DUBLIN BUSINESS SCHOOL

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AN EXPLORATION OF FRANK ALLEN'S STATE OF THE NATION PLAYS

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ABSTRACT
This thesis sets out to explore the dramatic work of Frank Allen, a Dublin director and playwright. As this is the first time his work has been examined in academic discourse, this thesis makes a huge contribution to the evolution of social drama on an Irish national stage. Following on from the introduction which explains the motivation behind the project, chapter one begins by positioning Allen's dramatic work within the framework of national theatre. This chapter also explores the man behind the drama, where he was born and grew up, the inspirational forces which enable his creative talents to be realised and the vision he has to supply the marginalised people of Dublin with drama that is about them and for them. Chapter two analyses Allen's contemporary plays, extrapolating the social message he wants the audience to extract from Cafe Slices and Oh When the Hoops. Through these works, he underlines the hardships suffered by the working class in a unique visual interpretation of Dublin's socio-cultural distinctiveness. Chapter three examines Allen's plays, Twelve Days in May and Seven Lives for Liberty. These are works which hark back to Ireland's revolutionary period, giving a more rounded picture of iconic heroes, such as James Connolly and Padraig Pearse. He transforms them from iconic patriots to authentic Irishmen through his illustration of the suffering endured by men who were poets, teachers, musicians and writers, as well as the anguish their families underwent. In doing so, he brings the past into the present moment, revealing deep truths about the foundation, as well as the continuing negligence of the state. In providing a reflective study of contemporary and historical Ireland, this thesis shows how Frank Allen's social theatre exemplifies class distinction, sociology and a unique, inherent insight into Irish issues previously denied articulation.
'O WORDS are lightly spoken,'
  Said Pearse to Connolly,
'Maybe a breath of politic words
Has withered our Rose Tree;
Or maybe but a wind that blows
  Across the bitter sea.'
"It needs to be but watered,'
James Connolly replied,
"To make the green come out again
  And spread on every side,
And shake the blossom from the bud
  To be the garden's pride.'
"But where can we draw water,'
Said Pearse to Connolly,
"When all the wells are parched away?
  O plain as plain can be
There's nothing but our own red blood
Can make a right Rose Tree.'

W.B. Yeats. *The Rose Tree*
INTRODUCTION
From the earliest beginnings of drama, theatre has always been and continues to be an instrument which is used by the dominant class to subjugate the proletariat. Agusto Boal contends "all theatre is necessarily political, because all the activities of man are political and theatre is one of them" (Boal: 2000, p ix). As well as being used by the dominant class, Boal believes that the subjugated can subvert this manipulation through identifying the limits imposed on them. Theatre can and should be used as a way to create social protest, allowing the audience to recognise their position in society and look for change. In contemporary Ireland, one could question why this type of theatre is relevant. Financial depression, recession, governmental mismanagement and capitalist greed result in a country falling apart, literally held together by the shoestrings of the ordinary man on the street. Austerity, higher taxes, pay cuts and a significantly diminishing public sector generates a need, a vital requisite for those silent voices to be heard, recognised and acted on. Frank Allen, director and playwright, creates a platform for those voices to be heard. His theatre is social, yet also political in the sense that it invites audiences to recognise social injustices and act on them.

Who is Frank Allen? Frank Allen was born in Dublin and comes from a working class background. A modest, unassuming man, he writes theatre that he hopes will bring communities together and encourage them to discover their history. Through his theatre company Tobar Na Run, he gives individuals an opportunity to flourish, to express themselves and engage in drama which is otherwise not opened to them. This thesis sets out to explore the works of Frank Allen, one of Ireland's unsung dramatists who, until now, has not been considered academically. Allen's life, his inspirations and his dramaturgy are epistemologically analysed for the first time, identifying recurring themes, nuances and tropes within his drama. In doing so, this thesis will offer an insight and in-depth understanding into his style of writing, highlighting his love of the common man and his need
to call attention to the plight of a country that is teetering on the brink of financial and social collapse.

This thesis begins by briefly placing Allen's work within the context of national theatre. He revives the ideologies laid down by literary giants, such as Yeats, Synge and O'Casey, who endeavoured to reinvent Irish representation through creating a theatre which accurately embodied Irish social and cultural mores. Following on from that, an exploration of the dramatist is presented, delving into the main influences and forces which compelled him to write, ascertaining his vision of what theatre should be and discovering the inspiration behind his productions. An analysis of Allen's contemporary plays examines how Café Slices and Oh When the Hoops motivate audiences to accept or affect change through holding up a mirror to contemporary life. He emphasises Dublin's unique social and cultural identity, expressing the hardships from individuals who are sometimes in harmony and other times out of sync with their place in society. Allen's State of the Nation plays, Twelve Days in May and Seven Lives for Liberty are interrogated in the following chapter, showing how Allen focuses on these iconic figures as real people, who had real families, desires and fears. In doing so, he creates a unique window into Ireland's past, retaining the deep truth that lies behind the foundation of the Nation of Ireland, effortlessly balancing these heroes while simultaneously exploring the past in ways which enable his audience to learn about the present.

Frank Allen's theatre is not found in the hallowed halls of the Abbey or the Gate, or even in the more mass-oriented Gaiety or Olympia theatres. Instead, one is more likely to find these productions in the lesser known locations of Liberty Hall or The Crypt. Nevertheless, his work astounds those who are introduced and immersed in it. His theatre literally sings, not only to the individuals taking part in a workshop but also to the audiences who recognise themselves and are enthralled. His plays are not mere entertainment. Full of
substance and meaning, one always finds something that can be taken from them, whether that is a slice of Dublin life in a little cafe or a history lesson that goes much deeper than school lessons or books. His theatre is a theatre about Dublin people, for Dublin people and, by a Dubliner. This thesis will prove how Allen's work, whether intentional or not, is even more relevant today in society's uncertainty of the future. Prior to a study of his plays, it is necessary to locate him in a National context, remove the mask of distance and delineate the man behind the drama.
CHAPTER ONE: A DRAMATURGICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 A Historical Framework

Irish theatre developed and evolved through a great many phases since the onset of the twentieth century. W.B. Yeats, alongside Lady Augusta Gregory and Edward Martyn, made a conscious attempt at national regeneration through the Irish Literary revival. At this time, theatre in Dublin and the rest of Ireland consisted primarily of touring melodramas from England with Ireland depicted principally by the stage Irishman until, according to John Harrington, W.B. Yeats vowed to "show that Ireland is not the home of buffoonery and of easy sentiment, as it had been represented, but the home of an ancient idealism" (Harrington: 1991, p 410). The mission of the literary revival was to present new Irish plays, as Georg Grote contends "all the existing theatres in Dublin refused to stage entirely Irish plays, which had not first been approved by a London audience" (Grote: 2003, p 19). During the revival of national theatre, writers were encouraged to revitalize the concept of Irish identity, seeking realistic representations of Irish culture and life and indigenous productions with authentic depictions of Irish characters. These same writers endeavoured to remind Ireland’s people of a past identity, while also identifying a contemporary Irish distinctiveness that would continue on for generations. While attempting to address what David Lloyd considers the "crisis of representation in which the Irish sought, for centuries in vain, to see themselves mirrored and represented in the society around them" (Lloyd: 1993, p 6), writers such as Yeats, Synge and O'Casey used theatre to revive positive aspects of Irish myths, sagas and heroes and mend the broken bones of Nationalism. Subsequently, after decades of famine, poverty and land war, the theatre could be used to consciously and politically rejuvenate the image of Ireland and its people.

The Abbey Theatre as the National Theatre not only provided an inspiration for indigenous Irish drama, it created a space where the reinvention of Irish culture might be
possible and also where politics and drama might be nurtured into fruition. As a founding member of the National Theatre, John P. Harrington notes how Yeats considered the complex relationship that National drama had with its audience as one that "reflected the audience as it was, and simultaneously worked to improve it" (Harrington: 2008, p x). Therefore, it became a means of inclusion, of bringing people together and creating a community of likeminded Irish men and women. One dramatist who joins communities through his work is Dublin born playwright, screenplay writer and director Frank Allen.

1.2 Frank Allen: The Man Behind the Drama
Frank Allen strives to create a community of likeminded men and women by encouraging marginalised members of society to express themselves, as well as providing the opportunity to explore and enjoy hidden, untapped talents through the Tobar Na Run theatre company. Within his own work, he has managed to capture the essence of what it means to be Irish by representing the struggles, frustrations and humour of Irish people both within historical situations and contemporary life. Unmistakably Irish in their setting, his plays focus on drama that is self-consciously concerned with the representation of Ireland and in particular Dublin, as its main subject. Believing that everyone has the right to experience theatre in their own communities, his work bears similarities to Sean O'Casey's tenement dramas in that they offer what Nicholas Grene describes as "a slice-of-life naturalism, with all the contemporaneity of immediate events rendered from within" (Grene: 2002, p 11). The majority of his work is instilled with a didactic spirit that centres on class, sociology and the representation and understanding of Irish history. Reflecting on Ireland's experience of the past and the present, Allen explores and brings to light areas of Irish history that have been passed over or been denied articulation. In fact, he could be considered a revisionist historian that works to turn Irish historical studies away from its passion of a narrative of national insurrection to an analysis and representation of those in the background.
Frank Allen was born in Drimnagh, Dublin in November 1954 to a large working class family. He attended Drimnagh Castle Christian Brothers where, despite the many scandals associated with schools and the religious system, Frank's own memories are entirely positive. He credits the school and teaching staff with instilling in him a love of the Irish sporting tradition, Irish language and Irish history. Stuart Spencer calls the need to write "the impulse" (Spencer: 2002, p 127). Frank found his "impulse" in the 1980s while teaching in Pearse College, Dublin. He attended a production of Brian Friel's highly acclaimed Translations by Field Day Theatre Company in The Gate Theatre and, while sitting in the audience watching incredible performances by Ray McAnally, Liam Neeson and Mick Lally, he realised "that's my world, I want to explore it, and I want to have a play on stage" (Frank Allen: 2013). A performance of One Big Blow in 1981 by the agitprop Scottish Theatre Company 7:84 made him realise that it was the type of theatre he wanted to produce. The 7:84 Theatre Company was established in 1970 by playwright John McGrath and was based upon the philosophy that seven per cent of the population own eighty-four per cent of the wealth. Guardian writer Brian Logan notes how it "took theatre to the poor and the far-flung, and spoke to them - in political terms, but using the vernacular of popular entertainment - about their lives" (Logan: 2002, p 1). Writers that participated in the 7:84 Theatre Company produced socially driven theatre about working people that highlighted injustices or oppressions. One Big Blow dealt with a mining community in England where miners' lungs were being destroyed as a result of their exposure to coal dust. Even though they suffered from their working conditions, the miners continued to support and play in the local brass band. Ingeniously, the actors on stage didn't have instruments; they made the music themselves using their own voices and the illusion of playing instruments. This cultivated in audiences the realisation that the tools for change are within their own hands. The Passion Machine Theatre Company under Paul Mercier, Roddy Doyle and Brendan Gleeson also
made an enormous impact on the young aspiring Dublin playwright. In the early 1980s, they were writing and producing plays such as *Drowning* (1984) and *Wasters* (1985) that reflected the lives of real Dubliners. Their aim was to encourage the ordinary Dubliner that had probably never gone to the theatre before to attend a performance and more importantly to return again and again. Like the 7:84 Theatre Company and The Passion Machine Theatre Company, Frank Allen felt compelled to write and produce plays that truly reflected Ireland as it was in the past, the changes it has undergone and what it is today. Ultimately, he wanted to bring the full theatre experience to marginalised areas and to the working man and woman.

As someone who always aspired to be a writer, Allen considered teaching and writing as two mediums that went hand in hand. Eventually moving into teaching in the prison system, Allen found the inspiration from his everyday life that truly motivated him to write. His biggest influences in relation to drama have been Sean O'Casey from both an Irish and in particular, a Dublin perspective and on an international level, Arthur Miller, both of whom have left a lasting impression on him. He considers O'Casey's three tenement plays, *The Plough and the Stars*, *The Shadow of a Gunman* and *Juno and the Paycock* as among the finest in Irish theatre. As far as he is concerned, there are few Irish dramas able to hold a candle to *The Plough and the Stars*. He regards Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* as one of the most influential plays of its time, its strength lying in its ability to be pertinent to other eras of depression or recession. As a play that was written in 1939, with subject matter that is based on an ordinary person suffering during the period of the great depression, Allen believes that *Death of a Salesman* could be played in Dublin today or any city in the world and it would say so much about contemporary life and the hardship that the ordinary person endures. To him, that is the strength of a wonderfully transcendent play.
Allen accumulates stories from every medium, from conversations, from events on the news, from reports in the local newspaper, all with the potential to become what Buzz McLaughlin calls "the seed of an idea that can grow into a brilliant play" (McLaughlin: 1997, p 21). Consequently, Frank's plays stem from today's society and from history, sometimes seeing something and thinking God that's a play, that's a short story, that's a film, that has the components of making good drama. *Give us a Break*, written in 1999, is a cynical view of modern life and is based on a course that Frank and his sister attended called the *I Am Course*. It was supposed to be an empowering and life changing experience. However, drowning in turbulent rhetoric, Allen remembers it felt "like putting people through a washing machine of emotions" (Frank Allen: 2013). From his encounter with the *I Am Course*, he wrote *Give us a Break*, caustically commenting on the modern fad of analysis in today's society. For Allen, anger too is an excellent motivation for writing. When he wrote *Oh When the Hoops* in 2003, he was devastated at the selling of Milltown Football grounds for development. The demise and loss of such iconic land to what he deemed to be "greedy property developers" (ibid. 2013), saddened and enraged him. When writing the play, Allen used the idea of a house haunted by the ghost of a former grounds-man to symbolize the history and character that had been lost forever, due to the greed of Ireland's property developers. *Oh When the Hoops* was first performed in Liberty Hall, motivating Shamrock Rovers' supporters to stand during performances, to chant and raise their flags and send tingles down the spines of the audience. His first play *There's a Welcome on the Mat*, written in the late 1980s with his sister Phil Roberts, remains unperformed. His first drama to be staged was *Scenes from Kilmainham* in 1991 and was part of the newly formed Tobar Na Run (The Well of Mysteries/Secrets) Theatre Company.
Tobar Na Run was founded as a co-operative, aiming to tackle elitism in Irish theatre by unearthing new talent particularly in marginalised communities. Elitism in theatre is an issue that strikes a strong chord with him. Believing that "theatre is for the people, with stories originating from those same people" (Frank Allen: 2013), he considers the Abbey, paradoxically, as a National Theatre that is not inclusive of its people. He sees it as something that has become an avenue for elite society, stating that "all one has to do is observe an opening night with the intelligentsia having their pictures taken for the society pages to understand why" (Frank Allen: 2013). Unfortunately, as a result of its exclusive status, Allen believes that Ireland's working class don't feel that the theatre is for them. He is saddened that great Dublin based dramas such as Juno and Paycock are revived again and again by the Abbey, yet ordinary young Dublin men and women don't see it. Believing that "inside every human heart is a talent that given an opportunity can flourish" (Frank Allen: 2013), he lives by the ethos that people need encouragement not criticism, that even working class people who might not be able to afford The Abbey or The Gate still have their stories to tell. Through Tobar Na Run, he has attempted to be a vehicle for that expression, making the experience fun and educational. Allen asserts that many of the people that he met and who engaged with him through his drama workshops continue to work with Tobar Na Run as writers, stage managers and lighting technicians. He notes how all are stronger, more grounded, altruistic people who have been nurtured and pushed to achieve their potential in life.

The 1916 Proclamation strongly influenced Frank's beliefs. He considers himself "political without being party political, a Socialist and a Republican" (Frank Allen: 2013). He strongly believes in an egalitarian society and is angered at the obscenity of one person earning hundreds of thousands of euro’s while another will have his meagre wage reduced.
Over the years, he has been left with the feeling that the Irish are quite conservative in their politics, believing that "we suffer still today from a post-colonial inferiority complex; therefore, we are reluctant to fight for our rights" (ibid. 2013). He strongly believes in a republic that was envisioned by the signatories of the 1916 Proclamation, where:

all the children of the nation are cherished equally. Not just some of the children but all of them. The children of Ballymun, Drimnagh, the children from the estates in Limerick that have been ravaged by crime; right across the country (Frank Allen: 2013).

He has been involved with many social and political groups throughout his lifetime. Locally, he was involved in the GAA; he was the Branch Secretary and Chairman of the TUI. He supported his brother’s election onto the Workers Party but has never been an active member. Preferring to make his voice heard on a local level, he was heavily involved in the 'Save Moore Street' campaign in 2009. He organised 'Arms Around Moore Street', having been inspired by the Independent Struggle in the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, where citizens linked hands across the states as a form of peaceful revolution. The 'Save Moore Street' campaign formed a human chain to make the statement that it belonged to the people. For them, it was sacred ground and should be preserved and honoured as such. Shay Linehan, childhood friend and playwright and director of Deilig Inis Theatre Company, travelled as a teacher throughout Zambia and Zimbabwe in the 1980s. Allen visited several times, witnessing first-hand the poverty and abuse in Africa for mineral wealth in the copper mines. It reminded him of similar abuses which were prevalent throughout British colonies in the past. In Africa, a privileged ex-pat society maintained wealth and influence whilst rampant poverty and dire conditions were ignored. Hugely influenced by his experiences in Africa and, following a lecture in Trinity College by Kadar Asmal, Allen felt compelled to support any effort to eradicate abuse of power in Africa, becoming involved in the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement. His political and social beliefs are embedded within plays such as *Oh*

He sees history all around, with the ghosts and the spirits of the people still there and still in his imagination. When he walks around the city, he feels he is walking through a living graveyard. He walks past St. Patricks Cathedral and imagines Dean Swift walking on those same cobblestones. When he goes to the GPO, he is reminded of Easter Monday 1916. Walking past St Catherine's Church in Thomas Street evokes images of Robert Emmet. History plays a huge role in some of Allen's plays. Even his contemporary plays reference historical events or figures. Plays such as Twelve Days in May (2009) and Seven Lives for Liberty (2010) are examples of his passion for Irish history. They are motivated by a desire to see the signatories of the Proclamation, as well as James Connolly's life and values reaching a modern audience. In doing so, he invites "the audience to reach beyond mere fact to engage with the process of history in ways that will illuminate their lives in present time" (Cave: 1986, p 17). He aims to "present the characters of both plays not, as the iconic characters from our school history books but as real people with families, loves and desires" (Frank Allen: 2013). His characters are writers and musicians, they are a person who had a very wide vision of what Irish life should be; that is cultural sovereignty. What makes these plays so powerfully emotive is that they show the characters' last moments, that they had families, that they were real people... to make the audience realise that it wasn't just the execution of individuals. With Twelve Days in May (2009) and Seven Lives for Liberty (2011), Allen achieves an indelibly haunting theatre, where ghosts are given voices and their families are finally made visible and relatable to the men that they called father, son, brother and husband.
When a writer creates a character, he wants the audience to accept that character as authentic. Frank Allen believes in the concept of a three dimensional character profile, so that the actor and the audience believe in the spirit and essence of that character. He looks at the character from a physical perspective, then sociologically and psychologically. For instance, he asks, how does a person mix with others, is there some psychological curve that impels them to do something or to speak a particular way. His stage directions are meagre, providing the mere basics of a character's physicality and location. However, like Shakespeare directions are found buried within the words, the dialogue. Characters state their politics, their beliefs and the situations that they are in, whether that it is patriotism, socialism, capitalism, drug addiction or release from prison. What lies at the heart of Frank Allen's writing is the belief that when you read something that you must say "I was once that soldier, I understand that emotion, I once felt that fear, I once felt that joy" (Frank Allen: 2013). For him, the writer has an intention; he uses language that communicates directly to the reader. If the reader can sympathise, understand, or discover something in that line of dialogue, then the writing is working. His plays are infused with this method of writing. They are straightforward, they are frank and candid in their intention and they communicate their message directly to any audience member.

1.3 Conclusion

Sitting and watching a Frank Allen play, the audience may witness a debate, a dialogue between a developer who is very anti trade union and anti socialist and a guy selling a socialist newspaper who is an advocate of Marx or Connolly. If someone in the audience assesses the ideas of these characters and thinks that either of those men have a fair point then Allen maintains he has succeeded. His plays are about society and how ordinary people live. They are dynamic and clear-cut, providing a working representation of life around us. Each play constitutes a new departure and attempts to solve new problems, yet the function of his
theatre remains the same, to provoke, not to preach. He presents a set of characters that tell a tale, regardless of whether they are historical or contemporary. Within those tales, there is an element of nostalgia and a battle cry for injustices both past and present.
CHAPTER TWO: ALLEN’S CONTEMPORARY PLAYS

What is it about stories and the acting out of stories in drama that holds such fascination for us? As far back as Greek tragedy, the re-enactment of narratives which hold a mirror up to human frailty, allows the audience to vicariously experience the meaning of life and to come to terms with the inevitability of death. This is achieved through exploring conflict, misunderstanding, contradiction, or loss. It enables the audience to achieve an understanding of their lives and along with that, the motivation to either affect change or acceptance. Theatre is an amazing way of expressing the trials and tribulations of everyday life, from passionate emotions to political standpoints. As a visual form of literature, theatre can have a deeply lasting and leading effect on the masses. Dermot Bolger states that theatre and, in particular, Irish theatre is a "forum where social codes and roles can be scrutinised" (Bolger: 2001, p 73). Frank Allen's contemporary plays such as Cafe Slices (1997 - 2011) and Oh When The Hoops (2003) are forums where those 'codes and roles' can be explored and evaluated.

