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SF PERUSALS

Samuel French Acting Edition

Night and Day

by Tom Stoppard

SAMUEL FRENCH

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

The text of "Night and Day" is that of the British touring production, which differed in one main respect from the London and New York productions. The play as it was originally seen began with a brief, almost wordless prologue in which the audience saw what turned out to be Guthrie's dream: the jeep driving through night and mist, Guthrie jumping out, the sound of a helicopter overhead, Guthrie being shot, and the jeep driving off. This still seems to me to be the best way to begin the play but (quite apart from the business of procuring a jeep and accommodating it in the wing space) it does necessitate beginning the play with an empty stage, which in turn necessitates a mobile set. The original production also had the jeep driving onto the stage for the last scene of the first act, and driving off at the curtain. The changes made in this edition at the beginning and end of the first act have been made to make it possible to perform the play in a permanent set.

CHARACTERS

GEORGE GUTHRIE

RUTH CARSON

ALASTAIR CARSON

DICK WAGNER

JACOB MILNE

GEOFFREY CARSON

PRESIDENT MAGEEBA

FRANCIS

NOTES ON CHARACTERS

GUTHRIE is in his forties; perhaps quite short; fit, can look after himself; wears tough clothes, blue denim, comfortable boots.

RUTH is in her late thirties; probably tall; attractive in face, figure and, especially, voice; shoulder-length hair.

ALASTAIR is eight, English prep school; fair.

WAGNER is in his forties, a suit-and-tie man; big but not fat. An Australian; some accent.

MILNE is twenty-two or -three and definitely attractive in a way that is called boyish; casually dressed.

CARSON, Ruth's husband, is somewhat older than her but also in good shape; casually but well dressed.

MAGEEBA, the President, is around fifty, a British-educated black African, a hard man if soft of voice; carefully dressed in freshly-laundered "informal" army uniform.

FRANCIS, Carson's black African servant and driver, is in his twenties; slacks and white clean short-sleeved shirt.

A NOTE ON "RUTH"

The audience is occasionally made privy to Ruth's thoughts, and to hers alone. When Ruth's thoughts are audible she is simply called "RUTH" in quotes, and treated as a separate character. Thus, RUTH can be interrupted by "RUTH."

This rule is also loosely applied to the first scene of Act Two, where the situation is somewhat different.

Night and Day

ACT ONE

THE SETTING: *We are in a fictitious African country, formerly a British Colony. The living area of the Carson house. The door to the outside is visible Stage Left. The small hallway and living area are arranged on open-plan, but centrally, at the back of the stage, is a separate study with a sliding door facing the audience. When the door is open part of the interior of the study is visible, notably the telex machine on a desk. The level of the hallway and the study may be raised a step or two above the level of the seating area at the Centre and Right. At the Right, among other seats, is an upholstered bench (or something equally suitable) on which* GUTHRIE *later sleeps. Upstage Left is an entrance from the kitchen etc., and Upstage Right would lead to bedrooms, via some steps which are partly in view. At the bottom of the steps is a wide pillar disappearing into the roof; this comes into use in the second act when* RUTH *and her double are switched (in the original production a growing tree was incorporated into the set instead of a pillar). The decor is generally European with some local colour. The place is comfortable and well used but fairly expensive. There is a telephone in the study and another one at Stage Right and also a house phone at Stage Right. There is a sideboard or table with bottles or glasses on it. Against the Centre Stage wall of the study is a shelf which must be hard enough for a bottle to be broken on it.*

Before the lights come up there is the sound of a telex, which gets louder until it is very loud and then blends into the sound of helicopter and, a few moments later, machine-gun fire. Near the beginning of this sound sequence, a very dim flickering light shows GUTHRIE'S *face and little else of him, looking up into the light and shouting but hardly audible over the general noise. When the gunfire is heard he collapses.*

The lights come up to reveal GUTHRIE *sleeping in a chair in the living-room. Near him is his camera bag which has pockets for camera lenses, film etc. An empty lemonade glass is near him. A car is heard approaching the house. The car arrives. The car door slams.* FRANCIS *enters and removes* GUTHRIE'S empty glass, and leaves. RUTH *enters through the front door carrying two or three packages which she puts down. Music, with drum beats, has been playing since the lights went up. It is coming from a small cassette player on the set.*

RUTH. Those drums, those damned drums . . .

(*She switches off the cassette player.* RUTH *sees* GUTHRIE *sleeping in the chair. She looks at him but he doesn't move. She notices the bag and bends down and touches it—perhaps to peer inside it.*)

GUTHRIE. Please don't touch that.
RUTH. I'm sorry.
GUTHRIE. Christ. That wasn't nice at all.
RUTH. I thought you were asleep.
GUTHRIE. I thought I was dead.

