

SHOW ME THE MONEY

A Dark Stage Comedy

by

Tony Diggle



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INTRODUCTION

More than a few years ago, there was a girl in my social circle who had a fixation about marrying a millionaire (she never did), and this is what gave me the idea. I thought, suppose I take a girl who wants to marry a millionaire, put her with an unsuitable man, and then change both their circumstances
....

Thus came about the outline of what has now become “Show me the Money”. Some readers may already be wondering if this is just the next in a long line of “love of money” comedies that could be argued to have started more than two thousand years ago with Plautus’ “Pot of Gold”. But I hope it’s not just that. For one thing, so ingrained has money become in the way we think about everything today that it’s almost impossible not to love it, or at the very least to keep focussing on its implications.

What are the main functions of money? Two of the most important are that it acts as a medium of exchange and as a store of wealth. But what we seem to have forgotten today is that money will only work in either of these respects when it is remembered that the value that is stored and exchanged lies elsewhere. Money itself has no value: it is the lubricant that allows the really valuable entities to change and develop over time. Problems arise when too much attention is paid to achieving short-term monetary gain for its own sake. Now, instead of money being fitted to the action required, we seem

INTRODUCTION

to have become imprisoned in a world where action has to be fitted to the money.

I hope you will enjoy this “city comedy”, and along the way, this particular look at how we have come to think about money, and the way it has come to work.

Tony Diggie

PRODUCTION NOTE

The play has been written in an episodic style (i.e. it moves abruptly from one location to another as the scenes change). For this reason it is best suited to a simple, straightforward type of production concentrating on the characters and their interaction, and using the theatre as a “black box”. The set needs to be no more than indicative: for instance some sort of bar, a drinks cabinet that includes some drawers, plus a couple of chairs, a table and a sofa, that by dint of design or coverings can be used to indicate different settings at different times. This is the maximum that is required, and the play can be done with less.

The mechanics of the scene changes are best handled in a “lights down, lights up” manner, assisted by appropriate sound effects to indicate a change of place, or a “ticking clock” to indicate the passing of time, and possibly appropriate music to indicate a change of place, time and mood.

Stage directions and directions for the entrance and exit of characters at scene changes have been kept minimal in the text for this reason.

The play has been written for a cast of six with doubling, but more actors can be accommodated if required.

The action of the play takes place in various locations in
London.

Time: the early 2010s

ACT 1

Scene 1: A Pub: The Last Trump

Scene 2: David's Office

Scene 3: The Last Trump

Scene 4: Lloyd's Office

Scene 5: The Last Trump

Scene 6: Lloyd's Office

Scene 7: The Last Trump

Scene 8: Outside the Last Trump

Scene 9: Haileybridge's Club

ACT 2

Scene 1: Jenny's Flat

Scene 2: Haileybridge's Office

Scene 3: Jenny's Flat

Scene 4: The Last Trump

Scene 5: Aftermath

Scene 6: Safe House

LIST OF CHARACTERS

PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

David BOREHAM

40. Middle Manager with a consulting firm

Jenny QUIVER

“Less than 40”. Proprietor of a “greasy spoon” café

OTHER CHARACTERS

BARMAN)	
TOMMY, a heavy)	Actor 3
Frank BLOOM, a bank manager)	

Lloyd WARNER, Boreham’s boss)	
Peter HAILEYBRIDGE, a solicitor)	Actor 4
JOURNALIST)	

James WETHERBY, a gangster)	Actor 5
PHOTOGRAPHER)	

Guy BRISCOE, Boreham’s colleague)	
KENNY, Jenny Quiver’s brother)	Actor 6
Detective Sergeant Ted TANDY)	

NEWSREADER Actor 7 / One of the four support actors

Prologue

(As the curtain rises, we hear music suggestive of the contemplation of aspirations and dreams.)

BOREHAM I'm David Boreham. I'm forty. This is the year that I'm going to start making big money. I'm also going to find the girl of my dreams and get married.

QUIVER I'm Jenny Quiver. I'm... less than forty. I never do any work at all if I can possibly help it. And I'm going to marry money, and spend as much as possible. In fact... I'm going to marry a millionaire.

(As the music ends, BOREHAM and QUIVER turn and look straight into each other's eyes. Blackout.)

ACT 1

Scene 1

A Pub: The Last Trump

(As the lights come up, a chorus of “Happy Birthday to you” is in progress. The “CHORUS” consists of David BOREHAM’s colleagues, most of whom are heard but not seen, being outside the lighted stage area. David BOREHAM is revealed completing the downing of a pint in one: he is fairly drunk. On either side of him watching admiringly are his boss, Lloyd WARNER, and one of his colleagues, Guy BRISCOE, who is holding a birthday cake with forty candles on it.)

CHORUS Happy birthday to you!
Happy birthday to you!
Happy birthday, dear David,
Happy birthday to you!
Hooray!

(BOREHAM finishes the pint, and blows out all the candles on the cake.)

CHORUS Hooray!

WARNER All right, ladies and gentlemen, your attention, please. We’ve done the song, we’ve done the cake... now it’s time for the present! *(Sounds of expectation.)* Now, er, when I asked David what he wanted, he very modestly said that he didn’t want anything, and we all know that he’s the man who’s got everything *(Sounds of sneering laughter)*. But seriously, David, we’ve put

ACT 1

our heads together, and we think we've come up with just what you'd like.

BOREHAM Oh, it's not a stripogram, is it?

WARNER A stripogram! (*Jeers.*) Nothing so mundane! (*Cheers.*) Now come on, David, you can do it. What would you really like for your birthday?

BOREHAM A marriageable woman!

