

THE BARTENDER MIXES MAGIC LIGHT

by Peter Papadopoulos

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Man

Woman

Bartender

PLACE

A bar.

TIME

Present.

PRODUCTION NOTES

The shifts in CAPITALIZATION denote shifts in reality.  
They may be accompanied by shifts in music.

*IN THE DARK. A CHIME. LIKE THE SOUND OF A SPOON RINGING OUT ON A GLASS. BEAT.*

*LIGHTS UP ON A BAR, HORIZONTALLY ACROSS THE STAGE. THE BARTENDER IS ON THE UPSTAGE SIDE, AND ON THE DOWNSTAGE SIDE, A YOUNG WOMAN SIPS THE REMAINDER OF A SLUSHY DRINK.*

BARTENDER  
HOW IS IT?

WOMAN  
SAME OLD SAME OLD  
SLICED DELI TURKEY LOOKS NOTHING LIKE THE REAL BIRD

BARTENDER  
GET YOU ANOTHER?

WOMAN  
NO. I'LL TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT.

BARTENDER  
SOMETHING LIKE AN ORGASMIC DAY AT THE BEACH?  
*SHE SHAKES HER HEAD NO.*  
SOMETHING LIKE A LONE LADY JOGS THROUGH THE PARK AT SUNSET?  
*SHE SHAKES HER HEAD NO.*  
SOMETHING LIKE AN APRICOT PRUNISH DESSERT PRAIRIE DESERT?  
*SHE SHAKES HER HEAD NO.*  
SOMETHING LIKE...

WOMAN  
NO. NOTHING LIKE THAT.  
SOMETHING LIKE...

A RAVAGED RAMPAGE RUN DOWN DREAM  
OR AN AFTERSHOCK COLD RAZORBURN CREAM TANGO  
OR A MISTY MORNING MONSTER MAYHEM WITH A MISUSED MISERY CHASER.

*THE BARTENDER NODS.*

BARTENDER  
THAT BAD, HUH?

WOMAN  
WORSE.  
DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

BARTENDER  
YES.  
I DO HAVE SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

*THE LIGHTS DIM EXCEPT ON THE BARTENDER, WHO RAISES A MIXING GLASS AND BOTTLES. HE POURS AND SHAKES AND STIRS AND SHAKES AND*

*POURS AND STIRS. RAYS OF LIGHT DANCE DOWN ON HIM FROM THE  
RAFTERS AS HE WORKS.*

*THE BARTENDER STOPS, HOLDING UP THE CONCOCTION. ALL LIGHTS DIM  
BUT A LONE SPOT ON THE BARTENDER AND THE GLOWING DRINK. THE  
BARTENDER ANNOUNCES:*

BARTENDER  
THE BARTENDER MIXES MAGIC LIGHT.

*A CHIME. LIGHTS BACK TO FULL.  
A MAN ENTERS.*

MAN  
GET HER ANOTHER AND I'LL HAVE THE SAME

*THE BARTENDER GRABS TWO GLASSES AND BEGINS POURING. THE MAN  
SITS BESIDE THE WOMAN AT THE BAR.*

WOMAN  
ARE YOU TRYING TO GET ME MAD OR GET ME FAT OR GET ME DRUNK OR SWEEP  
ME OFF MY DARK SIDE?

MAN  
CAN'T A GUY JUST BUY A BEAUTIFUL DRINK A WOMAN?

*BARTENDER SETS THE DRINKS DOWN IN FRONT OF THEM. THE WOMAN  
EYES HER DRINK A MOMENT.*

WOMAN  
I DON'T SEE WHY NOT

I DON'T SEE WHY  
THE SKY  
NEED BE SO DARK TONIGHT

OUTSIDE  
WHERE WE ARE NOT  
THE SKY IS DARK.

INSIDE  
WHERE WE ARE HOT  
PRIDE PERPETUALLY DREAMING.

