

## The Day Music Died

By A. C. Zito

"You're barely touching your food." Regina told Henry.

"I just ate with Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg a couple of hours ago so I'm good." Regina looked at him, surprised.

"You're messing with me." She said to him, smiling.

"No," said Henry. "I should've showed up late like Neil deGrasse Tyson did. But he had a good excuse. He just got back from Mars doing a documentary on the alien fish they found in the waters up there. I'm very excited to watch it. He actually pets it and everything and swims around in the cold water. He said we should've seen it. The lake was thawing up nicely, and we should all get a lake house up there before all the land is bought out." She looked at him, in shock.

"I heard rumors about Neil going into space; I didn't know it was true. And he went to Mars? SUMO-FLEX, that's cool." Henry scowled at Regina.

"Don't say sumo-flex anymore, in two weeks a new term is going to come out and that term will be gone just like the 2020's is about to be." Regina became red in the face.

"How would you know? No one knows what the future holds!" Henry didn't seem to be paying much attention to Regina. He was too busy examining his fingernails.

"I do know what happens in the future. I control it." Regina threw her napkin down and stood up.

"You don't know jack-SQUAT, HENRY BRYANT!" Henry chuckled to himself as he stood up as well. He threw two stacks of one-hundred dollar bills down on the table and picked up the half-finished bottle of wine.

"Take a walk with me, Regina, darling. Let's take a walk on the wild side." She looked at him, reluctant, but at the amount of money he just threw on the table *willy-nilly* had her feeling quite intimidated by the cocky know-it-all he presented himself to be.

"This is a beautiful night for a walk." She quietly said to him as they began walking through Cannon Beach, Oregon's downtown areas.

"Yes, it has a lot of nooks and crannies to make you feel like you're in a cute, little wonderland. Listen, Regina; I don't want to break your heart. Maybe we should just call it a night. Okay?" Regina ignored him. She was too busy thinking about all that money he just threw on the table.

"What do you do for a living, Mr. Bryant?" She put her arm around him, and he put his arm around her.

“Real-estate,” he said, nonchalantly, as he took another swig of the bottle of wine.

“No, really,” she said, snatching the bottle from his hand and taking a swig herself. He sighed, replying:

“I make apps. Well, I *did* work for Google, but they fired me because I disobeyed their orders.” She stopped in her tracks leaving him to stop as well. She looked up at him, curiously.

“What did you do?” She asked, intrigued. Her face looked warm, and the brisk yet pleasant air flowing through the coastal town wasn’t doing much help to keeping her body temperature down. She felt excited; yet scared.

“Have you heard of *Vocoff*?” she shoved him hard, squealing out:

“You made *that*? My sister and her husband absolutely *love* that app! Now, every time Logan Paul or Jake Paul or RiceGum or whoever my niece and nephew are watching, it’ll just turn the sound on mute when they say a cuss word! Do you know how revolutionary that is? And you definitely helped a lot of YouTubers businesses along with every music artist, TV show, or movie *ever*. Now, they can cater to, pretty much, everyone!” She laughed a funny, quirky laugh before putting her arm around him again and taking another swig as they continued their walk. But Henry still looked to be distressed as he discontinued their walk once again.

“But I did something... Regina, I can’t. Every time I try to do this dating thing or make friends with people it just doesn’t work.” She grabbed his arm as he started walking away and shoved the wine bottle into his chest, saying:

“Hey... drink, dude. You seem *way* too stressed out for a thirty-three year old *millionaire*.” Henry shook his head, frowning.

“It’s not about the money. It’s never been about the money. It’s only about making sure *you’re* happy, first and foremost, and then making sure the people around you are happy too. But I can’t do either without staying afloat with a stable job. I can’t do both without breaking some toes. I want to achieve my goals, but I don’t want to make myself or other people suffer. I don’t know what to do... I don’t know *what I’ve done!*” Regina took a step back.

“You need to *take a break* and have a KitKat bar.” She laughed at this, took the bottle of wine from his hands and began walking again. Henry followed her. Maybe she wouldn’t care. Maybe she didn’t like music that much... but who doesn’t like *music*?

“They fired me, Regina Kapur. Because I did *it!* I killed it! I killed *music!*” Regina frowned. She slowly dropped the wine bottle in a nearby trashcan and went and sat on a nearby bench.

“I don’t understand. Come sit with me. Tell me why you feel so troubled. You *know* everything is going to be all right.”

*That's what she thinks* Henry thought to himself *I have to go into hiding. I have to get away from society because of the evil thing I've done.*

"Sit down and take a chill pill. You're not *Hitler*... you didn't *kill* anyone. You just made a cool, little app. You're a good guy. I don't see why they would fire you; did you say something nasty to one of the upper people? If so, you can always go and apologize. That's no big deal. You weren't harassing anyone; you weren't stalking anyone; you were stealing from anyone; you weren't *killing* people or taking part in sexual misconduct."

"No..." Bryant replied. "But... I updated the app. Now it does *more* than bleep out cuss words. It puts ads on mute. Google is now being sued by Spotify, Pandora, YouTube, Twitch, Hulu, TBS, Comedy Central, CNN, NBC, FOX, TNT, TruTV, HGTV, USA, BET, Freeform, Disney Channel, Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network, Spectrum, Dish, MSNBC, Vimeo..." Regina interrupted him, saying:

"Hold on... you can't be serious!" Henry looked at her, darkly. She knew there was more.

"I lost all my money buying lawyers. But I know the future. I made a new app. It goes public tomorrow. It's called Fut-Net. It's pronounced like *fa-yute* like the '*fut*' in future. Google's dead, Fut-Net lives; what else is dead, you may ask? Microsoft Edge, Mozilla Firefox, Chrome, Bing; Fut-Net does so much more than what any of those browsers or search engines could ever do. It shows the internet, but it gives the span of the youngest child born so far and however long into the future they will live. So far, I can see one-hundred and fifty years into the future. But supposedly, in twenty years give or take, the world will be able to see two-hundred years into the future. The only glitch in it is that you can't see yourself in the future or what you're doing. Only other people can. But you'd think you'd be able to get people to tell you what you're doing like when you die, who you fall in love with, if you have kids; but it just comes out muffled when someone tries to tell you or write it down for you. But one thing I *have* learned from the future is what is about to happen in the case with Google vs. the Internet. Google wins; and they don't get rid of the app. So music has to change with the times."

"How does it change with the times?" Regina asked. She felt the pressure weighing down on her. She wanted to run away. He did something, she knew it. He did something so unbelievably terrible.

"There are no more songs from the heart. That type of music is almost dead. I killed it; I killed it, *don't you hear me?* It's just songs that are... that are... *advertisements*; songs about drinking *Pepsi* or wearing *Sketchers*. The government couldn't put a stop to keeping the ads around the songs or before the song starts so corporations made it so the ads were written *inside* the songs!" Regina wanted to laugh.

"That's the stupidest thing I've heard in my entire life. If you don't want to tell me what you do for a living, you don't have to avoid the question and go into such fanatical lengths! I'm *outta* here, buddy." Regina got up and left while Henry shrugged his shoulders and put his headphones in, singing to his new, favorite song:

*Amazon bought me that Gucci* MIGOS

*Amazon bought me that Gucci MIGOS*

*Amazon*

*Did*

*It all*

*In*

*Three*

*Days*

*Or less!*