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SF PERUSALS

SHEBEEN

A Play in Three Acts

by Mufaro Makubika

SAMUEL FRENCH

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ISBN 978-0-573-11545-5

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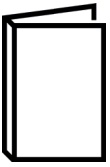
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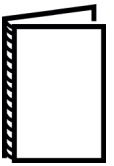
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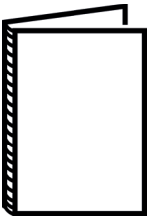
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★★★★★ "Blazing with clinical, spine-tingling finesse"
The Telegraph (on *1984*)

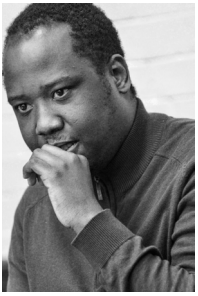
★★★★ "This is a big play, ambitious in the way it melds the public and the private, full of heart and very little sentimentality"
The Guardian (on *Wonderland*)

★★★★ "It's a show that grows in pace, wit and emotional resonance the more it goes on; you'll leave smiling"
The Times (on *Holes*)

★★★★ "Stands shoulder to shoulder with the best ... a hit."
The Telegraph (on *The Kite Runner*)

Chief Executive: Stephanie Sirr
Artistic Director: Adam Penford

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Mufaro Makubika is a playwright who lives and works in Nottingham. Credits for Nottingham Playhouse: *How To Breathe*.

Shebeen was the winner of the 2017 Alfred Fagon Award for best new play.

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Shebeen, by Mufaro Makubika, commissioned by Nottingham Playhouse was first performed by Nottingham Playhouse Theatre Company, in association with Theatre Royal Stratford East, at Nottingham Playhouse on 1 June 2018, with the following cast and creative team:

GEORGE	Karl Collins
PEARL	Martina Laird
EARNEST	Rolan Bell
MRS CLARK	Hazel Ellerby
MARY	Chloe Harris
SARGEANT WILLIAMS	Karl Haynes
CONSTABLE REED / **ROBERT DUNNE**	Adam Rojko Vega
LINFORD	Theo Solomon
GAYLE	Danielle Walters

Director	Matthew Xia
Designer	Grace Smart
Lighting Designer	Ciarán Cunningham
Sound Designer / Composer	Richard Hammarton
Movement Director	Rachael Nanyonjo
Fight Director	Kev McCurdy
Dialect Coach	Hazel Holder
Dramaturg	Kirsty Patrick Ward
Casting Director	Sarah Bird CDG
Casting Director	Sophie Parrott CDG

CHARACTERS

PEARL – Female, black, late thirties, Jamaican living in district around the St Ann's Well Road.

GEORGE – Male, black, early forties, Pearl's husband, Jamaican living in the district St Ann's Well Road.

EARNEST – Male, black, thirties, Trinidadian immigrant living in district around the St Ann's Well Road.

LINFORD – Male, black, early twenties, Jamaican immigrant living in the district around the St Ann's Well Road.

MARY – Female, white, early twenties, born and living in the district around the St Ann's Well Road.

GAYLE – Female, black, twenties, Jamaican immigrant living in the district around the St Ann's Well Road.

MRS CLARK – Female, white, late forties to early fifties, a neighbour, Mary's mother. Nottingham born and living in the district around the St Ann's Well Road.

SARGEANT WILLIAMS – Male, white, late forties, police officer. Nottingham born and living in the district around the St Ann's Well Road.

CONSTABLE REED – Male, white, Mid- to late twenties, Nottingham born.

ROBERT DUNNE – Male, white, twenties, London born.

Supernumeraries to play the **GUESTS**.

The actor who plays **CONSTANBLE REED** also plays **ROBERT DUNNE**

SETTING

August 1958.

The district around the St Ann's Well Road, Nottingham.

A home.

A green carpet. Brown and green wallpaper with elaborate designs of birds. In the corner is one of those display cabinets with sliding glass doors packed full of crockery and glasses which only come out on special occasions. On a little doyley-wrapped coffee table in the middle is a very bright purple vase full of artificial flowers. There are a lot of doylies in the room. In the corner, a pristine and shiny looking gold drinks tray laden with all sorts of rums and liquors. In one corner is a heating lamp which has blackened the ceiling right above it. Some of the wallpaper is peeling off. Pictures on the wall of George and Pearl. George in his trunks and gloves. There is also a picture of a young Queen Elizabeth II. She looks out at us. Doors leading off to the kitchen and the rest of the house.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

/ represents an interruption.
Stage directions are in italics.
Dialogue in between ... are private conversations in public.
Unspoken thoughts/intentions are in brackets.
Song choices are suggestions.