Cafe Slices, a series of one act plays written by Frank Allen and performed by Tobar Na Run Theatre Company between 1997 and 2011, consists of In the Picture (1997), Poet's Corner (1997) and Mr Blueberry (2011). Each play can be performed on its own or as part of the group and all can be considered as a slice of contemporary life. They act as paradigmatic microcosms of the nation as a whole, with each play's themes and characters applicable to the period in which it was written. Exploring these one act plays in a concise way, provides audiences with a whole story in one hit. As a result, less time is required to extrapolate meaning from the characters, settings and storyline. Within each of the plays, Allen incorporates chance meetings with strangers belonging to vastly different sociological environments. Throughout these plays, he maintains a triptych of people, consisting of two main protagonists and a less prominent character who acts as a counterbalance or referee.
Replacing the famous cottage-kitchen setting of Irish plays with a cafe, Allen preserves the dramatic space familiar to Dublin audiences, giving a more contemporary feel to his tales, as well as providing a context for the dialogue and a setting that allows for the interaction of strangers. By using recognisable settings, Allen's drama works as a medium where societal mores can be considered by his audiences. Comparable to many plays set in contemporary Dublin, social issues such as class, poverty and inequity are entrenched in the central conflict, along with political opinion. As a writer, Allen is interested in what causes a character to utter words and what societal forces lies behind them. He burrows beneath the facade of society and studies what people are doing, why they are moved to certain behaviour, the route that society is taking and the impact of socialisation and environments inhabited.

2.1 In the Picture & Poet's Corner

*In the Picture* and *Poet's Corner* were first performed in the Crypt Theatre in Dublin Castle in April 1998, as part of the first performance of *Cafe Slices*. *In the Picture* is the account of a chance meeting between Barry McGovern, a young struggling artist and Emer O’Malley, a psychic healer, in a city cafe on a rainy October lunch-time. Emer is used as a tool by Allen to explore the notion that to follow your dreams is the right thing to do, no matter what. However, Barry suffers from what Allen has described in a recent interview as a "post-colonial inferiority complex", one that makes us "reluctant to fight for our rights" (Frank Allen: 2013), or in this case fight for his dream. Throughout the play, the polemic discourse between Barry and Emer centres on his inability to sell his paintings in order to provide for his younger siblings. While the main focus is on Barry and his artistic endeavours, other areas of the characters' psyche are explored extensively, such as the effect of losing parents at a young age, the added pressures of becoming the sole provider for younger siblings, Barry's disillusionment in his artistic abilities and his younger sister Linda's inability to move forward from grieving, resulting in an attempted suicide. Even though the play deals with
such emotive issues, it still manages to maintain an upbeat conclusion. Emer becomes an angel in disguise and not only encourages both Barry and Linda to move forward but also saves the day by purchasing his painting.

With the same setting of a cafe in Dublin city centre, *Poet's Corner* centres on the chance meeting of Peter O'Driscoll and Solo McGrath. The role of Rosie Kennedy, the cafe waitress, is to act as a counterbalance between the two male characters. There is little exploration into Rosie's background and character; she is merely introduced to achieve symmetry. Peter designs and sells greeting cards and is described as "very stern and unhappy with his lot" (Allen: 1997, p 327). He is also impatient, rude and quick to judge upon appearances. Solo is a mature student studying sociology and psychology, an education that he explains as the "figaries of society and the workings of the human brain" (Allen: 1997, p 333). He is described as “a slob of a man in his mid fifties" (Allen: 1997, p 328), with an easy-going air about him. The dialogue between both men is central to the drama. At its heart are assumptions that are made in contemporary society based upon appearance and vernacular. While the men's dialogue is focused on their opinions of each other, the play also explores topics such as the joys of returning to education, an underlying alcohol problem and the advice to follow your dreams whether that is in pursuit of education, or writing overtly sentimental poems for inside greeting cards. *Poet's Corner* is presented as a light hearted exploration into the meeting of two strangers that eventually becomes a journey into another's background and life, where Peter and Solo share their past experiences and find something akin to equality.
2.2 Mr Blueberry

*Mr Blueberry*, written in 2011, is the final and by far the finest of the triptych of plays that encompasses *Cafe Slices*. It is a better developed and more superior explorative examination of social and political mores than *In the Picture* and *Poet's Corner*. It can be considered a slice of life comment on the current financial crisis in Ireland, as well as an analysis of the division of beliefs between those supporters of capitalism and the ordinary man, for whom socialism remains the answer. *Mr Blueberry* is set in a cafe in Dublin's Liberties and is centred on the accidental meeting of two strangers that share a common historical bond. The dialogic nature of the play provides a forum for Bill Quinlan and Dave Douglas, who hail from vastly different social spheres to voice their opinions and state their beliefs. The play causes us to question whether people are too quick to judge by appearances and dogma. Allen supplies the audience with two protagonists from a similar, underprivileged socio-economic background, yet embodying vastly different experiences and contrasting views about how the world works. Alongside these two protagonists is Rosie, a waitress serving customers in the cafe and, in this instance, is an occasional referee to the many disagreements between the two men. She mediates "Ah don't be fighting you two. It's Christmas time" (Allen: 2011, p 79). Allen, who maintains a minimalist approach to stage instructions, relies on his characters' dialogue to develop and reveal hints of their pasts as the play progresses. Situating the drama in Dublin's inner city is reflective of Rosie and Dave's sociological positions and backgrounds which instantly places Bill as an outsider returning to his childhood home.

Frank Allen uses the characters of Bill and Dave as archetypes for the polarities that have existed and still exist in contemporary Irish society. Both of the men have conflicting beliefs, having had entirely diverse experiences growing up. Both are confident that they are right and unwavering in their attitudes. Bill and Dave are judgemental of each other based
upon appearance and point of view. Bill is a self-made man who left Ireland and the tenements as a child and owes his life to the bravery of a local resident who rescued him from the rubble of a collapsed building. Dave is Liberties born and reared, a trade-union representative and currently unemployed. Dave, like many Irish men and women, is disheartened due to current financial problems and believes vehemently "in the control of the means of production, distribution and exchange. That society should be organised for the betterment of all the people and not just for the fat cats" (Allen; 2011, p 65). Allen cleverly sets up the polarities of the characters' class and sociology from the beginning, designing an interesting combination of social principles in order to examine who they are, why they are moved to certain behaviour and, the impact of socialisation on their character.

His characters are multi-faceted; each performs a role within the play while also containing symbolic dimensions appropriate to their current political and economic status. Rosie, who works in the cafe, serves customers in her own genial way: "Nice to get in out of the cold isn't it?" (Allen: 20011, p 59) and accepts everyone she encounters without any prejudice at all. She also works as a counterbalance between Bill and Dave, treating both as equal contemporaries. Her marriage is precarious; her husband Stevie is a heavy drinker for whom the forthcoming holiday to Spain is "Just another piss-up for him" (Allen: 2011, p 62). She refers to Stevie in a joking manner; however, it is clear that he is holding her back. Rosie, in this respect, is evocative of Sean O'Casey's Juno. She is the typical Irish mother, always keeping the balance and ensuring that the bad elements remain outside the front door. Bill, "a portly well dressed man, in his late sixties" (Allen: 2011, p 59), has returned to Ireland for the races in Leopardstown and is passing time in a cafe that holds more than a transient appeal to him. Bill, who was reared in England and "worked every hour God gave me and bit by bit built up a construction business" (Allen: 2011, p 69), can see Ireland and its
problems from an outsider's perspective. For him, there are no memories of the "Rare Ould Times" (Allen: 2011, p 67). He remembers only the tenements and a home that was a "rat-infested hovel with damp running down the walls" (ibid: p 67). Dave, "a forty year-old local man" (Allen: 2011, p 59), is Liberties born and reared, unemployed and "Secretary of the Dublin Branch of the Socialist Workers Party" (Allen: 2011, p 75). Dave trained as a printer but, like so many Irish men and women, has recently lost his job and is struggling with a family to provide for and a mortgage to pay. He is bitter and resentful of the "politicians and their cronies ... that have the country robbed blind" (Allen: 2011, p 78) and sees the answer to Ireland's financial problems in socialism and equality for all.

Bill enters the cafe and comments "Oh it's chilly out there ... A cup of white coffee ... Ah sure maybe I'll try a muffin" (Allen: 2011, p 59). Not too far behind him, Dave enters and states "Brass-monkeys out there isn't it? ... I'd murder a mug of tea" (Allen: 2011, p 60). Immediately, it is discernible that these two men are chalk and cheese. Bill is well dressed, pleasant and has an English accent. He stands out as a visitor, one who is well fed, well off, and merely dropping in to the cafe for a cup of coffee to pass time. Dave, his polar opposite, drinks tea, is familiar with the cafe, knows Rosie who works there and knows that he is "entitled to a refill" (Allen: 2011, p 71) for his mug of tea. Dave enters the cafe carrying "a bundle of Socialist Workers newspapers" (ibid: p 59). Bill, eager to check the racing for later that day and not really realising that it is a Socialist paper, asks to buy one. Scrolling through the paper, he is annoyed to discover that the racing page is absent and equally irritated that he has just supported the socialist cause through his purchase of *The Socialist Worker*. At once, the men make rash judgements about the calibre of each other. Bill crassly advises Dave to keep his money for "the revolution", later calling him "Dave the Socialist" (Allen: 2011, p 61-64). Dave makes the assumption that because Bill owns a horse, he is "a pure capitalist ...
thinking he can buy everything and everybody” (Allen: 2011, p 77). Dave is bitter and resentful of anyone who, in his opinion, is not a socialist. He is, in his own words, "anti what you stand for” (Allen: 2011, p 64). He demands equality, wanting equal rights but is unprepared to listen to anyone else's philosophies on the working man and his entitlements. He believes that "The worker is always at the bottom of the pile" and that "Capitalism teaches the people the moral conceptions of cannibalism - the strong devouring the weak” (Allen: 2011, p 67-78). Bill admits that he is a capitalist with "no time at all for trade-unions. All pinkos, the whole bloody lot of them” (Allen: 2011, p 69). He believes that socialism doesn't work and that "Somebody's got to make money or we'd all be starving" (Allen: 2011, p 68).

By situating these two protagonists as opposites, Frank Allen is allowing each side to be given a platform to air his beliefs. In doing so, he encourages audiences to watch, listen and evaluate the rhetoric, hopefully reaching an opinion based upon their own experiences and creed.

Masaru Sekine believes that in "Irish drama, the past is a territory where dramatists can better see the present" (Sekine: 1986, p 37). Allen uses snippets from history to make connections that inform us of our past and how the past is important in how we become who we are in the present. The collapse of the tenements in Clanbrassil Street in 1946 was a terrible disaster for Dubliners. Using a factual story, such as the collapse of the tenements, not only provides a background to Bill, it also affords the opportunity for audiences to be informed of the diabolical conditions that Dubliners were forced to endure due to greedy landlords. In doing so, Allen offers both a history lesson and a forum for the exploration of current living conditions that, for him, are the responsibility of contemporary fat cat landlords and dodgy businessmen. Bill, talking about his memories of "a rat-infested hovel with the damp running down the walls" (Allen: 2011, p 67), allows the audience to connect the past to
the present where, according to Dave, even now "there'll be children crying in the inner-city for the want of a decent dinner" (Allen: 2011, p 78). The word Zozimus is used by Bill as his password onto the betting site. Zozimus was a street bard in the early nineteenth century who traversed Dublin city, reciting his own poetry. Also known as Michael Moran, his more famous works are The Finding of Moses and Saint Patrick was a Gentleman. Zozimus was also a weekly satirical magazine published in Dublin from May 1870 to August 1872 by A. M. Sullivan and, was named after Michael Moran's alias. By using a name like Zozimus, Allen shows that although Bill now lives in another country, he is still conscious of his heritage and is eager to preserve the connection he has with Dublin city.

The play may appear to be dull to many and could seem to feel like it is preaching. However, it is lightened by the wait for the news confirming if the race meeting will go ahead, as well as the interaction between Rosie and the two men. Alongside the dialogue of disparity between the two men, there are other issues addressed within the play. These include concerns surrounding how lives are influenced and changed by small and large events, how first impressions can be wrong, how one can be too quick to judge and, the impact that the Celtic Tiger had on the ordinary person. By setting the drama in the Liberties, Allen invites a more intimate exploration of people whose paths cross for a short period of time. The happy ending, where Bill leaves a twenty thousand pound cheque for Dave as a thank you for his life being saved by Dave's grandfather, highlights the play's conclusion as a contradiction. If Dave accepts the money, is he really a socialist and is Bill really callous and mean like all capitalists? Through setting, characterisation and interactions between characters, Allen allows the audience to come to their own conclusions, it is up to them to decide whether they agree or disagree.
2.3 Oh When The Hoops

*Oh When The Hoops*, a three act play, was written in 2003 in response to the selling of Milltown Football grounds, the home ground of Shamrock Rovers Football Club, to developers during the property boom in Ireland. The play is a polemic reply to the greedy property developers who dominated Irish society during the early part of the twenty first century and for whom taking land that symbolises history for a section of society is merely about turning a quick buck and moving on. It acts as both a nostalgic, wistful window back to the past, when supporters where shouting "We are the SR the SR FC" (Allen: 2003, p 251), as well as a forum where both sides are presented. Audiences can come to their own conclusions as to whether progress at the loss of iconic structures is the right way to do business or not. When writing this drama, Allen used the concept of a house haunted by the
ghosts of Rovers supporters to symbolise the history and the character that was lost forever once the bull-dozer engines were switched on. The play was performed in Liberty Hall to thunderous accolades from the Rovers' supporters and audience members that were saddened and enraged by the greed of our fellow Irish men. It becomes a tool by which the playwright can focus on an era of so called development that managed to sour the Irish people against big business. Similar to *Cafe Slices*, Allen uses the cottage-kitchen setting that is so familiar to Irish plays. This time, the drama is situated in the kitchen of Number One Glenmalure Park. This is the show house of a newly developed estate, built on the site of the Shamrock Rovers pavilion, where the clubs physiotherapist Billy King conducted his business for more than forty years.

Archetypes are used in the characterisation as epitomes of Irish people. Such as the ordinary worker and the property developers whose greed got the country into the financial quandary the population is submersed in. Larry Kearns, a property developer, is symbolic of the culture of greed and aspiration to be richer and more powerful. He highlights the callous nature of people during the property boom in Ireland. He has little or no emotional attachment to any person or anything, stating that Billy King is "yesterday's man" and "Life moves on" (Allen: 2003, p 273). When Larry hears that Debby is being visited by past Shamrock Rovers supporters in her kitchen, he is terrified of the effect it will have on his investment. However, always on the lookout for a quick buck, he states "think commerce ... if she saw the Blessed Virgin I'd knock down the houses and build a basilica" (Allen: 2003, p 263). As far as he's concerned, everything is a means to move upward and everybody has a price. He is prepared to use any corrupt method to get what he wants, symbolising the bankers, developers, politicians and dodgy businessmen who took liberties with the goodwill, naivety and money of ordinary Irish men and women. Larry regards all areas of society as
tiered, even sport, which he deems "the old boys' network" (Allen: 2003, p 236). For him, sport and in particular, rugby, which he considers "full of professionals" (ibid: p 236), is great for his business. On the other hand, he positions Gaelic, "full of teachers and civil-servants" and soccer, "the yellow-pack end of the market" (ibid: p 236), at the lower end of the scale in sport. He looks down on his nephew's new wife, believing that because she comes from Crumlin she hasn't "got any class" (Allen: 2003, p 306). He notes that her mother lives next door to "the Viper, and the Mechanic and every other gowger in town" (ibid: p 306). He will stop at nothing to prevent bad publicity and demands "No controversy, no newspapers, nothing, you get my drift?" (Allen: 2003, p 240).

Larry's nephew, Robbie Dolan, is the typical Celtic Tiger cub who wants to be a millionaire by the time he is thirty-six, stating "I'm going to build my own empire" (Allen: 2003, p 257). He has aspirations to be just like his uncle. He wants "a summer villa in Spain and a top of the range Jaguar" (Allen: 2003, p 237). Such is his admiration, he will follow Larry blindly, citing "When Larry says jump, I say how high" (Allen: 2003, p 242), even if it is at the expense of his marriage. Robbie sides with his uncle against his wife Debby, the elderly Peter King and his new neighbours and friends. Robbie transforms into a symbolic metaphor of the young men and women who became enmeshed in financial deals in the hope of improving their lives and becoming wealthy very quickly. Robbie's new wife Debby is deliriously happy with her new home, her new husband and her life. She is originally from a working class area of Dublin and considers herself to have married well. Debby is portrayed as naive and very much a simple soul who is happy with her lot. She represents the people of Ireland, for whom just about enough was always plenty until the Celtic Tiger arrived. Dialogue between Debby and Larry is emblematic of the Irish people being given a voice and an opportunity to answer back. When Debby states "nobody's going to interfere with who I
invite into my own home" (Allen: 2003, p 240), she is the voice of the Irish people. She is content to make a living through her jewellery business and refuses to expand as Larry advises. When Larry suggests that she "patent her designs and start using the net", Debby replies that she "want[s] to work from home, be happy, maybe make a little money" (Allen 2003, p 237). She is capable of immense empathy and kindness, caring for the elderly Peter King, whilst her husband would rather ring the police and have him prosecuted for trespassing. She defends Peter's character when Larry implies that he would "frighten people off the houses" (Allen: 2003, p 238). She invites Peter back to the house to help her with the garden stating, "You will call again won't you" (Allen: 2003, p 234). As a result of her kind hearted nature, the ghosts of the past visit Debby. For them, she is someone who will listen and who will act against the wrongdoers. She, in effect, is the voice of the forgotten.

Peter King is the link to the past, a storyteller or seanachai within the play. Through him, the ghosts of the people who once walked through Milltown, who have been lost or forgotten and who once chanted from the stands "We're going to win the Cup, We're going to win the Cup" (Allen: 2003, p 251), can be given justice and laid to rest. His brother, Billy, can rest in hospital knowing that his roses are being cared for. In stark contrast to Larry, Peter is a good man, a principled man who insists "I have to honour the brother's wishes" (Allen: 2003, p 231). He will not be swayed by Larry's power, stating "I don't give a tinker's curse about your millions of pounds" (Allen: 2003, p 274). His only wish is to care for the garden his brother planted and to fulfil his brother's dying wish that "his ashes be spread here in Milltown" (Allen: 2003, p 323).

The play becomes a forum through which the playwright portrays the greed and disregard for the ordinary citizen by businessmen in Ireland during the Celtic Tiger years. Frank Allen uses comparisons between the "Chinese students in Tiananmen Square" (Allen:
Supporters "tried to stand in front of a bull dozer on the site" (ibid: p 224) in an attempt to reveal how unjust and unfair they thought the development of the site was. For many Dubliners, the football ground was the life force and essence of who they were. By situating the drama within a family home, he makes it much more personal and emotive of the damage wrought on the ordinary man by bankers and developers. Allen uses real events from the past, such as, when "Rovers were playing Dundalk ... and a wall collapsed on the spectators" (Allen: 2003, p 266) to evoke memories in those that were there and as a way of teaching the past to those that were not. He also uses football legends' names such as Billy King and Frankie O'Neill as a way of memorialising their contribution to Ireland. Audiences were familiar with the Shamrock Rovers saga. Therefore, for the most part they were not present to be entertained but, as a communal collective deriving catharsis from the performance.

2.4 Conclusion
Dermot Bolger states that "Theatre is part of a broader cultural conversation about who we are, how we are in the world and who and how we would like to be" (Bolger: 2001, p 55). Allen uses his contemporary plays such as Cafe Slices: In the Picture, Poet's Corner and Mr Blueberry and Oh When The Hoops as devices to establish "how we are in the world" around us and as a platform for how we can change that world. By using his experience of being a Dubliner as a social and cultural arrangement that is expressive of a group identity, he also provides the opportunity for audiences to experience, evaluate and associate themselves within his drama. In the footsteps of Sean O'Casey who, in Declan Kiberd's opinion, "focused his Dublin plays not on the deeds of warriors but on the pangs of the poor" (Kiberd: 1996, p 219), Allen focuses on the "pangs" of the ordinary man and woman in Dublin. He provides those same men and women with a voice to articulate their grievances and, more
importantly, the opportunity to promote change and make a difference within their community.
CHAPTER THREE: ALLEN’S HISTORY PLAYS

According to Declan Kiberd, Friedrich Nietzsche argues that "even modern man needs history because it is the storage closet in which all the costumes are kept" (Kiberd: 1996, p 230). History is a fascinating puzzle that holds in its "storage closet" personal and cultural significance for all of us. The past informs our lives, ideals and expectations, potentially revealing what was lost and what was forgotten. Writing plays that explore history can provide social commentary on a forgotten period, as well as allowing an insight into the social structure of that era. Those who delve into history and are drawn into the past can be instrumental in teaching new generations who they are and where they have come from. Allen sees the present enveloped in history, the ghosts and the spirits of the people still everywhere, still vividly starring in his imagination.

His plays, Twelve Days in May (2009) and Seven Lives for Liberty (2010), are examples of the passion and enthusiasm for Irish history that he, as a playwright and history lover, has to share with his fellow Irish men and women. Within these plays, he undertakes the task of reflecting and exploring Ireland's profound experience of rebellion, bringing to light areas that have previously been passed over or denied articulation. In this way, he seeks representation and understanding for recent Irish history which he wishes to share in the most extravagant of ways, on stage. Irish history and culture are fundamentally linked; therefore, both plays manage to show an alternative side to the events that surrounded the 1916 Rising and have shaped the modern nation. Although both plays deal with the same period in Irish history and while both examine the effect of the loss of life through fighting for a cause, they differ in structure and exposition. However, both plays focus on the warmth of family life, the forging of new relationships and the courage to continue during the direst of circumstances. Richard Cave states:
Writing a history play poses a considerable problem of balance: how to give an adequately detailed exposition of proven historical facts but to do so incisively and imaginatively enough that a thematic interpretation of those facts may evolve and develop (Cave: 1986, p 17).