MAN  
AT THE COAST WE'RE WARMING  
AN OCEAN BARBARY BANQUET.  
CARE TO DINE WITH ME BY THE SEA?

WOMAN  
I WOULD LOVE TO

MAN  
Hi. My name is Bob.

WOMAN  
I'm Annette.

MAN  
My pleasure.

WOMAN  
PLEASURE TO PLEASE YOU YOU MEAN

MAN  
PLEASURE TO EAT YOU YOU MEAN

WOMAN  
PLEASURE TO MEAN YOU DEMEAN

MAN  
PLEASURE TO DECEIVE ME YOU MEET

WOMAN  
PLEASURE TO TREAT ME AS MEAT  
ME

MAN  
MEET ME IN THE MIDDLE WOULD YOU

WOMAN  
HALF WITTED AS WE ARE

MAN  
SHALL WE HALVE THE WAY TO THE HAVING PLACE?

*PAUSE.*

WOMAN  
WOMAN, I DO

MAN  
MAN, I CAN

WOMAN  
WOMAN, I WISH IT TONIGHT

MAN  
I WILL

WOMAN  
WALLOW IN YOUR LUSTERFUL WONDER BRIGHT

MAN  
SNAP JAW ANGRY SIGH WASHING WORE THIN

WOMAN  
OUT! OUT! OUT!

MAN  
TONIGHT THE LIGHT SO BRIGHT

AND SO WE BEGIN:

WOMAN  
AND SO WE BEGIN:

*They tap glasses.*

MAN  
Do you come here often?

WOMAN  
That line is so old.

MAN  
I didn't mean. I just meant. I've never seen you here before.

WOMAN  
I never go out to bars. Well, almost never.

MAN  
Why tonight?

WOMAN  
I was meeting a friend here, but she just called and cancelled.

MAN  
Is that the truth?

WOMAN  
No. Not exactly.

*PAUSE.*

MAN  
AND SO WE BEGIN:

WOMAN  
AND SO WE BEGIN:

MAN  
HE SAID I TOLD YOU SO

WOMAN  
AND THEN THEY WERE GONE

MAN  
AND THAT'S WHY I'M LATE

WOMAN  
AND AFTER I LEFT THE HOSPITAL

MAN  
AND THERE WERE NO LEFT MORE IN THE DRAWER

WOMAN  
AND SO I LOOKED FOR HELP

MAN  
AND SHE SAID I'VE NEVER TOLD YOU THIS BEFORE

WOMAN  
AND THEN HE TURNED AROUND AND I KNEW HE'D BEEN CRYING

MAN  
AND THAT WAS THE LAST TIME MY MOTHER SAID

WOMAN  
IT HAD ENTERED HIS SPINAL FLUID AND SEEMED LIKE IT MIGHT

MAN  
MOVE DOWNTOWN WHERE I THOUGHT BUSINESS WOULD BE BETTER

WOMAN  
NOT SELL THE HOUSE UNTIL I WAS SURE THAT I COULD

MAN  
BRING BLANKETS BECAUSE THE WEATHER WAS SO BAD THAT DAY—

WOMAN  
LIGHT CAME JUST IN TIME BECAUSE WE WERE QUITE LOST AND

MAN  
FOUND THAT I COULD FACE THIS ADDICTION WITH THE HELP OF MY FAMILY

WOMAN  
TREE HAD FALLEN OVER IN THE STORM AND SHATTERED

MAN  
MY HOPES OF EVER FINDING HER AGAIN SO I

WOMAN  
CALLED THE HOUSE AND STILL THERE WAS NO ANSWER

MAN  
ME WHEN I'M SPEAKING TO YOU I SAID YOU'RE ONLY TWELVE YEARS

WOMAN  
LATER WHEN I WENT TO FLORIDA TO VISIT MY SISTER

MAN  
WHOM I NEVER FORGAVE FOR HAVING BETRAYED MY TRUST

WOMAN  
FUND HAD COMPLETELY RUN OUT AND THE MEDICAL BILLS WERE

MAN  
GOING OVER TO SEE THE NEW HOUSE AND

WOMAN  
WHY DON'T YOU COME OUT AND MEET ME FOR A DRINK?

