

Penguin



Readers

JOHN LE CARRÉ THE NIGHT MANAGER

THE DEEPER YOU GO, THE DARKER IT GETS



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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.”