As a conscientious dramatist and lover of Irish history, Frank Allen strives to retain the essence of the emotional truth that lies at the foundation of historical events and achieves that balance by skilfully recreating undeclared heroes, while also attempting to explore the past in ways that are enabling to the present. *Twelve Days in May* and *Seven Lives for Liberty* provide a voice for the children, mothers, wives and friends of the men who were executed for the conviction that liberty and equality are fundamental rights of the citizens of Ireland. Throughout *Twelve Days in May* and *Seven Lives for Liberty*, there is no doubt as to how things turn out. Audiences are left to wonder what does this mean, not what will happen. The drama for both plays derives from the human dignity that survives all loss, the arc of life and the fulfilment or completion of that life.

### 3.1 Twelve Days in May

Using language that is rich in image and elegiac in tone, along with a dramaturgy that moves between 1916 and the ghosts of the past, *Twelve Days in May* explores our history from the vantage point of an implicit present. Set in the days immediately post the 1916 rebellion, it is based around the final days of James Connolly before he is executed for treason. The plot is driven by Connolly’s family’s desire to see him one last time. Focusing primarily on Connolly’s wife and children, it gives a unique insight into the impact that this Scottish born man had on his family and on his adopted country. By moving beyond Yeats' mythical figure of Kathleen Ni Houlihan, Allen manages to place an emphasis on the reality of execution and the effects that it can have on family in *Twelve Days in May*. He achieves this through concentrating on those that are left behind in the aftermath of the actions of revolutionaries, marginalising Connolly, instead of taking the more obvious route of using the point of view
of the revolutionary. He also chooses a man that fought, not because of his birthright but, because he saw injustice and he felt that he could make a difference.

The stage is divided into two distinct areas; the set design is kept simple. Stage left is the hospital room where James Connolly is being cared for, the bed is central to the action. The kitchen area of William O'Brien's home is stage right where Lillie Connolly and her children have been given refuge. The central stage area is used for any other action within the play. Unless action takes place within the O'Brien home or the hospital room, the stage remains stark, lit with red or blue hues alongside backlit images projected onto the rear wall. Images and lighting used in this way evoke images of a city under siege, as well as a group of men listening to Connolly speak at a workers' rally. Allen uses five prologues; each prologue acts as a guide to the various characters within the play and as a method of explicating the events leading up to James Connolly's arrest and the effect that they may have had on all parties involved. Lapsing into poetic, mythical moments, Connolly experiences visits from his dead child Mona, who died in a fire in Dublin while he was in the United States. For a man who is dying because of his belief that all children should be given equal opportunities "that no little boy or girl will have to go barefoot, or without clothes" (Allen: 2009, p 157) and to be supported in his final moments by the ghost of his child, is truly moving. Poignantly, towards the conclusion, Mona reassures him “At the end Daddy. I'll be there at the end" (Allen: 2009, p 197). Allen weaves between the past and present to narrate the story of how Connolly, a British soldier, met and courted his wife, travelled to the United States and, against all odds, became accepted by the Irish people as one who would work tirelessly for their rights.

James Connolly was a nationalist and a socialist; he stood for national freedom from English colonisation and campaigned for an end to capitalism. Particularly explicit about
class in relation to Ireland, he once stated that "The cause of Labour is the cause of Ireland, and the cause of Ireland is the cause of Labour" (Workers' Republic, April 8, p 175). He saw these issues as interlaced and entwined. In Twelve Days in May, Connolly is introduced as a man that has sacrificed everything for workers' rights and for the Irish people. Allen inherently believes that the ordinary man on the street should be thankful for the intervention of men like James Connolly and Englishman Jim Larkin, stating "We were kneeling in the gutters begging for work. Now we can stand up and look any man in the face. Now we have the right to work. Now we have the dignity of man again" (Allen: 2009, p 151). Allen describes Connolly as a man who cites "Dickens, Shakespeare, and Robbie Burns" among his favourite writers alongside "Karl Marx and Engels", who never saw a play and received "very little schooling", yet could articulate his point of view to hundreds of men and could hold his own against any educated man (Allen: 2009, p 155). Allen offsets the heroism of Connolly against the capitalistic lack of nationalism of Irish Independent owner William Martin Murphy. Murphy states "Commerce is the life blood of this nation and when commerce is paralysed politics is doomed" (Allen: 2009, p 143). He is against the uprising and "those that set out to bring this country and its commerce to its knees" (Allen: 2009, p 159). Murphy's main concerns are for the loss that he has suffered to his businesses and making a case "for immediate compensation in Westminster" (Allen: 2009, p 143). Murphy is a man for whom it is business as usual, even though his city is in ruins. He will continue to circulate the news believing that "people can't get enough bad news" (Allen: 2009, p 157).

Throughout the play, Allen illustrates how relationships are formed, even during the terrible conditions of war and imprisonment. The relationship that is created between James Connolly and Surgeon Tobin is one of equality and mutual appreciation. Tobin and Connolly discuss literature and poetry, even delving into the politics of Shelly and Wordsworth, who,
in Connolly's words, were "all radicals and wanted to change the world" (Allen: 2009, p 184). Tobin begs for forgiveness for certifying Connolly as fit to undergo trial, asking "You will forgive me ... You are the most courageous man I have ever met" (Allen: 2009, p 186). Connolly is treated by all who guard him as an equal and as a man who will create a lasting impression on them. One young army officer who apologises to Connolly for the decision of the Court Martial is told by Connolly "Well Thomas we soldiered together for a while", to which the soldier replies "We did, sir" (Allen: 2009, p 187).

The play focuses on all of James Connolly's children who articulate exactly how the rebellion, the executions of the leaders and the threatened execution of their father is affecting them and their mother, Lillie. Although Lillie's role in the play is small, Allen uses her memories of an earlier life with Connolly and also her relationship with her children to highlight the role that this woman played in supporting them. Lillie is aware that she married a good decent man, stating "all he wanted to do was to change the miserable lives of the workers and the poor and make the world a better place" (Allen: 2009, p 207). Connolly's only son Roddy fought beside him for five days. However, Connolly insisted that the younger lads, including Roddy, leave before they were arrested, stating that Roddy "would live to fight another day" (Allen: 2009, p 162). Having her only son returned to her and knowing that her daughters were safe was what kept Lillie Connolly determined to survive. According to her husband, Lillie "is tough .... She'll pull through” (Allen: 2009, p 212).

The unique father daughter relationship formed between Connolly and his eldest daughter Nora, forged in the heat of a socialist struggle, highlights the transition of a young girl into an independent woman who will continue to be committed to reviving her nation, stating "We've got to get back and help in the fighting” (Allen: 2009, p 129). Nora, who tells her father "But I wanted to fight like you did" (Allen: 2009, p 190), is as politically minded as
her father and understands that "their Ireland is not our Ireland" (Allen: 2009, p 151) when it comes to men such as William Martin Murphy. She holds Murphy responsible for "starving the children of Dublin" (ibid: p 151) during the 1913 Lockout. Nora has been taught by her father to always fight for what you believe to be right. Therefore, she storms into the offices of the Irish Independent alone to berate the editor for printing a photograph of her father in his sick bed and for calling for "the ringleaders of the rebellion to be singled out and dealt with as they deserved" (Allen: 2009, p 192). Nora, by the end of the play, becomes a substitute for her father. He asks her to smuggle out a copy of his Court Martial statement and to "gather his songs ... to stay united and to mind Mama" (Allen: 2009, p 213), his last words to her being "don't forget we shall rise again" (Allen: 2009, p 212). Frank Allen undoubtedly presents *Twelve Days in May* as a fitting tribute to James Connolly. However, he places the focal point on the people who are affected by Connolly's socialist ambitions and his actions in the 1916 Rising. By focusing on everybody around Connolly, he manages to present a fuller, more detailed picture of an iconic man. Thus, he provides the story from all angles and from all parties, even the enemy. Using drama in this way becomes a tool whereby opposing values or beliefs can be assimilated, allowing audiences to formulate reactions that may encourage action.
Figure 2: Twelve Days in May (2009) - A young James Connolly addressing a workers rally

Figure 3: Twelve Days in May (2009) - Lillie Connolly and her children
Figure 4: *Twelve Days in May* (2009) - Young James Connolly wearing his British army uniform

Figure 5: *Twelve Days in May* (2009) - James Connolly on his death bed.
3.2 Seven Lives for Liberty

*Seven Lives for Liberty* is a theatrical tribute to the men and women of 1916. Performed using music, dance and drama, it becomes a pastiche of memory, music and dance that portrays, illustrates and re-enacts the lives and the momentous acts of the seven signatories of the Proclamation of the Republic. Painting a broader canvas in their depiction rather than how they are often seen, opens up the lives of these seven men and allows a more profound insight into them as fathers, husbands and sons. Allen's use of music and drama is similar to the way that it is used by Luis Valdez in El Teatro Campasino. Chicano theatre, which grew in popularity during the civil rights movement in the United States, used actos as a forum for the workers to address the exploitation experienced by them at the hands of the labour contractors. Luis Valdez's El Teatro Campasino used Brecht's notion of foregrounding opposing values to create reactions, thus encouraging action. In *Los Vendidos* (1967), Valdez employed sets, music and costumes to create a sense of self and of ethnic and cultural commonality between the spectators and the performers. Drawing on sets, music and costumes in this way meant that it worked as a method of keeping Chicano legacy alive by making participants "keenly aware of their social heritage, traditions ... perpetuated, faith ... renewed, values ... transmitted and deeply embedded" (Goodlad: 1971, p 12). Through music, drama and mixed media, Allen creates the same sense of self and cultural commonality that audiences of Chicano theatre experienced.

The drama is divided into sections, each segment telling the background of each of the signatories and their relationships with their families and friends. The script is compiled from primary sources, such as the last words of the signatories to their families in their final hours before execution, copies of Court Martial's, witness statements and historical records. Original songs and music written and performed by Pat Waters can be considered fitting laments for lost loves and lives. Interspersing the drama with songs and music written
especially for each of the men engages spectators and stirs the imagination. Allen explores the use of mixed media through the integration of original film footage and photographs with live action throughout the play, adding depth and intensity to an already emotionally charged drama. Juxtaposing actors in their roles with the real men and women projected on to a screen behind them, allows for a deeper interaction by spectators and a more authentic understanding of the reality of losing one's life in the pursuit of liberty.

Seven Lives for Liberty begins with seven separate prologues that set the tone, provide a background to the insurrection and establish setting and place. As Allen also uses prologues in Twelve Days in May, it could be considered that by breaking the drama into short, sharp segments at the start of the plays also work to highlight the fragmented and unpredictable society that Ireland's forefathers existed in. The prologues are a mixture of song, visuals of Dublin pre-1916 as an "Elegant and Affluent City" (Allen: 2010, p 89), images of "tenement life and barefoot children" (ibid: p 89) and the Dublin Lockout in 1913. They are followed by further prologues, including an actor portraying James Connolly addressing Irish workers, original film footage of O'Donovan Rossa's funeral, an actor reading "Pearse's oration at the grave of O'Donovan Rossa" (Allen: 2010, p 90) and finally images of Dublin city in ruins following the rebellion. The drama begins with the surrender at the G.P.O. and Number 16 Moore Street, subsequent to the leaders witnessing the "shooting [of] civilians under a white flag" (Allen: 2010, p 92). The play then visits each of the seven signatories in turn, in the order in which they were executed, showing snippets of their lives and their loves, moving from space to space, backwards and forwards, eventually ending with their execution. By allowing audiences to encounter each of the leaders through photographs, film footage and music, Allen is, in effect, taking the pictures down from the walls, presenting the men as real life characters. They are shown as husbands, brothers, sons
and family men, who had loves and personalities, who were playwrights, poets, writers, teachers and musicians.

The first of the signatories to be portrayed is Padraig Pearse. His song *The Gaelic Sword of Light* is sung with images of Pearse projected on to the background. The scene moves from his surrender to his Court Martial, where he states "We seem to have lost. We have not lost. To refuse to fight would have been to lose; to fight is to win" (Allen: 2010, p 97). His surrender is immediately followed by his final words to his mother in the form of a letter written the night before his execution, in which he tells her "You asked me to write a little poem which would seem to be said by you about me" (ibid: p 97). It concludes with Pearse's poem *The Mother*, written the night before his execution, describing his mother’s thoughts on the death of her two sons and recited alongside footage of Pearse himself. The section ends hauntingly with a mother's words "And yet I have my joy: My sons were faithful, and they fought" (Allen: 2010, p 98).

Thomas J Clarke is the signatory that is portrayed next. However, the scene opens with Kathleen Clarke, his wife, sitting in Kilmainham Jail. The focus is placed on the interaction between Kathleen and the military guard. In this section, Allen gives a voice to the family of the leaders, when the English guard asks Kathleen “why do you try to stab England in the back when she is at war?” (Allen: 2010, p 99). She replies, presenting him with a scenario where England is overrun with Germans and asks "Don’t you think as an Englishman you would rebel?" (ibid: p 99). Amongst the horror and death of prison, one young man finally appreciates what men like Thomas Clarke have done. He shakes her hand and leads her to her husband's cell. Before he is executed, Thomas Clarke stands and addresses the audience "I and my fellow signatories believe we have struck the first successful blow for freedom. The next blow, which we have no doubt Ireland will strike, will
win through, in this belief we die happy" (Allen: 2010, p 102). The stage is lit to portray dawn, the time of execution, alongside an image of Thomas Clarke, followed by a family portrait with Clarke conspicuously absent, in a heartbreaking image of his bereft family.

In the section dedicated to Thomas Mac Donagh, the audience are brought back in time to the opening of St Enda's boys' school. Images of the building are displayed behind the actors, which add to the staging and position the drama. The school was opened in 1908 by Padraig Pearse with "the emphasis on training the boys to take their part in a free and Gaelic Ireland" (Allen: 2010, p 103). Thomas Mac Donagh was headmaster until his execution in 1916. Allen uses this section to portray how Mac Donagh and Joseph Plunkett met their wives, the Gifford sisters Muriel and Grace. The audience are then transported to 1916, to Mac Donagh's court martial and his final goodbyes. The stage is set with Mac Donagh's wife and child to one side reading his letter as he reads aloud from his prison cell. Thomas Mac Donagh's song is fittingly called *The Poet and the Patriot* and the scene ends with the approaching dawn and his final poetic words, "The loud harp dumb, And his deed the echoes fill, When the dawn is come" (Allen: 2010, p 107).

Signatory, Eamonn Ceannt, was a proficient musician and uileann piper. The scene that leads the audience to his final moments begins with him playing a lament on the pipes in the Dublin Pipers Club. *The Voice of the Gael* is sung alongside visuals of Ceannt, the audience bear witness to his final hour lying on his cell floor with the sound of his cherished pipes lamenting him. Allen fittingly finishes this scene with Ceannt firstly addressing the audience and commending the "magnificent gallantry and fearless calm determination of the men who fought with me" (Allen: 2010, p 110). He verbalises his fear for his wife and son, lamenting "Poor Aine, poor Ronan" (ibid: p 110), lifting his pipes to play one final time. His pipes are taken from him, yet they continue to play for him while he is readied for his
execution. The scene ends as the mournful pipes cease to play, signifying the execution, followed by images of Ceannt's family on the screen. The play moves onto Joseph Plunkett, who famously married his sweetheart Grace Gifford while awaiting execution in Kilmainham Jail. The scene dedicated to Plunkett moves alternatively between Plunkett and Grace. He is shown seated in his cell writing to Grace, asking her to marry him. Grace emerges, hurriedly buying her wedding band so that they can marry before his execution at dawn. Plunkett and Grace Gifford are finally brought together to be married in the presence of a priest and Plunkett's prison guards. As dawn breaks, Grace Gifford, left alone at the altar, turns to leave as Joseph Plunkett's image projected onto the background slowly fades into that of Grace.

Following the execution of Joseph Plunkett, Allen moves the action to the House of Commons in London. The audience are given the account of the pleas for leniency by both Irish and British M.P's for James Connolly, due to his fatal injuries and protocol for "the treatment of wounded prisoners of war" (Allen: 2010, p 116). From the House of Commons, Allen cuts back to the signatories and to Sean Mac Diarmada, who was visited in prison in his final hours by his good friends Phyllis and Min Ryan. His last act before execution is to address the audience that he will "meet death for Ireland's cause as I have worked for the same cause all my life" (Allen: 2010, p 122). Mac Diarmada's lament, *His Heart Belonged to Roisin*, is sung over a background of visuals of the man. For the final signatory, James Connolly, Allen jumps back to 1896 to an era when Connolly was becoming an activist amongst Ireland's workers. He does so to establish that Connolly wasn't an Irishman but Scottish and that he found it difficult to be accepted by Irish workers. He cuts from 1896 to Connolly's Court Marital while "propped up in his hospital bed" (Allen: 2010, p 124). He uses the song *The Breaker's Yard of Stone* and images of Connolly as a bridge between the past and the present. The scene finishes with Connolly saying goodbye to his wife Lillie and
his daughter Nora, his final words "Look after Lillie for me Nono, and don't forget we shall rise again" (Allen: 2010, p 127).

*Seven Lives for Liberty* is a thought provoking, emotional and deeply passionate tribute to the memory of exceptional Irish people, where the ghosts of those that sacrificed everything are provided with the opportunity to relive events of their heroism. Making use of the men's own speeches and writings allows an exploration of their thoughts and feelings and provides a living essence to the leaders of the rising. Focusing on the people that surrounded the seven signatories, such as wives, mothers, children and friends, open up the drama to include more than just the famous insurgents but also the unknown heroes. In a similar way to *Twelve Days in May*, Allen delivers an open, unbiased story that is inclusive of all sides, allowing audiences to reach their own conclusions.

![Padraig Pearse addresses his Court Martial](image6.png)

Figure 6: *Seven Lives for Liberty* (2010) - Padraig Pearse addresses his Court Martial
Figure 7: *Seven Lives for Liberty* (2010) - Eamonn Ceannt playing the uileann pipes

Figure 8: *Seven Lives for Liberty* (2010) - Thomas Mac Donagh at St. Enda’s School
3.3 Conclusion

In *Twelve Days in May* and *Seven Lives for Liberty* Frank Allen aims to "present the characters of both plays not as the iconic characters from our school history books, but as real people with families, loves, and desires" (Frank Allen: 2013). He presents them as real people, as writers, poets and musicians. He shows their last moments, to make the audience realise that it wasn't just the execution of individuals; that they had families and loved ones. He effortlessly weaves in those lost strands and untold stories. The real beauty of these plays arises from a resolute acknowledgement of history's horror that is intensely moving and compassionate. They are plays of strength and scope which are profoundly moving and packed full of emotional dynamite. Yeats is quoted by D.E.S. Maxwell as asserting "I had had from the beginning a vision of historical plays being sent by us through all the counties of Ireland" (Maxwell: 2009, p 8). Frank Allen has a vision of his historical plays *Twelve Days in May* and *Seven Lives for Liberty* being sent "through all the counties". Frank Allen's motivation is the desire to see the lives and values of James Connolly and the signatories of the Proclamation reaching a modern audience. As a storyteller, Frank Allen is interested in exposing the hidden stories through which he hopes to encourage debate and reflection from the audience.
CONCLUSION

Frank Allen is a Dublin playwright who, to date, has never been considered academically or epistemologically. Yet, his plays are a remarkable journey into the past and the present, giving a new voice to the unsung heroes of Ireland's turbulent past - the families behind the revolutionaries, as well as a voice to the unsung heroes of Ireland's turbulent present - the ordinary citizen trying to survive in a world of austerity. This thesis set out to explore the historian and social revolutionary behind the dramatist and analyse his plays. It began by interrogating the main influences and inspirations which drove Allen to write, as well as gain an invaluable insight and understanding into his style of writing, placing his work within a context of Irish Drama. Through interviews, this thesis discovered who or what influences his writing, where he finds material for his plays and ultimately what his objective is. Through a close reading of four of his plays and, an exploration of the themes running throughout, this thesis accentuates how, his writing is relevant in contemporary society and will continue to be relevant in the future. This thesis is the first step towards giving Allen a rightful place alongside literary figures such as Yeats and O'Casey, whose theatre was not merely to entertain but also to educate.

Chapter one positioned Frank Allen in a dramaturgical framework, provided a background to Irish drama and explicated how, until The Abbey Theatre was established by W.B. Yeats, Lady Augusta Gregory and Edward Martyn, theatre in Ireland consisted of the stage Irishman depicted in English melodramas. Changes wrought provided an inspiration for indigenous theatre to evolve and created an environment for which Irish culture could be cultivated. Much like these literary playwrights, Frank Allen attempted to create a community of like minded men and women through his plays. Using his theatre company, Tobar Na Run, as a means for marginalised members of society to express themselves, new talents can be discovered, nurtured and encouraged to develop within Irish theatre, talents
that would never be unearthed otherwise. Allen was inspired by many events from Irish history and performances from Irish and international theatre. From the Dublin Lockout in 1913, to the more recent Save Moore Street Campaign, he has been compelled to write and produce plays that truly reflect Ireland's past and its present, exposing the changes it underwent. In a similar mode to the agitprop Scottish Theatre Company 7:84 and Dublin's The Passion Machine Theatre Company, he brings the full theatre experience to marginalised areas and the working class. He accumulates stories from every possible medium, going back to iconic historical moments, such as the 1916 Rising and contemporary injustices, such as the closure of Shamrock Rovers football grounds which was sacrificed for capitalism. Believing that Irish theatre is elitist and one that is not inclusive, he established the theatre company Tobar Na Run as a vehicle for the working class, making the theatrical experience fun and educational. Citing Sean O'Casey and Arthur Miller as influences that left a lasting impression on him, he considers their dramaturgy on the working class to be the most influential plays of their time. Therefore, this playwright is very much moved to write a cache of plays that emulate the traditional kitchen setting but also deal with everyday social issues.