*SILENCE. THEY SIP THEIR DRINKS AND TAKE ALL THIS IN.  
THEY GROW MORE AND MORE ANXIOUS AND BEGIN TO GULP DOWN THEIR  
DRINKS.*

*SEEING THIS, THE BARTENDER BEGINS TO POUR MORE LIQUOR INTO THE  
BLENDER.*

BARTENDER  
ROUND TWO!

*HE THROWS THE SWITCH ON THE BLENDER AND THEY SHOUT OVER ITS  
ROAR.*

WOMAN  
I JUST DON'T THINK YOU HEAR ME!

MAN  
I JUST DON'T THINK YOU NEED ME!

WOMAN  
IT'S MY FAULT!

MAN  
NO IT'S MINE!

WOMAN  
YOU'RE RIGHT, IT IS YOUR FAULT!

MAN  
SO NOW YOU'RE SAYING IT'S MY FAULT?

WOMAN  
YES, IF YOU WOULD JUST PAY SOME ATTENTION!

MAN  
IF YOU WOULD JUST LISTEN TO ME!

WOMAN  
IF YOU WOULD JUST TRY TO UNDERSTAND!



MAN  
WAIT FOR ME WITHOUT BECOMING IMPATIENT!

WOMAN  
STAND UP FOR ME WITH YOUR FAMILY!

MAN  
TALK NICER TO THE KIDS!

WOMAN  
DO THE LAUNDRY ONCE IN A WHILE!

MAN  
TRY TO PUT YOURSELF IN MY SHOES!

WOMAN  
COOK A MEAL ONCE IN A WHILE!

MAN  
BATHE THE BABY WITH THE BATHWATER!

WOMAN  
BAKE THE CAKE ON MY BIRTHDAY TRY TO MAKE

MAN  
A SINGLE DANG DARN EFFORT

WOMAN  
TO GREET THE CHILDREN IN A FRIENDLY FAMILY SORT OF WAY!

*THE BARTENDER SHUTS OFF THE BLENDER. HE POURS THEIR DRINKS.  
THEY SIP THEIR DRINKS AND THE WOMAN PLAYS WITH HER UMBRELLA.*

MAN  
So. Do you think you want kids?

WOMAN  
I don't know. Do you?

MAN  
You don't know?

WOMAN  
No.

MAN  
Have you thought about it?

WOMAN  
Yes.

MAN  
And you still don't know?

WOMAN

No. It's complicated. It's an awful lot of responsibility. Sometimes I think I can hardly take care of myself.

MAN

I think I know what you mean.

WOMAN

I see those families at the airport with all those kids and I think, could I really do that? And then I think, maybe I'd like to give it a try. Maybe it would be a beautiful and spiritual sort of a thing.

MAN

Are you telling the truth?

WOMAN

I think so.  
Do you? Want kids?

MAN

Yes.

WOMAN

How many?

MAN

I don't know. Two or three.

ENOUGH TO BOUND THE HOUSE WITH GLEE  
AROUND AND AROUND THE MULBERRY TREE  
SONGS SUNG SILLY FREE  
SIPPING SIPPY CUP CUPPING BOBBY HEAD HEART HELD OPEN HAPPY.

*THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER A MOMENT. THEY LUNGE TOGETHER IN A  
PASSIONATE KISS. THEY CONTINUE TO SPEAK AS THEY KISS AND GROPE.*

MAN

I LOVE YOU!

WOMAN

I WANT YOU!

MAN

I NEED YOU!

WOMAN

I NEED YOU!

MAN

I NEED YOU!

WOMAN

I NEED YOU!