(FRANCIS *comes on with a tea-tray, a nice tea-set with one cup and saucer. He brings this to* RUTH *at the table.*)

RUTH. Thank you, Francis. Has the house been opened to the public? (*This gets through to* GUTHRIE.)

GUTHRIE. Oh—God—I'm terribly sorry—

RUTH. I shouldn't get up; you look awful (*To* FRANCIS *who is leaving.*) Another cup. (RUTH'S *manner is easygoing.* GUTHRIE *gets up.*)

GUTHRIE. No—I'm fine. Sleeping on planes—you know. Ruins the complexion. From the inside. My name's Guthrie—George Guthrie.

RUTH. How do you do? I'm Ruth Carson. Would you care for some tea?

GUTHRIE. Wouldn't say no. Thanks. (RUTH *is pouring tea for* GUTHRIE *into the only cup.*)

RUTH. Sugar?

GUTHRIE. No thanks.

(GUTHRIE *goes back to his bag and fishes about in it. Meanwhile* FRANCIS *comes in with another cup.* GUTHRIE *is looking for something—saccharin tablets—in his bag.* FRANCIS *leaves.*)

RUTH. I'm sorry I wasn't here to greet you Mr. . . . Guthrie. I had to go into Jeddu to pick up some things.

GUTHRIE. The boy let me in. I've come to meet Dick Wagner. (*English pronunciation—Wag-ner. He has found the saccharin and is coming back.* RUTH *remains perfectly still.* GUTHRIE *comes casually back to the table and sits down.* RUTH *waits until he looks at her.*)

RUTH. What are you talking about, Mr. Guthrie?

GUTHRIE. Dick Wagner. Do you know him? (*Pause.*)

RUTH. Is he a composer?

GUTHRIE. No. He's a reporter. Writes for the Sunday Globe, in London. I take the pictures. The pictures, as you know, are worth a thousand words. In the case of Wagner, two thousand. He was supposed to be at K.C. to meet me.

RUTH. Why in God's name do you expect to meet him at my house?

GUTHRIE. He told me. He left a message at the airport.

RUTH. He told you to meet him *at my house?*

(GUTHRIE, *sipping tea, catches her tone for the first time, and hesitates.*)

GUTHRIE. Well, he didn't mention *you.*

"RUTH." Help!

GUTHRIE. Just the house. The boy said it was O.K. to wait in here till Wagner comes. Is that all right?

"RUTH." "Is that all right?" Oh yes, bloody marvelous. Just what you needed, Ruth, and serve you right—nothing is for free, you always pay, and Guthrie has brought the bill. Silly woman!

GUTHRIE. Mrs. Carson?

"RUTH." Oh God, get me out of this before Guthrie's friend arrives; I don't feel up to being witty today.

GUTHRIE. Penny for your thoughts?

RUTH. Sorry?

GUTHRIE. You were miles away.

RUTH. Alas, no.

GUTHRIE. Sorry? (*Pause.*)

RUTH. What kind of camera do you use?

GUTHRIE. Do you know anything about cameras?

RUTH. No. (*Pause.*) By the way, we don't call them boy anymore. The idea is, if we don't call them boy they won't chop us with their machetes. (*Brief smile.*) Small point.

GUTHRIE. (*Holds his arm out, palm to the ground.*) Boy about this high, fair hair, your mouth, knows about cameras, has a Kodak himself; said I could wait in here. (RUTH *acknowledges her mistake, but* GUTHRIE *pushes* it.) His name's Alastair. (*He has pushed it too far and she snaps at him.*)

RUTH. I know his bloody name.

GUTHRIE. (*Olive branch.*) The one I use mainly is a motorized F2 Nikon. (*Sips tea.*) Lovely.

RUTH. (*Smiles.*) Would you like a proper drink?

GUTHRIE. (*Relaxes; shakes his head.*) The sambo gave me a lime squash. (*Winces.*) Sorry.

RUTH. (*Gets up; moves.*) Why is my husband filling my house with journalists?

GUTHRIE. I thought he was one.

RUTH. Geoffrey? Don't be silly.

GUTHRIE. I saw the telex.

RUTH. That's for his business. Did he ask this man to come here?

GUTHRIE. I don't know.

RUTH. What does he want?

GUTHRIE. I don't know.

"RUTH." Help!

GUTHRIE. A story maybe.

