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SF PERUSALS

SHUT YOUR EYES AND THINK OF ENGLAND

A Comedy

JOHN CHAPMAN and ANTHONY MARRIOTT

SAMUEL  FRENCH

LONDON

NEW YORK SYDNEY TORONTO HOLLYWOOD

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SHUT YOUR EYES AND THINK OF ENGLAND

First presented by John Gale at the Apollo Theatre, London, on the 15th November 1977, with the following cast of characters:

Sir Justin Holbrook	Frank Thornton
Stella Richards	Madeline Smith
Arthur Pullen	Donald Sinden
Lady Holbrook	Jan Holden
The Rt Hon. Sir Frederick Goudhurst	Willoughby Goddard
His Highness Sheik Marami	Peter Bland
Mrs Joyce Pullen	Patsy Rowlands
Mr Rubenstein	Ken Wynne
Dr Cornish	Robin Parkinson

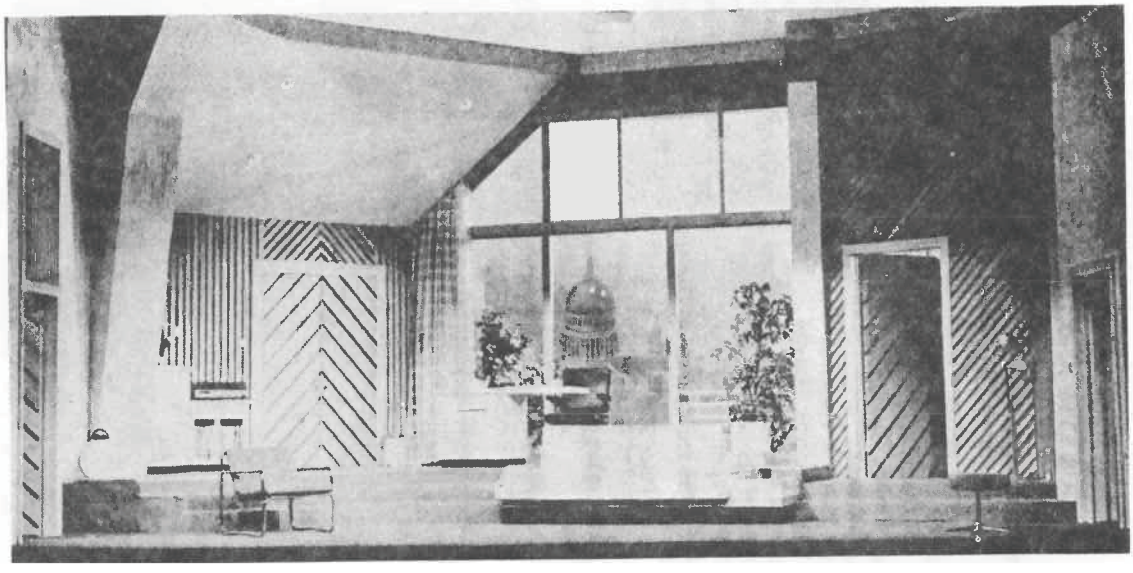
The play directed by Patrick Garland

Setting by Peter Rice

The action takes place in a Penthouse Apartment in the City of London

Act I Early Saturday morning
Act II A few moments later

Time—the present—give or take a Government



ACT I

A luxury apartment in the City of London overlooking St Paul's. Early morning

The back wall is almost entirely taken up with a picture window with sliding glass doors leading on to a balcony which goes off to one side of the stage. There are four doors in the room: one leading to a bedroom, another to a kitchen, a third to the offices of Holbrook Investments Corporation, and a fourth—double doors—to the hall. This last is the main entrance to the apartment. There is a large sofa in the middle of the room, and some modern gimmicky furniture. The whole impression is that of a high-class business man's pad. The record-player is playing, and the telephone receiver is off its rest

Justin Holbrook enters from the bedroom in his dressing-gown. He is a good-looking well-preserved man in his early fifties. He goes to the sofa table and picks up a dirty brandy glass, then picks up another dirty brandy glass from beside the armchair. He puts both glasses on the drinks cabinet and lifts the record-player lid and turns off the music

Holbrook (*calling*) What do you usually have for breakfast.
Stella (*off*) Just a glass of orange juice.