The exploration of the play Mr Blueberry (2011) was the focus of Chapter Two alongside Oh When the Hoops (2003). Consisting of In the Picture, Poet's Corner, and Mr Blueberry, Cafe Slices is a series of one act plays that can be performed on their own or as part of the collection. All of the plays contain chance meetings by strangers from different social backgrounds, acting as microcosms of the nation. Within each play there are three characters, two that maintain the majority of the dialogue and one that acts as a counterbalance. The playwright maintains the famous cottage-kitchen setting of Irish plays, merely replacing it with a more contemporary setting, a cafe in Dublin's inner city. By
providing a dramatic space that is familiar to Dublin audiences, he immediately provides an understanding or a context to the dialogue and a setting that allows for the interaction of strangers. Within each of the trilogy he delves beneath today's society and studies modern Irish men and women, their behaviour and their socialisation within their environments. *Mr Blueberry* the final section of the triptych explores themes such as the current financial crisis in Ireland, as well as the growing divisions between those that support capitalism and those that feel that Ireland needs to move towards a more socialist, equal society. The play also questions whether people are too quick to judge by appearances and also by dogma. *Oh When The Hoops* acts as a reflective aperture to the past. Using the iconic cottage-kitchen setting, the play focuses on the greed of property developers for whom making money is God and ordinary people mean nothing. A house haunted by the ghosts of Rovers followers represents the history that was destroyed forever, while Allen uses archetypes in his characterisation to allow audiences to identify with characters. The play works as a tool by which the playwright focuses on the damage wrought on the ordinary man by bankers and developers and provides a forum whereby the community can derive a form of catharsis from the performance.

Chapter three focused on an exploration of Allen's State of the Nation plays, *Twelve Days in May* (2009) and *Seven Lives for Liberty* (2010). In *Twelve Days in May*, Allen again retains the kitchen setting that is so familiar with Irish audiences, allowing recognition and an appreciation that they were real people with real emotions. In *Seven Lives for Liberty*, although the setting is predominately the execution site of the seven men, Allen's mixture of music and photographs or film footage adds nostalgia and a deeper more profound understanding of who these men really were. While both plays use the same historical events, Allen presents the characters as ordinary men with families and desires, weaving in
the untold stories left absent from Ireland’s history books. *Twelve Days in May* and *Seven Lives for Liberty* are expressions of Allen's passion and enthusiasm for Irish history, a passion he wishes to share with contemporary audiences. Throughout *Twelve Days in May* and *Seven Lives for Liberty*, he retains historical truth and the re-enactment of unprofessed heroes, while also placing the focus on those left behind in the aftermath of rebellion and giving a voice to the unheard wives, children and friends of men executed for their beliefs. An alternative side to the events of the 1916 Rising is presented within the plays, where Allen portrays tremendous human dignity and survival by both the condemned men and their families and friends.

Frank Allen makes a huge contribution to Irish culture. At working class theatres, his plays provide audiences with excitement, humour and a significant element of iconic Irish drama. There is a thread that runs through his plays, history and lessons in life’s injustices. However, his plays are also suffused with positive life experiences, such as family, forming new relationships and fighting for a cause. His dramas ask questions, invite response and reflection upon the past and present, as well as articulate areas of Irish History that have been neglected by antecedent playwrights. He wholly endorses everyone's right to experience theatre in their own communities. He is, undoubtedly, a revisionist historian working to turn Irish historical studies away from its obsession with a narrative of national revolution to an analysis of those in the background. Drama can be used as a device to impart a message and a means to create an extraordinary relationship between the audience and a political and cultural message. Bringing people together in this way, with a common goal, that is societal, political and cultural, community is in essence being created.

Drama according to Christopher Murray "helps society find its bearings" (Murray: 2000, p 9). Allen's drama gives a voice to the marginalised, and shows audiences issues that
bear relevance to their lives and their culture. He presents recognisable situations, characters and social issues, provides a forum for their exploration and in doing so, his writing makes its own statement. Through his plays, he aims to effect change, to highlight injustice, to create an ideology which differs from the dominant ideology handed down by his predecessors. He aims to engage audiences to debate, to question, and to change. He strives to provide access to Irish theatre for those who might otherwise never experience our heritage. His reflective exploration of the past and the present is imbued with a didactic energy that is centred on class, sociology and an understanding of Irish history previously denied articulation.
REFERENCES

Allen, Frank (2013) Interviewed on 13/02/2013 & 20/02/2013.


APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Permission from the playwright

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To Whom It May Concern

In relation to Sandra O’Reilly’s thesis, I wish to state that Sandra has total permission to use texts, text extracts, film and documentaries that I have worked on. I feel very honoured that Sandra has chosen my work, as a playwright and screenwriter, for the subject of her study and I wish her every success with her thesis and in the future.

Yours sincerely,

______________

Frank Allen
Appendix 2: Cafe Slices: Mr Blueberry

Cafe Slices

“MR. BLUEBERRY”

By FRANK ALLEN

© Frank Allen, Dublin 2011
Cafe in The Liberties, Dublin two days after Christmas. Bill Quinlan, a portly well
dressed man, in his late sixties enters. He looks about the cafe, takes off his overcoat and
then sits at one of the tables. Rosie Kennedy, a young cheerful waitress approaches.

Rosie: Nice to get in out of the cold isn’t it?

Bill: Oh it’s chilly out there right enough. This is lovely and snug.

Rosie: There’s a menu for you. We do a full Irish Breakfast if you’d like something
warm.

Bill: Ah no thanks, I had a breakfast earlier in the hotel. A cup of white coffee
would be grand.

Rosie: No problem.

Bill: Ah sure maybe I’ll try a muffin. You can see I’ve a sweet tooth can’t you?

Rosie: You’re grand. We’ve chocolate chip or blueberry.

Bill: Surprise me, what’s your name?

Rosie: Rosie.

Bill: Bill Quinlan, lovely to meet you Rosie. That’s a real Dublin name.

Rosie: Is it? Now let me see... I think you look like a blueberry man.

Bill: Blueberry it is then?

(Exit Rosie and after a beat enter Dave, a forty year-old local man carrying a
bundle of Socialist Workers newspapers and a laptop)

Dave: Brass-monkeys out there isn’t it?
Bill: You’re not telling a lie.

Dave: I’d murder a mug of tea.

Bill: Can I buy one of your papers?

Dave: You want one?

Bill: You were selling them?

Dave: Oh yeah I am. There you go.

Bill: Is that enough? (Offers two euro)

Dave: Yeah... grand.

(Bill scrolls through the paper)

Bill: Ah for fuck sake!

Dave: What’s wrong?

Bill: Where’s the racing page?

Dave: Racing page! It’s The Socialist Worker!

Bill: Socialist Worker. Why didn’t you tell me that?

Dave: You didn’t ask.

Bill: Another smart Alec.

Dave: Here do you want your two euro back?

Bill: No I don’t. Keep it for the revolution.

Dave: We’re not that hard up.
(enter Rosie with a coffee and a blueberry muffin)

Rosie: Ah howya DD. Now there you go Bill. Enjoy. Usual for you DD?

Dave: A mug of yourself… her name is Rosie.

Bill: We’re already acquainted.

Rosie: Myself and Bill go back ages… at least five minutes anyway.

Bill: Good on you girl.

Dave: I might try one of them. I’ve just come into money.

Rosie: Do you want the blueberry or the chocolate chip?

Dave: Ah the chocolate chip, the blueberry’d only give me acid.

Rosie: Back in a mo.

Bill: Oh Rosie can I listen to your radio at eleven for the news? I want to know if the racing is on or off. There was an inspection at half-ten.

Rosie: Yeah, no problem. I’ll give you a shout coming up to eleven.

Bill: Thanks sweetheart.

(exit Rosie)

Dave: Jasus you’re big into the horses aren’t you.

Bill: I am. I’ve a horse running in the Lexus this afternoon.

Dave: What’s the Lexus?
Bill: The big steeplechase in Leopardstown. It’s worth a hundred grand to the winner.

Dave: A hundred grand! And you own a horse that’s running?

Bill: Yes.

Dave: So what are you doing around here?

Bill: I was born here.

Dave: In Clanbrassil Street.

Bill: Yes but I meant actually here, right here where we’re sitting. There used to be a tenement building where this café and all these new houses are now.

(enter Rosie with a mug of tea and a chocolate chip muffin)

Rosie: Now DD.

Dave: Thanks. When are you off to Spain?

Rosie: Friday. Can’t wait.

Dave: Well for you getting out of this kip.

Rosie: I need a bit of sun.

Dave: Is Stevie looking forward to it?

Rosie: Just another piss – up for him. He hasn’t stopped drinking since Christmas.

Dave: Ah well, if you can’t beat him join him.

Rosie: You must be joking. No I’m going to find myself a nice Spanish fella. Have me new bikini and all.
Bill: Good girl Rosie.

Rosie: Well I’ll never get a sun-tan inside in the pub.

Bill: You’re gas.

Rosie: And they have great shows at night. I love the karaoke.

Bill: Are you a singer?

Dave: She won the talent contest in the Red Cow in the summer.

Bill: Did you Rosie?

Rosie: Yeah, I won the holiday in Spain.

Bill: Well fair play to you. Oh the Liberties was always famous for its singers. My mother sang in the Royal. She had a lovely voice.

Dave: She’d want to be good now to be as good as Rosie. Our Shirley Bassey.

(sings) I, I who have nothing, I, I who have no-one, Believe me when I say…

Bill: Jasus, who let the cat into the room. Stick to selling the papers sunshine.

Rosie: I better get back to my work.

(exit Rosie)

Dave: When did you leave here?

Bill: Oh I left Clanbrassil Street after the tenement collapsed. That was in 1946. It was an awful disaster. The old buildings caved in. There were four people killed. My mother and father were injured and taken down to the Meath...
Hospital. I was dug out of the rubble ten hours later by one of the neighbours who heard me crying. I was only three.

Dave: Me oul fella told me all about that time. Jasus you were lucky.

Bill: I don’t remember that much about it except my mother’s tears of joy when she got me back. I’ll never forget that. We moved in with an aunt up in Rathmines then for a few years until my father emigrated to England in 1950. I’ve lived in England since.

Dave: Bill is it? I heard Rosie calling you Bill. I’m Dave.

Bill: Pleased to meet you Dave…Dave the Socialist. Do you actually believe in all this shite?

Dave: What shite?

Bill: All this socialism mullarkey.

Dave: Well it’s not mullarkey in the first place and yes I do. I am a socialist.

Bill: Fair play, every man to his own and all that but what do you mean when you say you’re a socialist?

Dave: Well it’s anti what you stand for anyway.

Bill: That’s classic that is? You’re against everything but you can’t tell me what you’re for. I met loads of you guys over in England. Bullshitters every single one of them.

Dave: Hold on a minute pal. I don’t like your condescending attitude. Just because you own a horse doesn’t mean you can talk down to people.
Bill: Who’s talking down to you? I asked you a very simple question and you refused to answer me or maybe you just don’t know the answer. That’s alright. I never expected you to be a genius.

Dave: I know the answer alright but you’re hardly worth enlightening.

Bill: Oh whose cage have I rattled now? Well?

Dave: Well what?

Bill: You’re a socialist, go on…

Dave: I believe in the control of the means of production, distribution and exchange. That society should be organised for the betterment of all the people and not just for the fat cats like the system we have now.

Bill: Right I have you.

Dave: Well are you happy with that?

Bill: Oh I’m perfectly happy. And if the old frost goes away soon I’ll be even happier. It’s you that isn’t happy.

Dave: There’s nothing wrong with me.

Bill: Of course there’s something wrong with you. What age are you now, if you don’t mind me asking you?

Dave: I’m forty two.

Bill: Forty two. And how long have you been a socialist?

Dave: I’ve always been a socialist.
Bill: You must be totally pissed off then.

Dave: What are you spouting about?

Bill: Do you not see? Look it, let me explain it for you then. My horse that’s running in The Lexus out in Leopardstown this afternoon, he’s run in twelve chases so far. He’s an eight year old. Right. He’s won nine times and he was placed all the other times and he’s never fallen yet, touch wood.

Dave: What the fuck has your nag got to do with me being a socialist?

Bill: You don’t see the connection?

Dave: Are you sure that building didn’t fall on your nut?

Bill: What I’m telling you is this. It’s all about the track record. Socialism has a very bad track record. It’s fallen every time it has run.

Dave: That is the greatest heap of, pardon the pun, horse manure I’ve ever heard.

Bill: Right. Tell me then. Where has socialism ever worked? Go on tell me?

Dave: Latin America, Venezuela for instance and Cuba.

Bill: Cuba, come off it will you? If socialism is working in Cuba, why are all the Cubans trying to get into Florida.

Dave: Cuba has one of the best health and education systems in the world. You won’t find old people dying on trolleys in Cuba, not like in this kip.

Bill: But the people have nothing, that’s what socialism does.
Dave: And why have they got nothing? Because the Yanks have placed so many restrictions on their economy.

Bill: So you’re anti-American as well.

Dave: I’ve nothing against the American people but their foreign policy stinks.

Bill: Forget foreign policy. I’m talking about jobs. You don’t want us going back to the dark ages do you? And don’t give me that baloney about Dublin in the Rare Ould Times. I was here don’t forget. I lived here in a rat-infested hovel with the damp running down the walls, until my father had the good sense to leave.

Dave: Why should you have to leave your own country? Why can’t you stay and change things?

Bill: Are you working at the moment?

Dave: No, I’m unemployed.

Bill: I’m sorry to hear that.

Dave: I’m a printer but I was made redundant a year ago.

Bill: We’re living in difficult times alright.

Dave: Difficult times has nothing to do with it. The worker is always at the bottom of the pile when the bosses decide the profits have taken a dip. But they still have their jags and their big mansions. They won’t lose one wink of sleep thinking about my missus or my little daughter or my mortgage. I’m just another statistic. There’s nearly half a million like me but we don’t matter.
Bill: Believe me there would be thousands more like you, only for the amount of American investment in Ireland.

Dave: They can stick their investment if you ask me.

Bill: You can’t say that.

Dave: Of course I can say it. They never came here to give us charity you know. They’re given huge tax incentives and then when they find cheaper labour somewhere else they’re gone like a hot snot to Thailand or Cambodia or some place like that.

Bill: That’s business. The problem with you is that you don’t live in the real world.

Dave: Oh I live in the real world alright.

Bill: So you would resent me because I’m a business man.

Dave: I never said I resented you. I resent the capitalist class that’s all.

Bill: Quit the jargon will you. The capitalist class. Somebody’s got to make money or we’d all be starving.

Dave: So you’re telling me that capitalists go into business to stop people from starving? Pull the other one will you.

Bill: Well when your printers went out of business look what happened to you.

Dave: They didn’t go out of business; they just made a few of us redundant. They’re still printing.

Bill: And why did they pick you then?
Dave: I was the shop-steward and they didn’t want the union in there.

Bill: Ah now I have it. I’m going to have a little wager with you.

Dave: Wager…I don’t gamble.

Bill: Here just two euro then.

Dave: Two euro? Alright then, what’s the bet?

Bill: I bet you brought that place out on strike. Am I right?

Dave: Yeah, we were on strike a few times actually.

Bill: A few times. No wonder they let you go. I wouldn’t have hired you in the first place.

Dave: Would you not now?

Bill: No I’ve no time at all for trade-unions. All pinkos, the whole bloody lot of them.

Dave: Don’t be so ridiculous. You’re claiming that every member of a union is a communist.

Bill: Wait till I tell you about unions. When I started working over in Coventry I had nothing. I worked every hour God gave me and bit by bit I built up a construction business. By the late seventies I had nearly eighty men working for me and we were flying. But those union fuckers. You’d go onto a site and if you asked a labourer to put down a few screeds, the chippies were on to their union and the whole job would stop. The very same carry-on with the sparks and the plumbers. Always on about demarcation zones and the like.
Shower of wasters. Hold the job up for weeks. Any good builder worth his salt can do all those jobs.

Dave: That’s not true.

Bill: Look it I ran a multi-million pound business, I know what I’m talking about mate.

Dave: So what’s the point in serving an apprenticeship then? Young men going off to technical school to learn their trade and you’re saying one man can do all the jobs.

Bill: Most good builders can. Yes.

Dave: Well let me ask you a question then. You need a heart by-pass and you go into the hospital but they’ve only got a chiropodist available, would you let them go ahead? You would and your bollix!

Bill: That’s a stupid argument. You’re not comparing like with like.

(enter Rosie with the radio)

Rosie: It’s coming up to eleven. That’s on Radio One now.

Bill: You’re an angel.

Rosie: Can I get you anything else?

Bill: Another coffee please and will you have another tea?

Dave: No thanks, I’m entitled to a refill. I’ll get one later.

Bill: You won’t make much profit out of this fella. Just one white coffee.
Rosie: That’s the News now.

(They listen to the news headlines)

Radio: RTE News Headlines at eleven:

Many local authorities are reporting that reservoir levels are at critically low levels and a spokesman for Dublin City Council has stated that many suburban estates are still without water. In sport this afternoon’s Heineken Cup game between Leinster and the Ospreys has been postponed due to a frozen pitch at the RDS but good news for racing fans, Leopardstown has been given the all clear for this afternoon’s big Lexus Chase card after a recent inspection has shown that a sufficient thaw is in progress to allow today’s festival meeting proceed. First race off there at 12.30 and in Golf Padraig Harrington is two shots clear of the field in the South African Masters in Pretoria…

(Bill switches off the radio and punches the air)

Bill: Yes, yes…we’re on. Is there a newsagent nearby? I need a Racing Post?

Rosie: The one around the corner should be open. Here I’ll slip out. We’re not that busy.

Bill: Good girl Rosie, much obliged.

(Bill gives Rosie a twenty euro note and she takes the radio away and exits)

Bill: Stroke of luck. I thought we were banjaxed. The horse has never been better.

Dave: Did he tell you?

Bill: As a matter of fact he did. I saw him do his last piece of work on Christmas Eve and when he was back in his stable I gave him a few polo mints and he just kept nodding his head at me. I knew what he was saying.

Dave: Yeah, have you any more polo mints?
Bill: Christ you take the biscuit do you know that? The horse is actually a very noble animal and extremely intelligent. More intelligent than most humans I know. They can communicate with us, there’s absolutely no doubt about that.

Dave: Funny now, I heard the complete opposite. I was told that a really intelligent horse would rear up on his jockey and try his best to throw him off on the way down to the start, so that he wouldn’t have to break his heart running two or three miles with some little undernourished bollix beating the crap out of him with a whip.

Bill: Not at all, which wise guy told you that, Karl Marx? A thoroughbred horse is bred to race. They are the most wonderfully tuned athletes. You haven’t lived if you can’t appreciate looking at a champion racehorse in full flow.

Dave: They don’t call it the sport of Kings for nothing, don’t you know I’m a Republican?

Bill: All I know is you’re some contrary bastard.

Dave: I don’t support the monarchy. I suppose you doff your hat at the Queen when she’s parading down Royal Ascot?

Bill: I’ve earned a good living in Britain. I’ve no gripe with the Queen.

(Bill’s mobile phone rings)

Bill: (on phone) Yes Sean, yeah good news…it’s on alright. It said there was a good thaw… I’m not certain about the ground. I’d say it’d have to be heavy, soft anyway. No he won’t mind it as long as it’s not too loose. Sure it was like a bog the day he won in Wetherby. He’s absolutely flying, jumping out of his skin.
(Dave takes his laptop out of the case and starts his computer)

Bill: (cont’d) Bar a fall Sean it’ll take something real special to beat him. Oh yeah, I’m going to have a cut alright. Don’t hesitate Sean, I’m telling you it’s printing money. About fours, maybe nine to two. It’s a great price. I think it’s a steal myself. Yeah, see if you can get on. Count me in for ten grand if they’ll lay you. Yeah ring me Sean. Take it easy.

Dave: You really like this nag don’t you? You’re not putting ten grand on him are you?

Bill: I will at least. Maybe another ten on the course if I get a good price.

Dave: That’s nearly a year’s dole all on one poxy animal.

Bill: I wouldn’t be backing him if he was just any poxy animal. This fella runs like a Rolls Royce.

Dave: What’s his name anyway? I better tell the oul fella, he’s never out of the bookies.

Bill: New Society but tell him to keep it quiet.

Dave: New Society, you’re jesting.

Bill: I’m not jesting. That’s his name New Society.

Dave: Where did you get a name like that?

Bill: From his breeding, he’s by Moscow Society out of a mare called Rebel Countess.

Dave: Your horse is a bleeding communist!
Bill: I hope not; I want the bugger to win.

Dave: So is that good breeding?

Bill: Top-class. Moscow Society was a Champion Chaser.

Dave: So it’s like father, like son what? It’d be gas if they did that with humans wouldn’t it?

Bill: They do do it with humans. Look at the Royal Family. Prince William by the Prince of Wales out of Princess Diana.

Dave: Yeah but you’d hardly say Charlie was a champion chaser now would you?

Bill: Maybe not but it’s all about keeping good blood lines.

Dave: So what happens when the Princess is having it off with the butler?

Bill: You mean with the proletariat? Not good. That’d be weakening the line. End up with a mongrel.

Dave: Yeah but you could do it with Olympic Champions. Imagine putting that sprinter bloke Bolt in with Sonya O’Sullivan. Jasus you’d be guaranteed a gold medal winner wouldn’t you?

Bill: Did Rosie put something in that tea? ... What are you writing?

Dave: Ah just me blog.

Bill: Your blog?
Dave: I’m Secretary of the Dublin City Branch of the Socialist Workers Party. I write up a blog page. Keeps members up to speed with what’s happening and I get a chance to spread the message.

Bill: So you write up something now and the other lunatics can read what you’re thinking?

Dave: Now you have it. It’s called embracing technological advances and using mass-media.

Bill: So you can write any kind of gobbledygook? How many members have you got?

