

The Decision

The metallic sound of mum's key in the front door was a distant one as I was lost in the world of the internet. Just like every evening for the past month, I was sat drooling over the new Beats headphones that were recently released and titled 'The Headphones of the Century', on my laptop.

Although it was just an image on the screen, I could almost feel them in my hands. Their light weight, their plush over-ear leather cushions and cream leather headband. Their smooth glossy finish and the thumping bass produced every time they were turned on. I had been saving up for them for ages ever since Dean, the new boy in my class, got a pair. It was rapidly becoming a fashion must have with all the kids. Nobody really cared what they sounded like. As I sat there gazing at the laptop I realized, I was just like everyone else. I wanted them because they were the new thing. Not because I was a music aficionado. So I decided to leave my Beats for awhile and go see what was happening in the real world of my family.

I found my sister, Rachel, easily enough. She was in her room designing dresses. She was a small, smiling girl of eight years. She had her hair tied up in

a tight bun. Often the joke of the house; she only had her hair tied up when she was designing, which was to show she meant business. Despite her age, she had a sharp eye for fashion. You could give her twenty euro and ask her to spend it on one new outfit and she could come back with five. She heard me approaching her room and looked up from her drawings with an eager grin stretching from ear to ear. No sooner had I set foot in her room than she was there by my side showing me her latest dress design. I told her they were lovely and proceeded down the hall towards the kitchen. I heard my parents arguing with words like 'finances' and 'debt' being thrown about and I decided to give that room a miss and head upstairs to my bedroom.

I didn't emerge from my room until a strangely late dinner time when I was called by my parents. I entered the kitchen to be greeted by an atmosphere that can only be described as a dismal one. I was just about to casually bring up the topic of purchasing my Beats headphones when I noticed mum's eyes were red and puffy. It must have been a serious argument for mum to break down and cry. Funnily enough, dad was usually the emotional one. Not long after dinner was served, then dad decided to break the suffocating silence. "Kids, your mother and I have some bad news. Today your mother's company went into liquidation and she lost her job. I'm afraid there will be no summer holidays this year".

"But Rachel's communion has to go ahead, so we were hoping we could borrow your holiday savings to help pay for it and make her day special".

"What!" I screamed outraged. "Now I can't get my Beats and you know I worked so hard to earn the money!". I knew this statement was both selfish and unfair. My parents only wanted my sister to have a good day.

"Billy. Please. Just go to your room," dad said, the expression on his face mixing anger and disappointment to a look of utmost hurt.

"But why?" I replied.

"Now!," he screamed this time looking more upset than angry. So I turned on my heels and left the room knowing that not only had I let my family down but also that I had let myself down.

The following day wasn't any better. Everyone was ignoring me after the previous night's performance. I knew what I said was selfish but nobody wanted to listen. This only turned my remorse into anger and I trudged out the front door, but not before I grabbed my money. I didn't care what they said. Communion or no communion, I was getting my Beats.

My mood only darkened when I arrived at school. Now, not only did Dean have Beats, but most of my year had them too. Soon enough I would be the

only one without them. Word would spread that mum had lost her job and then everyone would say I was too poor to afford them. No. I wasn't going to let that happen. So my mind was set. I would get them at lunch. Only two hours away. Down the road and into HMV. Simple.

Lunch came quickly and I was ready to bolt out the door as soon as the bell rang. Ding, dong. I was up and out the door before the teacher could even give us our homework. It didn't matter anyway. I would get it off one of the smart students before class. Down the hall and out the front door I ran with my heart pounding in my ears. Despite the fact that HMV was only a short walk from the school, every step felt like a hundred. Finally I reached the door. I swung it open and was hit full in the face by the chorus of Lady Gaga's 'Marry the Night', as it thumped throughout the store. Inside was packed with people wanting to test the new Beats on display or purchase their own set. So I walked forward to join the queue. I felt my phone vibrate in my pocket. It was a text message from mum. It said,

"Sorry for giving you a hard time. We just can't afford to have €180 leaving the house for a pair of headphones. I hope you understand. Mum xxx".

This only made me feel worse. But it didn't matter I had already made my decision. It was now my turn in the queue. "Next please sir?", the cashier said.

I left the store feeling happy about my decision. The walk back to the school didn't seem so long now. I strutted back into my next class for once actually looking forward to maths. The last three classes came and went faster than I could have ever hoped. I strolled home upon final bell in no hurry to make the journey. It gave me time to think about the day's events. I met mum on my way home. She was driving down our street as I arrived at the front door of our house. Luckily she had a key because unfortunately I had misplaced mine. I asked her how was her day, completely forgetting that she was now unemployed. She had spent her day cleaning out her office. An awkward silence followed until finally she said, "Did you get my text today"

"Yeah mum", I replied, "I was actually down in HMV when you when you text me. I was trying to decide what to do with my money"

Her face softened and she said, "So you made the right decision I'm guessing?"

"I think so mum", I said smiling and with that I put on my new Beats, to drown her out before she could protest.

Cian Boyle