Stella Richards enters, putting on her wrap, and leans on the bedroom door. She is a very elegant and expensive call-girl

In my game you've got to watch your figure.
Holbrook (*smiling*) Quite.
Stella By the way do you want to pay cash or shall I charge it to your account?
Holbrook I don't really mind, as long as it's confidential.
Stella I should do it on your account. As you know, we call it "secretarial services" and then you can get it off tax as well.
Holbrook Very accommodating. You don't do it on "Diner's Club" yet, do you?
Stella We tried that, but it was such a bore carrying around those heavy machines. (*She sits in the desk chair*) Do you mind if I use the phone to call the Agency?
Holbrook (*putting the receiver back on the phone*) Sure, help yourself.
Stella Oh, you took it off the hook.
Holbrook I have a wife who has a habit of ringing at the most inopportune moments.
Stella I suppose that explains why you don't have one in the bedroom.
Holbrook I don't go in there to make phone calls.

Stella dials

Stella You can say that again.

Holbrook Will there by anyone on duty at this hour? It's only just gone nine. And it is Saturday morning.

Stella We're a genuine twenty-four hour, seven day service.

Holbrook Very commendable.

Stella I like to get my appointments sorted out as early as possible, then I can go home and have a good sleep.

Holbrook That's something we share in common. I'll get your orange juice.

Holbrook exits to the kitchen

Stella (*on the phone*) Morning, Stella Richards here; put me through to Bookings will you ... Hello ... What's in the diary for me? ... Not that American film producer again; he's always asking me to marry him ... I keep telling him I don't give complementaries ... O.K., six o'clock at his hotel.... Last night? Oh, fine, I think it might become a regular booking ...

Holbrook enters with two glasses of orange juice

Yes, he's absolutely charming. 'Bye, call you same time tomorrow. Take care. (*She replaces the receiver*)

Holbrook There you are. (*He gives her a glass*)

Stella Thank you.

Holbrook Who've you got today, anyone I know?

Stella We never discuss one client with another, it's not ethical.

Holbrook I'm glad to hear it.

Stella We're just like your City organizations, secretly efficient.

Holbrook You'd be an asset to any organization. Ever thought of becoming a private secretary?

Stella No, thanks. I tried it once, before I turned professional. Too much like hard work. And all those childish business men chasing you round the filing cabinet. I found it most distasteful.

Holbrook How about another round of pleasure before you go?

Stella Fine by me, but surely you don't want me round when the staff arrive.

Holbrook There's nobody here. The City's closed on a Saturday.

Stella (*looking at a letter on the desk*) By the way, I hope you don't mind my asking, but what exactly is the Holbrook International Investment Corporation? (*She picks up a letter-head*)

Holbrook We're one of the largest private investment institutions in Western Europe. Incidentally we've got a new issue coming up. As Chairman and Managing Director I could always let you in on the ground floor if you're interested.

Stella Thanks, I'll have a word with my stockbroker sometime. Not that I invest much, the tax on unearned income is so crippling these days.

Holbrook You've obviously got a good head for business.

Stella It's all part of the game, isn't it? And of course I use the best firm of chartered accountants!

Holbrook Of course!

Stella They assure me I'm sitting on a fortune!

Holbrook I see their point. Come on!

Stella rises. She and Holbrook move to the bedroom door

Stella exits to the bedroom

There is a tapping on the office door

(*Surprised*) What the devil ...

He hastily closes the bedroom door. There is another tentative tap. He goes to the desk and collects the glasses of orange juice

Coming! (*He goes to the drinks cabinet and puts the glasses on it, then moves to the main door and opens it*)

Arthur Pullen enters with briefcase, umbrella, spectacles, bowler hat and mac. He is a punctilious accountant in his late forties

Pullen Sir Justin, I hope I'm not intruding?

