

another pSecret pSociety pshort pstory



Eureka! by Mike Bozart (Agent 33) | DECEMBER 2016

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by Mike Bozart

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Manuel Oscar Ortiz, a 26-year-old, struggling Hispanic American actor, opened the coffee-stained, crumpled, dingy, return-address-less envelope in his cramped and cluttered East Hollywood (California, USA) studio apartment. The three o'clock December sunlight slithered through the old Venetian blinds into his kitchenette and illuminated the sheet of notebook paper. He read softly aloud:

Man, oh Manuel! Yes, finally, 'Daring' has successfully formulated Mysterium! [sic] And boy does it enhance neurotransmission inside our 3-pound [1.36 kg] intracranial jelly lobes - our brains. Dude, I inhaled a big blast last week, and let me tell you, I'll never be the same. No, I haven't become a homicidal rapist, but I have become painfully aware of humankind's fate. I won't spoil it for you; I'll let you 'see' for yourself. You won't believe it! Anyway, since I no longer trust USPS, [United States Postal Service] I hid a small container for you in Eureka. [California, USA] Let me close with these clues for discovery:

- *from the Canadian Atlantic he came*
- *easier to fell trees than find gold*
- *Queen Anne would be proud*
- *waterfront is worth the walk*
- *where the rain trickles out, I put it in*
- *on a line between turret and sign*

Manuel then carefully folded the note back into thirds and re-inserted it into the right-edge-torn-off envelope. As he held it in his right hand, his mind began to race. *I wonder who sent this. Probably Charles. Yeah, it has to be Charles. He's too paranoid to own or even use a cell phone. That's why he sent this letter anonymously. I wonder if there's anything to this Mysterium stuff. Charles claims that he's seen the fate of humankind. What an outlandish remark! But, that's just like Charles. Well, I probably won't have any work this weekend. Maybe jump a flight up to Arcata. Yeah, why not?*

Next Saturday morning found Manuel at LAX (Los Angeles International Airport), boarding an Alaska Airlines flight with just a backpack. Once in his window seat in the middle of the coach section of the Boeing 737, he looked at the cracks in the tarmac. His mind meandered. *Have to go to PDX [Portland International Airport] first. A nonstop would have been nice, but it's just too expensive on short notice. Well, the extra time can be used to start deciphering the clues in that letter. Oh crap! Where is the letter?! [It was in his left hand.] Oh, there it is. Gosh, that letter has got me so hyped-up that I'm losing my mind. Need to relax. I wonder how impressive that Mysterium mist is. Hope I can find it. Clue 1: 'from the Canadian Atlantic he came'. That could be any one of a hundred thousand gents. Hmmm Let's start with the third clue, a proper noun – Queen Anne. Let's do a Google search on Queen Anne and Eureka, California together. Bingo! The old Carson Mansion. The first two clues further confirm this. But, what does the fourth clue – 'waterfront is worth the walk' – happen to mean? I'll just get a hotel room near that Victorian mansion and find out this afternoon.*

The flight to Portland was relaxingly uneventful, save for a small boy who lost his tiny toy under his seat. Once inside the south terminal, Manuel went to a newsstand that proudly stated that they sold 'everything from porn to granola bars'. He drifted over to the map section as Nick Lowe's *Christmas at the Airport* suffused the dusty air from a ceiling-tile speaker. A cute, petite, raven-haired Latina in her early 20s looked at Manuel and smiled. *Well, there's an opening. Should I talk to her? I'm single once again. Hell, why not?*

He walked up to her, feeling insouciantly assure of himself. "Did you find something to read?" he asked prosaically, sounding a bit tired.

"No, they don't have the romance novel that I'm looking for," she said, sensing his interest in her ... or her body.

"Which novel is that?" Manuel asked, and then realized that he might be prying. *Romance novels can be like porn for women. Why am I asking her for the title? I wouldn't know it anyway. Would she ask me for the title of my favorite porn site? Let's wake up, boy. / He sure is feeling bold.*

"The title is *Kathy's Barbarian*. It's girly stuff." *I am sure that it is. / I wonder if he's a speedy pumper.*

“Would the barbarian in that novel happen to be named Ingomar?” *Huh? Ingomar? What a name!*

“No, I don’t think so. Why?”

“Oh, it’s a long story,” Manuel said with a slight sigh. *I need to hear it.*

“Tell me this long story over a tall cup of coffee, mister. I’ve got twenty minutes to kill. There’s a coffee shop next door.” *Hard to pass up an offer like this. She’s very cute and incredibly sexy. Just don’t tell her about the Mysterium.*

“Ok, sure. Why not?”

“Exactly! Why not? There’s no harm in it.” *I hope not.*

They then moseyed over to the espresso stand, ordered and took opposing seats at a 4-top table.

“Oh, by the way, my name is Lucia.” She then put her large brown handbag down in the chair beside her.

“I’m Manuel. Do you speak Spanish?” *I guess that I look more Hispanic than I thought.*

“Hardly any. I’m second generation. My family came to San Diego [California, USA] from Guatemala back in the 1980s.”

“I see. My roots go back to Costa Rica. I attended Humboldt State University in Arcata – studied acting. I’m headed back to Eureka now.” *Another movie-star wannabe.*

“Going to link up with the old college gang and burn a few blunts?” [hollowed-out cigars filled with marijuana]

“Uh, no, just going back for old time’s sake.” *That’s a lie. He would suck as a politician.*

“Oh, stop with the coyness, hombre. [man in Spanish] You’re going back there to bang your old girlfriend. Am I right?” *Wow! Why did I have to start talking to this woman? Must not be like that David character in ‘Gold, a summer story’. [the 2013 novel by yours truly] Should have never struck up a conversation with her. Need to watch my tongue.*

“No, nothing like that. So, where are you off to?” *He’s quite evasive. Something is up. It’s obvious. I should track his sly ass. I’ll drop a GPS [Global Positioning System] chip on him.*

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