

Don't Look Back

A 10-Minute play

By Drew Petriello

Contact:
Drew Petriello
(425) 530-6011
dpetriello@comcast.net

CAST

SOTIRIA: Female. 20s. A stranger in Chiron's Rest. Despite her overt misery, there is a toughness and wit inside of her.

ORPHEUS: Male. Early 20s. Must sing and play guitar. Functioning alcoholic. Spends all his time playing guitar in Chiron's Rest since he lost the love of his life.

KYRIE: Any gender. Over 30. Bartender of Chiron's Rest. Patience of a saint.

SETTING

A bar: Chiron's Rest. It is deserted save for the characters in the play. It is lovingly maintained, but there is a sense of stagnancy to the place, as though a thin layer of dust coats every surface.

SCENE 1

Sotiria is sits on a barstool, drinking whiskey on the rocks at the bar. Orpheus is playing a sad song on his guitar. Kyrie stands behind the counter, staring out into the audience, waiting for their services to be needed.

ORPHEUS

(singing)

Looking through the haze and fog of my memories
I see thousands upon thousands of fallacies
All committed by me
Only one haunts me like a ghost that cannot sleep
Nightmares at night of a promise I didn't keep
Selling my joy for cheap

I can't look back
I must look back
I can't look back
Let me go back

Orpheus continues to play his guitar.

SOTIRIA

It's more dead in here than my chances of ever feeling joy again.

KYRIE

Mm.

SOTIRIA

What time's the rush?

Kyrie gives her a flat look.

SOTIRIA

(pointing at Orpheus)

At least he looks like the sort who practically lives here. Is he always so...?

KYRIE

Angsty? Yes.

SOTIRIA

Beautiful music though. Haunting. Ooh, it's giving me those good bone chills...

KYRIE

Eightieth song about his dead wife.

SOTIRIA

Huh.

The song continues in the background.

Sotiria begins to walk to Orpheus. He glares at her, stopping her in her tracks. She turns around, goes back to the bar and downs her whiskey.

SOTIRIA

Misery, it turns out, does not seem to love company.

(holding up her glass)

Put it on my tab.

KYRIE

(producing a bottle)

Mm-hm.

Kyrie pours, then makes notes on a slip of paper. Orpheus stops playing his music. Silence for several seconds.

ORPHEUS

Kyrie.

KYRIE

Mm?

ORPHEUS

(tapping his wine glass)

Tab.

Kyrie pours Orpheus a glass of red wine. Kyrie jots something down on a different, more crumpled slip of paper.

SOTIRIA

Nice tune.

ORPHEUS

Uh-huh.

SOTIRIA

It was gorgeous.

ORPHEUS

Well, yeah.

SOTIRIA

Take a complement, Narcissus. Geez.

KYRIE

Orpheus.

SOTIRIA

No no, Narcissus was the guy who fell in love with his own --

KYRIE

(pointing at Orpheus)

Orpheus.

(beat)

SOTIRIA

No. Really?

ORPHEUS

The one and only.

SOTIRIA

Seriously? No, wait, seriously? Oh my god, my girlfriend and I used to go to your concerts all the time!

ORPHEUS

(drinking wine)

Mm.

SOTIRIA

I can't believe I didn't recognize you. What are you doing in a place like this?
(to Kyrie)

No offense.

KYRIE

(shrugs)

SOTIRIA

Everyone thinks you're dead.
The crowds that congregated to hear you play wept and held funerals
the trees you used to write songs among are withering and dropping their leaves
the critters of the trees are hiding
there are more snakes than there used to be.
Why did you leave?

ORPHEUS

Well. I'm not leaving here.

Kyrie wags the crumpled slip of paper in the
air.

ORPHEUS

My crowd of three is all I need:
the indestructible Chiron's Rest
the immovable bartender, Kyrie
(holding up his wine)
and the blood of the fallen.

(he takes a drink)

You are not my usual audience these days. You should leave. You don't belong here.

SOTIRIA

I belong here as much as you. Why are you here?

ORPHEUS

None of your business.

SOTIRIA

Like you have any pressing business whatsoever.

ORPHEUS

Not true. I am in this one's business --

(re: Kyrie)

-- and happen to be making music and drinking sour wine within it.

KYRIE

You don't like the wine?

ORPHEUS

No, no. It's perfect. I'll pay off my tab when I can. I promise, Kyrie.

KYRIE

Mm-hm.

SOTIRIA

It was her favorite.

