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# THE NIGHT MANAGER

JOHN LE CARRÉ

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Penguin  
Random House  
UK

*The Night Manager* first published by Hodder & Stoughton, 1993  
This Penguin Readers edition published by Penguin Books Ltd, 2020

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Original text written by John le Carré  
Text for Penguin Readers edition adapted by Anna Trewin  
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Inside illustrated by Kevin Hopgood  
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Cover designed by Matthew Burden  
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Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-0-241-43096-5

All correspondence to  
Penguin Books  
Penguin Random House Children's  
One Embassy Gardens, New Union Square  
5 Nine Elms Lane, London SW8 5DA



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## Contents

People in the story	4
Note about the story	5
Before-reading questions	6
Chapter One – At the Queen Nefertiti Hotel, Cairo	7
Chapter Two – At the Hotel Meister Palace, Zurich	13
Chapter Three – Jonathan becomes an agent	18
Chapter Four – Jonathan saves Daniel	22
Chapter Five – On Crystal Island	30
Chapter Six – Jonathan loses his passport	35
Chapter Seven – Time to rest	40
Chapter Eight – Jed learns the truth	44
Chapter Nine – In Curaçao	54
Chapter Ten – An unreal war	61
Chapter Eleven – Prisoners	67
Chapter Twelve – Burr goes to work	72
Chapter Thirteen – Bradshaw makes a call	77
Chapter Fourteen – On the <i>Pasha</i>	80
During-reading questions	86
After-reading questions	88
Exercises	89
Project work	92
Glossary	93

CHAPTER ONE  
**At the Queen Nefertiti Hotel, Cairo**

Jonathan had often seen her, but he had never spoken to her. She was a tall, dark and beautiful woman of around forty years old. He sometimes saw her getting out of expensive cars outside the Queen Nefertiti Hotel in Cairo, where she lived and he worked. Sometimes he saw her in the hotel dress shops. Everyone called her “Madame Sophie”, and they all knew that she was Freddie Hamid’s girlfriend. Freddie was one of the three rich Egyptian brothers who owned the Nefertiti. Freddie had once lost half a million dollars in ten minutes, playing **cards**.

“You are Mr Pine, the night manager,” Madame Sophie said, softly, as she sat on a chair next to the **reception** desk. It was late in the evening, and there were no other hotel **staff** there. Then she smiled and added, “You are the flower of England.”

“Thank you,” replied Jonathan, and he smiled back at her. “No one has ever called me that before. How can I help you?”

“I am Madame Sophie from apartment number three,” she said. “I have seen you often, Mr Pine. You have careful eyes.”

“And I have seen *you*,” he said.

“You also sail,” she continued. “Freddie took me sailing yesterday. I saw you on a pretty blue boat that had an English flag. Is it yours?”

He laughed. "Of course not! It's Mr Ogilvey's, the **Minister**. He works at the **British Embassy**. How can I help you, Madame Sophie?"

She was quiet for a moment, and then she said, "I would like you to do something for me. But first I must ask you a question. Do you know Richard Roper?"

"I'm sorry, but I don't," Jonathan replied.

"But you must know him!" she said. "He is famous and handsome. He has Arab horses and a big boat, and he does a lot of business in Cairo. He is English, like you, and very **confident** and **charming**."

"I'm sorry," Jonathan said, "but I've never heard his name."

But Madame Sophie was not sorry. Instead she looked pleased. "It is good that you do not know him," she said, and she gave Jonathan a large envelope. "Now, I would like you to copy these private papers for me."

"Of course," Jonathan said, and he led her into a small office behind the reception desk. He switched on the **photocopier** and began putting in the papers as she stood next to him.

As he watched each paper go through, he saw that they were letters from a company called Ironbrand to Freddie Hamid. Then his body went cold. The letters were describing the selling of **arms** – guns and **missiles**.

Madame Sophie was watching him work. "Thank you," she said, when he had finished. "Please put the copies in an envelope and put them in the hotel **safe** with your



name on them." Jonathan did what she asked.

"If anything happens to me – I mean if I die – then please give them to your minister friend, Mr Ogilvey," she said.

"If that is what you want, then of course," Jonathan replied. "How long will the papers stay in the safe?"

"Perhaps a night," she said. "Or two nights. You are here every night, aren't you? I will call you sometimes. Thank you, Mr Pine. Goodnight."

When she had gone, Jonathan went to the safe and took out the envelope. Then he quickly made another copy of the letters, which he put into his pocket. He put the first copies into a new envelope and **locked** them back into the safe.

Eight hours later, he was sitting with Mark Ogilvey in his boat. Ogilvey was his friend, but Jonathan knew that he worked for **British Intelligence**.

“So Freddie Hamid is buying arms from Richard Roper,” Ogilvey said in a surprised voice. “He’d do better to continue playing cards.”

Two nights later Sophie called Jonathan to her room. He found her standing at the window.

“Please tell me the truth,” she said. “Where are the papers you copied for me?”

“They’re still in the safe,” Jonathan replied.

“Have you shown them to anyone?” she asked.

“No one,” Jonathan replied.

“Freddie came to see me,” Sophie continued. “Mr Roper telephoned him and told him that other people now know about their business. Freddie is not happy.” Sophie turned from the window, and Jonathan saw her face. Both of her eyes were **bruised**, and her mouth was cut.

Then she turned back to the window and stared through it. “‘Look at all these people,’ I told him. ‘Every time someone sells arms to another mad Arab leader, these people have less food. Because it is more fun to have a big army than to feed your own people.’ I said to Freddie, ‘You are an Arab. Is it right that your Arab brothers should pay for your dreams?’”