"RUTH." I need somebody—help—

GUTHRIE. What is his business?

"RUTH." (*Picking up the rhythm.*) *Not just anybody—He-e-e-lp!* (*Car approaching.*)

GUTHRIE. Here's somebody coming. (GUTHRIE *stands up and moves back, looking out.* RUTH *laughs briefly at herself.*) Beat-up Mercedes. Is that your husband?

RUTH. It's a taxi.

GUTHRIE. Wagner.

(RUTH *leaves. Going upstairs. Helicopter approaching fast and low, over the house.* GUTHRIE *looks up surprised. When the sound is at its loudest, he*

ducks into a crouch, his hands over his head. Then the helicopter has gone. ALASTAIR *has entered. He sees* GUTHRIE *crouched.*)

ALASTAIR. What's the matter? Mr. Guthrie?

GUTHRIE. Hello . . . (ALASTAIR *is carrying an old-fashioned leather-bound Kodak. The camera is folded and* ALASTAIR *holds it by the strap.* GUTHRIE *straightens up.*) Hello.

ALASTAIR. I've found it. Are you going to show me about it? (*Sound of taxi departing.*)

GUTHRIE. I think my friend has arrived. (FRANCIS *enters, from "kitchen."*)

FRANCIS. I thought you were coming down to the compound with me, Allie.

ALASTAIR. No—I want to talk to Mr. Guthrie. (*To* GUTHRIE.) I came before but you were asleep. (*Exit* FRANCIS.)

GUTHRIE. I'm sorry.

ALASTAIR. Will you show me later?

GUTHRIE. Sure.

ALASTAIR. I believe this is an excellent camera. It just needs some film.

GUTHRIE. When does your daddy get home usually?

ALASTAIR. That was him. The helicopter.

GUTHRIE. Oh. (FRANCIS'S *car drives away from the house.*)

ALASTAIR. He buzzes us. Then Francis takes the car down the compound to fetch him.

GUTHRIE. The compound?

ALASTAIR. The mine. A helicopter is extremely useful in a country like Africa. Have you ever flown in one?

GUTHRIE. Yes, a few times.

ALASTAIR. In Africa?

GUTHRIE. No, in Asia.

ALASTAIR. Well, you know how useful they can be.

(WAGNER *enters from the front door.*)

GUTHRIE. Yes. This is my friend, Dick Wagner.

WAGNER. (*Enthusiastically.*) Hello Gigi, you lovely bastard! (WAGNER *moves down into the room and slaps* GUTHRIE'S *shoulder.*) You look *terrific!*

GUTHRIE. I look terrible.

WAGNER. (*Fresh start; same tone.*) You look *terrible!* How are you?

GUTHRIE. This is Alastair Carson.

WAGNER. (*Talking down.*) How do you do, Alastair? And how old are you?

ALASTAIR. Eight. How old are you?

WAGNER. Kid's a natural.

(*Female voice Off, not* RUTH, *"Allie!"*)

ALASTAIR. Got to have my bath now anyway. (*To* GUTHRIE.) Would you like to look at my camera 'til I get back?

GUTHRIE. Sure.

ALASTAIR. You won't forget.

GUTHRIE. No.

ALASTAIR. I'll come back.

(*Voice Off: "Allie!"* ALASTAIR *goes.*)

GUTHRIE. How are things here, Dick?

WAGNER. Not wonderful. I've been in Jeddu ten days. Bloody thing won't catch fire. Where's this Carson?

GUTHRIE. He's on his way. Who is he?

WAGNER. He runs the business end of the copper industry. Also manganese, potash . . . he's in mines generally.

GUTHRIE. But not frequently.

WAGNER. How about Mrs. Carson?

GUTHRIE. She keeps herself nice too.

WAGNER. Where is she?

GUTHRIE. Upstairs. Are you a friend of the family?

WAGNER. Hardly. The one who came out here was an earl or something. Grandfather, I think. There's an elder brother defending the title in England. This one works for a living. As it were. She's his second wife.

GUTHRIE. What are we doing here?

WAGNER. Looking up Carson.

GUTHRIE. Why?

WAGNER. I don't know. I think Hammaker must know him. (*He takes a folded cablegram out of his pocket.*) I got this on Sunday. "Guthrie arriving K.C. ex-Dacca Thursday. ETA ten hundred. Suggest uplook Geoffrey Carson at home Jeddu. Happy birthday. Hammaker." Did you tell her you were meeting me here?

GUTHRIE. Who? Oh, yeah.

WAGNER. You said me?