Dave: Well our party’s only got about eight hundred but other left-wing groups can log on as well, so potentially it could reach thousands. And then there’s the international dimension as well. Like there’s loads of left-wing groups in Britain and all over Europe as well, they can read my blog.

Bill: So that’s what you do all day, when you’re not selling your paper?

(enter Rosie with the Racing Post)

Rosie: Now Bill. (hands him the Racing Post and puts Bill’s change on his table.) That bloody husband of mine delayed me. I think I’ll divorce him before the week is out.

Dave: Poor Stevie, what did he do now?

Rosie: I saw him heading into Doyles for a curer and then he tells me when he found his passport it was two months out of date.

Dave: The muppet!
Bill: What are you going to do now?

Rosie: Sure the Passport Office is closed for Christmas.

Bill: Ah I’m sorry Rosie.

Rosie: Fuck him, I’m going to go to Spain on my own. I’ve had enough, I really have.

Dave: You wouldn’t leave Stevie behind would you?

Rosie: You just watch me.

Bill: Now that’s your’s girl… No, I insist now, that’s it.

Rosie: Ah that’s too much, I couldn’t.

Dave: Take it Rosie. His horse is going to win a hundred grand.

Rosie: You have a horse?

Dave: New Society.

Rosie: Have you Bill?

Bill: Yes. Look. Lexus Chase 2.30 Leopardstown. Horse number 3, owner Bill Quinlan. Not bad for a Liberty Boy now is it?

Rosie: Bleedin’ brilliant. Can I back him?

Bill: Of course you can and I recommend that you do.

Rosie: I’ll put this tenner on him.

Dave: Bill’s only putting on ten grand!

Rosie: Ten grand, oh Bill, are you mad?
Bill: Well you know what they say Rosie, if you don’t speculate you can’t accumulate.

Rosie: Right I’m definitely backing him so.

Dave: Can I get me re-fill now?

Bill: Miserable fucker isn’t he?

Rosie: Ah no, we do do re-fills here don’t we do though Di-Di. And I’ll bring your coffee in a minute as well.

Bill: Thanks darling and I’ll get you to ring me a taxi for Leopardstown in a few minutes.

Rosie: No problem.

(exit Rosie)

Dave: Making a real skivvy out of her aren’t you?

Bill: Skivvy. What do you mean? Sure I gave the girl a tip.

Dave: That’s typical of your type. You think you can buy everything and everybody. You’re a pure capitalist. You fit the bill to a tee.

Bill: Oh I do, do I?

Dave: Look at that article on the bankers and the developers. It’s on the second page.

Bill: Read it to me. I could do with a laugh.
Dave: Capitalism teaches the people the moral conceptions of cannibalism – the strong devouring the weak; its theory of the world of men and women is that of a glorified pig-trough where the biggest swine gets the most swill.

Bill: So I’m a swine now am I? Jesus you’re some tulip. I admit to being a capitalist. And I’m not ashamed to be called one either. I’ve made a success of my life; I started without an arse in my trousers but at least I didn’t end up bitter and twisted like you.

Dave: Bitter and twisted. What are you on about?

Bill: You resent success and you don’t like successful people.

Dave: No I don’t but I’ll tell you what I do resent. When you’re out there in Leopardstown swanning about in the parade ring with all the so called pillars of the community, there’ll be children crying in the inner-city for the want of a decent dinner. That’s what I resent. Because everytime I see racing on the telly the place is full of politicians and their cronies. Most of the races are sponsored by big-shot developers, the same shower that have the country robbed blind. So don’t call me bitter and twisted because I happen to believe in something.

Bill: Jesus, I’m going out to see a horse race. Don’t be such a kill joy. It’s not my fault the country is up the swanee. I got out of the kip years ago.

Dave: I’m going out for a smoke.

Bill: Take your time.

(Exit Dave in a huff and after a beat Bill’s mobile rings)
Bill:  Sean well … you got fives. You have my ten grand on at fives as well. Ah do you know what Sean, your blood should be bottled? Yeah why, I have an account with Ladbrokes and one with Betfair. He’s eights with Betfair. Christ! No, no I left the hotel an hour ago. I’m not near a computer. But are you sure he’s eight to one on Betfair? Ah Jasus, I’ll have to get on. No, I’m down in a café in Clanbrassil Street. It’s in the Liberties. Cyber Café. I doubt if any of them’d be back open after Christmas. Hang on, there’s a fella in the café has a computer. He’s a right gobshite but he might help. I’ll ring you in a few minutes. Yeah, I’ll see you in the Owners and Trainers Bar. I’m getting a taxi in a few minutes. I’ll ring you. Right, right, right go on.

(enter Rosie with a cup of tea and a cup of coffee just as Dave comes back in)

Rosie:  Now lads. Do you want me to ring for your taxi now Bill?

Bill:  Yeah, please would you Rosie?

Rosie:  Ah don’t be fighting you two. It’s Christmas time. I’ll ring for you now.

(exit Rosie)

Bill:  Are you alright sunshine?

Dave:  Yeah, why wouldn’t I be?

Bill:  I didn’t mean to upset you.

Dave:  I’m not upset. Now if you don’t mind I want to concentrate on my blog.

Bill:  Could I ask you for a favour?

Dave:  Me?

Bill:  Can you get on the internet there? Is it possible?

Dave:  Sure there’s Wi-Fi here.
Bill: So you can?

Dave: Yes, how do think I post me blog?

Bill: I’m a bit of a Luddite myself. Only barely manage using this thing.

Dave: What do you want to get on-line for?

Bill: Betfair. I have an account with Betfair and I want to back the old horse.

Dave: Come on.

(Bill comes over and stands behind Dave)

Dave: Now [www.betfair.com](http://www.betfair.com) Right she’s up now. They’re looking for your password. Here I’ll let you put it in.

Bill: No, no you do it. It’s Zozimus.

Dave: Zozimus, are you serious?

Bill: Yeah Zozimus, he’s from around here too.

Dave: Zozimus on Betfair, I don’t believe I’m doing this.

Bill: Did you spell it right?

Dave: I know how to spell.

Bill: Sorry. I apologise. Now are we in?

Dave; Yes you’re in now. Now what do you want?

Bill: Today’s Racing.

Dave: Is this it?
Bill: No, no that’s the World Darts, I don’t want that. Underneath that.

Dave: Sorry I’m a virgin on this site. I told you I don’t gamble.

Bill: Right now go down to Leopardstown, yes that’s it, now the 2.30pm race. Press that.

Dave: Ah, this is fascinating. There’s your nag. New Society. What does that mean 9.3?

Bill: It means he’s trading at a little over eight to one. For one pound you would get a return of nine pounds thirty.

Dave: So this works like the stock exchange?

Bill: Exactly so we have to get on now.

Dave: So how do you get on?

Bill: You just punch in your stake?

Dave: But how does your money go through? Credit Card?

Bill: No, no I have already got money in my account. It’s like a bank.

Dave: Don’t mention those bastards.

Bill: Ah Christ, will you stop your politics for a few fucking minutes. I want to get on before the price goes down.

Dave: Excuse me. How much are you putting on?

Bill: Try 5,000.
Dave: Where? In this box, o.k. 5,000 euros.

Bill: No it’s sterling. My account is English. Now press confirm.

Dave: Is that it?

Bill: Bingo. I’m on. You’re a gentleman.

Dave: My God, see what that says. Your stake £5,000, potential winnings £46,500.

Bill: Look at the price now, he’s only paying a little over three to one.

Dave: So you got nearly three times that.

Bill: Here buy yourself a drink on me.

(Bill hands Dave a fifty euro note)

Dave: Thanks. I feel like an inside-trader.

Bill: We’ll make a businessman out of you yet. Got to take a leak. Rosie any news on that taxi?

(enter Rosie)

Rosie: He’ll be here in about ten minutes.

Bill: Perfect. I’ll be in grand time.

(exit Bill)

Dave: He’s after giving me fifty euros.

Rosie: Ah he’s a very nice man isn’t he? Why did he give you the money?

Dave: I got him onto a gambling website.

Rosie: Are you going to back his horse?
Dave: Yeah, he’s very cocky about his chances. He’s after putting five grand sterling on him.

Rosie: Will you put this on for me? I don’t now how to write a bet.

Dave: Yeah, no problem.

Rosie: Thanks DD.

(exit Rosie and Dave starts working on his computer. Enter Bill talking on the mobile)

Bill: No listen Sean, you know the game well enough. No that won’t effect his price on the course. He’ll still get four to one. He’s annoyed with me. What’s he got to be annoyed with me for? He should be honoured to train a top class horse like that. I know the stable want to get on. Look it he’ll still get a good price out there. I’m finished backing on-line now. Relax Sean, yeah. See you out there in about a half hour. Take it easy. Bye, bye.

Dave: Are you in trouble?

Bill: No, no, not at all. The stupid trainer was complaining to Sean, that’s my brother-in-law. He has a quarter share in New Society. He saw the price tumble on Betfair and he’s afraid the word is out. He’s just panicking. The stable are going to plough into him on the track.

Dave: High finance what?

Bill: Back on your blog. I must read it sometime.
Dave: No I’m on Facebook now. We’ve also got a Facebook Page for The Socialist Workers Alliance. It’s a very popular site for notifying people. Are you on Facebook?

Bill: No I’m not.

Dave: Ah it’s an amazing invention. If we have a campaign or we’re organising a protest, we can post up the details and it will go out instantly to all our friends. That’s how Facebook operates. You build up your bank of friends. Now you can do this as an individual and contact your friends group, maybe a few hundred but for a left-wing alliance like this page here, you can reach thousands of people instantly. Our own party members, the Labour Party, Workers Party, Sinn Fein, literally thousands of people can read the messages. I’ve just posted up a notice recommending people to back New Society this afternoon in the Lexus at Leopardstown.

Bill: You did what?

Dave: Happy New Year to all my brothers and sisters in the socialist movement. Get on New Society today at Leopardstown. Time 2.30. Owner fancies him strongly. Don’t forget the party if the horse wins. Be Lucky. Dave D.

Bill: You can’t send that out.

Dave; It’s too late now. It’s gone.

Bill: Are you some kind of a wind-up merchant? Take it back for fuck’s sake.

Dave: What’s wrong with you? Sure I can’t take it back. It’ll be all over the world by now.
Bill: You fucking idiot. The horse will be money on now. Not worth a fuck.

Dave: The wonders of modern technology.

Bill: Tell me you didn’t send that out.

Dave: Sorry, you seem a little upset.

Bill: Upset, I’ll break your fucking neck.

(Bill lunges at Dave)

Dave: Get your hands off me you lunatic.

(Rosie runs in)

Rosie: Stop it. Stop it. The two of you.

(Bill releases his grip on Dave and backs away)

Dave: You ought to be locked up.

Rosie: Shut up DD. You’ve been niggling at this man since you came in. Take up your computer and come back when you learn to behave yourself.

Dave: I’m telling you, you better not come round this way again. Mr. Hotshot.

Rosie: DD, I said leave it.

(exit Dave)

Bill: Ignoramus.

Rosie: Are you alright?

Bill: Jesus I’ve met some clowns in my time but that fella tops the lot.

Rosie: Ah DD’s alright really. He’s got real angry since he lost his job.
Bill: Why do you call him DD? I thought his name was Dave.

Rosie: It is. Dave Douglas. He lives just two doors up.

Bill: Douglas, did you say Dave Douglas?

Rosie: Why’s wrong?

Bill: What’s his father’s name?

Rosie: Freddy Douglas.


Rosie: What?

Bill: That DD fella. His grandfather was the man who saved my life. Jack Douglas pulled me out of the rubble when the tenement collapsed.

Rosie: God wait till I tell him. He’ll be delighted.

(Taxi beeps its horn)

There’s your taxi now. Are you sure you’ll be alright?

Bill: I’ll be fine. What number does Dave Douglas live in?

Rosie: 33, just two doors up.

Bill: Rosie. Hold that taxi man will you? Run up and bring young Douglas back. Please Rosie. Will you do that for me?

Rosie: O.K. are you sure?

Bill: Please Rosie. Run up and get him.
(exit Rosie and Bill takes a cheque book from his coat pocket. He writes out a cheque and leaves it on the table.)

Bill: Old Jack Douglas!

(enter Rosie with Dave. Bill embraces him tearfully)

Dave: What’s wrong with you?

Bill: Your grandfather... I owe everything to your grandfather.

Dave: Is he alright?

Rosie: Everything’s o.k. now Bill.

(Rosie comforts an extremely emotional Bill)

Bill: Right I’m alright now. Now I left something on the table for you. I’ll be in touch.

(Bill exits and Rosie follows him to the door)

Rosie: Bye Bill, I hope your horse wins.

Dave: He’s left me a cheque.

Rosie: For you?


Rosie: Twenty Thousand, show me!

(takes the cheque and reads)

God!

Dave: Yea and it’s sterling. I’ll never say a bad word about the Queen again
THE END
Appendix 3: Seven Lives for Liberty

Seven Songs For Seven Signatories/

Seven Lives for Liberty


3. Drama:  James Connolly speaking in street.

Connolly:  “We are out for Ireland for the Irish. But who are the Irish? Not the rack-renting, slum-owning landlord; not the sweating, profit-grinding capitalist; not the sleek and oily lawyer; not the prostitute pressman – the hired liars of the enemy. Not these are the Irish upon whom the future depends. Not these but the Irish working class, the only secure foundation upon which a free nation can be reared.

Capitalism on the other hand teaches the people the moral conceptions of cannibalism – the strong devouring the weak; its theory of the world of men and women is that of a glorified pig-trough where the biggest swine gets the most swill.

If you strike at, imprison or kill us, out of our prisons or graves we will still evoke a spirit that will twart you, and, mayhap, raise a force that will destroy you. We Defy you!…Do your worst!”.

5. Drama. Pearse’s Oration at the grave of O’Donovan Rossa.

Pearse: “This is a place of peace, sacred to the dead, where men should speak with all charity and all restraint; but I hold it a Christian thing, as O’Donovan Rossa held it, to hate evil, to hate untruth, to hate oppression, and, hating them, to strive to overthrow them. Our foes are strong and wise and wary; but, strong and wise and wary as they are, they cannot undo the miracles of God who ripens in the hearts of young men the seeds sown by the young men of ’65 and ’67 are coming to their miraculous ripening today. Rulers and defenders of Realms had need to be wary if they would guard against such processes.

Life springs from death; and from the graves of patriot men and women spring living nations. The Defenders of this Realm have worked well in secret and in the open. They think that they have pacified Ireland. They think that they have purchased half of us and intimidated the other half. They think that they have foreseen everything, think that they have provided against everything; but the fools, the fools, the fools! – they have left us our Fenian dead – And while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace.”

6. Revolution Easter 1916 – Music

7. Images of City Destroyed.

8. 16 Moore St.

Present. James Connolly on bed attended to by Nurse O Farrell.

Wounded British soldier in bed opposite. Other leaders Clarke, Plunkett, MacDiarmada, Pearse.
Captured British soldier in bed opposite cries out.
Nurse O Farrell tends to him.

Prisoner: We are going to die here. There’s no hope – why won’t they surrender?
Nurse: Calm down. The will do what’s best. They are honourable men I assure you. Now you rest easy.
Prisoner: It was one of your people what saved me. Carried me across the street, he did, over his shoulder and under fire – blimey, I should be dead.

Pearse in discussion with Clarke, Mc Dermott and Plunkett.
They approach Connolly.

Pearse: James, we are planning an attack on the enemy barricade. This will allow us to escape across the street towards the Four Courts under Commandant Daly. It’s worth a try.

Connolly: And the likely casualties?

Pearse: Well..Once we cross the street we will have the shelter of the laneways.

Connolly: And our wounded?

Pearse: I’m afraid we may have to leave you here.
Connolly: Yes I expect so ….. but we fight on then.

Pearse: Yes we fight on. Is that agreed?

Connolly: Oh aye, if feasible.
Clarke. Let them come to us. The lads are ready. If the terrace is secure we can hold out for sure

Plunkett: It is secured. They will not risk an attack. The city is ablaze. It is the first time it has happened since Moscow. This is the first time a capital has been burned since then!

Incredible!

Machinegun fire on street –

Mc Dermott moves to window – side stage.

Turns to others - shocked

Mc Dermott: My God …. they are shooting civilians under a white flag. They’re shooting at anything that moves out there.

Pearse to volunteer: Quick. Get to Mc Loughlin - Halt the charge and ask him to return to HQ. Now - Man - Move!

Volunteer: Yes sir. He grabs rifle and leaves.

Pearse: This is slaughter. We need to reconsider before proceeding.
Mc Laughlin enters room.

Mc Laughlin: The men are ready sir.

Pearse: Hold for the moment. You know this area?

Mc Laughlin: I do sir.

Pearse: Is it heavily populated? Are there people living around these streets?

Mc Laughlin: Well yes Sir, once we clear the laneways opposite. There will be good cover.

Pearse: But are there likely to be civilian casualties?

Mc Laughlin: Yes sir there probably will be. It will be difficult and the military are shooting anything on sight. Sir…. I regret to report that The O Rahilly and his men were not successful sir. I’m afraid he was shot leading the charge.

Pearse: I feared that (turns to others): Should we continue?

Mc Dermott: Can we continue?

Mc Laughlin: But the men are ready sir.

Pearse: I know I know but ….. Hold for the moment till further orders.

Mc Laughlin: Is this it then sir? Is it over?
Pearse: angry - Hold for the moment do you hear?

Mc Laughlin: Yes sir. (he leaves).

The leaders confer –

Pearse: If we accomplish no more than we have accomplished, I am satisfied, I am satisfied that we have saved Ireland's honour......For my part ... I am not afraid to face the judgement of God, or the judgement of posterity. (page 11).

Pearse: Is it agreed then – that we should seek terms?

Clarke turns away in anguish- shaking his head -

Clarke: Seek terms you say. SURRENDER you mean - Not on my behalf. We agreed to a fight to the finish. We owe it to the lads, we owe it to ourselves to fight on as long as there’s .... hope. What if the country rises? We have no news. We have to hold out.

Plunkett: Tom, but its civilians Tom. We cannot risk any more civilian casualties - we have no choice.

Clarke: Civilians you say. And who’s shooting the civilians? The enemy!

Connolly: Aye Tom but we can’t control that but we can save the lads if we seek terms. They deserve to be spared – we know our fate – but they deserve to be spared.

Mc Dermott: And they are young. There will be another day ... for them.

Clarke: You Sean! After all we’ve been through.
Plunkett: Tom. There really is no alternative. We are trapped. If we seek terms they may spare the lads.

Pearse: Is it…agreed then?

Turns to each for confirmation.

Pearse: (continues). HQ Moore Street. Believing that the glorious stand which has been made by the soldiers of Irish freedom…… and desirous of preventing further slaughter of the civilian population and to save the lives of as many as possible of our followers, the members of the Provisional Government here present have agreed…. (looks at Clarke)… by a majority to open negotiations with the British Commander.

Mc Loughlin: Is it over-cant we hold out.?

Clarke: yes we could but at what risk – maybe they are right but .. (breaks down). Maybe it’s for the best.

Mc Dermott: Right then.

Mc Dermott: (pause) …. Nurse ….

NURSE: Yes.

Mc Dermott: We….we need a white flag…. Can you find one?
9. Padraig Pearse. First of the Seven Songs, The Gaelic Sword of Light sung live by Pat Walters accompanied by visuals of Pearse.

   Down to line “We’ll live and die that dream”

10. Drama. Surrender Scene.

General Lowe and officer await the arrival of Pearse.

He enters accompanied by Nurse O Farrell carrying a white flag.

General Lowe and the officer salute.

Gen. Lowe:  Was this man in the General Post Office?
Officer:    I did not see him there
Gen Lowe:    Were you?
Pearse:     Yes I was. (He offers his sword to the General)
Gen Lowe:  The only condition I make is that I will allow the other Commandants to surrendered, I understand you have the Countess de Markievicz down there
Pearse:     No she is not with me
Gen Lowe:  Oh I know she is down there
Pearse:     Don’t accuse me of speaking an untruth.
Gen Lowe:  Oh I beg your pardon Mr Pearse but I know she is in the Moore Street area
Pearse:     Well she is not with me sir
Gen. Lowe:  I suggest the Nurse is detained overnight so that she can deliver the surrender order to the other commandants. She will then be set free with a safe convoy pass
Pearse: (to O’Farrell) Will you agree to this?
Nurse:       Yes if you wish it
Pearse:       I do wish it. (Nurse steps back)
Pause – flash photo – similar on screen.

Gen Lowe: Then that is all. Take him away, the Nurse stays.

Pearse is led away.

Officer: It would be interesting to know how many marks that fellow has in his pocket.

Fade:

11. Court Martial Scene

Courts Martial- Pearse faces President of Court and another Officer.

When I was a child of ten I went down on my bare knees by my bedside one night and promised God that I should devote my life to an effort to free my country. I have kept that promise. We seem to have lost. We have not lost. To refuse to fight would have been to lose; to fight is to win. We have kept faith with the past and handed on a tradition to the future. I assume that I am speaking to Englishmen, who value their freedom and who profess to be fighting for the freedom of Belgium and Serbia. Believe that we, too, love freedom and desire it. To us it is more desirable than anything in the world. If our deed has not been sufficient to win freedom, then our children will win it by a better deed.

Officer: Take the prisoner away.

Fade


He sits at a candlelit table composing a letter. He reads the text.

My Dearest Mother,

I have been hoping up to now that it would be possible to see you again, but it does not seem possible. Good-bye, dear, dear mother. I hope and believe that Willie and the St. Enda’s boys will be safe. You asked me to write a little poem which would seem to be said by you about me. I have just received Holy Communion. I am happy except for the great grief of parting from you. This is the death I should have asked for if God had given me the choice of all
deaths, to die a soldier’s death for Ireland and for freedom. I have not words to tell my love of you.

