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The Quiet Woman

A Comedy for Three Players
In Two Short Scenes

by Gerald Cole

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2F / 1M

CHARACTERS

TONY LUPO: *an attractive man with a smug sense of self-worth.*

MS. DIABLO: *a perceptive woman; works for the “Babes in Arms” matchmaking service.*

ROBIN: *a mime, more-or-less; Tony’s “blind” date through the matchmaking service.*

SETTING

The “Babes in Arms” matchmaking service and the Casbah and Grill Restaurant

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SCENE ONE

AT RISE: *TONY LUPO, an attractive man with a smug sense of self-worth enters the BABES IN ARMS match-making service. He is a bit nervous about the adventure, but also annoyed. Ms. DIABLO walks in and greets her client.*

MS. DIABLO

Ah, Mr. Lupo. Welcome to the Babes in Arms matchmaking service, where we guarantee to find your perfect mate, based on the traits you yourself present us with. My, you are punctual.

TONY

Thank you, and please call me Tony. You know, you came highly recommended. I don't normally resort to such actions as, well, you know.

MS. DIABLO

Hiring someone else to meddle in your love life?

TONY

Yes. Yes exactly.

MS. DIABLO

You know, Mr. Lupo, Tony, most human beings now-a-days are far too engaged in their worldly affairs to truly search for the perfect mate, and therefore are left to choose whatever is nearest and hope for the best. There is a reason divorce rates are so high, you know.

TONY

Exactly! So many women who just don't respect the needs of their man. So self-involved in silly lady things, not attentive like they should be. I knew you'd understand.

MS. DIABLO

I see. Go on.

TONY

Well, my last date, for example. Late. I came to pick her up and she made me sit in the living room, like I don't have enough to do with my life already. And then she came out in this flowery dress, an affront to my eyes, yammering on and on about her day. Is this how it works. Shouldn't we fill out some forms or something?

MS. DIABLO

No, talking is how we do this, how we learn about you. And I must say, you offer quite a lot of information, like a feast of blood wafted before a hungry shark.

TONY

Thank you. Then I had another date, she had that raspy smoker's voice, you know the one that sounds like the child of Barry White and a mule. Now, if she was pretty I could have used my eyes instead of my ears for at least one pleasant sense, but her eyes were green and she had freckles. Imagine. Like that is becoming on a woman.

MS. DIABLO

I see. And how did the date go?

TONY

Don't you know, she rejected me? Said I was too barbarous for her. Such nerve.

MS. DIABLO

I can hardly imagine any woman seeing a man such as you as anything but...

TONY

You know your stuff. Just last week I sat at the dinner table of a very chic restaurant with Lucy. A most blah person if ever there was one. I told her my favorite joke. Why can't a blind woman drive?

TONY pauses to let MS. DIABLO answer. He huffs a bit when she doesn't.

TONY (CONT'D)

Because she's a woman! Lucy never even cracked a smile. I had them rolling at the Men's Club, I don't mind telling you.

MS. DIABLO

Well, I think I have it straight. You want a woman who dresses conservatively, in black perhaps. She must have a sense of humor, but not act out silly in any way. And most of all, she needs to be quiet.

TONY

Exactly!

MS. DIABLO

Not to worry, Tony. I know just the perfect match. Be at the Casbah and Grill Saturday at six sharp. She will come to greet you with a red rose.

TONY

And she'll be funny, calm, conservative, and most of all, quiet?

MS. DIABLO

She'll be all of those things to a fault.

TONY

Wait. I forgot. Pretty. I'm quite a catch, after-all, so my date needs to meet the standard I set.

MS. DIABLO

She will be pretty.

*TONY and MS. DIABLO shake hands. He exits.
LIGHTS DOWN.*

SCENE TWO

AT RISE: *The Casbah and Grill Restaurant. TONY sits at a table waiting for his date to arrive. He checks his watch.*

TONY

Five fifty nine. Cutting it short. Just like a woman. If women ran the world each day would be daylight savings time. At least there would be no wars. The armies would all show up late and miss the damn thing.

He looks at his watch again.

TONY (CONT'D)

Six o'clock. Ms. Diablo may not be as reliable as I...

TONY stops talking as he watches A WOMAN all dressed in black enter. She's a mime, complete with white gloves and make-up.

TONY (CONT'D)

Now why would they let a mime into such a classy restaurant?

