

Ernie's Incredible Illucinations

ERNIE has been taken to see the doctor by his Mum and Dad because he has been having strange 'illucinations'. The doctor is seated at the side of the stage and produces a notebook. He is making notes on what follows.

ERNIE: *(To the doctor)* It started with these daydreams. You know, the sort everybody gets. Where you suddenly score a hat trick in the last five minutes of the Cup Final, or you bowl out the West Indies for ten runs – or saving your granny from a blazing helicopter, all that sort of rubbish. It was one wet Saturday afternoon and me and my mum and dad were all sitting about in the happy home having one of those exciting afternoon rave-ups we usually have in our house. *(He picks up a book and pretends to read)* It was all go. Mum thought Dad would be at the match. He didn't often miss a game but they were playing away. He told mum he was not going to Birmingham. Even for United.

Meanwhile – while this exciting discussion was in progress, I was reading this book about the French wartime resistance workers and the dangers they faced – often arrested in their homes. I started wondering what would happen if a squad of soldiers turned up at our front door, having been tipped off about the secret radio transmitter hidden in our cistern – when suddenly...

(He throws the book down, ceases talking directly to the doctor and becomes part of the scene he is describing. Looking around him) I can hear the tramp of feet. It's a squad of soldiers and they're marching up to our front door. They're banging on it now. I shouldn't go out there, Mum. I said don't go out there. It's not the milkman. It's a squad of enemy soldiers. They've come for me... The soldiers. They've found out about the radio transmitter. *(There is a loud crash)* Don't go out, Mum. Leave the television! Don't go! Mum...

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(Mum opens the door just as the two soldiers are charging. They shoot past her, straight into the hall, collide with ERNIE's Dad and land in a heap with him. Dad manages to hold the television above his head and save it from breaking. ERNIE crouches behind the table. To himself) They've surrounded the house. They want the television set. It's the neighbours' – not ours. They're forcing my Dad to go outside in the rain. They're threatening to shoot... (Bursting out from behind the table) Hold it! Drop those guns! (As the officer raises his gun) Da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da. (The soldiers collapse and are strewn all over the hall. Mum screams. Then there is a silence) Sorry, Mum. Yes, they are dead...

(ERNIE steps forward. As he speaks, and during the next section, Dad and Mum carry off the bodies)

Dad said it needed thinking about. It could have created a bit of gossip. And the carpet – it hadn't done that much good either. They didn't know what to do with the bodies. Well, Mum and Dad decided that the best thing to do was to pretend it hadn't happened. That was usually the way they coped with all emergencies...

by Alan Ayckbourn