THANKS TO

Esther Richardson, Fiona Buffini, Giles Croft,
Adam Penford, Stephanie Sirr, Kirsty Patrick Ward,
Matthew Xia, Nick Quinn
and the community of St Ann's, Nottingham.

For Janet

ACT ONE

Early Saturday evening. **PEARL***'s cleaning and cooking.*

PEARL *wipes the glass doors on a display cabinet.*

PEARL*'s clear and focused.*

At the end of the act, the home is a shebeen.

A knock at the door from outside.

PEARL Who is it?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Mrs Brown?

Beat.

PEARL You going to say what you want?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Sergeant Williams.

PEARL Who?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS The police.

PEARL *takes her time.*

PEARL *opens the door.*

PEARL Didn't recognise your voice, through the door.

Come in.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS You weren't to know.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS *stands at the door.*

PEARL Please come in.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS *wipes his shoes on a mat.*

SERGEANT WILLIAMS *takes off his hat and mops his brow.*

SERGEANT WILLIAMS *comes in.*

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Thank you.

PEARL How can I help you officer?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Is Mr Brown around?

PEARL He gone shop.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Do you think Mr Brown will be back soon?

PEARL What do you want with George?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I was hoping to speak to Mr Brown, madam.
An official matter.

PEARL He in trouble officer?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Do you know when he'll be back?

PEARL Can I help?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I'd need to speak to him personally.

PEARL You're starting to scare me officer.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Don't be alarmed.
I just need to speak to Mr Brown that's all.
A courtesy call if you like.

PEARL He soon back.
Me expecting him soon.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I'll come back later.
Thank you.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS *about to leave.*

PEARL Stay.
No need to go.
Mr Brown.
George, is on his way.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I can wait outside.

PEARL Don't need to.
Nice and cool in here.
Sit.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS You sure, madam?
That Mr Brown won't mind.

PEARL I don't mind.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I don't think that's a good idea.

PEARL Why?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Why?

PEARL Yes, why?

Beat.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS You are a woman alone in her home.
Your husband isn't here.

PEARL This my home as well Sergeant.
I've asked you to stay.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS *unsure.*

Sit.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I can stand.

PEARL You can sit if you want.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I'll stand.

PEARL Suit yourself.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS *stands.*

Don't mind if I work while you wait?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS A woman's work is never done, right?

PEARL That's true.

PEARL *exits into the kitchen to check on her cooking.*
SERGEANT WILLIAMS *stands and wait.*

SERGEANT WILLIAMS *looks around the room.*

PEARL *returns.*

Would you like a drink officer?
Tea?

Beat.

Something stronger?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I'm alright, thank you Mrs Brown.

PEARL Pearl.

Beat.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Right.

PEARL Don't think we've been properly introduced.
Say hello on the street.
That's all.

Beat.

Yours?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Like I said before, Sergeant Williams will do.

Silence.

I can come back later.

PEARL Relax Sergeant Williams.
He soon back.

PEARL *continues cleaning the display cabinet.*

SERGEANT WILLIAMS *waits.*

PEARL *wipes the glass doors down with a wet cloth.*

PEARL *dries the glass doors with newspaper.*

PEARL *moves on to the drinks tray.*

PEARL *wipes down each spirit bottle with a wet cloth.*

PEARL *wipes down the frame of the display cabinet.*

SERGEANT WILLIAMS That smells great.

PEARL Sorry?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS What you are cooking.
It smells great.

PEARL Thank you.

Pause.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS What is it?
What you are cooking?

PEARL Curried mutton.

Beat.

Would you like some Sergeant?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS No I'm fine, thank you.
I have tea waiting for me at home.

PEARL Your wife cook curried mutton too?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Not quite curried mutton.
She wouldn't know how to.

Beat.

I need to save myself for me tea.

PEARL What are you having?
She cook good for you?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Maybe egg and chips.
I don't know.

Beat.

PEARL You must have some mutton then.
You like chips and egg?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS It suits me fine.
I eat whatever she makes.

She's my wife.

Beat.

PEARL Won't you sit officer?
Please.

Pause.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Only for a bit.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS *looks at the picture of* **GEORGE** *on the wall.*

PEARL *notices* **SERGEANT WILLIAMS** *looking.*

I've heard about Mr Brown.

PEARL You seen him fight?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS No.
Heard he was a good fighter though.