ORPHEUS

...I beg your pardon?

SOTIRIA

Your wife. It was her favorite wine. Drinking it reminds you of her.

Orpheus glares at her.

SOTIRIA

(raising her whiskey on the rocks)

I'm doing the exact same thing, babycakes.

She and Orpheus finish their drinks.

SOTIRIA

Oof, lordy, keep 'em coming.

ORPHEUS

Another!

Kyrie looks between the two of them, sighs,
then gets them their drinks and makes marks on
their respective tabs.

Orpheus

(after a time, staring at the glass)

I can barely stand the stuff, but I can't seem to stop drinking it.

(he takes another sip, then stares at the
glass)

It was my fault. Her... being taken from me. Twice. Goddammit, twice. Chiron's Rest is for more than when you've hit rock bottom. It's for when you've screwed it up so bad you can't face the outside world.

(he takes another drink, then continues to
stare at the glass)

Eurydice

Oh... your name is beautiful

I knew it was to be us when I heard it

your name

dancing musical notes on the leaves as I played.

The most beautiful song

I wrote for you

I can't play it anymore

I can't hear it anymore

it's fading from my memories

the only thing that won't fade

is your face when I turned to look at you

Eurydice.

Silence. Orpheus contemplates the glass, then
sets it down.

SOTIRIA

Sotiria.

ORPHEUS

Hm. Also a beautiful name.

SOTIRIA

Thank you. Any other good joints nearby to drown your sorrows in? Change things up a bit.

ORPHEUS

Wouldn't know.

SOTIRIA

Just here? How long?

KYRIE

Two years, four months, twelve days.

ORPHEUS

That long.

SOTIRIA

Two and a half years.

ORPHEUS

Guess so.

SOTIRIA

Two years and a half years straight in the same rundown bar --

(to Kyrie)

-- no offense --

(to Orpheus)

-- feeling sorry for yourself.

ORPHEUS

Mm-hm.

Mm.

KYRIE

SOTIRIA

Meanwhile, in the world beyond
there is no music half so heartfelt
half so beautiful anymore.

An endless winter

'cause the trees have lost their wills to live
clouds are making tantrums from lack of music
and there are so many snakes these days
serpents around every street corner
because your music hasn't left these walls
for so
so long.

ORPHEUS

The world doesn't need me.

SOTIRIA

If your self-pity is so goddamn important to you, go masturbate on a patch of soil for the rest of your life. You'll do more good that way.

ORPHEUS

You have no idea.

SOTIRIA

I don't? How do you think I ended up at Chiron's Rest, armpit of all the armpit bars of the world? But I am getting out of here before it's too late. I don't want to be like you.

ORPHEUS

Don't be so sanctimonious.

Sotiria downs her drink. Kyrie slides a slip of paper across the counter.

SOTIRIA

Best I can do is an IOU.

Kyrie shakes their head. Sotiria looks around the empty bar.

SOTIRIA

Are you going to stop me from leaving?

(a pause)

Mm-hm.

ORPHEUS

Kyrie's good people. Don't skip out on -

SOTIRIA

At least your grand return to the outside world will be met with heralding angels and adulation, you wallowing pig. Me? I'm going to go back out there, and I'm going to deal with about four dozen debt hounds. My lovely ex fleeced me and then - *pssht!* - off she went. I haven't a clue what I'm going to do, but I'm going back out there because there's no way in hell I'm going to stay here and feel sorry for myself until I die.

(beat)

And you can't even do it for heralding angels and adulation. If you do ever decide to get out, you can find me where the lake becomes the sea.

ORPHEUS

Could've just said "coast."

Sotiria glares at Orpheus. He shrugs a "sorry."

Sotiria exits. Orpheus watches her go. He is about to take a drink when he stops himself. He stares at the wine in the glass.

ORPHEUS

Kyrie?

KYRIE

Mm?

ORPHEUS

If I can't stand the way the wine tastes, why do I keep drinking it?

KYRIE

Been wondering the same thing for two years, four months, twelve days.

ORPHEUS

Why didn't you say anything?

KYRIE

What kind of barkeep would turn down their best customer?

Silence. Orpheus sets down the wine glass, picks up his guitar and goes over to the bar.

Kyrie shows Orpheus the slip of paper.

ORPHEUS

She kind of gave up the game, didn't she?

Kyrie sighs. Orpheus claps Kyrie on the shoulder, then leaves. Kyrie cleans up the bar, humming the tune Orpheus sang at the beginning of the play.

THE END