In Tune

By

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INT. BANK - DAY

A small bank in a suburban mall. People line up desultorily. The tellers look bored.

SUPER - CHICAGO ILLINOIS

LUKE (23), tall with a crew cut, gets to the service window. He hands over a Social Security cheque. The TELLER is a middle aged, portly man. He gives a fake smile and takes the cheque.

LUKE
Hi there. Another nice day. Wednesday already...week is just flying.

TELLER
I’ll bet it always flies for you. Social Security...it’s not like you have any commitments, right?

LUKE
Sorry?

TELLER
Sorry for what? Being a burden on society?

He taps in numbers on the keyboard. The cash till opens.

LUKE
Hey, no need to be rude. I might be unemployed but I don’t deserve this abuse. In fact, I might make a complaint to your boss.

He leans forward to read the teller’s name badge. Nothing there.

TELLER
Oh, silly me. I forgot to put my tag on.

He pins a ‘BANK MANAGER’ badge on and looks up at Luke.

TELLER
Now then, let’s hear your complaint...asshole.

Luke isn’t deterred - he’s used to this.
LUKE
Why are you working the windows?
Shouldn’t you be sitting in your
office, drinking coffee and looking
at porn?

TELLER
Why you...for your information,
some of my rat filth staff have
called in sick. They don’t rate
much higher than you on the shit
scale.

He hands over some bills.

LUKE
Thank you.

TELLER
Don’t thank me, scumbag. Thank the
people in this world that work. Now
scuttle off to your video game
arcade. Spend your hard earned...

Luke pockets the cash. Suddenly, the muzak playing in the
background changes. Luke’s ears prick up as he listens...

VOCALIST(O.S)
.....Been searching for the
answer...to find a better
way...someday she’ll appear..take
away my troubles....I’ll be free to
vanish in her smile..someday she’ll
appear...

LUKE
That’s a nice song. Any idea what
it is? Do you have a set list for
the background music?

People in the line behind him are restless.

ANGRY CUSTOMER(O.S)
Hey, dickhead! Move it, will ya?
Folks got business to do. The bars
are nearly open.

TELLER
You heard the man. Get lost!

Luke wanders out. That song is stuck in his head...
INT. DINER – DAY

JOEL (22), solid with a mop of black hair, sits at a table near the window. Luke walks in and sits down.

JOEL
Get the money ok?

LUKE
Yeah. Copped the usual abuse. ’No good loser, get a fucking job’, blah, blah...

JOEL
Typical bank clerks. But, everyday, a total loser expects shit. Goes with the territory.

He gestures to EDDIE (50), behind the counter.

JOEL (CONT’D)
Yo, big Ed...can we have a coffee, please?

EDDIE
Sure. Just one?

JOEL
Yeah, things are tight. It’s time to share, man. Do our bit for the recession.

LUKE
I’ve got__

JOEL
Quiet! It won’t hurt us.

EDDIE
Comin’ up.

He checks the time – 1015 – and turns on a small radio.

EDDIE (CONT’D)
Got a good thing running at Hollywood Park. Easy money.

He makes the boys a coffee and brings it out to them. They take turns sipping from the cup.

LUKE
Great coffee, Eddie.
EDDIE
You guys are s-o-o desperate.

JOEL
And betting on a four-legged tin of dog food isn’t?

EDDIE
Ha! You guys can’t be that broke, though. Didn’t you say Luke’s mom was paying half your rent?

LUKE
Yeah, but only because she has a crush on lover boy here.

EDDIE
Hmmm. That true, stud?

JOEL
Um, no comment at this stage.

LUKE
My mom has been a bit wayward since the divorce.

EDDIE
She must be around my age...

LUKE/JOEL
No!!

EDDIE
Hey, just asking...

JOEL
(sighs)
Look, Luke’s mom is a very hot lady...

LUKE
Too much info, buddy.

JOEL
...but I have refused her advances on moral grounds.

EDDIE
Because she’s your best friend’s mother, right? Commendable.
JOEL
Not exactly. I’m just not keen on going anywhere near a birthing canal he slid down.

Eddie blinks and returns to his radio. Luke starts to speak as the door opens. ROBYN (24), a tall and pretty brunette, enters. She gives the boys a friendly nod.

JOEL
(whispers)
Stop the press...what a honey.

EDDIE
Hey Robyn. How goes it?

ROBYN
Good, thanks Ed. Lovely day.

EDDIE
Sure is. Coffee to go?

ROBYN
That would be great.

Eddie makes a coffee, one ear pinned to the radio. Robyn checks her mobile, as Joel and Luke check her out.

EDDIE
There you go...yes!!

ROBYN
(laughs)
My money makes you that happy?

EDDIE
Sorry...my horse just won. Made me a packet.

ROBYN
Good for you. Bye now.

She leaves, smiling again at the boys.

JOEL
Eddie, my man, who is she? Damn, what a stunner!

EDDIE
Works at the music store on the next block.
LUKE
How come we never seen her before?

EDDIE
Maybe you aren’t usually awake this early.

JOEL
Ouch!

EDDIE
She’s single too...

LUKE
Interesting.

JOEL
I saw her first.

EDDIE
Now boys, don’t fight about it. Look, to celebrate my good fortune on the oat burners, here’s a free coffee.

JOEL
Big Ed, you shouldn’t spoil us.

EDDIE
I’m not. Actually, it makes me sick seeing two grown men sip from the same cup. Dammit, it’s not natural.

LUKE
You’re all heart, Ed.

He stands as Eddie brings the coffee out.

LUKE(CONT’D)
But my buddy here can have it. He’s spilled most of the other one anyway.

