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## Secret Contours

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## **SECRET CONTOURS**

*K. Orsini*

### **OF THE ATLANTIC**

**MAN**: solitary patron of Maine's Dandy Gander.

**BARTENDER**: bartender to the Dandy Gander.

### **OF THE PACIFIC**

**WOMAN**: also referred to as "the woman in red," a well-known cinema star of the 1940's.

**MAN**: perceived lover to the woman in red.

Lights up on two bars located on either side of a wall. On one side, a man sits in a suit, sullen and isolate. On the other, a woman in red fishes her way through a party, stopping to greet various individuals nearby. Each of them has a drink in hand.

#### **MAN - ATLANTIC**

(Singing drunkenly) Rain that falls for days on end nestles safely in a potter –

#### **BARTENDER - ATLANTIC**

I do say, my lad, it appears you've had about enough. In the name of the Dandy Gander, we've got quite a reputation to carry.

#### **MAN - ATLANTIC**

Please, sir, I know much of said reputation, and might I say that in light of its mention as Maine's finest brewery, it has never been known to turn away a drink from a man most wary.

The man pulls a wrinkled bill from the depths of his pocket, dangling it sloppily before him. The bartender unwillingly accepts the bill, pouring another drink.

#### **MAN - ATLANTIC**

When it rains, it pours, when it rains, it pours.

The man and bartender freeze in position on the fringe of the Atlantic as the inhabitants of the Pacific joyously come to life. As the woman in red snakes through the crowd, she comes to a halt at the arm of a man.

#### **MAN - PACIFIC**

(Aloud to the party) Let us raise our glass to the woman of the evening, whose radiance and pure charisma has been preserved on the screen.

The guests break out in simultaneous cheer. Clinks of the glasses are heard all around.

**W O M A N - P A C I F I C**

(Aside to the man) Darling, enough with the toasts. Soon the place will be running dry.

**M A N - P A C I F I C**

I'm quite certain it won't; I've appointed the best of my means to this celebration.

**W O M A N - P A C I F I C**

A gesture, which I most approve, but do not wish to draw attention by. It does not do to rely on means –

**M A N - P A C I F I C**

As it does not do to be wildly humble.

**W O M A N - P A C I F I C**

(Slyly) I simply have my charisma, darling. Won't you join me for a dance?

The two step aside and melt into that perfectly recognizable mold of ardor. At this moment, both of the coastal establishments are filled with the tender delight of an agonizing concerto. The Pacific-timers freeze in their stance as the Atlantic-dwellers awaken from their rest.

**M A N - A T L A N T I C**

(Signaling toward the radio) Won't you eliminate that ruckus? One of us is trying to drown out the thinking.

**B A R T E N D E R - A T L A N T I C**

And what better way than to numb the mind with a bit of musical serenity?

**M A N - A T L A N T I C**

There is no serenity here. Only the torment of a dream most dismissed and smoldered. This does not sit well with me. Please relinquish the tune.

**B A R T E N D E R - A T L A N T I C**

Relinquish the tune? Why not relinquish yourself from your seat at the bar?

**MAN - ATLANTIC**

Relinquish the tune, now. It is not sitting well with me.

**BARTENDER - ATLANTIC**

Neither is the whiskey.

The man and the bartender freeze once again. In unison, the life of the Pacific stirs.

**MAN - PACIFIC**

(Whilst dancing) Surely you are aware that I have more on my conscious than the stature of my financial being. How do you suppose I'd been feeling, sitting in on all those crowded theatres?

WOMAN - PACIFIC

I cannot say.

**MAN - PACIFIC**

I'd been feeling, how fortunate I've been to have landed on the same Californian coast. To ensue the toast to your success.

The woman in red begins to silently weep. She appears morose, swaying in time with the pace of the concerto.

**WOMAN - PACIFIC**

This song – such a haunting piece.

The Pacific freezes; the Atlantic awakens. The tune continues to play on the bartender's radio.

**MAN - ATLANTIC**

Speaking to a paying customer in such an intolerable tone? I see you've lost your manners.

**BARTENDER - ATLANTIC**

It's time you'd ought to be on your way. Please, pay your tab and go. I don't want any trouble here.

**MAN - ATLANTIC**

I will not. Turn off that damned tune, and pour me another drink. So help me.

The man on the Atlantic lifts his glass into the air. There is a momentary pause as the Pacific coast unfreezes.

**MAN - PACIFIC**

Darling, what makes you weep? How about a glass of champagne?

The two part from their dance. A waiter approaches, cradling a tray of two drinks. The man takes each of them in hand, passing her the first, and sipping from the second.

**WOMAN - PACIFIC**

Darling, (pause) there's a ring in my champagne.

At once, the man on the Atlantic hurls his glass at the bartender's radio as the woman in red's crashes synchronically to the floor. Each of them splits into several tiny pieces. The bartender of the Atlantic pulls a pistol from behind the counter, taking aim at his drunken patron. All the while, the man of the Pacific drops to one knee, and the concerto ceases to play.

**BARTENDER - ATLANTIC**

Out with you, now.

**MAN - PACIFIC**

Will you be my wife?

The man on the Atlantic raises his arms into the air. The flock of Pacific nightlife withdraws from conversation, facing all of their attention onto the couple in question. A vocal silence floods the stage, and each of the characters stand still as statues, contemplating their fate.

**WOMAN - PACIFIC**

(After respite) I will.

The crowd breaks out into another concurrent applaud.

**MAN - ATLANTIC**

(Softly, delicately) Rain that falls for days on end nestles safely in a potter, calling forth the spoils of men keeping quiet under covers.

Slowly, cautiously, the man exits the bar, and in the street takes a seat upon pavement. As he sits, the coast of the Pacific continues in its vibrant affair. The man of the Pacific shares a tenacious kiss with the woman in red, and as the two proceed to embrace in their ravishing dance, the man on the Atlantic feels a chill of the air, breezing from one coast to the next, and drifts softly off into a bottomless slumber.