WARNER He got it in one! (*Cheers.*)

BOREHAM What do you mean?

WARNER Guy, I think you have the necessary.

BRISCOE Here we are, David.

BOREHAM What's this?

BRISCOE A subscription to an exclusive dating agency. Of course, in order to get you the ideal woman, we had to jazz up your particulars a bit. (*Laughter.*)

WARNER Well, come on, David, don't your colleagues get a thank you?

BOREHAM Oh yes... very good... just what I've always wanted. (*Laughter.*)

WARNER Right, ceremony over, back to the festivities, whose glass is empty? David, let me get you another.

SCENE 1

(WARNER goes to the bar. A general hubbub returns. BRISCOE converses with unseen colleagues. BOREHAM continues to peruse the form.)

BOREHAM What's this? Salary, a hundred thousand a year!
Guy, I don't earn that sort of money...

BRISCOE Your on target earnings, David... mine's a pint,
Lloyd.

BOREHAM Why have I got all these addresses? World class
yachtsman? Guy, Guy...

BRISCOE What?

BOREHAM I'm not a world class yachtsman, I go sailing
with friends once a year.

BRISCOE Well, you're on your way then.

BOREHAM I don't think that this is a good idea. I'm not
going to do it.

BRISCOE Thought you'd say that, David. But it's too late,
mate, I forged your signature and sent it in.

(The BARMAN has come in from outside, and has just served WARNER. QUIVER has followed him in with an empty glass. As soon as she asks for another drink, he starts manhandling her towards the door.)

QUIVER Fuck off! Fuck off! Give me another gin.

ACT 1

BARMAN You've had enough. I told you to go. Outside!

QUIVER Get your hands off me, or I'll have you for assault.

(BOREHAM's party cheers.)

QUIVER And you lot can fuck off for a start!

(More cheering. The BARMAN pushes her out.)

BRISCOE How about her, David?

BOREHAM Very funny.

BRISCOE Drama over.

(WARNER returns with another pint.)

WARNER Here you are, David. I've got to be getting back,
but you take your time. *(Assesses BOREHAM's state.)*
.... No, take the rest of the day off. After all, it's the big
40. Enjoy the day. *(Exit WARNER.)*

*(The hubbub ceases. Spotlight on BOREHAM looking down at
the form.)*

BOREHAM Thanks, Lloyd. I can't tell you how happy I
am...

Scene 2
David's Office

(A sound effect of computer keyboards indicates that we are now in BOREHAM's office. BOREHAM and BRISCOE are standing talking.)

BOREHAM Now look what's happened! Some woman actually wants to meet me!

BRISCOE It's not exactly bad news, David. Let's have a look... mm, bit vague, looks like she runs a posh restaurant. Central address. Just round the corner. Can't actually place it, I must say.

BOREHAM Oh, I can't do it. This isn't the way. How am I going to explain everything?

(BRISCOE dials a number on his mobile. A spotlight comes up on QUIVER elsewhere.)

QUIVER Hallo.

BRISCOE Can I speak to Jennifer Quiver, please?

BOREHAM What are you doing?

QUIVER Who wants to speak to her?

BRISCOE It's David Boreham.

QUIVER Who?

ACT 1

BRISCOE From the dating agency.

BOREHAM Give me that.

QUIVER (*Does double-take*) Oh God...

BRISCOE Of course. It's for you.

QUIVER (*putting on a voice*) Hallo.

BOREHAM Hallo.

QUIVER Thank you for calling me so quickly. I thought you might not be interested.

BOREHAM I wasn't! (*BRISCOE puts his head in his hands.*)
I mean, of course I was. I was delighted to hear from you.

QUIVER Oh, well, where shall we meet then?

BOREHAM Meet?

QUIVER Well, that is the idea, isn't it?

BOREHAM Yes... um... you're quite near where I work.
Do you know the Last Trump in Northminster Street?
(*BRISCOE looks even more horrified.*)

QUIVER What, the pub?

BOREHAM Yes.

SCENE 2

QUIVER That's slumming it a bit, isn't it? Of course, I expect you want to be discreet.

BOREHAM Yes! That's it!

QUIVER Well, when shall we meet?

BOREHAM What about Tuesday evening? Perhaps we could fix the time on the day. I sometimes get held up at work.

QUIVER All right. I look forward to hearing from you on Tuesday. Bye.

BOREHAM Yes, bye!

BRISCOE Couldn't you have found somewhere more exciting than the office local to meet her?

BOREHAM Well, I wasn't prepared. Making me do it off the cuff like that. I didn't know what I was saying.

(Lights down on BOREHAM and BRISCOE as they exit arguing.)

(QUIVER dials another number on her mobile.)

QUIVER Kenny, it's me. ... How's Mum? ... So, is there any more news? ... About, you know ... You're sure? ... No strangers coming round. No-one watching the flat, or anything like that. ... Nothing that I've seen. Uncle Steve's not heard anything? ... You're quite, quite sure? ... There's no reason why there should be any trouble

ACT 1

after all this time ... It was just such a shock that's all ... Anyway I'm off on my latest adventure ... With the dating agency ... This business has really thrown me. I've got to do something. I've hooked one ... What do you mean, "Which one did I pick?" The richest one, of course ... Never mind about that. That's all in the past ... I haven't met him yet. He sounded a bit strange on the phone. Oh God, I forgot ... He wants to meet at the Last Trump ... That's where I went after you told me the news. I had to get out. I got blind drunk ... I got thrown out ... Yes, but this was even worse than usual ... Never mind, I'll wear a wig. And I'll go late. Then if he's a dud, I can make a quick escape.