

Cafe Society March 4, 2022

The cafe was more crowded than usual so Anthony found himself seated near the back of the building. He found himself checking the twenty-four hour news updates and also the weather forecast.

The damn Ukrainian war was spiraling more and more out of control. Putin's troops may well have been tripping over themselves but they were killing thousands of Ukrainian civilians in the process.

Anthony was tempted to order a pint of beer but he checked himself. Too early in the day for any sort of alcoholic beverage.

Two boys were seated at an adjacent table. They are arguing about whether Jimmy Page played a Les Paul or a Telecaster on Stairway to Heaven. Anthony had always disliked Led Zeppelin and similar classic rock bands.

The boys' argument was going nowhere until a young woman joined their table. They stopped talking as she joined them.

Sorry I'm late, guys.

That's okay Shelley.

You're not all that late.

Thanks, guys. I'm afraid I have bad news....Kathleen Sullivan died.

The two music geeks swallowed their tongues. They did not seem to know Kathleen Sullivan as well as Shelley did.

I didn't know her that well, really.

I didn't know your friend Kathleen was sick. How did she die?

Cancer, Rob. She'd been ill for some time.

Anthony didn't know Kathleen Sullivan. Was she a musician? An artist? A writer?

Her partner died a few years ago. Right, Shelley?

Yes, Ben. Joe passed in 2017.

The waiter took Anthony's order. He saw an empty booth closer to the front of the cafe and asked if he could move to that booth. He didn't want to be listening to a conversation about the death of somebody he didn't know.

This woman who had died couldn't have been that old, he remarked to himself. This girl Shelley and her friends certainly weren't very old. Cancer.....Anthony associated various cancers with older people and older bodies. He had lost friends to cancer and was terrified about the possibility of getting it himself.

The server obliged his request. Anthony could now sit closer to the front of the cafe. The music on The Playlist sounded like Led Zeppelin but it was somebody else....somebody loud and insignificant.