I will call to you in my heart at the last moment,

Your son, Pat

Fade.

Mrs. Pearse reads poem aloud.

The Mother

I do not grudge them: Lord, I do not grudge
My two strong sons that I have seen go out
To break their strength and die, they and a few,
In bloody protest for a glorious thing,
They shall be spoken of among their people,
The generations shall remember them,
And call them blessed;
But I will speak their names to my own heart
In the long nights;
The little names that were familiar once
Round my dead hearth.
Lord, thou art hard on mothers:
We suffer in their coming and their going;
And tho’ I grudge them not, I weary, weary
Of the long sorrow--And yet I have my joy:
My sons were faithful, and they fought.

13. **Song:** Pat Waters sings from verse “Take ready aim and fire…” accompanied by remaining Pearse visuals.
14. Thomas J. Clarke. Drama

Opening:

Ante Room, Kilmainham Jail.

Kathleen Clarke sits opposite a military police guard.

Guard: I don’t understand you Irish, why do you try to stab England in the back when she is at war. I come over here from England where evidence of war is everywhere you turn, darkened streets, food rationing, wounded men everywhere, very little amusement.

Here in Dublin I find your streets ablaze with light picture houses, theatres dancehalls every form of amusement going full blast, food in plenty, nothing to indicate a war. Despite that you start a revolution. Why?

Kathleen: You in your arrogance as an Englishman would not admit that the German could win the war, but suppose for the sake of argument we say they did win. Then in conquering England and ruling her they reduced her from a prosperous country, an educated people to a poverty stricken one; education ruthlessly stamped out, the German language substituted by law for the English, her population reduced to a third of what it had been; her people driven out to make room for the Germans; Germans planted in all the best positions of the country; all the best land confiscated and given to Germans; her people starved while the Germans were well fed. Don’t you think as an Englishman you would rebel?

Guard: I’m damn well sure I would.,

Kathleen: Well you have our point of view in as few words as I can give it to you.

Guard: Well I never considered it like that. Thanks for the…explanation. Would you shake this English mans hand.

Kathleen hesitates.
**Guard**: Please Mam
Kathleen hesitates.

**Voice**: Visitor for Clarke.

**Guard**: Its time. I hope that ….I wish you good luck’
He extends his hand again.
Kathleen shakes it.
They approach the cell.
Fade

15. Under Easter’s Blood Red Sky

Pat Waters sings song down to line “Held our country in its grasp” accompanied by visuals of Tom Clarke.

16. Drama
**Tom Clarke’s Cell Kilmainham Jail.**

Thomas Clarke is lying on the floor. The door opens. He jumps up to see his wife accompanied by a soldier with a lit candle in a jam jar. It is the only light in the cell.

**Kathleen Clarke**: ‘Why did you surrender? The last thing you said was no surrender.
Clarke: I know Katty, I know. And I meant it. Had it rested with me there would have been no surrender. On a vote I was outvoted. I had hoped to go down in the retreat from the GPO but it was not to be. Perhaps it’s all for the best.

Kathleen: What was the trial like?

Clarke: It was a farce. I suppose you know I am to be shot in the morning. I am glad I am getting a soldier’s death. Your brother Ned also I believe.

Kathleen: Surely not Ned. He is so young.

Clarke: Yes he is very young but from the British point of view he has earned death. He as proved himself a fine soldier and a hero. All the men are heroes.

My comrades and I believe we have struck the first successful blow for freedom and so sure as we are going out this morning so sure will freedom come as a result of our action. It will not come today or tomorrow and between this and freedom Ireland will go through Hell but she will never lie down again until she has attained full freedom. With this belief we die happy. I am happy and satisfied at what we have accomplished.

Soldier: Time is up.

Tom and Kathleen prepare to part. She turns and exits the cell. The door closes. The key turns in the lock loudly. She pauses.

Fade.

16. Pat Waters resumes song, down to line “Of generations after me” accompanied by visuals of Clarke.

17. Tom Clarke in cell.
Candlelight. Clarke is writing a letter in his cell.

He reads aloud as he writes.

**Clarke:** Dear K, I am in better health and more satisfied than for many a day. -all will be well eventually-but this is my goodbye and now you are ever before me to cheer me-God bless you and the boys. Let them be proud to follow the same path.-Sean is with me and Mc Garry- all well they are all heroes. I’m full of pride my love.

Yours Tom.

Love to John and Madge.

I entrust to you this message for the Irish people.

Clarke stands and addresses audience:

**Clarke:** ‘I and my fellow signatories believe we have struck the first successful blow for freedom. The next blow, which we have no doubt Ireland will strike, will win through. In this belief we die happy.

Thomas J Clarke,
Kilmainham Jail.
3\textsuperscript{rd} May 1916. Fade to black.

Darkness. Sound of approaching escort. Sound of a key turning in the door lock.

Silence.

**Visual - Backdrop image of Clarke.**

Stage lights depict the dawn.

Visual – Clarke family minus Tom Clarke.

Fade to end of song.

19. Thomas Mac Donagh – Drama

St. Enda’s School, Oakley Road, Ranelagh 1908

Chairman: L&G, the opening of this new school of St. Enda’s here in Cullenswood House is indeed a proud moment for us all. You have heard P.H. Pearse outline his vision for the future education of the boys here, but now I ask for your kindest attention for the Leas Priomh-Oide, a proud Tipperary man Mr. Thomas MacDonagh.

(Thomas MacDonagh mounts the podium)

MacDonagh: A dhaoine uaisle, ta failte o chroi romhait go leir go dti an scoil alainn seo. A lady in the audience asked me earlier what difference would a school like St. Endas make. How will it be different to other educational institutions in this city? First and foremost this college is aimed at providing a fully Gaelic education, whereby the pupils will study the language and culture of their own nation and take part in activities such as drama, sport and music. Is that too much to ask, that we should provide an Irish education for Irish boys in the capital city of Ireland? The school will be bi-lingual and the emphasis will be on training the boys to take their part in a free and Gaelic Ireland. It will be an honour for me to serve here as a teacher and help Padraic fulfil this noble aspiration. Moll an oige agus tiocfaidh se! Go raibh mile maith agut go leir.

(The audience applaud warmly and when Thomas jumps down from the podium, he is congratulated by Joseph Plunkett. The Chairman then introduces the Gifford sisters, Muriel and her younger sister Grace)

Chairman: Thomas let me introduce you to Muriel Gifford and her sister Grace.

MacDonagh: Very nice of you to come today. Well I hope you are impressed?

Muriel: It’s such a pity us girls hadn’t got a school like this.
MacDonagh: There will be soon I hope. You are very welcome. I have heard of the Gifford sisters. You are artists, are you not?

Muriel: Oh that would be Grace - she's the talented one. She draws and writes poetry. Grace has just finished studying art in London.

Grace: Muriel ...that's enough. We are not here to discuss me.

MacDonagh: Well isn't it great to be surrounded by beauty and brains.

Chairman: Have you met Joseph Plunkett? Joe this is Muriel and her sister …

Grace: Grace, Grace Gifford.

Joe: Pleased to meet you.(takes her hand)

Chairman: Grace is an artist.

Joe: Good for you Grace – I do a little writing myself.

Chairman: A little, who’s being modest now?

Joe: Pay no heed to him – It’s true I do write a lot but only admit to just a little. We must meet up and discuss our 'mutual talent' sometime.

Grace: That would be nice. I shall look forward to it.
Muriel: Maybe you should apply for a teaching post here in St. Enda’s?

MacDonagh: Well I shall definitely mention you to Mr. Pearse.

Great: Great.

(The Gifford sisters exit)

Chairman: Thomas, you should fall in love with one of those girls and marry her.

MacDonagh: That would be easy – the only difficulty would be to decide which one.

Chairman: Spoilt for choice, Thomas boy, spoilt for choice.

Joe: I could help you there.

(They laugh and exit)

20. Pat Waters sings The Poet and the Patriot down to the line “For Tipperary’s proudest son” accompanied by visuals on Thomas MacDonagh.

21. Drama

Richmond Barracks- Court Martial sitting - Mac Donagh facing officer(s):
Mac Donagh: I thank you for your courtesy. You would all be proud to die for Britain, your Imperial patron and I am proud and happy to die for Ireland my glorious fatherland.

Officer: You speak of Britain as our Imperial patron.

Mac Donagh: Yes for some of you are Irishmen.

Officer: And what of your imperial patron, what of Germany?

Mac Donagh: Not if Germany had violated and despoiled my country and persisted in withholding her birthright.

Officer: Carry on

Mac Donagh: There is not much left to say. This rising did not result from accidental circumstances. It came in due recurrent season as the necessary outcome of forces that are ever at work. The mass of the people of Ireland will doubtless lull their consciousness to sleep for another generation by the exploded fable that Ireland cannot successfully fight England. We do not profess to represent the mass of the people of Ireland. We stand for the intellect and soul of Ireland.

Gentlemen you have sentenced me to death and I accept your sentence with joy and pride since it is for Ireland I am to die.

Take me away.

Fade.

22. Drama

Kilmainham Cell: MacDonagh at table writing.
Reads letter to his son aloud  (Muriel- side stage with child- reads as he speaks).

MacDonagh:  My Dearest love Muriel, Thank you a million times for all you have been to me. I have only one trouble in leaving life – leaving you so. Br brave darling. God will assist and bless you. Goodbye, kiss my darlings for me. I send you the few things that I have saved out of this war. Good bye my love till we meet again in heaven. I have a sure faith of our union there. I kiss this paper that goes to you. I have just heard that they have not been able to reach you. Perhaps it is better so. Yet Father Aloysius is going to make another effort to do something. God help and sustain you, my love. But for your suffering this would be all joy and glory. Goodbye,

Your loving husband, Thomas Mac Donagh.

I return the darlings photographs. Goodbye my love.

Mc Donagh stands facing audience

He then recites poem  – Of a Poet Patriot.

His songs were a little phrase,

Of eternal song.

Drowned in the harping of lays

More loud and long

His deed was a single word

Called out alone

In a night when no echo stirred

To laughter or moan

But his songs new souls shall thrill,

The loud harps dumb,And his deed the echoes fill

When the dawn is come.
Dawn lighting to fade – Mac Donagh stands.

23. Pat Waters sings song – the Poet and the Patriot. (from ‘denied was she his lips to kiss’) to end accompanied by visuals.

24. Eamonn Ceannt – Drama

Pipers Club Concert, Dublin.

Ceannt and another piper Martin Daly in club.

They play a lament. It ends.

Martin Daly: Ah the pipes - they stir the blood and its rumoured that’s the reason you started this club.

(They laugh)

Martin: They say you can hear the voice of Ireland in the pipes. And it’s true what they say Eamonn - all our wars are merry but all our songs are sad.

Ceannt: Ha ha. A challenge then – follow this then.

(upbeat jig/reel).

Fade

INTERVAL
25. **Pat Waters sings The Voice of The Gael** down to the line “From the Pipes of the Ballymoe Gael” in the first chorus, accompanied by Ceannt visuals.

Fade.

26. **Drama - Kilmainham Cell.**

Voice: Visitor for the prisoner. Ceannt stands and greets Father Augustine.

Ceannt: Father, good to see you.

Father A.: And you too Eamonn. You sent for me.

Ceannt: Yes. Is there news?

Father A: Eamonn, there’s no reprieve I have to inform you. I expect you knew that.

Ceannt: And news from outside?

Father A: Well it’s difficult to judge. There is ill feeling among those connected to the war effort naturally.

Ceannt: Ireland is at war too, Father – at war with Anglicisation. Why should Ireland the mother of heroes be the Cinderella of nations. Ireland is now in rags and tatters, without arms, without language, without the right to rule her own household and they ask her to remember Belgium.

Father A: But Eamonn, when innocent lives are endangered there must be dialogue.

Ceannt: I leave for the guidance of other Irish revolutionaries this advice, never to treat with the enemy, never to surrender at his mercy but to fight to a finish. Ireland has
shown she is a Nation. This generation can claim to have raised sons as brave as any that went before. And in the years to come Ireland will honour those who risked all for her honour at Easter in 1916. I bear no ill will against those whom I have fought.

You have to make other visits haven’t you Father?

Father A: yes I have. (He prepares to leave)

Ceannt: Well I would like you to come back to me again. (He takes out his watch) I have another hour, have I not?

Father A: (turns to the wall upset) Yes Eamonn, just another hour.

Ceannt lays down – sound of uileann pipes.

Lights fade.

27. Drama – Kilmainham Stonebreakers Yard:

Lights up to reveal Ceannt sitting on a soapbox with pipes. He addresses the audience.

Ceannt: I wish to record the magnificent gallantry and fearless calm determination of the men who fought with me. All, all were simply splendid. Even I knew no fear or panic and shrunk from no risk even as I shrink not now from the death that faces me at daybreak. I hope to see Gods face even for a moment in the morning. His will be done. All here are very kind. My poor wife saw me yesterday and bore up - so my warden told me - even after she left my presence. Poor Aine, poor Ronan. God is their only shield now that I am removed. And God is a better shield than I. I have just seen Aine, Nell, Richard and Mick and bade them a conditional goodbye. Even now they have hope!
He starts to play the pipes. (lights fade)

A soldier approaches.

He grabs the pipes from Ceannt –the pipes continue offstage – the soldier places a blindfold across Ceannts face and a white paper over his heart.

Ceannt stiffens-extends his legs outwards- the pipes suddenly cease -silence.

Fade to Black.

Visuals : Ceannt with pipes.

28. Pat Waters sings song: The Voice of the Gael - from “He’d not seek the praise of the masses” to end.

Visuals: Ceannt family

Fade.

29. Joseph Plunkett – Drama

Richmond barracks.

Joe Plunkett in cell writing.
Plunkett: My darling Child,

This is my first chance of sending you a line since we were taken. I have no notion of what they intend to do with me but have heard a rumour that I am to be sent to England.

The only thing I care about is that I am not with you-everything else is cheerful. I am told that Tom was brought in yesterday. George and Jack are both here and well. We have not one word of news since Monday 24th April except wild rumours. Listen if I live it might be possible to get the Church to marry us by proxy – there is such a thing but it is very difficult I am told. Father Sheridan might be able to do it. You know how I love you. That is all I have time to say. I know you love me and I am very happy. Joe

Fade.


The jeweller Mr.Stoker is pulling down the shutters to close the shop when Grace Gifford arrives all flustered.

Grace: Are you closed?

Stoker: That time of day lady. Why, are you looking for something in particular?

Grace: It’s an emergency, I need to buy a wedding ring.

Stoker: How can I refuse such beauty, come on in.

(Mr.Stoker offers Grace a seat)

Stoker: Now I will bring you a selection of quality wedding-bands.

Grace: You’re very kind.
(When Mr. Stoker comes back he finds Grace sobbing)

Stoker: Ah, you shouldn’t be crying when you are going to be married.

(Grace tries to stifle convulsive sobs)

Grace: I am Mr. Plunkett’s fiancée. I will marry Joe in Kilmainham Jail tonight but they are going to shoot him at dawn.

Stoker: Merciful God! Oh, you poor child. I don’t know what to say to you.

Grace: I’ll pick this one.

Stoker: I am very, very sorry Miss.

Grace: Grace, Grace Gifford. How much is this ring?

Stoker: You chose well Grace. It’s our most expensive wedding-band, twenty eight guineas, unfortunately.

(Grace pays for the ring and prepares to leave)

Grace: Thank you very much.

Stoker: You will be in my prayers Grace. You are a very brave young woman.

(Grace leaves leaving a bewildered Mr. Stoker looking after her)

31. **Pat waters sings Bayonets’ By Candle Light** down to line “Be the blessing of our vows” accompanied by visuals of Plunkett.
32. **Drama - Yard in Kilmainham Jail:**

Grace is alone. A British Soldier approaches.

Soldier: You are Ms. Grace Gifford, I believe.

Grace: That is correct.

Soldier: Are you alone?

Grace: Yes I am. I have been here for a number of hours. I am here to be married. My sister was to be here but … it was not to be…

Soldier: You are aware, then of the sentence carried out this morning on her husband Mac Donagh.

Grace: Thomas Mac Donagh you mean… yes I am so aware.

Soldier: I will see if they are ready then.

Grace: Thank you.

Soldier leaves - Grace remains as light fades to dusk.

33. **Drama - Cell:**

Plunkett recites poem –

Plunkett: ‘The day I knew you loved me, we had lain

Deep in Cill Doraca down by Glean na Scath

Unknown to each till suddenly I saw

You in the shadow, knew oppressive pain (light fading on Grace)

Stopping my heart, and there you did remain

In dreadful beauty fair without a flaw,

Blinding the eyes that yet could not withdraw

Till wild between us drove the wind and rain

Breathless we reached he brugh before the West
Burst in full fury-then with lightning stroke
The tempest in my heart roared up and broke
Its barriers, and I swore I would not rest
Till that mad was worthy of your breast
Or dead for you-and then this love awoke. (light out on Grace)
Lights out.

34: Kilmainham Jail Chapel: Altar backdrop visual on screen.

Grace enters and stands alone at the altar in silence. A priest stands ready.
Joe in full uniform flanked by soldiers enters and joins her at the altar.
They then kneel before the priest-silent pause - exchange rings – silence.
Cue song - (‘Bayonets by Candle light’…to ‘Be the blessing of our vows’.)

Soldier: Time is up.

Joe is marched away by the soldiers.

Fade. Dawn lighting.
Grace stands alone at the altar.

35. Pat Waters sings Bayonets by Candlelight – ‘The day of judgement’s calling….’
Grace slowly leaves the chapel.

Dawn on screen – Portrait of Plunkett fades into portrait of Grace.

Song ends
Fade.

35. Debate in Westminster

(House of Commons, London, Thursday 11 May)

Speaker: Order, Order, Order. The Right Honourable Laurence Ginnell.

Ginnell: I ask the Prime Minister to confirm whether the authorities had tried James Connolly after the surgeon had reported that he was dying of his wounds and is there a precedent for the summary execution of a dying man?

Asquith: On the contrary the doctors confirmed that Connolly was fit to undergo trial and therefore the other question does not apply.

Ginnell: But it has been ascertained that Connolly had suffered horrific wounds and is there not a protocol in relation to the treatment of wounded prisoners of war?

Asquith: This erroneous reference to war is typical of the language and emotionally charged rhetoric of Mr. Ginnell and consistent with his recent speeches in this
house. General Maxwell was well aware of Connolly’s condition but decided that the court-martial could be convened in the hospital.

Ginnell: Shame on him and further shame on a government that sanctions such barbarity. Does the decision making now lie with the Military and have you Prime Minister lost all control?

Speaker: Order, order, order. The Right Honourable John Dillon.

Dillon: I feel bound to protest in the most solemn way against the large number of military executions of men, many of whom were not prominent leaders of the insurrection. Any further military executions will have the most far-reaching and disastrous effects on the future peace and loyalty of Ireland. The primary object of my motion is to put an absolute stop to these executions. Is that nothing? It is the fruit of our life’s work. We are held up to odium as traitors by the men who made the rebellion but you, you are washing out our whole life’s work in a sea of blood.

(Boos are heard across the chamber)

Speaker: Order, order, order.

Dillon: I declare most solemnly and I am not ashamed to say it in the House of Commons, that I am proud of these men. Yes they were foolish, and yes they were misled but who could ever doubt their courage?

Voices: Shame, shame, shame.

Member: Now you have shown your hand Dillon.

Dillon: Did I ever fail to show my hand in the House of Commons or conceal anything? I say I am proud of their courage and if you were not so dense or stupid, as some of you English people are, you could have had these men fighting for you, and they are men worth having.
Member: You stopped them.

Dillon: That is an infamous falsehood. I and the men who sit around me have been doing our best to bring these men into the ranks of the army. It is not murderers who are being executed, it is insurgents who have fought a clean fight, a brave fight, however misguided, and it would be a damned good thing for you if your soldiers were able to put up as good a fight as did these men in Dublin.

Secretary: Mr. Speaker, I demand that The Right Honourable Gentleman withdraws these abominable lies.

Voices: Shame, shame, shame.

(The Prime Minister’s Reply)

Speaker: Order, order. I now call on the Prime Minister to reply.

Asquith: Today’s debate has only copperfastened my opinion that we will never get to the bottom of this most perplexing and damnable country. In reply to the Right Honourable Gentleman let me state that there are still two other persons who are under sentence of death - MacDermott and Connolly – a sentence which has been confirmed by General Maxwell. Both of these men signed the Proclamation and took an active part, one of them the most active part of all, in the actual rebellion in Dublin. I do not see my way, and the Government do not see their way to interfere with the decision of Sir John Maxwell, that in these two cases the extreme penalty must be paid. If it was justifiable, as we think it was, in the case of the five other persons who signed the Proclamation, it would be extremely difficult, on any ground of justice to discriminate between them and these two others simply for the reason that they happen to have been tried a little later. I cannot – I tell the House fairly and frankly –
reconcile it with my conscience or my judgement that preferential treatment
should be accorded to men equally or even more guilty. I would like to advise
the House that I am travelling to Ireland this evening, I will meet with General
Maxwell and I will report back to the House next week on the state of things
in that troubled and unfortunate country.

Sean Mac Diarmada.

38. Drama Prison Cell - Candle light.

Mc Dermott at table writing letter.

Mc Dermott (Reading aloud) – My dear Daly, Just a wee note to bid you goodbye. I expect in
a few hours to join Tom and the others in a better world. I have been sentenced to a soldier’s
death-to be shot tomorrow morning. I have nothing to say about this only that I look upon it
as part of the days work. We die that the Irish nation may live. Our blood will re-baptise and
reinvigorate the old land. Knowing this, it is superfluous to say how happy I feel. I know now
what I have always felt-that the Irish nation can never die. Let present day place hunters
condemn our action as they will, posterity will judge us aright from the effects of our action.

