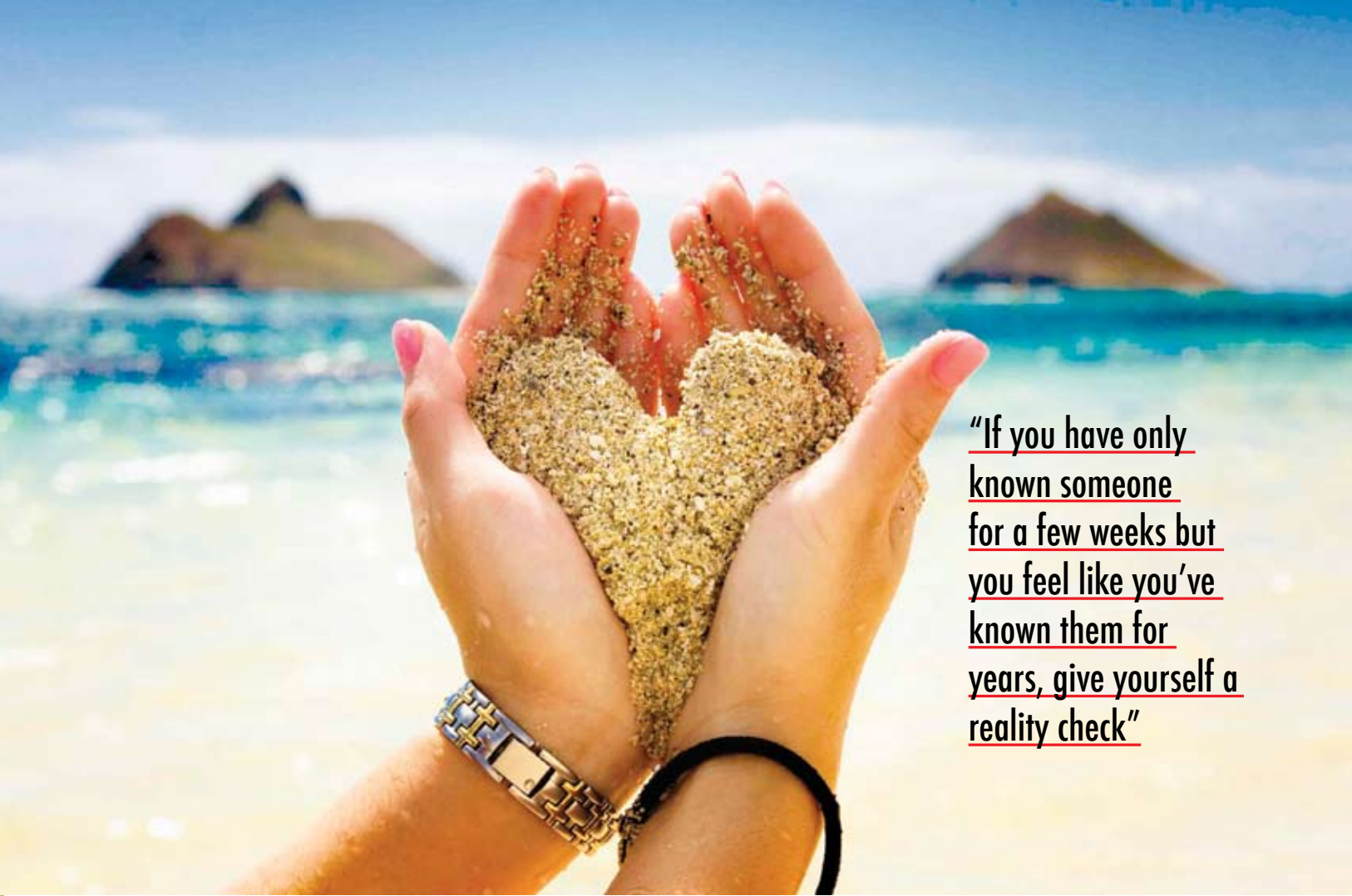


Lovers by Gustav Klimt

# LOVE IN THE SUN

The sun is shining, the temperature is rising, and love is in the air! Summertime romances are, more often than not, intense but temporary. The future you have planned with your summer prince charming may quickly crumble as the seasons change, but that's no reason not to enjoy them while they last. By **Mira Khreino**





"If you have only known someone for a few weeks but you feel like you've known them for years, give yourself a reality check"

**O**ur summertime psychological mind-frame differs from that of other seasons. We tend to look healthier, feel better about ourselves, get out and about more, and yes, show more skin. The increase in social activity leads to intersex mingling and a heightened awareness of our sexual attraction and desire. In sunnier months, people are also usually happier due to the sun's impact on brain serotonin levels and our mood. These factors compound to lead to an increase in self-esteem and self-confidence, gearing us up for the summer and the potential for romance it brings. Summer romances are fantastic when both parties are on the same page as to whether they are searching for a casual fling or a more serious commitment. However, it may be that one person's intention differs from the other's. Here are our top tips to ensure that you not only enjoy yourself but safeguard your feelings as well.