“What did Freddie say?” asked Jonathan, looking at her face. Those bruised eyes were turning blue and yellow.

“He told me to stop asking questions,” she replied, angrily. “I told him that I would not. Egyptians are *my* people!”

“You have to get out,” Jonathan said. “Leave Cairo.

You know what the Hamids are like.”

“The Hamids can kill me as easily in Paris as they can in Cairo.”

After Jonathan left her he telephoned Ogilvey, but there was no answer. Next he phoned a friend in Luxor. “Is your holiday apartment still empty?” he asked.

Then he called Sophie. “A friend of mine has an empty apartment in Luxor,” he said. “You can stay there for a week or two.”

There was a short **silence**. Then she said, “Will you come too, Mr Pine?”

Jonathan and Sophie sat next to each other on the roof **terrace** of the holiday apartment in Luxor.

“Richard Roper is the worst man in the world,” she said. “He knows the bad people everywhere. He is healthy. He is white. He is rich, and he went to the best schools. He is funny, and he is confident. But he **destroys** things. Why? He does not live on the streets. What is wrong with him? You are a man. Do you know?”

But Jonathan did not know. He was watching her beautiful face with the night sky behind it. He could not stop looking at her, and, when he was away from her, he could not stop thinking about her.

Then she said, “Jonathan, did you tell anyone about the envelope in the safe? Did you show the papers to anyone?”

“No,” Jonathan lied, and he felt very guilty. “No, no one. Why do you ask?”

“Because Roper was told about the papers,” she said, “by some friends of his in British Intelligence.”

A few weeks later Jonathan stood in Sophie’s apartment. Blood was everywhere. It was on the walls, and the bed and the floor. Sophie lay on the floor with her head on her arm. There were policemen in the apartment. One was on the terrace. Another was looking into her empty safe.

“I loved you,” he thought, as he looked down at Sophie’s body. “I loved you, and I didn’t tell you.”

“Were you sleeping with this woman?” asked one of the policemen. He was smoking a cigarette.

“No, we just met for coffee sometimes,” replied Jonathan. “She was friends with Freddie Hamid. Do you know Freddie Hamid?”

“No,” the policeman said. “Did you kill this woman?”

“Yes, I killed her,” thought Jonathan. “But not how you think. I killed her because I showed her papers to Ogilvey, and Roper learnt about it.”

“No,” he replied. “What are you going to do?”

“It must be a **robber**,” said the policeman. “A robber killed her.”

## CHAPTER TWO At the Hotel Meister Palace, Zurich

It was a snowy evening. Jonathan and several other hotel staff were standing on the stone steps of the Hotel Meister Palace in Zurich. They were waiting to welcome their guests.

“It must be a different Roper,” Jonathan had thought this afternoon when he saw the **list** of guests who were arriving that evening.

**Roper R. O., a group of sixteen, arriving  
from Athens by private plane at 9.30 p.m.**

“There must be two Ropers who are **dealers** and live in Nassau,” he told himself.

It was the middle of winter, and there were very few guests staying at the hotel. Thick snow filled the air and lay on the ground. The weather was terrible, even for Switzerland. “Maybe Roper’s plane will not be able to **land** in this weather,” Jonathan thought. But, a minute later, several long black **limousines** drove quietly through the gate, and some men and a young woman got out of the first car. They were all wearing very expensive clothes. The woman was in her twenties and had golden brown hair. She wore a long coat that reached her feet. She did not look like Sophie, but she was very beautiful. Jonathan watched her moving up the steps to the terrace on light feet.

Next to her was a tall man of around fifty years

old who wore a brown **leather** jacket. He was strong, and he had thick hair that was grey around the ears. Several **bodyguards** stood around him as he came to the top of the steps and confidently shook hands with some of the staff. Then he turned to Jonathan.

"I'm Richard Roper," he said, and he took Jonathan's hand in his. He had the lazy voice of a very rich, confident and very charming Englishman. "How do you do? There's a lot of us staying here."



"Good evening, sir," Jonathan replied. "My name's Pine. I'm the night manager."

The group entered the hotel with Jonathan behind them. Roper turned to the beautiful woman, who was looking at some magazines on a table.

"Jed, how are you doing, darling?" he said. "She loves magazines, but I hate them myself."

The woman turned and smiled at him. "I'm fine, darling," she replied.

"Have you been here long, Pine?" asked Roper. "Wasn't here last time, was he, Frisky?"

"No way," said a big bodyguard with small eyes and huge hands.

"Where were you before?" Roper asked.

"Cairo," Jonathan replied. "But I wanted a change, so I came here."

A large man in a big leather coat was coming towards the reception desk. He had lots of **passports** in one hand and some envelopes in the other.

"Where have you been, Corky?" said Roper. "You need to sign for everything."

Suddenly there were people everywhere. They had all come out of the limousines. There were men in expensive evening suits and women wearing gold necklaces and bracelets. A handsome man with blond hair came in with a thin, unhappy-looking woman, followed by another bodyguard.

Corky lit a cigarette and started speaking French loudly to someone on the phone. Then he turned to Roper, who was moving towards the lift and discussing **antiques** with the man with blond hair. "Your friend Apo will meet us on Monday lunchtime," Corky shouted. "We can go to the Kronenhalle restaurant – the food's good there. That OK?"

"No," Roper shouted back. "Too many people. Tell him to come here for lunch." Then the woman, Jed, smiled at Jonathan over Roper's shoulder as they disappeared into the large lift.