

'P's and 'O's

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INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT

Scattered groups of BUSINESS MEN in suits and WOMEN dressed in evening attire, with cocktails in their hands, grace the elegant room. A BARTENDER serves them their martinis from behind the bar as the clusters of suits and gowns whirlpool the room.

RAYMOND BAILEY stands amongst a circle of suits with his wife, PAIGE, by his side. Their late twenties faces look slightly out of place among the hardened older faces that dot the room.

RAYMOND

Did you hear that the rates
on the Madison account might
double?

OLDER MAN

That's just a rumor.

RAYMOND

Maybe, but if it is true,
the resulting waves are going
to be of a tidal variety.

TALL MAN

I understand that the reason
for the possible increase is
that the clients no longer
seem to care how much they
invest in an account.

Paige pulls on Raymond's sleeve. He turns his intense face to her bored one as she mouths her pardon from the group to him before she addresses the suits.

PAIGE

If you'll excuse me, gentlemen.

The circle of suits nod their excusion and she departs. She casually saunters towards a square of WOMEN in the center of the room.

Paige attempts to infiltrate the square from the fringe by listening to the conversation being controlled by a SLENDER WOMAN.

SLENDER WOMAN

From what I heard, that dress she wore was originally one of Elizabeth Taylor's. One of those that accidentally gets handed down to the wrong person by way of some silly mistake. I thought she looked dreadful in that shade of green.

DOWDY WOMAN

Oh, no, she looked divine. Very elegant.

SLENDER WOMAN

Well, that isn't true. But what is true is that no one knows how to make a decent evening gown anymore. When I first married Charles, designers created art for women, now they create high priced hooker's clothes.

DOWDY WOMAN

Absolutely.

The square of women all bob their heads in agreement as Paige rolls her eyes. As she casually steps away, she takes a quick glance at her own attire as if assessing what the quad might think of it.

Paige crosses over to a triangle of MEN AND WOMEN, but after a moment, she moves on to another circle. After another eavesdropping with the latest clique, she notices a young man, GEOFFREY BARNES, at the bar.

While noting the man's out of place artsy attire of black turtleneck and casual slacks, Paige walks towards him.

BY THE BAR, the man notices Paige advancing in his direction. He smiles courteously at her as he swirls scotch and ice in his old-fashioned glass.

PAIGE

Good evening. I'm Paige,

Raymond Bailey's wife. Have we met before? Forgive me, but you don't seem to be an employee of the firm.

GEOFFREY

No, we haven't met and as for the latter, that would be because I'm not.

Paige smiles at the sound of his British accent.

PAIGE

Are you a client then?

GEOFFREY

Actually, no.

The young man takes a drink of his scotch.

GEOFFREY [CONT]

I don't usually attend such fancy gatherings. I'm just here from London on other business.

PAIGE

This must seem a far cry from England.

GEOFFREY

Actually, it's quite similar to tea-time. You know, the idle chit-chat that takes place during the tea.

Paige laughs the laugh of knowledge and takes a sip her cocktail.

PAIGE

I'm afraid I didn't catch your name.

GEOFFREY

Well, it probably would have helped if I had the manners to have provided it to you, Mrs.

Bailey.

PAIGE

Please, call me Paige.

GEOFFREY

Very well. But only if you call me Geoffrey.

PAIGE

Agreed. So, you said you're here on business, but not as a client of the firm. What exactly is your business?

Geoffrey sports a healthy grin of a mischievous nature.

GEOFFREY

It's not really a business.

PAIGE

It isn't?

GEOFFREY

It's more of a hobby. You see, it's rather difficult to make a business out of thinking.

PAIGE

Pardon me?

GEOFFREY

Thinking. I think a great deal. As a matter of fact, I've even written a book about thinking. That's why I'm here tonight. Mr. Brandford brought me here in order to meet some wealthy individuals to find financing since publishing firms are not that interested at the moment in books on thinking, or the theory of thinking.

PAIGE

Theory of thinking? Sounds

like you're trying to prove
that thinking exists.

GEOFFREY

Well, my fellow alumni from
Oxford have already taken
care of the existence part,
but I have found that there
are a lot of people who just
don't think.

PAIGE

So you wrote a book to help
them figure out how to think?

GEOFFREY

Something like that. I just
need to get the financing for
the publishing. But somehow,
this group strikes me as the
non-thinking type.

Geoffrey gently taps Paige's arm as he lets out a slight
chuckle.

GEOFFREY [CONT]

What do you think of ostriches,
Paige?

PAIGE

I haven't given the matter much
thought.

GEOFFREY

Well, I have. Everyone in the
world can be classified into
two groups; groups of birds
to be more specific. There are
pheasants and there are
ostriches.

PAIGE

Mm-hmm.

Paige nods her interest as she intently focuses on
Geoffrey's face.

GEOFFREY

You see, the pheasants are the people who are not only beautiful on the outside, but also serve a function on the inside. Pheasants are wonderful as an entrée to eat and to receive energy from to live. They are very clever birds and are quite difficult to catch.

Paige shifts her weight from one foot to another without letting her eyes waiver from Geoffrey's face.

GEOFFREY [CONT]

Take ostriches on the other hand. Their meat is tough and their intelligence isn't much better. Every time one of those birds sticks its head in the ground, its neck is open to being snapped. The only thing that they are good for is conversation.

PAIGE

Conversation?

GEOFFREY

Absolutely. One can use their plumage to write letters. Some people are good for a number of things, some are good for just a few words. That, my dear Paige, is the 'P's and 'O's theory.

PAIGE

Vapid versus volume, then?

GEOFFREY

Yes. Brilliant deduction. Too bad not all could grasp the theory as quickly as you have.

PAIGE

It's a rather interesting

theory from someone as young
as yourself.

GEOFFREY

Why is age a measure of wisdom?
After all, we both seem to be of
the same generation, but possess
a similar appreciation for the art
of thinking. That doesn't occur
very often these days. Hmm,
perhaps that will be my next theory.
Or rather the disproving of that
theory, to be more exact.

PAIGE

Well, it appears as there's no end
in sight for your thinking
possibilities. I do hope you find
someone to publish your book. I'm
quite interested in reading it now.

The mid-life crisis figure of MR. BRANDFORD waves for
Geoffrey to join him and TWO OLDER MEN from across the
room.

GEOFFREY

It seems Mr. Brandford is calling
me over to him. Time to be
charming to the men with money.

PAIGE

I believe he wants to introduce
you to Mr. Houseman. That's a
good sign. Old money, old man,
and no family. I just might be
reading that book of yours very
soon. Hopefully, we'll meet again
someday.

GEOFFREY

May your words ring true. It
has been a pleasure to spend a
few moments with a pheasant as
lovely as yourself.

Geoffrey smiles his regrets at leaving and casually strides over to Mr. Brandford with his now watery glass of scotch in his hand.

Raymond sidles up to Paige and links his arm with hers.

RAYMOND

Who was that you were talking
with, Paige?

PAIGE

Just a fellow pheasant who has
to talk to a few ostriches tonight.

Raymond gives Paige a puzzled expression. She just smiles at at him before taking another glance at the young Englishman mingling amongst the suits with money.