GUTHRIE. Yeah. (GUTHRIE *takes the cable out of his hand.*)

WAGNER. Dick Wagner.

GUTHRIE. How many names have you got?

WAGNER. How did she react?

GUTHRIE. A bit like you.

WAGNER. How's Dacca?

GUTHRIE. You know Dacca. It's not Paris.

WAGNER. (*Nods; sings badly.*) "April in Dacca . . . I love Dacca in the springtime. I love Dacca in the . . . " Yeah . . . It's not Paris. It's Dacca.

GUTHRIE. (*Handing back the cable.*) Is it your birthday?

WAGNER. No. Sounds good, doesn't it?

GUTHRIE. Did you clock the telex?

WAGNER. (*Looks round and sees the telex.*) Christ!

GUTHRIE. (*Nods.*) Happy birthday.

WAGNER. I don't believe it.

GUTHRIE. Do you think he's got a wire machine somewhere?

WAGNER. We're going to make them sick.

GUTHRIE. Who's out here?

WAGNER. Everybody. (WAGNER *has gone to the machine. He taps a couple of keys and waits for the evidence that it is in working order. The machine chatters back at him briefly.* WAGNER *looks at* GUTHRIE *wide-eyed.*) We are going to make them *ill.*

GUTHRIE. The hotel doesn't have telex?

WAGNER. The hotel doesn't have cleft sticks. There's a post office in town which is a joke. Fritz Biedermeier said when he blew the dust off the counter there was an urgent message for Stanley from the New York Herald.

GUTHRIE. That wasn't here, was it?

WAGNER. It was a joke.

GUTHRIE. O.K. Who's Biedermeier?

WAGNER. Newsweek. He was in Beirut that time.

GUTHRIE. Oh yeah. Him. Has he got a photographer?

WAGNER. No, he's got a camera.

GUTHRIE. That's bad for trade.

WAGNER. Yeah, I wouldn't like it if you learned to write. I think we'll do O.K. now we've got wheels. Which one is yours?

GUTHRIE. The Cortina. How did you get up from Kamba City then?

WAGNER. In a Cessna.

GUTHRIE. Bloody firemen.

WAGNER. Afraid of missing the war. It wasn't so expensive—I shared with a couple of photographers.

GUTHRIE. (*Interested.*) Yeah?—who's that?

WAGNER. One was a Frog—Jean-Paul something. A left-Bank layabout. Yves St. Laurent army fatigues and a gold chain, very tough with the Gauloises, no

filters—know what I mean? "I was just a gigolo 'til I discovered photo-journalism."

GUTHRIE. (*Sharply, angrily.*) Knock it off will you, Dick? (*Pause; apologetically.*) He's really very good.

WAGNER. Sorry.

GUTHRIE. What about the other one?

WAGNER. A groupie. No sweat. He had one of those cameras with a little picture of a cloud and a little picture of the sun and you slide it across according to the weather.

GUTHRIE. (*Smiles.*) Well, I'm shooting Tri-X through two thousand quids' worth of lenses, but he'll get better pictures if he's in a better place. One time in Vietnam I was in a dug-out with Larry Burrows, and this American kid is there—he looked like a hippie, bummed his way into the country and got himself a letter from AP and a second-hand Leica, so he's accredited, right?—wouldn't know his arse from a hole in the ground except he's *in* a hole on the ground, and he's lost his light meter. He's reading his Kodak packet, and there's all kinds of shit coming over, mortars, and he says to Larry, "Hey, do you think this is cloudy-bright or semi-dull?" Well, all you can see is smoke and flames so Larry says, "I think it must be cloudy-bright." This kid then starts walking forward behind a tank and the next time I see him he's got a set of prints of Viet-Cong attacking the bridge, it looked like Robert Mitchum was just out of frame. Three pages in "Match."

WAGNER. Maybe it's the same kid.

GUTHRIE. Later he stepped on a land-mine.

WAGNER. It probably isn't, then.

GUTHRIE. And Larry. And the other three in Larry's helicopter. Do you know how many people were killed in that war?

WAGNER. Not exactly.

GUTHRIE. Forty-five.

WAGNER. Oh. People.

GUTHRIE. And eighteen missing.

WAGNER. Don't be morbid, Gigi.

GUTHRIE. I'm not beng morbid. (*Pause.*) Before you came I was sleeping, in that chair, and I dreamed that I bought it—got killed by a helicopter. I was really quite spooked. Is this going to be a helicopter war?

WAGNER. For Christ's sake!

GUTHRIE. O.K. How are they getting their stuff out?