*HE PICKS HER UP AND PUTS HER ON THE BAR. HE CLIMBS ON TOP OF HER AND THEY BEGIN HAVING SEX ON THE BAR.*

*THE BARTENDER PULLS A SURGICAL MASK AND MEDICAL GLOVES OUT FROM BEHIND THE BAR AND PUTS THEM ON.*

BARTENDER  
THAT'S IT, FOLKS. THAT'S IT.  
JUST KEEP BREATHING, MA'AM.  
THAT'S IT. KEEP PUSHING. BOTH OF YOU.

*THE MAN IS RISING TO ORGASM AND THE WOMAN IS RISING TO CHILDBIRTH.*

BARTENDER  
HARDER  
HARDER  
HARDER  
THAT'S IT.

HARDER  
HARDER  
HARDER

*THE MAN AND WOMAN CRY OUT THEN COLLAPSE TOGETHER.*

*THE BARTENDER MAKES BABY CRYING SOUNDS AS HE PICKS UP A BOTTLE OF WHISKEY. HE ROCKS THE CRYING BOTTLE. HE PULLS OFF HIS MASK.*

BARTENDER  
CONGRATULATIONS!  
SOMETHING GOES IN AND SOMETHING COMES OUT!

*BARTENDER RAISES THE BOTTLE, CALLING FOR A TOAST.*

BARTENDER  
IT'S A BEAUTIFUL BABY BOTTLE!

*THE BARTENDER SLIDES THREE SHOTGLASSES ONTO THE BAR AND BEGINS POURING FROM THE BOTTLE. THE COUPLE WEARILY STRUGGLES TO SIT UP ON THE BAR.*

MAN  
Hang on a minute.

WOMAN  
Hold on. Just a minute.

*THEY GATHER THEIR SHOTS AND TAP GLASSES. THEY THROW BACK THEIR DRINKS.*

BARTENDER  
AHHHHH!

MAN  
AHHHHH!

WOMAN.  
AHHHHH!

*THE MAN AND WOMAN PUT THEIR GLASSES DOWN AND LIE BACK DOWN SIDE BY SIDE ON THE BAR. THE BARTENDER SWEEPS AWAY THE GLASSES AND THEN PULLS OUT A SHEET FROM BEHIND THE BAR AND TUCKS THEM IN.*

*THE BARTENDER WRITES UP A BILL. HE PUTS IT ON TOP OF THE MAN.*

BARTENDER  
Thank you, folks. Any time you're ready.

*THE BARTENDER BEGINS WIPING DOWN BOTTLES ON THE BAR, WHISTLING QUIETLY AS HE WORKS.*

*THE MAN SITS UP AND PICKS UP THE BILLS AND LOOKS IT OVER. HE FISHES AROUND FOR A PEN UNDER THE SHEET. AFTER A FEW MOMENTS HE TURNS TO THE WOMAN.*

MAN  
Do you have a pen?

WOMAN  
No.

*THE MAN TURNS TO THE BARTENDER.*

MAN  
Excuse me, do you have a pen?

BARTENDER  
Oh, sorry. Yes.

*BARTENDER TAKES A PEN OUT OF HIS SHIRT POCKET AND HANDS IT TO THE MAN.*

MAN  
Thank you.

*THE MAN TRIES TO WRITE OUT THE BILL BUT CANNOT FIND A GOOD WRITING SURFACE IN BED. HE TURNS TO THE WOMAN WHO IS WATCHING HIM.*

MAN  
Do you mind?

*THE WOMAN ROLLS OVER SO THE MAN CAN WRITE OUT THE BILL ON HER BACK. THE MAN FINISHES AND HOLDS THE BILL OUT FOR THE BARTENDER.*

MAN

Thank you.

BARTENDER

No, thank you. Have a good night, folks.

MAN

You, too.