- All-consuming thoughts about a new summer romance can cause you to disengage from your everyday life, priorities, and desires. In the midst of being swept off your feet, try to stay grounded on some level, whether that means seeing your friends regularly, pursuing your hobbies, or taking time for yourself.



- Things move at a faster pace when either you or your love interest is on holiday. A passionate summer love affair might have gone very differently if it had been set in the humdrum daily life of a wintery hometown. It is therefore important that you keep things in perspective. If you have only known someone for a few weeks but

you feel like you've known them for years, give yourself a reality check! Remind yourself that there is so much about them you have yet to discover.

- It is not who happens to like you, but who you happen to like that is important. Do not go for someone for the simple reason that they seem interested. There





**“Building a future based on first impressions, or on a short season, might end in long-term regret”**

are two principal reasons for this. First, by spending time with someone you are not interested in romantically, you are keeping yourself from meeting someone who you may potentially fall for. Second, you are worth too much to settle for dating someone you aren't crazy about; desperate people settle for whatever they are given instead of going for what they want.

- Men and women both have the same fears and insecurities around dating, so be proactive instead of reactive. Show interest instead of waiting to react to someone showing interest in you. The more active we are in our lives, the more power we have over our destiny. In this case, a man will usually also appreciate you taking some of the burden off of him.

- Be open and inviting to love. If you are confident and self-assured, relaxed and positive about life, you will invite exactly what it is you need from it. The message you then confirm to yourself is that you deserve happiness because you are worth happiness. Be relaxed around members of the opposite sex; an interested man should be trying to impress you just as much as you are trying to impress him.

- Avoid thinking “Would I be able to be with this person in the long term?” upon first meeting someone! The reality is you will have to get to know them much better



before entertaining such ideas. Building a future based on first impressions, or on a short season, might end in long-term regret. Give yourself the chance to properly get to know your love interest and give them the chance to get to know you.

Refrain from jumping stages and going from zero to one hundred in two weeks. If you only have forever on your mind, you'll always be playing a mental game of “yes or no,” which takes the fun out of getting to know someone.

## "Avoid holding on to something that has expired"



- Do not seek to define your relationship too early on. However, if the question of "What is going on between us?" is really bothering you, then own up to your feelings and discuss them. That way, you are both clear on each other's intentions. You will then be in a better position to decide where to go from there.
- Trust your instincts. If after a couple of weeks you sense that he's either sleazy, slimy, or shady, then cut bait and fish elsewhere. People will always put their best foot forward at the beginning. If his true colors clash with yours, then change the canvas, palette, and paintbrush!
- Avoid holding on to something that has expired. Treat your summer romance like a good party and leave before things go downhill. Bid your farewells while you're still having fun and before things go sour.
- The famous song "Summer Nights" from the movie *Grease* finishes with the verse "It turned cold, that's where it ends. So I told her we'd still be friends... Summer dreams, ripped at the seams. But oh, those summer nights." This more or less sums up most summer romances. Appreciate the fun times but also acknowledge that, fleeting as the season it's named after, summer romances are temporary.
- If you feel that you both have a lot in common and have a potential future together as the summer season comes to an end, then have a discussion about



it. Sooner is better than later. Do not be too eager to throw the relationship away; see if there are things you can both do to keep it going. If you find at the end of the discussion that you are not compatible after all, try to end things as amicably as possible and mourn the relationship before moving on.

- For a relationship to stand the test of time, it must weather the seasons. Long-term relationships must not only pass the three-month honeymoon phase of finding everything interesting about the other person, but make it through summer, autumn, winter, and spring. A season-spanning relationship is the only true way for both partners to experience each other's mood and behavioral changes as the seasons transition.

The people we meet bring to us a whole new world; we're introduced to their opinions, experiences, thoughts, stories, likes, and dislikes. When two people meet, there is an exchange. The exchanges we have with different people can vary greatly, each contributing a little to who we are today. We learn something valuable from every experience. Just because something does not last does not mean that our time has been wasted, or that we should regret ever having taken that chance. Our perceived mistakes allow us to learn, gain wisdom, and better deal with similar situations in the future. Any experience we learn from, good or bad, is worth the effort. So enjoy the August heat and heart flutters, for September comes around way too soon. ■