WAGNER. Air freight from K.C. There's nothing closer for pictures. Good chance of a pigeon, too—lots of people flying out at the moment. And there's the AP wire on Saturday if you're pushed—they'll print up for you.

GUTHRIE. Either way, it's a four hour drive for that lot.

WAGNER. You won't do any better.

GUTHRIE. Carson's got a helicopter.

(*He sits down and picks up* ALASTAIR'S *camera and opens it. He's going to find a roll of film in his own bag and put it into* ALASTAIR'S *camera. But this is something which he takes his time over, checking the camera itself, etc. Also, he gets interrupted so the job isn't completed until later.*)

WAGNER. I can't take much more of this. Our own telex and a helicopter, and the competition writing post cards. If this war starts on a Saturday morning you and I are going to be famous.

GUTHRIE. You are famous in Dacca. I saw your name in the lavatory in the Inter-Continental.

WAGNER. How nice.

GUTHRIE. It said "Dick Wagner before he dicks you".

WAGNER. (*Grins.*) Sour grapes. I didn't break any embargo. I had my own source.

GUTHRIE. All right.

WAGNER. (*Getting worked up.*) By the time those stuck-up bastards woke up, my story was in London.

GUTHRIE. Listen, it's nothing to me.

WAGNER. Jesus—it was on the stone!

GUTHRIE. Do you think we're in the right place?

WAGNER. What do you mean?

GUTHRIE. I don't know what I mean.

WAGNER. Well, everybody else is here.

GUTHRIE. That's what I mean.

WAGNER. There's nothing better. Except an interview with the President, and nobody has even *seen* that mad bastard for six months.

GUTHRIE. What's the story in Jeddu?

WAGNER. (*Shrugs.*) It's as near as we can get to ALF.

GUTHRIE. Who's he?

WAGNER. Them. "Who's he?" Don't you ever look at the bits between the photographs? A.L.F. Adona Liberation Front. The Colonel. Colonel Shimbu.

GUTHRIE. O.K.

WAGNER. Didn't you know about my famous scoop?

GUTHRIE. No.

WAGNER. Neither did I. Sunday, everyone gets cables from home. "Sunday Globe finds Colonel Shimbu. Why Shimbu unfound by you," etcetera. So everybody's screaming, where is Shimbu, Wagner, you bastard? Only, it isn't my story. *I* don't know where the bloody Colonel is. So then they want to see *my* cable—they think it's hugs and kisses from Hammaker. But of course I can't show it to them because I don't know what this happy birthday thing is all about. So then they're calling me a *lying* bastard, and following me to the lavatory when they aren't following armoured

car patrols into the bush in broken-down taxis. You never saw anything like it.

GUTHRIE. Yes, I did.

WAGNER. Yes you did. There's a government press officer here who's the usual lying jerk, but there's no way of telling whether he's lyinng because he knows the truth or because he doesn't know anything, so you can't trust his mendacity either—he could be telling the truth half the time, by accident. His line was that the Adoma Liberation Front didn't exist, and the army had got it completely surrounded. But the Sunday Globe knocked that one on the head. We heard it on the radio. The BBC World Service picks up this Globe exclusive and what do you know, George? Some sodding little stringer with no name has found Colonel Shimbu and made a monkey out of me. Yeah. It sounded like a good piece, too. I'd like to know how he got the story out, I suppose he popped it in a letter box. It was an interview with the Colonel himself. And furthermore, it's not a rebellion, it's a secession—get the picture? *Media credibility!* Well, the press officer goes bananas. He wants to know which side the Globe thinks it's on. So I tell him, it's not on any side, stupid, it's an objective fact-gathering organisation. And he says, yes, but is it objective-for or objective-against? He may be stupid but he's not stupid.

GUTHRIE. I've got a present for you.

(GUTHRIE *gets up and walks towards the back of the room where he picks up a pile of newspapers.* WAGNER *doesn't turn to see this.*)

WAGNER. So he spends the briefing attacking the Globe—God bless him, it's the only story I've filed this week—and he's in a flat spin trying to make everything fit. At the end, this very smooth guy from

Reuters says, "Let me see if I've got this right. It's not a *political* movement, it's just a lot—or rather *not* a lot—of completely illiterate ivory poachers who've been reading too much Marxist propaganda, and they're all armed with home-made weapons flown by Cuban pilots."

GUTHRIE. (*Coming back.*) Who's the Globe special correspondent?

