

Dan + Edmund

Act I

7

Margaret Or indeed, ugly, but I know what you mean.

Dan It's genuine, you know, none of your Harrod's rubbish. Carved by a real live African out in the bush.

Edmund Where did you get it? (*He takes the carving from Rachel and examines it*)

Dan There's a shop just behind Knightsbridge, specializes in genuine tribal stuff.

Rachel They're ritual objects really, aren't they, these things?

Dan Well, fertility, I suppose, yes. Probably for rain.

Edmund But don't they make them specially for the tourists now?

Dan I'm sure they do, but not this one. This was carved by someone sitting in front of a hut after a day in the fields. Probably in a time of drought, or something like that.

Edmund It's a beautiful object though. Thanks a lot.

Margaret It's the psychology that fascinates me. You want something to happen to the weather, so you make an object which symbolizes your wishes. You use your imagination to create a fact.

Rachel All artists do that. When you imagine a thing, it becomes true.

Margaret Not only artists either.

Slight pause

Edmund Where shall I put it?

Rachel Oh, prominent on the shelf I should think. Clear a space. If you'll excuse me now, it's time I was seeing to the dinner, if we're ever to eat today . . .

Edmund places the carving on one of the shelves

Dan Good good! I'm starving.

Margaret I'll give you a hand.

Rachel Thanks.

Margaret Or at least, keep you company.

Rachel and Margaret exit into the kitchen

Dan What she really means is they'll have a good old gossip behind our backs. Got any dirt on you has she?

Edmund Not as far as I know. No more than usual.

Dan Nor me, as far as I know.

Pause

Edmund Is it worth it then, Dan? All this?

Dan Worth it? Of course it's worth it. Financially, once it's done, you can't lose. And who'd live any other way than in maximum comfort, if they had the chance?

Edmund Yes, I suppose so.

Dan But what I really want to know . . .

Edmund Yes?

Dan Is what does your old dad make of it all?

Edmund Well, yes. That's a bit of a sore point.

FROM HERE

Dan I thought it might be. That's why I asked. Has he seen it? I gathered from what you said earlier . . .

Edmund Yes, we had him down for a week-end about a month ago. Rowed non-stop for forty-eight hours.

Dan On the lines you might expect?

Edmund Exactly on the lines you might expect.

Dan I can't help admiring your old man. I must do an article about him one of these days.

Edmund (*taking Dan's glass*) Do you want another sherry? (*He goes to the drinks table*)

Dan Yes please . . . It'd be nice, wouldn't it, if we could all keep our simple beliefs, regardless of the facts.

Edmund (*handing Dan his sherry*) Cheers.

Dan What did he say?

Edmund Asked me if I hadn't got anything better to do with my money—which is blood money anyway, as far as he's concerned. Advertising, public relations, market research, any of the selling professions, all out! Get over there with the goats!

Dan I should have been here and put the whole lot on tape. The working class and its wealthy sons! Worth a page or two in the *Statesman* any day of the week!

Edmund He fixed me with his branch meeting look, and said, "Eddie my son, it's no way for a Socialist to live."

Dan Did he indeed!

Edmund So I told him in that case I wasn't a Socialist. (*He drains his glass*)

Dan What did he say to that?

Edmund Nothing much. I think he was pretty shattered. (*Wryly*) So was I.

Dan The blackmail that goes on between parents and children!

Edmund And the other way round. (*He refills his glass*)

Dan After all, if one is forced to live in a bourgeois society, against one's will, as it were, I don't see why one shouldn't enjoy its legitimate rewards. I think we should be concentrating on how to be Socialists and rich!

Edmund No Dan, you can't escape the old man's logic. You can't think one way and live another. I've chosen to live like this, so I suppose the rest follows.

Dan Bad news for the Labour Party's millionaires.

Edmund Well, they live with their consciences, I live with mine. (*He smiles rather weakly and drinks his sherry*)

Margaret enters from the kitchen

Margaret Politics are forbidden at Christmas. Don't let him tempt you, Edmund. He's only collecting material for an article.

Dan I've already told him that.

Edmund *Campari* again?

Margaret Please . . .

Rachel enters from the kitchen

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