PEARL A great fighter once.
Not anymore.

Silence.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS The wallpaper.
Mine comes off too.
It's these old houses.
Get the damp/

PEARL It's the best we can get.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I didn't mean anything by that Mrs Brown.

PEARL *gets a bottle of rum and two glasses from the drinks tray.*

PEARL I'm going to have a little drink.
Would you like to join me?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I'm working.

Thank you though.

PEARL Look like a man who's had a long hard day.

Beat.

Tried Jamaican rum?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I can't say I have.

PEARL This here.
This rum make you feel good.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I'm on the job.

PEARL So am I, Sergeant Williams.

PEARL *laughs.*

You going to let me drink on me own?
Just a sip.
Refused my food.
Now you refusing my drink.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS *unsure.*

We'll keep it between us.
Just a taste.

PEARL *pours two glasses of rum.*

PEARL *passes a glass of rum to* **SERGEANT WILLIAMS.**

SERGEANT WILLIAMS *reluctantly accepts.*

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I really shouldn't.

PEARL It's just rum.
What could it hurt?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS *stares at the rum unsure.*

Fighting the urge to drink.

Go on.

Take that down.
Make you feel good.

PEARL *drinks.*

SERGEANT WILLIAMS *drinks.*

That make you feel good?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS It's nice, thank you.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS *drains his glass.*

PEARL You know how to drink.
I like that.

Beat.

Do you mind if I play some music?
While you wait.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Not at all.

PEARL *puts on a record.*

"LONDON IS THE PLACE FOR ME" *by Lord Kitchener.*

The song gently plays in the background.

PEARL *continues cleaning the display cabinet.*

SERGEANT WILLIAMS *taps his foot.*

PEARL *notices.*

PEARL You like it?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I don't mind it.

PEARL Kind of music you dance to.
You dance Sergeant?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Not much.

PEARL *dances a little.*

PEARL Move your body to the music.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I couldn't do that.

PEARL *laughs.*

PEARL Would you like another drink?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I don't think I can.

PEARL Sure you can.
Between us.
You have my word.
Can trust me.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I don't know.

PEARL One more.

PEARL *pours another glass of rum for* **SERGEANT WILLIAMS.**

PEARL *pours a drink for herself.*

PEARL *hands him the drink.*

SERGEANT WILLIAMS *sips his drink.*

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Thank you.

PEARL *drains her drink.*

For your welcome.
Letting me into your home.

PEARL You welcome.
Like to think we friends now.

Pause.

Can I ask you a question Sergeant?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS If I can answer it.

Beat.

PEARL How long you been with your wife?
If that's not too personal?

Pause.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Married twenty-eight years.

PEARL Do you have kids?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Three boys and a girl.

PEARL Two girls.
Vivian and Esther.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Been together thirty years.
Me and my girl.

PEARL What does it take?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Sorry?

PEARL To stay together that long?
What does it take?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I don't know.

PEARL Surely you must.
Marriage is work, right?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Love.

PEARL Love is important.
Me and George haven't been together that long.
We talk though.
You talk to your wife?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS I do.

PEARL (About) How you feel?
When your feet feel tired.
Partners.
Me and George.
We partners.

Pause.

Tells me how he feels.
Know what he's thinking.
Share everything.
Worry about each other.
Understand?

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Maybe I should go.

PEARL No need.
We are friends now.

Beat.

Why are you here?
What do you want with George?

Pause.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS You have parties here?

PEARL Sorry Sergeant Williams.
Parties.
People.
Music.
Food.

Beat.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Parties.

Pause.

PEARL We have friends over.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS You have a lot of friends.

PEARL We are lucky.

Beat.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Indeed.
That many friends.

Pause.

I was born here.
I live here.
It's my home/

PEARL And mine.
Home sweet home.

SERGEANT WILLAMS We are all on top of each other.
Neighbours and that.
We are bursting at the seams.
Criminals running amok.

PEARL Hardworking men and women.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS The thing is I believe in the law.
I'm sworn to serve this community.
You.
I believe in not giving crime a chance to happen.

Beat.

You heard about the attack on the high street?

PEARL Heard something about it.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Is he one of your friends?

PEARL We all don't know each other Sergeant Williams.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS From what I've heard he's been here.
For a party.

PEARL Maybe in the past.
He doesn't come here anymore.

Pause.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS Now...
With your parties.
I...

Beat.

I just hope there isn't trouble.
You understand?

PEARL Never been trouble before.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS We all turn a blind eye.
I hope we can keep doing that.

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