

The Pirate of Penance

Joni Mitchell

The pirate anchored on a Wednesday
And why he came to port, I wonder
To see a lady, so my friends say

She dances for the sailors
In a smoky cabaret bar underground
Down in a cellar in a harbor town

I know he told her love was treasure
And they would reap the fullest bounty
He only comes to port for pleasure

So when the winds of morning
Blew the curtains in, she woke and found he'd gone
I saw his sails unfurling Thursday dawn

The pirate, he will sink you with a kiss
He'll steal your heart and sail away
(Saturday, early we met in the cove near the forest)

He'll leave you drowning in the flotsam of a broken promise in the bay
(Dancing, we wakened the dawn and the birds into chorus)
He came again to see her, yes, I think they told me it was Saturday
(Ask Penance Crane, she was out in her garden, she saw us)
I was at sea then, I didn't see them

I don't believe what you are saying
It isn't true I hardly knew him
Is this some game that you are playing

Go ask the dancer, she's the one who saw him last
The one who drew him here
He hasn't come to me since spring last year

There was a time when he would
Bring me silks and sandalwood and Persian lace
(Then came another 'Goodbye' and another 'Please don't go')

And he would hold me close and tell my sailing stories by the fireplace
(All night I dance and all day I keep watch with my sorrow)
I was at sea, I tell you I was nowhere near the mentioned murder place
(Searching for sails that don't come and I guess but I don't know)

Go ask the dancer, she knows the answer
(I don't know)
She knows the answer
(I don't know)
She knows the answer
(I don't know)