I know I will meet you soon. Until then goodbye. God guard and protect you and all in no.
15. You have had a sore trial but I know that Mrs Daly and all the girls feel proud in spite of
a little temporary and natural grief that her son and the girls, their brother as well as Tom are
included in the list of honours. Kindly remember me to Mrs Clarke and tell her I am the same
Sean she always knew.

God bless you all as ever,

Sincerely yours.

Sean Mac Diarmada.

36. Pat Waters sings Sean Mac Diarmada Song: ‘His Heart Belonged To Roisin’ … down to
line “We’ll Take it Back this Day” – accompanied by Visuals).

37. Drama Prison Cell: Table and chair. Candle on table with pen and paper. Soldier
stands on guard.
Mc Dermott sitting on a wooden bed between the Ryan sisters Phyllis and Min, his arms are around their shoulders.

Mc Dermott: Well girls, that was some week. You know the boys were refusing to surrender. The Kimmage lads feared they’d be shot outright as traitors-most of them were born across the water. Amazing people.

Min Ryan: They were surely. What ill happen them do you think?

Mc Dermott: Jail probably-but they are all young and will be ready for another time.

Min Ryan: Ashe did well in North Dublin and Galway rose under Mellows but it’s hard to get information.

Phyllis: The army murdered civilians in North King Street.

Mc Dermott: Yes I had heard, poor innocent people. We will rise again for sure.

Min Ryan: And yourself Sean, what do you think ?

Phyllis: They are pleading with the Prime Minister.

Mc Dermott: Ah who knows Min. You don’t be worrying-what will be, will be. Here- just in case- if the worst happens, keepsakes for the girls.

I’ll even sign them. (he attempts to scratch on coins from his pocket). And here (he pulls buttons off his jacket)…. Yes ,yes  take these too. (Min accepts then reluctantly).
Soldier: Time is up.

Mc Dermott: Well girls, sin e. Thanks for coming. He hugs Phyllis and turns to kiss Min goodbye.

Phyllis: Goodbye Sean.

Min: Oh Sean

Mc Dermott: We never thought it would end like this - that this…. would be the end.

Phyllis and Min are ushered out.

Fade.

He then stands.

Addresses audience –

Kilmainham Prison,
12th May 1916,
3.30am.

I, Sean Mac Diarmada, before paying the penalty of death for my love of Ireland, and abhorrence of her slavery desire to make known to my fellow countrymen that I die, as I have lived, bearing no malice to any man and in perfect peace with Almighty God. The principles for which I give my life are so sacred that I now walk to my death in the most calm and
collected manner. I meet death for Ireland's cause as I have worked for the same cause all my life. I have asked the Rev E. McCarthy who has prepared me to meet my God and who has given me courage to face the ordeal I am about to undergo, to convey this message to my fellow countrymen.

God save Ireland

Sean Mac Diarmada. (Playing of God Save Ireland on flute).

Enter Father Aloysius.

McDermott: Is it time?

Father A: It is Sean.

Father Aloysius blesses Sean and leads him out followed by soldier. He slowly turns and walks limping along a corridor (then towards a wall), then stops and turns and braces himself as lights fade.


39. Pat waters sings remainder of Song: ‘His Heart Belonged to Roisin’– accompanied by visuals.

James Connolly

40. Drama. (1896 Foster Place Dublin, Connolly 28)

Man: Gentlemen let me introduce our new organiser James Connolly.

(Connolly jumps up on stand)

Connolly: Comrades many of our countrymen and women still hold out hopes for a Home Rule Parliament but what we should be aspiring to is not a capitalist
monarchy with an elected head but a republic that would be a beacon-light to
the oppressed of every land. If you remove the English army tomorrow and
hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation
of the socialist republic, your efforts would be in vain. England would still
rule you. She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords,
through her financiers.

Voice: So you would do things differently then?

Connolly: Yes my friend we would bring things into our own hands.

Voice: Like what?

Connolly: We would nationalise our railways and canals. We would replace private
banks by State ones, with popularly elected boards of directors that would
issue loans at cost.

Voice: Will you give me a loan and I can go get a few drinks?

Voice 2: Shut up amadain, the man’s speaking sense.

Connolly: We would have a graduated income tax on all incomes over £300 in order to
pay pensions to the aged, infirm, widows and orphans. We would establish a
minimum wage and a 48-hour week. We would provide free education up to
the highest university grades.

And most importantly we call for universal suffrage.

Voice: University! Did he say university? University is not for the likes of us. Come
off it man.

Connolly: As the great Irish patriot Thomas Davis said: “Educate that you might be
free.” If they deprive us of education they keep us ignorant and downtrodden.

Voice: Are you calling us ignorant? You’re not even an Irishman.

(a few throw cabbage stalks at Connolly)
Connolly: Is it my accent comrade? You’d surely not condemn me because my father and mother had to leave this country after the Famine or else die of starvation in the poor fields of Monaghan. I’m an Irishman right enough and a proud one at that, but Ireland as distinct from her people is nothing to me; and the man who is bubbling over with love and enthusiasm for Ireland and yet can pass unmoved through our streets and witness all the wrong and the suffering, the shame and the degradation brought upon the people of Ireland -aye, brought by Irishmen upon Irishmen and women, without burning to end it, is in my opinion, a fraud and a liar in his heart, no matter how he loves that combination of chemical elements he is pleased to call Ireland.

41. **Pat Waters sings The Breakers Yard of Stone** down to line “ Said they’d follow him through hell”, accompanied by visuals.

42. **Drama – Court Martial in Dublin Castle Hospital**

James Connolly is court-martialled propped up in his hospital.

Major: Does the prisoner wish to reply to this charge?

Connolly: I do not wish to make any defence except against charges of wanton cruelty to prisoners. These trifling allegations that have been made, if they record facts that really happened, deal only with the almost unavoidable incidents of a hurried uprising against long established authority, and nowhere show evidence of set purpose to wantonly injure unarmed persons.

(short consultation between Major and Officer)

Major: The Court has decided that these charges are irrelevant and will not be placed against the prisoner. On the substantive charge of playing a leading role in an
illegal insurrection against His Majesty’s Forces in Ireland does the prisoner wish to reply?

Connolly: We went out to break the connection between this country and the British Empire, and to establish an Irish republic. We believe that the call we then issued to the people of Ireland was a nobler call, in a holier cause, than any call issued to them during the war, having any connection with the war. Believing that the British Government has no right in Ireland, never had any right in Ireland, and never can have any right in Ireland, the presence, in any one generation of Irishmen, of even a respectable minority, ready to die to affirm that truth, makes that government forever a usurpation and a crime against human progress. I personally thank God that I have lived to see the day when thousands of Irish men and boys, and hundreds of Irish women and girls, were ready to affirm that truth, and to attest it with their lives if need be.

Major: Very well, that concludes the business of the Court.

Connolly: Major, could a copy of the Court Martial proceedings be given to my wife Lillie Connolly?

Major: You will have to make a formal application to the Headquarters Irish Command. It is outside the remit of this court to make such a decision.

Connolly: I understand.

Officer: The decision of this court will be conveyed to you this afternoon.

(Major and Officer leave)

Fade

Pat Waters continues with “Breakers Yard of Stone”

43. Drama - Hospital, Dublin Castle early hours of 12th May.
James Connolly is visited by Lillie and Nora,

Nurse: It has been an honour. Now you’ll look a bit better for your family.

(enter Lillie and Nora)

Lillie: Oh James.

(Lillie holds his hand)

Connolly: Well, Lillie, I suppose you know what this means?

Lillie: Oh no, James. Oh no!

Connolly: Yes lovie. I fell asleep for the first time tonight and they wakened me up at eleven and told me I was to die at dawn.

Nora: No papa, no.

(Nora takes Connolly’s other hand)

Lillie: But your beautiful life, James, your beautiful life!

Connolly: Wasn’t it a full life, Lillie, and isn’t this a good end?

(Lillie weeps uncontrollably)

Nora: Oh mama.

Connolly: Look, Lillie, please don’t cry. Your tears will unman me.

Nora: Please mama.

Connolly: Put your hand down on the bed.

(Nora puts her hand down on the bed)

That’s a copy of my statement to the Court Martial. Try and get it out.

(Nora takes piece of paper)

Nora: I have it papa.

Connolly: How are the wains?

Nora: They’re all missing you papa but they’re healthy.

Connolly: Kiss them for me Nono.
Nora: I’ll look after things. Don’t you worry.

Connolly: I could always depend on you Nono. Lillie, William will organise something from the Union. They’ll help you get settled again.

Lillie: But it won’t mean anything now.

Connolly: Please do as I say Lillie. I need to know you will.

Nora: She will, won’t you mama.

Soldier: I’m sorry but the time is up.

Lillie: Oh please let me stay.

Soldier: I’m sorry we have to end the visit now.

(Lillie grips James in one final embrace and then the soldier with Nora have to pull her away. Nora turns and runs back to her father’s side)

Nora: Goodbye papa. I love you.

Connolly: Look after Lillie for me Nono, and don’t forget we shall rise again.

(Nora kisses James and then soldier ushers Nora out)

44. Pat Waters sings the last verse and chorus of The Breakers Yard of Stone, accompanied by visuals.

The End
Twelve Days In May

By Frank Allen

A Play for the stage in three acts

July 2009
TWELVE DAYS IN MAY

Prologue Scene 1

(Country Road outside Dundalk late April 1916. Nora and Ina walking in hot sunshine)

Nora: I’ll have to rest a while Ina. These blisters are torturing me.

Ina: Your shoes are finished. Poor Nono.

Nora: What did the last sign say?

Ina: Dublin 35 miles. God they’re going to bleed.

Nora: Just for five minutes. We’ve got to get back and help in the fighting.

Ina: Damn the military for taking the railway.

Nora: Do you think they’re still alive?

Ina: Who?

Nora: Papa and Roddy.

Ina: Don’t say that Nono.

Nora: And poor Mama, what is she going through? We better get back.

Ina: Look Nono, the field, it’s freshly ploughed.

Nora: Will we, it might ease my feet?

(Ina also takes off her shoes and stockings and they climb over the gate and run through the freshly ploughed earth. They whoop with joy but then we hear the booming sounds of artillery fire and the girls stop in their tracks)

Ina: Is that out at sea?

Nora: No that’s coming from Dublin. Come on we better get back.
(The girls leave the field and put back on their stockings and shoes)

**Prologue Scene 2**

(Four stretcher bearers under armed guard by British soldiers carry their wounded leader James Connolly though Dublin streets)

Citizen Army Man: Could I get some water for Commandant Connolly?

Soldier 1: Commandant Connolly? He’s no Commandant, he’s a slimy Shinner, that’s all he is.

Citizen Army Man: He’s very ill, can I get him a drink?

Soldier 2: Are you ‘ard of ‘earing. I said move it, your bastardin’ snipers haven’t surrendered yet.

(They carry the stretcher on and the soldiers watch all around them)

**Prologue Scene 3**

(Office of Irish Independent. Owner William Martin Murphy finds the paper editor Tim Harrington in his office)

Harrington: Mr. Murphy.

Murphy: Tim, how did you get in? The army held me up for nearly an hour. I told them I owned The Irish Independent. I even showed them the keys but they said that they wouldn’t take responsibility for my safety. They said insurgents had taken over The Independent building.

Harrington: I’m here since Friday. I haven’t gone home. The rebels were here alright but they didn’t damage anything. Look they even left food.
Murphy: Thank God for small mercies. They’ve destroyed everything else. The town is in a shambles. The insurgents are in the GPO but the military blow my Imperial hotel and Clery’s to smithereens. I’ll make sure they compensate me in full.

Harrington: Did you see this?

Murphy: The Proclamation of the Irish Republic.

Harrington: They have it posted up on every lamp-post across the city.

Murphy: Our gallant allies in Europe. They were in league with Germany you know.

Harrington: Did you see who signed it?

Murphy: James Connolly. I thought that we’d have a little peace when Larkin left for America but Connolly is more dangerous. He’s an out and out communist.

Harrington: Have you been in touch with the Castle?

Murphy: Those idiots are to blame you know. They allowed armed bands drill in the streets for months and march right up to the Castle gates. They looked on while their leaders preached sedition. Birrel wasn’t even in Dublin and Nathan’s totally out of his depth. How soon can we get the Independent out? The people are clamouring for news.

Harrington: If we can get enough staff in tomorrow maybe Tuesday.

Murphy: O.K. I’ll expect a newspaper on Tuesday and I want to contribute to your editorial.

Prologue Scene 4
(Army HQ Parkgate Street, Desk Sergeant Kirby reads the opening of General Sir John Maxwell’s letter back to him)


Saturday 29 April 1916. Dear Mr. Asquith, Brigadier General H.M. Lowe today obtained the written unconditional surrender of the rebels from their leaders, who were headquartered in the General Post Office in Sackville Street since Easter Monday. In view of the gravity of the Rebellion and its connection with German intrigue and propaganda and in view of the loss of life

Maxwell: No, say great loss of life

Secretary: Yes General Maxwell.

Maxwell: Great loss of life and destruction of property resulting there from, the General Officer Commanding in Chief, Irish Command, considers it imperative to inflict the most severe sentences on the organisers of this detestable Rising and on the Commanders who took an actual part in the fighting which occurred.

Last paragraph…

Secretary: Yes General.

Maxwell: It is hoped that these examples will be sufficient to act as a deterrent to intriguers and to bring home to them that the murder of His Majesty’s subjects or other acts calculated to imperil the safety of the realm will not be tolerated.

Yours sincerely etc.

Secretary: Ready for signing General.

Maxwell: Good man Kirby, make sure that gets away this evening. Must keep the Prime Minister informed.
Secretary: Will do General Maxwell.

Maxwell: I suppose I must set up Courts Martials next. Go through the formalities. Bloody nuisance. If this happened in Africa we’ve have hung a few dozen by now.

**Prologue Scene 5**

(Officer’s Hospital Dublin Castle. Nurse Sullivan pulls a sheet over James Connolly’s now caged leg. A Royal Army Medical Corps officer stands on guard in the room and Surgeon Tobin enters.)

Tobin: How is the patient?

Nurse: Very weak. I’ve just dressed the wound. His ankle is shattered and he’s lost a lot of blood.

Tobin: His name?

Nurse: General James Connolly.

Connolly: Jim Connolly will do fine.

Tobin: Forgive me Jim, I didn’t mean to be rude. Let me have a look at you.

(Surgeon Tobin takes off dressing and looks at the wound)

Christ, how are you able to talk man, you ought to be howling in pain.

Connolly: Howling takes energy; mine’s spent.

Tobin: You’ll need surgery tomorrow. I’ll get you something for the pain.

Connolly: Thanks.

Nurse: You’re an easy patient. Have you a family?

Connolly: A wife and six children.

Nurse: They don’t know you’re here.
Connolly: No, could you let them know for me.

Nurse: They won’t allow me.

Tobin: Rules.

Connolly: Sorry.

Tobin: No need to be sorry man. You just rest now. Now Nurse Sullivan if you could dress that leg again and I’ll give Jim some morphine.

(Nurse dresses his wound and Tobin gives Connolly an injection.)

Nurse: He’s a very brave man. He’s suffered terribly.

Tobin: Gangrene has set in. It has started to spread.

Nurse: What can you do?

Tobin: There is new medicine that might curtail it but I might have to send to London for it. Every day is crucial with him now. I’ll operate on him tomorrow. He should rest now. Morphine will ease his pain temporarily but it could disturb his mental well-being. Keep a close eye on him.

(Tobin exits)

Nurse: (to Officer) Call me if he wakens.

(Nurse Sullivan exits leaving the RAMC Officer guarding Connolly. He looks at the patient for a moment and then sits on a chair.

Connolly’s first child Mona (12), now deceased appears beside his bed.)

Mona: Daddy. I’m here with you.

Connolly: Is that you Mona?

Mona: Yes Daddy, it’s me Mona.

Connolly: But you left us darling.

Mona: No I am here with you now Daddy.
Connolly: Poor pet I broke my promise to you.

Mona: Promise?

Connolly: I never brought you to America luvvie.

Mona: But I was there Daddy. I was in America.

Connolly: You were.

Mona: Yes with Mama and Nono and the girls and little Roddy.

Connolly: No Mona I counted the children at Ellis Island and you were missing and Ina ran to me and told me about the fire.

Mona: I know about the fire but I was still there with you. In Troy.

Connolly: You were in Troy with us Mona?

Mona: 76 Ingalls Avenue. That was where we lived.

Connolly: Yes, yes, yes Ingalls Avenue and you were there?

Mona: Do you remember the grey squirrels in the garden?

Connolly: The squirrels.

Mona: And I loved the pear trees in the back.

Connolly: Yes, yes we had pear trees, and you remember them Mona.

Mona: I remember everything Daddy.

Connolly: My little one.

Officer: Nurse. Nurse.

(Officer calls out to Nurse Sullivan who hurries in)

He’s talking all the time.

Nurse: Are you alright Jim?

Connolly; Is Mona gone home?

Nurse: Just try and rest Jim. Get some sleep.

(Nurse wipes his brow)
Now Jim, try sleep. (to Officer) It’s the morphine.

ACT 1 Scene1

(William O’Brien’s House Belvedere Place. Lillie Connolly is surrounded by two of her daughters, Maire (17) and Fiona (8).

(Maire is combing Fiona’s hair)

Maire: Stop jumping Fiona.

Fiona: You were hurting me.

Lillie: Be careful with her love.

Maire: I didn’t do anything, she won’t stay easy.

Lillie: Let your sister comb your hair luvvie.

Fiona: I can do it myself.

Lillie: Fiona!

Maire: Can I go find Edie Mama?

Lillie: No I need you here darling. Edie should be back by now. There’s a newspaper shop on Dorset Street.

Maire: I wish we were back in Belfast, I don’t like it here.

Fiona: Can we go back Mama?

Lillie: Not till we find out about father. We can’t go anywhere until we find out about your father.

Maire: What about school?
Lillie: You’ll get back to school but at the moment I don’t know where your brother or your sisters or your daddy is.

(enter a distraught Edie with a copy of the Daily Sketch)

Lillie: What’s wrong?

(a hysterical Edie hands the paper to Lillie)

Lillie: Oh no Edie.

(Lillie lets the Daily Sketch newspaper fall to the ground. Edie holds her mother while Maire picks up the paper and reads aloud)

Maire: Rebel leader James Connolly dies from injuries. Daddy’s…

Lillie: He’s gone, gone forever.

(Maire and Fiona start to sob and gather round Edie and Lillie)

Edie: I dreamt that last night mama. I dreamt I saw Papa’s body and he was lifeless.

Maire: Could that be Mama?

Lillie: I don’t know. (To Fiona) Come here luvvie.

Edie: I tried to call him but he was just lying there. I screamed at him to answer but he never moved.

Lillie: When he left with Roddy I knew, I knew in my heart I’d never see him again.

He smiled back at me but I was terrified inside.

Fiona: Is Roddy dead too?

Lillie: No, no Roddy is not dead. Roddy is safe.

Maire: But how do you know that?

(just then Nora and Ina enter)

Nora: (Rushes to embrace her mother) Mama. What’s wrong? What’s happened?

Lillie: I thought I’d never see you again. Oh Thank God Ina you’re both safe.
Maire: Daddy’s dead.

(Nora takes the newspaper off Maire)

Nora: This is not true. Papa is still alive, he’s injured and in hospital.

Lillie: But it says.

Ina: No we stayed with Kathleen Ryan in Clontarf last night and she told us. Papa is alive, I’m certain.

Lillie: Is he badly hurt? What hospital is he in?

Nora: They think he is in the Red Cross Hospital in Dublin Castle.

Lillie: Oh girls you’ve lifted my heart. I thought my life was over.

Ina: Look Mama we bought some bread and cheese.

Lillie: Did you hear anything about Roddy?

Nora: They said he was arrested and is in prison.

Lillie: But he’s alive, he’s safe.

Ina: Yes Mama Roddy’s a tough boy.

Lillie: He left with your father on Good Friday and I haven’t seen him since.

Edie: He’ll be alright Mama, don’t worry.

Ina: We walked all the way from Dundalk. Nono’s feet are badly blistered.

Lillie: Boil some water for your sisters. You must be famished?

(Edie exits)

Nora: Just tired. Mrs. O’Brien is so kind to let us stay here.

Maire: There’s a room for us Nono, you Edie, Ina and me. Mama keeps Fiona with her.

Nora: How is little Kitten?

(Nora hugs Fiona)

Will you show me upstairs?
Fiona: Can I Mama?

Lillie: Yes luvvie, you rest Nora and I’ll find some ointment for your feet.

(Fiona, Maire and Nora go upstairs)

Ina: When I change my clothes I’ll go up to Dublin Castle to find Papa.

Lillie: No, no don’t Ina, they’ll send you to prison as well.

Ina: No they can’t Mama, they don’t know me.

Lillie: I heard the police were looking for Nora.

Ina: But if I can find out how Papa is, wouldn’t that be good?

Lillie: But be very careful lass.

Ina: I’ll just clean myself up.

Lillie: Will I ever see him again darling?

Ina: Of course you will. You’ve got to be our brave little mama again.

(Ina hugs Lillie and then exits leaving Lillie alone)

ACT 1 Scene 2

(Dublin Castle Prison Hospital. Captain Stanley welcomes Capuchin Priest Father Aloysius)

Stanley: Thanks for calling Father. The prisoner was very anxious to see you.

Father A: Just doing my duty Captain. This is James Connolly.

Stanley: He’s very ill, awful leg wound but his mind is clear.

Father A: I’ll speak to him now once we’re alone.

Stanley: The guard must remain Father.

Father A: If there are soldiers in the room I cannot do my work as a priest.

Stanley: I have been given orders that Connolly must be constantly under armed guard.
Father A: Confession is an important and sacred duty that demands privacy and I cannot go on with it in the presence of a soldier.

Stanley: The situation is outside my authority. The General has insisted.

