

HOW A STORY BEGINS

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“It’s not a gash, Grandpa and you can’t just say words like that anymore.”

My little darling. With my advanced age I have both the privilege and the duty to society to speak my mind as pleased. ‘Sides, when I speak of a sex organ as a gash it can no longer be perceived as an object of lustful mind meanderings- I have been rendered neutered by the relentlessness of time. I merely mention your gash as an identifier of your uniqueness, to differentiate you from the rest of us with dangly undergarment elephant nozzles. When I acknowledge you or your mother as a gash, just think of it as a derogatory term of endearment.

“Just, please don’t. That kind of talk is sexist and ain’t cool anymore!”

Believe in you me, Pigtails, I may be losin’ my vision but I can see clear the mores and values of the world. And I know they sure as shit change like the direction of the wind out a bagpiper’s asshole. I’ve earned the right to be bigoted, it’s accepted and encouraged amongst those of us of advanced age. So go on, put my special talk out your mind and sit with your old grandfather. Right here on this old sofa we left on the porch so the cat won’t piss on it anymore. That’s right, sit next to Paw. Though now it’s on the porch the raccoons piss on it some but I never minded it none anyway.

“Uh. I have homework to do.”

Shut the fuck up child and listen. When I'm dead your homework will still be there but my stories will be dead with me. And iffin it ain't Jack Reaper comin' for my memories it'll be the sand pit of mental instability I find myself slippin' in ta more an more each day. I got these goddamned stories and I mean to share em and you're the only person I can oblige to hear. So shut up, eat that chocolate bar stick and hear my story for today. I been holdsing on to a wallop of a tale and this just could be my last chance to tell it....

That's right kid, grimace. But open the ears and hear me... The year of significance is two thousand and naught naught naught, called 2,000 for simplicity.

“Grandpa! It's 2010 right now. I know because I write that at the top of all my papers.”

You think I don't know that?! Now shut up before I really don't know one year from the next! I'm launching into a tale you dumb bitch! Suspend your disbeliefs or else this'll be some long winded yappin for nothin!

The year 2,000. Eons ago. A backwards age, peopled and populated by thieves, vagabonds and the worse of em all....customer service representatives. That's right. Before robots that started doin all the work that ain't fit to be worth doin, people had to be doin' em. I'm talkin everything from sellin ya groceries to tellering you at the bank to fixin your Paw up with his picture paper pussy periodicals... Say what you will bout the modern age, but you kids sure got it easy all these damned robots! Anyhow, you might surmise the people of that time long ago were not only pure shitheads, but we had to have a lot more dealings with em too.

I ain't even tole you one of the worse bits of it yet either. As you may not know from your rosy tinted history text-pad-books, the piss buckets of the year Two-Naught-Naught-Naught were racist as shit.

“Racist?”

Humph. How could I expect you to even remember that word. My ignorance got me shakin my own head for my foolishness. Racist is the word what means when a person gets to hatin another, not for a sensible reason, but for a reason which pertains to only the hue of one’s skin. Now I know it’s hard to tell now, what with human retinas having mutated to only seeing hues of dullish green after years of staring at illuminated screen has mutated our DNA. But people have different colors of skin and slightly unique features dependin’ on a thing called race. It ain’t important, but the governments of the old times way back when saw fit to play people against each other by harping on such and such fictitious differences. That way they could fuck all those dumb turds when they weren’t payin enough attention.

This story I’m gonna unwind for you will touch upon conspiracies long forgotten and Roomba-ed under the mat of our history. It will also touch upon some things yet to come... Hold on. I pause for dramatic effect and raise an eyebrow towards you young lady for this statement lands with significance. This yarn will touch upon things to come... And you sure as shit is gonna learn a thing or two about racism and general bigotry along the way. I’ll conspiratorially whisper to you...even though we don’t recognize people as differing races anymore, your ol gradpa can still pick em out!

Anyhoo, back to the year 2,000, so long ago. My story is chiefly concerned bout a musical combo group. You wouldn’t a known of them, even if you were from back then. They was what we would call... obscure. They were a Doo-Wop musical group specifically, named The Arnold-Tones.

Okay, okay. I can see your eyes getting that familiar glaze over look. You see back in those days, music hadn’t yet been perfected by computers, and it took more than just one disc jockey with a fanciful laptop computer to perform for the entertainment of others. Fact of point, it could often take four to five people, each with an instrument in hand mind you, to perform the work of what

would easily take your mobile telephone minutes to create. Now you know that some of the other old coots at the senior center might say this is a cryin shame, or that just ain't as it should be... I say malarkey. Despite my bias which will sure be evident soon enough, just know you kids sure got it good today.

The Arnold-Tones was one of the musical such groups I spoke of. Back then things went in and out of fashion much like they do today. Difference bein, folks took a lot longer to change their mind on junk. Where now a hairstyle might be in vogue for a few weeks or so, back then it could take a year or more for the pendulum of popular trends to swing. Heck, your old grandpa had a pompadour longer than you even been alive, kiddo.