The mime, ROBIN, puts her hand over her eyes as if searching for someone. She spots TONY and reacts with joy and surprise. She starts to walk towards him when suddenly she seems to be walking against a very heavy wind storm. TONY can only stare in alarm. ROBIN snaps her finger as she comes up with an idea. She puts her hands to her mouth and mimes blowing into the wind, breaking it up and allowing her to walk over to Tony. She is very proud of the achievement.

TONY (CONT'D)

Look, Miss, you are very entertaining, I guess, but please go entertain someone else. I'm waiting for my date to arrive, and I don't want her to see me talking to a mime.

ROBIN puts her finger to her lips as if to sush him. She then, with grand flourishes, mimes pulling out of her pocket a flower. She smells it and hands it to TONY, who forgets himself for a second and takes it, before looking at his hand and realizing it's empty.

TONY (CONT'D)

My date will come to me with a red rose so please...

ROBIN gestures for him to stop. She mimes pulling out another flower and cues him to repeat what he just said.

TONY (CONT'D)

A red rose.

ROBIN signals that he is correct and hands him this new mime rose.

TONY (CONT'D)

You've got to be kidding. Funny, calm, conservative, and most of all, quiet. Well, you're definitely quiet.

ROBIN nods in agreement and sits down. She looks at the setting and starts to eat imaginary food, miming drinking wine, cutting a steak, and eating a banana. TONY is horrified.

TONY (CONT'D)

Uhm, perhaps you could wait until I order some real food.

ROBIN gestures no and pats her stomach to suggest she is full.

TONY (CONT'D)

At least you're a cheap date.

ROBIN reacts with shock.

TONY (CONT'D)

No, no, I mean inexpensive.

ROBIN gestures that she understands. She then sets her elbow on the table and rests her chin in her hand, waiting for the next pearl of wisdom to come from TONY's mouth.

TONY (CONT'D)

So. Okay. Uhm...Oh! Why can't a blind woman drive?

ROBIN puts her finger to her head, as if trying to think real hard.

TONY (CONT'D)

Because she's a woman.

TONY laughs at his joke. ROBIN looks puzzled. Then she starts to mime hard laughter, as if it was the best joke ever told in all of humanity.

TONY (CONT'D)

Well you do have a good sense of humor.

ROBIN gestures wait. She gets up and walks like a woman, sitting down in her chair as if it's a car.

TONY (CONT'D)

Oh, a woman. She sits in a car.

ROBIN mimes driving forward, back, forward, back, repeatedly, as if she's a driver trying to get out of a parking space and taking way too many back and forth's to do so, because she is a bad driver. TONY laughs at the joke.

TONY (CONT'D)

She can't park her car. Oh, that's so true. Women and cars.

ROBIN then stands up and walks like a man, to let him know she is starting a new joke. She sits down and mimes starting up a car. The car won't start.

TONY (CONT'D)

Oh, a man can't start his car.

ROBIN nods then continues. She taps her temple, thinking. Then she walks over to the "hood" and opens it up, looking at the "engine".

TONY (CONT'D)

Oh, so this is how he fixes it.

ROBIN gives him a thumbs up. She carefully looks at the "engine", gesturing examining wires etc. Suddenly she mimes a big hammer and starts to pound it viciously on the "car" She then goes to the chair to sit, mimes turning on the engine, and the "car" starts. She is happy with herself.

TONY (CONT'D)

That's how you think men fix cars?

ROBIN mimes laughter at her joke.

TONY (CONT'D)

No. A car is a very delicate thing and men know what they're doing.

TONY becomes very animated with his hands as he speaks. ROBIN starts to imitate him.

TONY (CONT'D)

Men are always in control of their environment, it's women who just can't handle...what are you doing?

ROBIN looks innocent and folds her hands very demure.

TONY (CONT'D)

Okay, okay, I guess I deserved that. You got a joke and I got a joke. Now we're even. I'm sorry, I guess we kinda got off on the wrong foot.

ROBIN starts to look at her feet, puzzled as to which one is wrong. She decides it's the right foot and scolds it.

TONY (CONT'D)

Okay. Well, I guess if Ms. Diablo thinks you are good for me then I should at least give this a try.

ROBIN shakes her head yes.

TONY (CONT'D)

I suppose you want to know about me?

TONY sits facing the audience, not paying attention to his date at all as he tries to tell her about himself. During his speech ROBIN starts to look interested, then starts to fall asleep. She mimes desperation at his talking and then starts to mime a rope, which she gestures tying into a noose, then throwing it over a beam, and finally hanging herself.

