

same as it ever was

by Thomas Hunt

"Wait a minute!

Everybody. . . get in line." The amplified voice of David Byrne erupted from his headphones.

"So, you gonna order anything?"

He slid his earphones off and looked up at the waitress. She wasn't gorgeous, but she was pretty. Her short brown hair was cut neatly, her hazel eyes shone brightly.

"Sorry, I couldn't hear you. Too many years of loud music, I guess."

"I guess so. You ready to order?"

"Sure, I'll have two scrambled eggs and a glass of orange juice."

"Toast, biscuit or muffin?"

"Muffin please."

"Sounds good."

She walked away, tucking her notepad into her apron and returning her pencil to its resting place behind her ear.

He sighed and put his headphones back on.

Byrne began singing again. "Nothing can come between us. Nothing gets you down. Nothing strikes your fancy. Nothing turns you on."

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It was a bright and early Sunday morning. He sat in the fourth street coffee shop listening to his music at a very high level and waiting for the waitress to come and take his order. The waitress, a beautiful, but aged young woman snuck up behind him and stood there waiting, until she spoke:

"So you gonna order anything?"

"Sorry, I couldn't hear you." He said, slipping off his headphones and smiling sheepishly. "Too many years of loud music, I guess."

"I guess so." She said, his grin deflected, her work face on, and her pencil in hand. "You ready to order?"

He glanced down at the menu and tried to compose his thoughts. The natural thing to do was simply to order. Some people may try to hit on the waitress, but he wasn't the type of person to hit on people when they were working. How was one to tell if they were into you or just making conversation because kindness and conversation was a part of their job. More importantly, what was the deal with the male obsession with waitresses? Were they hot because they

were brining you food or drink, or were they just hot? Regardless, he went with the easy route, plan A. "Sure, I'll have two scrambled eggs and a glass of orange juice."

"Toast, biscuit or muffin?" She said with a level of contempt you don't usually get early on a Sunday morning, but he shrugged it off, she had a hard job and even though the restaurant was mostly empty, he could see she had a half finished crossword puzzle waiting for her at the counter and the chef was behind the divider grungy looking and sleepy, waiting for his precious order to be taken so that he could go back to sleep.

"Muffin please." He said curtly with little or no emotion.

Like a robot she responded "Sounds good." and the transaction was over. 1,2,3,4. He sighed and put his headphones back on, once again tapping his fingers in time with the beat.

* * *

He was sitting, alone, in a large seventies style coffee shop. The walls were rocky and the carpet was an ugly orange brown, soiled here and there with the contents of fallen trays, the accident of spilled drink.

He noticed her standing there and slid his headphones off.

"So you gonna order anything?"

"Sorry, I couldn't hear you. Too many years of loud music, I guess."

"I guess so. You ready to order?"

"Sure, I'll have two scrambled eggs and a glass of orange juice."

"Toast, biscuit or muffin?"

"Muffin please."

"Sounds good."

She walked away. Why didn't I say anything to her, he thought. Why didn't I smile and tell her I die a thousand deaths every time she smiles or that if she were of Troy, her face would've launched a million ships, putting to shame Pitiful Helen's thousand. Ah fuck it, he thought to himself, I'll just try to enjoy my breakfast and not to think about it.

He put his headphones back on.

* * *

He marched through the seventies style coffee shop, his headphones beating out a rhythmic beat. The waitress stood there, behind the counter, wiping it down with a wet rag. He walked right up to her. He slid his headphones off.

He took a deep breath and said "Hi."

"Yes?" She said.

"Umm, can I just, sit wherever I want?"

"Sure, I'll find you."

"Okay, cause the sign said 'Wait to be Seated'."

"We don't much worry about that in the mornings."

"Alright, thanks."

"No problem."

He walked toward a booth in the corner, and slid his headphones back on.

David Byrne began singing again, "Wait a minute!"