

The Night That the Band Got the Wine

Al Stewart

The earthquake hit at 6 19 with a jolt
People went running for the doorways
And for the next half minute it shook
Up on the 17th floor the sommelier was opening the
wine
He knew the great hotel was solidly built
Still it must have been a miracle that nothing got spilt

Terry O'Shea got up from the Chippendale chair
Talking on the telephone
Looking perplexed waving a hand in the air
In the great room all alone
Fifty years old today, a microdot billionaire
Putting on a party like a Hollywood guy
With all the food and wine that his money could buy

The band came in arguing as usual
About nothing in particular
It always seemed to be this way
Tuning up and putting out set lists
Of all the stupid songs that musicians hate to play
Still it could be better than usual
The food looked great and it was money not glory
So when the clock struck eight
They began the theme from Love Story

Time went by with no one arriving at all
It was just Terry and the pictures
of dead people frowning from the wall
They didn't look very pleased
It was completely clear nobody was coming
They were all staying home with their earthquake kits
Waiting for the aftershocks to hit

Thirty decanters of wine sat ready to pout
1961 Margaux and Petrus and Chateau Latour
Swaying in unison
Lobster and caviar shrimp and salmon
They were all laid out with artistic flair
The waiters were already eyeing their share

Terry got up and he said Enough
And told the band to stop playing that dreadful stuff
He made them all come over to the table
And gave them wine that they had never dreamt of
So they worked their way through the burgundy and port
And started to relax
They discovered they had more in common than they thought
And so they went back

Over to the stand and started playing again
But this time differently
It got loud and louder and fairly insane
People heard it down in the street
It felt so good, they were smiling at each other
The waiters all ran out covering their ears
There was plaster from the ceiling on the crystal chandeliers

Terry was dancing like a madman and waving his hands
At anything and everything
Kicking up the dust from the carpet and doing handstands
Cackling and yodeling
This was a birthday bash he hadn't anticipated
Spinning like a top in the middle of the room
While the hotel shook to a sonic boom

After a while he passed out cold on the floor
And dreamed revealing things
Then he didn't have computers anymore
or fawning underlings
He was running through the trees on a tropical isle
No more feeling tense
In a flower pattern shirt of questionable style
It all made sense

The band went back to their homes in the Hollywood hills
Better than they'd ever felt
Waking up their sleep-addled wives with rambling tales
It didn't go down very well
But as a legacy they called a band meeting
And decided they were going to give up playing covers
From that day on they got along with one another

Terry woke up and strange as the story may seem
Though he felt terrible
He found with the dawn he could still remember his dream
So he just fell away
Nobody's seen him since
But I like to think of him
Sitting on a beach like Gauguin wearing a smile
Waiting for the brown-eyed girl, she'll be there in a while
Maybe thinking back now and then to a long ago time
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