Holbrook Pullen, what the hell are you doing here?

Pullen Well, I caught the early train, the eight oh-nine from Coulsdon South, getting into London Bridge at eight thirty-six. Coulsdon South is a bit further from my home than Coulsdon North but it's a much faster service, and anyway the trains from Coulsdon North stop at every station and don't run at all on Saturdays.

Holbrook (*blankly*) Ah.

Pullen And I wanted to be here by eight fifty, and was. Normally, of course, I get the eight nineteen which gets me in promptly at eight forty-two and then it's only a brisk eight-minute walk. There are those occasions, however, when we're all diverted to Victoria.

Holbrook moves into the room. Pullen follows him

Holbrook I didn't ask for a detailed run down on the Southern Region, I want to know why you're here on a Saturday.

Pullen To finish the books, ready for audit. I'm going on holiday today. I got here early, so that I could leave at three and I've brought sandwiches for lunch, so I shall have plenty of time to polish the job off.

Holbrook Well, get on with it. Why the hell are you knocking on my door?

Pullen The Office Manager isn't here today and he forgot to give me the appropriate keys. And I've been twiddling my thumbs for nearly ten minutes wondering what to do. Then suddenly it occurred to me that you might be staying the night in the penthouse, recovering from your Far East flight yesterday before joining your wife in the country today.

Holbrook Get to the point, Pullen.

Pullen The cabinet keys.

Holbrook goes to the desk, opens the drawer and gets the keys. Pullen goes to take the keys from Holbrook and leaves his briefcase on the desk

Holbrook The way you waffle round in circles, Pullen, I sometimes wonder how you ever became such a good accountant.

Pullen Thank you, sir.

Holbrook (*gives him the keys*) That wasn't meant to be a compliment.

Pullen (*laughing*) Oh, I see. Thank you, sir.
Holbrook Go away, Pullen.

Pullen goes to the main doors

Oh, Pullen, use my door to the office. That door!

Pullen goes to the office door

And don't forget to return the keys.

Pullen steps to Holbrook

Pullen No, sir.
Holbrook And, Pullen ...

Holbrook goes to the armchair. Pullen moves to him

Pullen Sir?
Holbrook Have a nice holiday.
Pullen Thank you, sir.

Pullen steps to the office door, then back to Holbrook

It'll be Bournemouth of course again this year. Joyce, my wife that is, does so enjoy it there, and they're used to us now at the Palace Court, and ...

Holbrook I'm glad somebody's used to you, for goodness' sake get out!
Pullen Yes.

Pullen exits to the office, then re-enters immediately

Don't worry, I shall be back on the fourteenth ...
Holbrook I can't wait!

Pullen exits to the office, slamming the door. He re-enters

Pullen I'm sorry, sir. I slammed the door.

Pullen exits to the office. Stella enters as Holbrook locks the office door and takes the key out

Stella What's the matter—gone off the idea?
Holbrook Of course not. But one of my staff's turned up.
Stella Oh no! Perhaps I'd better go then.

Holbrook goes and shuts the main doors and moves to the sofa.

Holbrook No, it's no-one of any importance, only Pullen, he's the accountant going on holiday—came in early from Coulsdon North, I mean South—going to Bournemouth—I don't mean he's going to Bournemouth from Coulsdon ... (*stops*) He'll have us all at it next.

Stella and Holbrook exit to the bedroom, leaving the door open. Pullen knocks on the office door and unlocks it with the key and enters

Pullen Sorry to disturb you ...

Seeing no-one there, Pullen goes to the desk. Stella and Holbrook laugh from the bedroom. Pullen steps to the bedroom, then goes to the desk, picks up his briefcase, and moves to the office door. There is more laughter from the bedroom. Pullen is rooted to the spot. There is a thud from the bedroom

Stella (*off*) Sir Justin, Sir Justin! What's the matter? Are you all right?

