

The Duke of Travel

by Brenda Bishop Blakey

Simon is like the Duke of travel when we go to foreign spots. He and I were not afraid of anything that August. We had the coin and the presence of mind that leads to something of a personal eternity. Though eternity would only last 'till the first of September. Then we would be due back in the U.S. facing our film and speech students respectively. It was summer, and only summer, that could become our year long I.V., even a pay-raise promises too little. Through the long academic year, no one remembers the extra dollars from a merit raise but the vacation still-shots framed in our memories are like racy French pictures we know we can return to again and again.

We are never bored when we have our trips. Simon says the secret is to avoid being in a hurry.

“Stay loose, woman, let your ass unwind.” He always says.

“I unwind plenty,” I tell him, “that's not the issue. I simply don't want my summer to be dull.”

This most recent one was our fourth trip together and near the last week of it something terrible occurred. We were having lunch at a tiny lakeside café. Mountains behind us formed a picturesque scene. The mood was relaxed and Simon wore a gentle grin. Although the grin may have been because the young fellow at the table behind us had a harsh voice and certain syllables when uttered sounded frog-like. Before I could comment about the voice, a stranger appeared and rode his motorcycle down the hillside. The beastly contraption had a loud rattle as it splashed into the lake. Simon leaped into action as the stranger cried out, “My bags, my bags.” Obviously, Simon didn't know if the man could swim so he tried to pull the man out. But, the man was only concerned with the satchels which seemed to melt silently into the water. The entire valley saw this scene transpire and several people flagged down officials. The stranger was yelling at Simon. “Fool, you think I will drown? Sacre bleu! Retrieve my bags, you idiot, they contain my grandmother's silver.”

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Simon trudged back to our table and several eager helpers attended the stranger.

We ordered some hot tea.

"Way to stay loose, Duke." I said.

Simon snickered. "I did it for you, love."

"For me? Right."

"So your summer won't be boring." He said.

I looked at him. He had that same grin. It was better than a racy French picture.