*THE MAN LIES BACK DOWN TO SLEEP, CURLED UP WITH THE WOMAN. THE LIGHTS DIM. CIRCLES OF GLOWING LIGHT ON THE BARTENDER AND THE COUPLE SLEEPING ON THE BAR.*

*THE BARTENDER CONTINUES HIS CLEANING.*

*AS THE BARTENDER CLEANS, HE INTERMITTENTLY TAKES OUT VARIOUS HOUSEHOLD OBJECTS FROM BEHIND THE BAR AND PLACES THEM AROUND THE SLEEPING COUPLE.*

*AFTER THE BARTENDER HAS SURROUNDED THEM WITH APPLIANCES, PLANTS, AND THE LIKE, THE WOMAN SUDDENLY SHOOTS UP IN BED.*

WOMAN

My bill! What happened to my bill?!

MAN

I took care of it. Remember?

WOMAN

Yes. Of course. Now I remember.

MAN

I wanted to. Is that okay?

WOMAN

Yes. Of course. Thank you.

*THE BARTENDER PULLS A LARGE CHRISTMAS TREE OUT FROM BEHIND THE BAR AND BEGINS SETTING IT UP DOWNSTAGE.*

MAN

Do you think I might call you some time?

WOMAN

That would be nice.

MAN

Can I have your number then?

WOMAN

Sure, I don't see why not.

*THE MAN AGAIN BEGINS TO SEARCH FOR THE PEN UNDER THE SHEET. AFTER A MOMENT HE TURNS BACK TO THE BARTENDER WHO IS BUSY WRESTLING WITH THE TREE.*

MAN

Sorry. Excuse me.

Sorry to bother you again, but do you think I could borrow that pen one more time?

*THE BARTENDER LOOKS UP FROM STRUGGLING WITH THE TREE.*

BARTENDER

Yeah, hold on a sec.

*THE BARTENDER FINISHES SETTING UP AND THEN PLUGS IN THE CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS. HE STEPS BACK. ALL THREE ADMIRE THE TREE.*

*THE BARTENDER BEGINS SEARCHING HIS CLOTHES FOR THE PEN. THE WOMAN CURLS BACK UP TO SLEEP.*

BARTENDER

Now where in the heck did I put that pen?

*THE BARTENDER CONTINUES SIFTING THROUGH HIS POCKETS.*

BARTENDER

Darn it, I just had it.

*THE BARTENDER MAKES HIS WAY BACK BEHIND THE BAR LOOKING FOR THE PEN.*

*IN THE DISTANCE WE HEAR THE SOUND OF SLEIGHBELLS. SANTA'S SLEIGH IS APPROACHING OVERHEAD.*

*THE MAN HEARS THE BELLS AND LOOKS UP. AFTER A MOMENT HE TAPS THE WOMAN ON THE SHOULDER, WAKING HER.*

MAN

Honey.

WOMAN

What is it?

*THE WOMAN HEARS AND SITS UP IN BED BESIDE THE MAN. THEY PEER SKYWARD. THE BARTENDER CONTINUES BANGING AROUND BEHIND THE BAR, AGITATED.*

BARTENDER

Hang on a minute. God damn it! I know that pen has to be here somewhere! I mean, where in the hell could it possibly go?! I just had it one second ago!!!

*THE MAN AND WOMAN RAISE THEIR FINGERS TO THEIR LIPS.*

MAN AND WOMAN

Sssssshh!

*THE BARTENDER STOPS.  
THE MAN AND WOMAN POINT TO THE SKY.  
THE BARTENDER LOOKS UP AND LISTENS.  
HE SMILES.*

*TABLEAU:  
ALL THREE LOOKING SKYWARD.*

*AFTER A MOMENT WE HEAR A BOOMING, SONOROUS VOICE TRAILING  
THROUGH THE NIGHT SKY.*

VOICE (O.S)  
YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO HOME BUT YOU CAN'T STAY HERE!

*THE SLEIGH BELLS DISAPPEAR SLOWLY INTO THE NIGHT.*

*A CHIME SOUNDS. BLACKOUT.*

*END OF PLAY.*