Stella enters from the bedroom

Doctor! Doctor!

Pullen I'm not a doctor. I work here.

Stella You're Mr Pullen?

Pullen Er—er—er ...

Stella Well, are you?

Pullen Yes.

Stella Then ring for a doctor. I think something's happened to my client.

Pullen Your client?

Stella Sir Justin Holbrook. I think he's had a heart attack in the middle.

Pullen In the middle?

Stella In the middle of the bedroom.

Pullen Good Lord.

Stella Are you going to dial or shall I?

Pullen Dial?

Stella For an ambulance—get him to hospital.

Pullen But they might take him to a public ward in the East End. He should go West.

Stella He will if we don't hurry.

Stella goes to the desk and dials. Pullen goes to the bedroom door and looks through

Pullen It's all right, he's still moving.

Stella D'you think one of us should give him the kiss of life?

Pullen I imagine you'd be better at it than I.

Stella (*on the phone*) Oh yes, ambulance, hold on!

Stella gives the phone to Pullen and moves to the bedroom door

You deal with them. I'll see what I can do to help in there.

Stella rushes into the bedroom

Pullen takes the phone and puts the keys on the desk

Pullen (*on the phone*) Emergency. My name is Pullen, Arthur Pullen ... I'm the accountant ... no, I'm not the patient. Well, it's for my Chairman, Sir Justin Holbrook, I think it might be a heart attack ... Where am I? I'm standing by the desk in the lounge ... Ah! The Holbrook International Investment Corporation, two hundred and twenty Gracechurch Street, London EC three one JW ... Oh, on a go-slow? But this is an emergency ... Well, do the best you can, after all he is on BUPA ... Well, it's like the A.A., isn't it? You can be towed in for nothing ...

Stella and Holbrook enter from the bedroom. Holbrook is draped in a blanket

Stella Are they on their way?
Pullen I wouldn't bank on it. (*He looks up*) Good Lord.

Stella and Holbrook sit on the sofa

(*On the phone*) This girl kissed him ...
Holbrook Pullen!
Pullen I mean I kissed him—well somebody kissed him and he's come to life so you can put your ambulance away. (*He replaces the receiver*) I must say I'm delighted to see you've recovered.
Holbrook Thank you.
Stella Are you sure you're all right now?
Holbrook Yes, yes, it was just a temporary black-out.
Pullen The "bends"?
Holbrook I beg your pardon?
Pullen The sort of thing experienced by divers and astronauts when they're going down or coming up.
Holbrook Quite. It's a nervous condition of the heart, called Stokes-Adams syndrome.
Stella You won't be needing me again, will you?
Holbrook Not in the immediate future, no.

Stella kisses Holbrook on the forehead. Pullen looks away

Stella exits to the bedroom

Pullen goes to the desk, collects his briefcase and moves to the sofa

Pullen (*tactfully*) Charming young lady. Bit of luck she was here really to give it to you.
Holbrook Give me what?
Pullen The—kiss of life.
Holbrook Wait a minute, Pullen, I seem to remember locking that door.
Pullen You did sir, but I had to come back for my briefcase. It contained my sandwiches and coffee, and as you kindly gave me the keys I used them to re-enter. I was on the point of going out again when I heard a cry of distress and your "mas–", "mas–"—er, physiotherapist came rushing in.
Holbrook Don't be so damned diplomatic, you know exactly what she is, and what we were doing.
Pullen Well, if I did, I would never—and I won't!
Holbrook Not if you value your job.
Pullen Oh, I do.
Holbrook I dare say you've had one or two mild peccadilloes in your time.
Pullen Mild what, sir?
Holbrook A bit on the side.
Pullen Oh, I see. Well, I wouldn't deny it's crossed my mind from time to time, but there's not a lot of scope for it in Coulsdon.
Holbrook Well, you've not in Coulsdon now. (*He gives him a wink*) You're

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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