WAGNER. I don't know. I'm famous in Jeddu. Scooped by my own paper. Bloody poaching, that's what it is. It's one of those ivory poachers moonlighting for Hammaker. I'd give anything for a copy of last Sunday's Globe— (GUTHRIE *dumps the newspapers and a magazine* (*Newsweek*) *into* WAGNER'S *lap.*) Aw, Gigi!

GUTHRIE. I couldn't get them all, just what they had when I changed planes at Karachi. (*The Sunday Globe is a respectable English paper. The African story is the second most important story on the front page. The back page is a sports page. The other papers are: the Sunday Express, Newsweek, the Sunday Times, the Sunday Mirror, and the News of the World.* WAGNER *of course looks at the Globe first.*) Front page . . .

WAGNER. Second lead. "From a special correspondent"—

GUTHRIE. That's what I said.

WAGNER. What the hell does that mean? Fair old piece. (*He turns the paper to look over the fold.*) Took care of mine anyway—"Richard Wagner adds from Jeddu"—two paragraphs. (*He puts the paper aside.*) Well, well. A world beat and no name on it.

GUTHRIE. A freelance.

WAGNER. They have names. I don't get it.

GUTHRIE. (*Picking up the Globe.*) Where is this place?

WAGNER. It's sort of North Wales.

GUTHRIE. North Wales?

WAGNER. I've given up on place names here—they all sound like games you play on board ship. If a place isn't called Tombola it's called Housey-housey. The way to look at it is, K.C. is London, Jeddu is up the A40—Cheltenham—and the Colonel is somewhere in the Welsh hills. The Sunday Times: "At five minutes past eight on Wednesday morning, an ADC on the staff of Supreme Commander and President Ginku Mageeba, his uniform distinguished by Christian Dior sunglasses and unbuttoned flies, drove a green and white jeep up to the Princess Alice Bar in downtown Jeddu and commandeered it as the nerve centre of Mageeba's victorious drive against the forces of darkness, otherwise known as the Adoma Liberation Front. The Army itself appeared in time for elevenses, and by today the advance had nearly reached the Esso pump three hundred yards up the road towards the enemy." Very funny. All facts and no news. Sunday Express . . . "The smouldering heart of this coffee-laden, copper-loaded corner of Africa is being ripped apart by the crazed ambitions of . . ." a re-write man on the Foreign Desk. Who needs it? (*He tosses that aside.*)

GUTHRIE. Newsweek.

WAGNER. Bloody Biedermeier. What's he got to say for himself? "Soviet imperialism in Black Africa last week reached into the Montana-sized copper kingdom of Kambawe, where four hundred miles north-west of the fashionable bars and boulevards of Kamba City a cashiered colonel raised his own flag against a gun-toting President who once played Othello at his English public school. By week's end, trigger-happy President Ginku Mageeba, 42, moved armoured troops into Jeddu, a tank town on the road to the Capital, and there the drama rested, but Mageeba could find

that, as in Othello, his troubles get worse after the interval." I hate them and their Pulitzer Prizes. All writing and no facts. Mirror . . .

GUTHRIE. Nothing.

WAGNER. That's honest, anyway. (WAGNER *turns his attention to the News of the World, which* GUTHRIE *has put down. A car is arriving.*) "Is this the laziest man in Britain?" I did that one once; different bloke, mind you. (*Still preoccupied with the Globe.*) I don't think it's anybody who's been around much. It's good stuff but it's too much I-was-there. It's somebody who wants to impress the world and doesn't know that the world isn't impressed by reporters. (*We have heard car doors, and an indistinct sentence* [*by* CARSON] *telling* MILNE *to go into the house.*) Yeah, I think I've got this one's number—he's not a star, he's a boy scout in an Austin Reed safari suit who somehow got lucky. Little prick.

(MILNE *enters from outside.* WAGNER'S *description is not far off.*)

MILNE. I say . . . (GUTHRIE *and* WAGNER *look at him.*) I say, that wouldn't be a Sunday Globe, would it? (GUTHRIE *and* WAGNER *look at each other.*) Not last Sunday's?

WAGNER. Care to have a look?

MILNE. I say . . . thanks . . .

WAGNER. Have you just come with Mr. Carson?

MILNE. Yes, that's right. He's just gone up to see his wife. (WAGNER *gives him the Globe.* MILNE *ignores the front page and thumbs through to the foreign page inside. His disappointment is silent but immense. He tries another page.*) He's just gone up to see his wife. (MILNE *gives up and closes the paper, giving the front page a casual glance. Then he sees his story and the*

jolt he gets is audible. WAGNER *and* GUTHRIE *relax.* MILNE *reads for a few seconds, lost in himself. To* WAGNER.) Do you need this paper?