JOEL
Where are you off to?

LUKE
To, uh, find a job.

EDDIE
Yeah, right.

Luke grins and leaves.
JOEL
You know, I could follow him. I’ve got as much chance with Robyn as him.

EDDIE
Possibly. But we both know that won’t happen. Leave him be.

JOEL
I suppose...say, you got any tips for the next race?

EDDIE
Maybe. You got Luke’s mom’s phone number?

JOEL
Maybe...

EXT. CITY STREETS – DAY

Luke walks along the street, amongst pedestrians. The day is fine but crisp. He finds himself whistling the SONG. Suddenly, the SONG blares from a passing car.

LUKE
What is going on here?

Ahead of him, a young white guy sits a bus stop. He has a small portable CD player, and listens on earphones. As Luke passes, a bus approaches. The guy gets up quickly, and the cable pulls loose from the player. The SONG roars out!

LUKE
Hey, that’s...ah, excuse me?

YOUNG GUY
Uh, yeah? Look, my bus is here...

LUKE
That song you’re listening to...who sings it? Please, I need to know.

YOUNG GUY
I don’t know. My brother made a mix for me. I have to go.
   (under his breath)
   Weirdo...

LUKE
Crazy...I need to get a grip.

He walks on and comes to the music store.

INT.MUSIC STORE - DAY

No one is in the shop, except for Robyn at the counter. She frowns as she checks an order, then looks up.

ROBYN
Good morning. Anything I can help you with? Oh, hello...you were at Ed’s diner before, weren’t you?

LUKE
Ah, yeah. He, um, recommended your CD’s.

ROBYN
Oh really? That was nice of him.

LUKE
Yeah...

There is a moment of silence. A mutual attraction is evident but neither is keen to make the first move...

ROBYN
So...is there any particular CD you’re after?

LUKE
Actually, you might be able to help me.

ROBYN
Yes?

LUKE
This song I’ve been hearing...

Suddenly, the SONG rings out over the store speakers. Robyn smiles.

ROBYN
I just love this song...

LUKE
Huh? That’s it! That’s the song I’m trying to find!
ROBYN
It’s our song of the week.

LUKE
I have to know who sings it. Have you got a copy? I’ll buy it now.

He pulls out his wallet. Robyn searches on the counter amongst paperwork.

ROBYN
We only have the one promotional copy...somewhere. I’m doing an order now.

LUKE
Please, I need to see the cover. It’s been driving me mad. I’ll...I’ll take you out to dinner.

Robyn looks up in surprise. Luke drops his head, blushing.

ROBYN
(quietly)
I’d like that. Ah, here’s the cover.

LUKE
Yes? Who’s it by?

ROBYN
I...that’s odd. No group name...no song name either. Just the record company label.

Luke’s eyes grow large. He throws his head back.

LUKE
AAAAARGH....

INT.DINER - DAY


SUPER - A FEW DAYS LATER

LUKE
...and that was it basically. All because of the song.
EDDIE
Which you still haven’t been able
to track down.

ROBYN
No. A real mystery that. I’ve
searched on the ’Net for hours.
Nothing.

LUKE
Hey babe, it’s ok. Things are
looking up for me now. A new girl,
some weekend work helping in her
store...Ed’s coffee. What could
possibly spoil my day?

The door opens. Joel walks in with Luke’s mom, TRISH (50),
blonde and extremely fit. They are both slightly drunk.

JOEL
Hey, dudes!

LUKE
Well, apart from this...

TRISH
Hi, son. Ah, this must be Robyn.
I’ve heard so much about you.

ROBYN
Ah, hi.

She glances at Luke.

EDDIE
Well, this looks interesting.

LUKE
(sighs)
Yeah...hi Mom.

EDDIE
So, Joel...?

JOEL
Wha...? Oh, Trish, this is Eddie.
Champion coffee maker.

TRISH
Heard all about you too, big Ed.
EDDIE
It’s all lies. Well, some of it.


ROBYN
So, your best friend dates your mom?

LUKE
Former best friend...

ROBYN
Cool!

JOEL
Actually, Luke, old buddy, old guy. I’ve come here... Trish and I have come here, straight from a very good party...to ask you a favour.

LUKE
This is gonna be good...

TRISH
Let me tell him, pumpkin...

Robyn and Eddie giggle as Luke sinks further into misery.

TRISH(CONT’D)
Joel and I thought it would be a wonderful idea to fly to Vegas this afternoon...

LUKE
My life is totally ruined...

TRISH
...and be married by a Clint Eastwood celebrant.

ROBYN
Awesome!

JOEL
What do you think, Luke? Or should I say...son?

EDDIE
You’d be a great dad, Joel. Luke here is a lucky boy. Coffees are on the house!
Suddenly, the SONG comes on the radio! Luke lifts his head, a look of wonder on his face. The SONG fades out.

D.J(OS.)
...man, that is one brilliant tune.
Destined to storm the charts...

LUKE
(whispers)
At last...something to hold on too...maybe I can salvage something...

D.J(OS.)
...yes, that’s the debut single by...

Luke slips to the floor, onto his knees. He gazes at the radio with reverential awe. Robyn, Joel and Trish can only watch in silence...

LUKE
(whispers)
Yes...

Then the DJ is gone, replaced by...

RACE CALLER(O.S)
And they’re off in the third,
Danish Oak away well, so too
Rambler’s Revenge...Broad Ebay
slightly blocked...

Eddie stands at the radio, finger on the dial.

LUKE
AAAAAAAAAAAAARRGHH...

EDDIE
(shrugs)
Hey, I got another good tip. Man
can’t survive giving away coffee...

FADE OUT