and it's been 21 in California for, like, ever. (It was still 18 in Georgia when I started High School and I just assumed it was that way across the country; never even bothered to look it up until now.) Thank you, interwebz!