WAGNER. No. I'd like you to have it.

MILNE. Thanks awfully. (*He takes out a small penknife and cuts his story out of the paper, which remains in the room for the rest of the play.*) Carson's just gone up to see his wife.

WAGNER. Yes, you said.

MILNE. Are you in mining as well?

WAGNER. As well as what? (MILNE *goes on reading.*) Anything interesting in the paper? (MILNE *finally puts the paper down.*)

MILNE. Actually, I'm a journalist.

WAGNER. Oh.

MILNE. Actually, I'm on the Sunday Globe.

WAGNER. Ah.

MILNE. Well, I'm not actually *on* the Sunday Globe.

WAGNER. What are you doing here, actually?

MILNE. I'm covering the rebellion. This is my interview with Colonel Shimbu on the front page.

WAGNER. That's very good. How did you find him?

MILNE. A bit excitable but quite a—

WAGNER. How did you find him?

MILNE. Oh. It was a bit of luck really. Some of his men stopped a bus I was on.

WAGNER. What for? Food? Money?

MILNE. No. They give out leaflets and lecture the passengers for a while and let them carry on. But they took me off the bus. I was the only white. That was a month ago before the story broke properly. I was in K.C. so I thought I'd have a recce, and I got kidnapped by this ALF group.

GUTHRIE. Lucky.

MILNE. Yes.

WAGNER. How did you get the story out?

MILNE. Shimbu got it out for me.

WAGNER. A pigeon?

MILNE. (*Laughing patronisingly.*) A *pigeon?* No, we've got a little beyond that in Fleet Street. Shimbu gave it to one of his chaps to take over the border and he posted it for me.

WAGNER. (*Glances at* GUTHRIE, *expressionless.*) Posted it.

MILNE. To tell you the truth the interview was ten days old but luckily I had Shimbu to myself. By the time the foreign press started to arrive in Kambawe the government got wise and attached the reporters to the army, which sounds promising but it takes away their freedom of movement. On a story like this it's no good at all until the real shooting starts. The story has got to be with the rebels. They should have known that. (GUTHRIE *smiles at* WAGNER.)

WAGNER. Where was your last job?

MILNE. The Grimsby Evening Messenger.

WAGNER. The Grimsby Evening Messenger.

MILNE. That's an evening paper in Grimsby, in England. By the way, my name is Jacob Milne.

WAGNER. Dick Wagner.

MILNE. Hi.

GUTHRIE. Guthrie.

MILNE. Hello.

WAGNER. What are you doing here, Jacob?

MILNE. In this house?

WAGNER. In Africa.

MILNE. Oh. I lost my job in Grimsby.

WAGNER. Yes?

MILNE. My idea was to get myself in on a good foreign story without too much competition. Then I heard that there was this interesting situation developing in Kambawe.

WAGNER. Where did you hear that?

MILNE. In Grimsby. (WAGNER *waits for more.*) I read it in Time Magazine.

WAGNER. Ah.

MILNE. Incredible how it's worked out. Carson says there's fifty reporters in Jeddu. They've got themselves thoroughly lumbered. There's no story in Jeddu. (*Reading from the Globe.*) ". . . sources close to President Mageeba . . ." Sheer desperation . . . Richard Vahgner. I bet I've made him sick. Well, he's not going to be very pleased about my exclusive, and the awful thing is (*Looking* WAGNER *in the eye.*) *I've got another one.* (*He sees the awful truth in* WAGNER'S *eyes.*) Oh, Christ.

WAGNER. Sit down, Jacob.

MILNE. Look, I'm sorry— (*He turns to* GUTHRIE.) are you with—?

GUTHRIE. George Guthrie.

MILNE. *Guthrie?*—Christ. I thought your Lebanon pictures were just—

WAGNER. Sit down. Where have you just come from?

MILNE. The Kaminco Complex—I can never get these places right—what's it called?

GUTHRIE. Ping pong.

MILNE. No.

GUTHRIE. Deck tennis.

WAGNER. Shut up.

MILNE. Malakuangazi. About a hundred and fifty miles north.

GUTHRIE. What's Kaminco?

WAGNER. Kambawe Mining Corporation. Carson's outfit. (*To* MILNE.) How did you get *there?*

MILNE. With the ALF of course. Shimbu captured Malakuangazi this morning. He shelled it and then went in and killed the garrison. That's my story.

WAGNER. (*Stares at him.*) Jesus wept. (CARSON *en-*

ters from the stairs, heading for the study. WAGNER'S *interception is slightly ingratiating.* CARSON *is half undressed and is drying his hair with a towel.*) Mr. Carson—I am Richard Wagner, Sunday Globe.