When it came to trends, Doo-Wop music was the doozy of them all. It had just about everything anything else ever had going for it...I'm talkin the bop, the sizzle...it even had half decent costuming. Doo-Wop combos groups came with fancy names and matching suits. The major, major groups were unmistakable; I can still remember em all to this day! Not the music mind you so much, mostly followed a similar template. But those fantastic suits, hairstyles and I can even remember the race of each group. That's right. Each of these Doo-Wop outfits was something we called segregated...meaning to say they was organized in accordance to their race of origin.

I'll hand you a for instance. *The Gentleman Callers* were Asian.

'What's an Asian?'

That's one of those races I spoke of. An Asian is a person who originates from a country on the land mass continent of Asia. They might be from China, Japan or one of them others. Oh, oh! Cept if they're from India or Pakistan they're another kinda race, we called Indian. Now we also called some of the older humans from the continent of North America, Indians. Funny enough, there was

actually an Indian group called the *Red Dots* and another Indian group called the *Featherettes*. So, the *Gentleman Callers* were Asian, I can't recall what kind though cause I was so racist back then. So you know most your boyfriends that I assume have larger than average waist schnozzles? They were what racists like myself would call Negro's, coloreds or moon crickets. "Black" was the preferred and least accurate nomenclature though, and there were a multitude of black Doo-Wop groups, my favorite being *The Sharp Flats*. All I mean to say is these groups kept to themselves, even if their audience and fans didn't care to notice their skin. In fact the only thing matching more than their skin, was their suits- and boy oh boy those **suits**.

Now my favorite suits were worn by my favorite group, *The Jumping Beans*. They were a Mexican combo from Guatemala.

I make a kissy hand to puckered lips French chef gesture to illustrate my delight with these suits. **Muah!** Green, crushed velvets tuxedos with a orange stripe down the pant, wide necktie, pointy alligator shoes... simply divine.

Shit! I'm onto the sidetrack of fashion when I mean to be centering the story around the point of greatest interest. I have highlighted the status quo of that year long ago numbered 2,000 so that when I arrive at our protagonists, you'll have an appreciation for what could be regarded as what is their greatest blight and their greatest strength.

I will pause for a few moments here and let you prepare to soak in the heavy strength of the following words which I will emphasize by slowing my voice and lowering its register...

...I speak of the group whose name I injected into conversation some time ago... The Arnold-Tones... The Arnold-Tones were forgotten and cast aside in their time because they didn't fit in. That's right they stuck out. If you ask for what reason did they stand out? I would say they stood

out because they were different....**Different races**...The Arnold-Tones were the first integrated, multi-racial Doo-Wop group.

Now they never intended to be different. In many ways they are like you and your friends today, they simply didn't pay much mind to the color of one's skin. They came together, brothers in music. While never wanting to be a politically driven group, just being themselves required of them that they become political. I mean to say it would have if anyone ever cared or paid them enough attention to notice those poor Arnold-Tones. Like a soggy loaf a wood, the spark under them just couldn't flame a fire. I'll tell you from my own firsthand experience hearing that music? They had it, boy they had it. And I'll tell you; to this day I know that the one thing keepin' those four boys from the stratosphere of the record charts was their race and their inability to all be the same one.

Point to fact they refused to let others define them by their race. Bravely, they kept their heads up, their chins out and were deferent to an in'defiant world. Oh! So let me describe them right quick to paint you a clearer picture.

Arnold Song, he was the Chinese one. Arnold Nightingale was the white one, or Caucasian as the fancy called them.

And let me cock my head slightly to the side to tell you an aside that in case you were wondering... you are a Caucasian yourself their little missy- not that it matters much these days anyhow- just figured you might be curious now that you know what race is. Yes you are fully Caucasoidal and I won't be proven otherwise. After Arnold Song and Arnold Nightingale you have Arnaldo Cantor, who was also a Mexican. Or Latino if you prefer. Lastly it's just Arnold Croon, and he was a Black person and maybe my favorite. The best singer, the most talented and the handsomest.

"I have to pee, Grandpa."

Jesus, child! I just got my steam and now you have to drain the gash?! Fine, but make it snappy.

Now that you know somewhat about the time and setting, we gotta jump into action! Go, go and hurry before I lose my thought filled train.

And there she goes....running off into the house and leaving her old grandfather to mutter to himself. That's one thing I can get too far away from these days. Muttering. I feel I can mutter and mumble at just about any damned volume I so well please and folks just hardly pay me any mind.

It makes me shake my head in a bewilderment tinged with delight.

I'll just sit here and mutter, life on pause and that little generation y bitch might not even come back.... Well here, I'll write a note to myself on my hand to pick up this story later.

Now she knows about Doo-Wop and the Arnold-Tones but I have to tell her more. I'll be dead by the time this story becomes important to her. But she has to know. She has got to prepare!