TONY (CONT'D)

I'm very clever. I went to school at GePaul, an intimate school designed for gifted men; of course there were no women there. I studied law, but the bar examine is really a scam so I didn't pass it. Not my fault, of course. But that left me without a career. Fortunately, I decided to go into politics. That's how I became the advisor to the mayor. I don't really get to see him much, actually I've never met him, but I'm sure he gets all my emails. My favorite color is red, like my car, and my favorite drink is a martini. I like the way Darrin always had a martini from his wife in that TV show, you know. I think you would be a great woman for a man. You are definitely quiet.

TONY turns to look at her and she instantly sits up, looking attentive.

TONY (CONT'D)

Oh, I'm sorry. I just keep talking about me. How about you. How do you think this date is going? I mean, you've heard about how great I am, does that make you feel awesome?

ROBIN thinks and then comes up with a response. She takes her flat hand and lowers it across her face, turning her face into a frown as she does. Then she lifts her hand and turns it into a smile. Then she repeats the two gestures.

TONY (CONT'D)

That's what I figured. Being with me makes you happy.

TONY turns his head away and she waves it again and makes an angry face. He turns to her and she waves her face back to being happy.

TONY (CONT'D)

At first I felt your, approach, was unbecoming, but the more I ponder this, the more I think it's refreshing to see a woman of your age doing something so, well, bold.

ROBIN just nods.

TONY (CONT'D)

And you never argue. That is definitely the sign of an intelligent woman.

ROBIN continues to nod, as if the action is robotic.

TONY (CONT'D)

And as an intelligent woman I know you'll appreciate this.

ROBIN stops, her face frozen in a terrified smile.

TONY (CONT'D)

I was telling the mayor, in an email of course, that the problem with our parks is they don't have enough emus in them. You know, the giant birds that are almost an ostrich but not quite. So I suggested that he buy a hundred emus and set them about in the bigger parks. That would make people want to come out for picnics and games and family outings. Families don't do outings enough. Maybe if they did then mothers would be more available for their sons and they wouldn't have to grow up feeling sad, alone, and wondering why their mommies just couldn't be bothered to see their first oboe concerto!

ROBIN is "speechless" so she pretends to rapidly eat a large steak dinner that is invisibly in front of her.

TONY (CONT'D)

So the point is, the mayor thinks it's a brilliant idea and has nominated me for a special award. I think it's the first time such a great award has ever been given to anyone and so I expect this will change to whole course of history. Perhaps they'll name a park after me, so any wife I may have would probably feel especially delighted...

ROBIN starts to mime choking.

TONY (CONT'D)

What is it? Are you okay? Are you choking?

ROBIN stops and gives him a look. Then she starts to choke again, silently.

TONY (CONT'D)

Did you swallow a piece of your steak the wrong way?

TONY instantly realizes what he's just said, knowing that there is no actual steak. ROBIN starts to mouth the words "blah, blah, blah," as she acts out pulling a string from her mouth. She winds the "string in her hands and presents it to TONY.

TONY (CONT'D)

What is it? Mine? My...words? Oh, I see. Sometimes my words are a bit hard to swallow.

ROBIN nods yes.

TONY (CONT'D)

Actually, in all honesty, the mayor didn't like my idea at all. I just wanted to say something impressive to you. You know, I'm a bit surprised by this, but I think this is the best date I've had so far. And to be honest, you are actually kind of pretty, I mean, I can't really see your face, but I think you are.

ROBIN gestures a fan that she snaps open and then fans herself.

TONY (CONT'D)

In fact...

He stands up. ROBIN seems surprised and stands up, too, dropping her "fan". She looks for it and then gestures "forget about it".

TONY (CONT'D)

I think we should...maybe...

TONY leans in to give her a kiss. She holds out her hand like she's signaling stop. TONY's mouth bumps into her hand and he stops, surprised. He leans back and she starts to put out her other hand. She's in a box, and her hands are feeling the sides and the top. She looks stunned to be in a box all of a sudden.

TONY (CONT'D)

Oh. A box. I see. Are you okay?

She signals that he put her in the box.

TONY (CONT'D)

I put you there? Oh no. What can I do?

ROBIN signals for him to sit down. He does. He is about to talk and she signals him to be quiet. She signals to him that he should ask about her. At first he seems puzzled. But then he seems to get it.

TONY (CONT'D)

I see. I should ask about you? Okay then. What do you think about my...

ROBIN signals "no". She then points to herself.

TONY (CONT'D)

What...do...you...do?

ROBIN smiles and shakes her head yes. She then mimes that she is a doctor.

TONY (CONT'D)

A nurse?

ROBIN looks angry and waves no.

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