CARSON. Yes. Have you come to help Jake with his story?

WAGNER. (*Decides to swallow that.*) That's right. My editor, Fred Hammaker suggested I look you up. Send his regards. And to Mrs. Carson.

CARSON. I'm afraid I've never heard of him. Excuse me. (*Leaving* WAGNER *looking at the closed study door.*)

GUTHRIE. He's never heard of him.

WAGNER. I'm thinking about it. (*To* MILNE.) How did Hammaker know about Carson?

MILNE. I told him.

GUTHRIE. When you sent your Colonel Shimbu piece?

MILNE. That's right. I thought Jeddu would be the next place I'd have a chance to file. I was right about that, though for the wrong reasons—like everybody else I thought the Colonel was heading this way.

WAGNER. You haven't filed yet?

MILNE. I couldn't. The land cable was cut in the shelling. That's why I came out with Carson. Do you know what Carson has got here?

WAGNER. Seen it. Happy birthday.

MILNE. I knew Geoff Carson slightly, from K.C. I interviewed him for a background piece when I first arrived in the country. Carson wanted to check his quotes so he gave me his home telex number. I had it in my book. I told Hammaker it was one place he might be able to reach me.

WAGNER. And here you are.

MILNE. With bells on. (*He takes his "copy" from his pocket and flourishes it.* WAGNER *takes it from him.*)

WAGNER. Well, you're a bloody idiot. You should have stayed inside and got Carson to carry your story out. He was the pigeon of a lifetime, with his own little helicopter. *Now* how are you going to get back in?

MILNE. Carson said he'd lend me a Kaminco car.

WAGNER. Don't be a clown—no-one's going to get into Malakuangazi now without a tank.

GUTHRIE. Jacob?

MILNE. Yes?

GUTHRIE. Why did Shimbu let Carson leave?

MILNE. I don't know. (*Pause—apologetically.*) I thought you meant a real pigeon . . . before. Sorry.

WAGNER. (*To* GUTHRIE.) What do you think?

GUTHRIE. (*To* MILNE.) Carson's using you for something.

MILNE. Does it matter?

GUTHRIE. Maybe not. I'll come with you.

MILNE. Fine. I never thought I'd be on a story with you.

GUTHRIE. Me neither. (GUTHRIE *relaxes having settled his immediate future. He picks up* ALASTAIR'S *camera and completes the business of inserting a film.*)

MILNE. How interesting—I always imagined you'd have one of those flashy Japanese jobs with lenses and things . . .

GUTHRIE. (*Smiles.*) There you go.

WAGNER. (*With* MILNE'S *story.*) Is all this going to stand up? Twelve Mig-17s, three Ilyushin-28's—who told you?

MILNE. I watched them land this morning.

WAGNER. Where did they come from?

MILNE. Yemen. You can see why Shimbu went for Malakuangazi—I should have worked it out. It's not the mine, it's the airstrip. There's no strip at Jeddu for anything bigger than a Cessna. In the hills he had

to make do with MI 8 choppers to supply him from across the border.

WAGNER. Who flies them?

MILNE. Cubans. It's in there.

WAGNER. Did you actually see a Cuban flying a helicopter?

MILNE. Not exactly—

WAGNER. (*Flaring up.*) Listen, Jacob—I know what it's like in Grimsby. You can say that Cubans have taken over the fishing fleet and next day you say that they haven't, *actually*, and nobody gives a bugger, because it's Grimsby. But this is the Sunday Globe and if you say Shimbu's got Cuban pilots you've got to have something better than his word and a Havana cigar—so who says they're Cuban?

MILNE. They do.

WAGNER. You interviewed them?

MILNE. Not exactly interviewed—they wouldn't let me. We played cards a few times. I was just improving my Spanish. (*His irritation gets the better of him.*) And if you don't mind my saying so, Mr. Wagner, you know fuck all about the Grimsby Evening Messenger, which is a great deal more important around Grimsby than the Sunday Globe is around the globe on any bloody day of the week!

WAGNER. Please call me Dick. This guy with the field battery—did you talk to *him?* (WAGNER *is referring to* MILNE'S *pages.*)

MILNE. Yes.

WAGNER. He spoke English?

MILNE. No, but I know a little Russian—it was my optional language at school.

WAGNER. (*Exasperated.*) Tell me something, Jacob —what did you get fired *for?*

MILNE. I didn't exactly get fired. It was after the trouble in the provinces—you know, the strike.

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