Father A: I have already given my word that I would not carry political information.

Stanley: I respect that Father Aloysius but…

Father A: Well if my word is not seen as sufficient or reliable you had better get another priest.

Stanley: I'll see if we can find General Lowe.

(Exit Captain Stanley and Father Aloysius leaving Connolly and RAMC officer)

Connolly: He’s a feisty old bugger isn’t he?

Officer: He was very annoyed. I can understand.

Connolly: Maybe he has a Mauser hidden in his habit.

Officer: No they even search the priests.

Connolly: What about the bishops?

Officer: I’ve never seen a bishop.

Connolly: You should count your blessings.

Officer: How’s the pain now?

Connolly: Bad enough. That’s war for you.

Officer: I’m sorry.

(Enter Captain Stanley and Father Aloysius)

Stanley: You can wait outside until Father is finished.

(Exit Captain Stanley and RAMC Officer)

Connolly: Thanks for coming back.
Father A: I’m Father Aloysius from the Capuchin Order. I have given my word I would only act as a priest and not in any political capacity.

Connolly: I know that Father. You would not get this privilege otherwise and, anyway, it is as a priest I want to see you. I have heard about the brave work of the priests and the nuns during the week.

Father A: The people have suffered terribly especially up near our church.

Connolly: I’m sorry to hear that. Father I do not regret what I have done.

Father A: I haven’t come here to condemn you. You are a soldier and you followed your beliefs. Do your family know you’re here?

Connolly: No, they must be terribly worried.

Father A: I’ll be seeing General Maxwell in the Phoenix Park tomorrow. I’ll talk to him about your family.

Connolly: Thanks. That’s what’s really worrying me.

Father A: Your wife and children.

Connolly: I’ve put them through so much. Was I wrong Father?

Father A: Did you love them?

Connolly: More than life itself but I’m no use to them now.

Father A: But you will recover and then you can look after them.

Connolly: No Father, I’m a gonner, they’ll shoot all the leaders.

Father A: Surely not.

Connolly: They will shoot us and I have nothing to leave Lillie and the children. Forty eight years on this earth and nothing to leave.

Father A: They won’t see it like that James.

Connolly: Will they forgive me, do you think?

Father A: Don’t fret about that now. Would you like me to hear your confession?
Connolly: Yes.

  (Father Aloysius hears Connolly’s confession.)

ACT 1 Scene 3

  (Dublin Castle. William Martin Murphy enters through gate as John Dillon, senior member of the Irish Parliamentary Party is about to leave.)

  Murphy: Dillon, My God, have they given you bed and board inside now?

  Dillon: What do mean by that Murphy?

  Murphy: Well you seem to live in Dublin Castle, you’re never out of the place. I suppose you’re measuring up your new office!

  Dillon: Do you always have to be facetious?

  Murphy: Actually Dillon, you’re the very man I’m looking for.

  Dillon: Is that right now and how can I be of service to you?

  Murphy: You are still a Member of Parliament I take it or have you done the honourable thing and resigned?

  Dillon: Why would I resign Murphy?

  Murphy: I would have thought that was obvious. You are a Member of the Government in waiting, you’ve had the ear of the Chief Secretary and Under Secretary for years now and between you you’ve allowed a rabble rise up and destroy this city.

  Dillon: Easy on Murphy, I have done nothing of the sort. I am as outraged as you are about what has happened but I have no power over the Castle. Nathan might
consult me from time to time but Home rule on the Statute Book and Home Rule in reality are quite different animals.

Murphy: And what were yourself and that amadain Redmond doing when all this was going on? Armed militias marching up to the gates of the Castle last week and the Germans running guns into Kerry. Have you any idea at all what’s happening in the country?

Dillon: Murphy you’ve been sniping at the Party for years in your newspaper but time was when you were glad of the Irish Party.

Murphy: Haven’t I every right to snipe. Look what’s happened to my businesses. My hotel is now a load of rubble and Clery’s is also destroyed. The business community are horrified at the absolute negligence of the government and you’re going to have to pay for this, are you hearing me?

Dillon: You know right well I am not the government.

Murphy: But you’ll present our case for immediate compensation in Westminster, oh by God you will. I intend to see to it and you can tell Redmond that William Martin Murphy is on his tail.

Dillon: Redmond is in London.

Murphy: Is he now, while Dublin, the seat of his so called parliament, is burning. Well you can send him a telegram.

Dillon: I’ll convey your views but the country has more pressing problems in my opinion.

Murphy: That’s where you’re wrong Dillon. Commerce is the life blood of this nation and when commerce is paralysed politics is doomed. Is Nathan inside?

Dillon: Yes I’ve just left him.
Murphy: Well he won’t be Under Secretary for much longer if the Dublin Chamber of Commerce have their say. Good day to you.

(Murphy goes into the Castle and Ina Connolly enters the gate)

Ina: Excuse me sir, could you tell me where the Red Cross Hospital is?

Dillon: Up through the yard there. Ask one of the soldiers.

(Dillon exits through gate and Ina walks on)

Ina: I want to visit my father.

Soldier: Who is your father?

Ina: James Connolly.

Soldier: Is he a soldier?

Ina: Well yes but he’s a prisoner?

Soldier: Your father’s a prisoner. Well you won’t be allowed see him then.

Ina: Not even for a minute.

Soldier: Strict orders, now girl you better go home before you get into trouble.

(Ina turns away in disappointment but as she approaches the gate she sees Nurse Sullivan and runs back to her.)

Ina: Would you know anything about my father?

Nurse: What’s his name?

Ina: James Connolly, they said he was wounded and was here in the Castle.

Mama is terribly worried about him.

Nurse: Well tell your Mama that he is very weak for loss of blood and that he is not improving.

Ina: Oh God. Will she be allowed see him.

Nurse: I can’t tell you anymore my dear. That’s all I know.
Ina: Well could you tell Papa that we are staying in town in William O’Brien’s house.

Nurse: Here, write down the address and if they allow your mother visit I will pass on the address.

Ina: Thanks Nurse.

Nurse: Will I tell him your name?

Ina: Ina.

(Nurse walks on and Ina exits the Castle)

Act 1 Scene 4

(Army Headquarters Phoenix Park)

(General Maxwell is reading a telegram)

Maxwell: Mr. Dillon, pleasure to meet you.

Dillon: Likewise General Maxwell.

Maxwell: Dreadful business this last while. Most upsetting for your party and your leader.

Dillon: Very damaging indeed. The overwhelming mass of the Irish people looked upon this Rising with feelings of detestation and horror.

Maxwell: Of course you’re right. Dublin was always seen as the second city of the Empire. I can assure you that the perpetrators of this sordid affair will be punished with a severity, which will make any repetition impossible for generations to come. Just received this telegram from His Majesty.

Dillon: (reading) Now that the recent lamentable outbreak has finally been quelled, I wish to express to my gallant troops in Ireland, to the Royal Irish Constabulary
and to the Dublin Metropolitan Police, my deep sense of the wholehearted 
devotion to duty and spirit of self-sacrifice with which throughout they have 
acted.

Maxwell: When you your work is acknowledged by His Majesty it only makes you 
redouble your efforts to serve King and Country, don’t you agree?

Dillon: With respect General it’s easy writing messages from the comfort of Windsor 
Castle but King George hasn’t been trapped in his home for a whole week like 
I have been. I would urge caution General. I have first hand knowledge of 
what’s going on here on the ground.

Maxwell: I don’t quite follow.

Dillon: There is a serious danger that severe military oppression could spark off 
wholesale disaffection.

Maxwell: But Martial Law has already been declared by the British Cabinet Mr. Dillon.

Dillon: So far the feeling of the population in Dublin is against the Sinn Feiners but a 
reaction might easily be created. I am urging the government not to execute 
any of the prisoners.

Maxwell: The Secretary of War has given me my instructions. I don’t really have an 
alternative.

Dillon: I implore upon you General, that policy is doomed. I have conveyed my 
feelings to Mr. Redmond in London.

Maxwell: You are asking me for clemency. Open rebellion occurred in Ireland, Mr. 
Dillon, at a time when the Empire is engaged in a desperate war involving the 
safety of the Realm.

Dillon: But many of those involved thought that they were just going out on normal 
manoeuvres.
Maxwell: Indeed. Supposing that the bulk of them believed that they were called out for manoeuvres only. Does that exonerate them for keeping out when they saw what was? I think not. Dublin is still smouldering and the blood of the victims of this mad rebellion is hardly dry.

Dillon: How long do you think martial law will be in place General?

Maxwell: After I have finished with Dublin I propose to deal with the rest of the country.

Dillon: I’ll have to make contact with the Prime Minister.

Maxwell: I haven’t heard anything disapproving from Whitehall and until I do I shall continue to carry out my duty.

Dillon: I fully understand your responsibilities General. It’s not easy for any of us. You do understand my concerns.

Maxwell: Absolutely. And I would be obliged if you would keep me informed of how things are on the ground so to speak.

Dillon: I will.

(Dillon exits as Secretary enters)

Maxwell: Oh I despair of this country. The Irish people are easy prey to venal politicians like Dillon. I need to get out another public notice Kirby.

Secretary: Right Sir.

Maxwell: Passengers Leaving Ireland. I General Maxwell hereby order that no person shall embark as a passenger on board any vessel except at one of the following ports: Dublin (North Wall), Kingstown, Belfast, Greenore. Each passenger must produce satisfactory credentials or proofs of identity to the Military Embarkation Officer or Police Authorities at the place of intended embarkation and give valid reasons for the intended journey. Today’s date. If you can get those printed I must go to Richmond Barracks.
Secretary: Yes General.

(Maxwell exits)

ACT 1 Scene 5

(William O’Brien’s House, Belvedere Place. Ina finds Lillie kneeling in prayer.)

Ina: Praying for Papa.
Lillie: Yes darling. It’s all I can do.
Ina: When you pray Mama, what do you ask for?
Lillie: To watch over your father and that I’ll be allowed see him again. And for Roddy. God knows where he is now.
Ina: You always had great faith hadn’t you?
Lillie: Faith in God but God isn’t holding my husband. He’s in the hands of the English.
Ina: Nono’s gone a long time.
Lillie: She heard that the Irish Independent would come out today. I hope the police don’t take her.
Ina: Nora’s too clever to be caught.
Lillie: But somebody might point her out. You don’t know people.
Ina: I hope we get word from the Castle soon. The nurse promised she would pass on our address.
Lillie: But she said he wasn’t improving. Maybe he won’t last at all. That’s my worry now that I won’t ever see him alive again.
Ina: Whisht, Mama, don’t talk like that. They will have good doctors there.

Lillie: For their own officers maybe. Why would they care about treating your father? They’d prefer to shoot him.

Ina: No Mama, they have to treat him, he’s their prisoner. The nurse was a good woman.

Lillie: Have they all eaten breakfast? Did you take porridge?

Ina: Yes Mama and Edie’s looking after the others. Did you take anything?

Lillie: Just a cup of tea. I’ve no appetite.

Ina: But you need nourishment Mama, it’s important you keep strong.

Lillie: I’ll be fine. I don’t know what we would have done without Mrs. O’Brien. How will I ever repay her?

Ina: She knows William and Papa were very close.

Lillie: James always relied on William O’Brien. When we were in America he’d never let a week go by without writing to William.

Ina: And he’s in jail now as well.

(Enter Nora)

Lillie: Is they’re any mention of your father?

Nora: No but there’s awful bad news Mama. Three of the leaders were shot yesterday.

Lillie: Oh no. Who did they shoot Nora?

Nora: Patrick Pearse, Thomas McDonagh and poor old Tom Clarke. I can’t believe it.

Ina: Show me.

Lillie: They’ll kill James too, that’s for definite now. Oh God.
Nora: No Mama, they can’t shoot papa. He’s an injured prisoner of war and there is a convention on that.

Lillie: No they will darling, they’ll see him as too dangerous. If they shot the other leaders they won’t spare your father.

Ina: Poor Muriel and her two little children.

Nora: And Patrick’s poor mother and Kathleen Clarke.

Lillie: May be Lord be with them now and ease their suffering.

Nora: We’ll have to do something Ina.

Ina: What can we do now?

Nora: We could rescue Papa.

Ina: How?

Nora: Well they allowed you into the Castle, we could get in.

Lillie: Stop that nonsense Nora.

Nora: But we could get him out. I could get help.

Ina: How would we get him out? The Castle is crawling with soldiers.

Nora: I have a gun.

Lillie: Where did you get a gun?

Nora: From father. He gave me a revolver to protect myself going up North.

Lillie: Nora, don’t do this to me. I’m out of my mind as it is.

Nora: But we must do something, he’s our father.

Lillie: Don’t you think I have lost enough? I lost Mona, burned alive when she was just twelve years of age and now your father. My only son is lost and if you go near the Castle with a gun they’ll shoot you too. Please Nora don’t bring me more sorrow, my heart won’t bear it.

Nora: Will he forgive us for letting him down Mama?
Ina: Father will understand, won’t he Mama?

Lillie: Yes darling. Now Nora promise me you’ll hide that gun. Promise me please.

Nora: I promise.

Lillie: Show me the paper luvvie.

Nora: When I was buying the newspaper Mama there was a big crowd gathered looking for news and I met one of the dockers who had been on strike and when he saw me he knew I was James Connolly’s daughter. He grabbed my hand and held on to it as though he was holding onto something of James Connolly. “We were kneeling in the gutters begging for work. Now we can stand up and look any man in the face. Now we have the right to work. Now we have the dignity of man again.” Wasn’t that a lovely thing to say Mama?

Lillie: Nora you should write that down for your father and give it to him if they let us visit him. That would perk him up.

Ina: Yes do that Nono.

Lillie: That man will never forget will he?

Ina: What man?

Lillie: William Martin Murphy. He owns this paper.

Nora: Show me. (reads) - All sensible and loyal people deplore the insane and criminal rising of last week. We care little what happens to the leaders.-

Lillie: He has never forgiven James or Jim Larkin for the strike.

Nora: And we’ll never forgive him for starving the children of Dublin.

Ina: How can he call his paper The Irish Independent?

Nora: Because their Ireland is not our Ireland. Look tomorrow he calls for an Intercession Day. - In every Church and Chapel tomorrow prayers will be offered for the victory of our soldiers and a collection made for the relief and
comfort of our sick and wounded at the front - He’s not calling for prayers for papa or Patrick Pearse.

Lillie: Your father wouldn’t want his prayers. Edie’s kept you some porridge Nora. Go in and get it while it’s still hot.

(Nora leaves for kitchen.)

Ina: Are you alright?

Lillie: Keep an eye on Nora will you? She’s so hot-headed you wouldn’t know what she’ll try.

Nora: She won’t do anything. Don’t worry.

(Ina leaves for the kitchen leaving Lillie who again kneels to pray. The lights dim and we are now on a Dublin Street in 1887 where a young woman Lillie Reynolds is waiting for a Tram. James Connolly 19, in British Army Uniform comes to join her)

James: Was that the tram for Kingstown?

Lillie: I think so. I just missed it by seconds. The driver wouldn’t stop.

James: I’m glad he didn’t.

Lillie: Why?

James: Are you always so lucky?

Lillie: Lucky?

James: Yes, lucky! If you had arrived a few seconds earlier then you would now be on your way to Kingstown.

Lillie: But I wanted to go to Kingstown.

James: And now your tardiness has rewarded you by meeting me.

Lillie: I think I’d prefer to be on the tram.

James: Is it the uniform? You don’t like fraternising with the enemy.
Lillie: You have a funny accent.
James: Ay, I have right enough. What’s your name?
Lillie: The DMP wouldn’t ask me that.
James: You’re a sharp one surely.
Lillie: Lillie is my name.
James: Well James Connolly with the funny accent is right pleased to meet you Lillie. Are you from round here?
Lillie: I’m from Wicklow but I work in Rathmines.
James: I love Dublin don’t you?
Lillie: Yes but I love to be near the sea.
James: Can I sit with you out to Kingstown?
Lillie: But it might be another half an hour.
James: Well walk with me to Donnybrook then?
Lillie: But you’re a stranger.
James: And you’re lucky. Come on take a chance.

(Lillie takes his arm and they walk off)

ACT 1 Scene 6

(Dublin Castle Hospital)

Tobin: The surgery will only increase the pain but it was necessary.
Connolly: Bad was it.
Tobin: The bones were shattered but that’s not the worst.
Connolly: Is there worse than shattered?
Tobin: Because of the delay in operating gangrene has set in.
Connolly: I had guessed that. Will you have to use the saw?

Tobin: I just hope I can curtail it spreading. I still hope to save your leg.

(Connolly bursts out laughing)

What did I say?

Connolly: Forgive me Doctor but you looked so earnest. You want to save my leg but the Army would prefer to shoot me?

Tobin: Very different vocations right enough. The soldier and the doctor. You know I’m twenty four years in the medical profession and I’ve never treated anybody like you.

Connolly: Like me?

Tobin: I don’t know any other man who’d laugh in your condition. Where do you get your courage?

Connolly: You don’t want to see me crying now do you?

Tobin: You’re very stoic.

Connolly: If you set out on a battle you’re likely to get hurt. Many a soldier lay dying on a battlefield for days. They weren’t brought to this hotel.

Tobin: Hotel!

Connolly: After I got injured last week, I could see that some of the men were downcast and when they patched me up a bit I asked them to wheel me out into the front hall to be back in the thick of the action with the boys. They handed me a book to read, The Hound of the Baskervilles and even though I don’t smoke I asked for a cigarette. The lads gathered around me, seeing me reading and smoking, and gave me a cheer and I said “Well men, this is revolution deluxe”. Morale is very important.
Tobin: The Hound of the Baskervilles, Arthur Conan Doyle. He’s from your town isn’t he?

Connolly: Ay, another Edinburgh man.

Tobin: How could you read a book with all that shooting going on around you?

Connolly: I couldn’t, it was all an act. Anyway I read the book years ago, it’s about evil landlords. It reminded me of the enemy.

Tobin: He’s good. Do you like detective stories?

Connolly: I like detective stories; I’m not too keen on detectives though.

Tobin: Have they been on your case?

Connolly: Always making enquiries about me, very considerate lot.

Tobin: Who are your favourite writers?

Connolly: Oh lots, Dickens, Shakespeare, Robbie Burns. I love history and biographies. I read a lot of political books when I was younger and books on political economy. Karl Marx and Engels.

Tobin: What is your favorite Shakespearian play?

Connolly: I loved Corialanus, all the politics and treachery but I think my real favorite was Measure for Measure.

Tobin: I never saw that one.

Connolly: I never saw any of them. I could never afford a ticket.

Tobin: Now that’s a tragedy.

Connolly: But I could imagine them all.

Tobin: You must have had good English teachers at school?

Connolly: I’d very little schooling; I went to work in a bakery at nine.

Tobin: No wonder you like Dickens.

Connolly: He was for the underdog, gave them a voice.
Tobin: I liked Hard Times.

Connolly: Story of my life.

Tobin: You should have been in music hall.

Connolly: And be booed off stage. No thanks. Mind you I’ve been heckled on many a street corner.

Tobin: They didn’t like your message then.

Connolly: Sometimes my accent didn’t help. Other times they’d call you a Catholic, then at times they’d say you were a Communist and anti-Catholic. It was hard to win.

Tobin: But it never stopped you.

Connolly: I was born stubborn.

Tobin: What’s wrong?

Connolly: Nothing.

Tobin: I don’t have to be Sherlock Holmes to know you’re in pain. I’ll get you something.

Connolly: Thank God for Conan Doyle so.

(Tobin gives Connolly a morphine injection)

Tobin: Now you should get some ease. You need to sleep now.

Connolly: A Midsummer’s Night Dream eh.

Tobin: Eh, you’re far too sharp for me James Connolly. Good night.

Connolly: Good night Doctor.

Tobin: (to RAMC officer) Call the nurse if he needs anything.

Officer: I will.

(lights dim and we see the young James Connolly, Lillie and Nora)

Lillie: You look disappointed.
Connolly: Ah there’s no end to the terrible things they say about me Lillie. It makes me angry because I know they say those things because I am a socialist.

Nora: A socialist, daddy, what’s that?

Connolly: A socialist, Nono, is a person who wants to change things so that everyone — every man, every woman, every boy and girl, will have enough to eat, and that no little boy or girl will have to go barefoot, or without clothes. That’s what a socialist is, Nono.

Nora: But everyone should want that, have you told everyone?

Lillie: What are you laughing at?

Connolly: I was so angry today at all the jibes but trust my little girl to make me smile again. You are like a young man who told me last week that when he first became a socialist he was afraid to fall asleep for fear the revolution would begin before he woke up.

Nora: What’s a revolution?

Connolly: We’ll require a revolution before we change things and have enough for everyone.

Nora: Let’s get a revolution.

Connolly: Good girl, we will. Come here to me luvvie, you’ve made my day.

Lillie: Come on in. I’ve got soup.

ACT 1 Scene 7

(Offices of the Irish Independent)

Harrington: Did you ever think we’d sell that many newspapers?

Murray: People can’t get enough bad news.
Harrington: We could have sold five times our normal circulation. Some of the newsboys were asking for a shilling a copy.

Murphy: I’m glad to see the spirit of enterprise alive in the youth.

Harrington: The staff has been outstanding. I couldn’t have asked for more dedication.

Murphy: Good, good, we can’t afford The Times getting a run on us.

Harrington: Two of our reporters have been arrested.

Murphy: Arrested. Who?

Harrington: Hendrick and Lawlor.

Murphy: Surely they’re not involved in this business.

Harrington: The two of them are in the Irish Volunteers.

Murphy: Damned idiots. You must keep this quiet Harrington. If that leaked out it would do untold damage.

Harrington: They never worked for us.

Murphy: Exactly.

Harrington: What about tomorrow’s editorial? Do want to sketch it out?

Murphy: No you write it, just refer to The Dublin Chamber’s meeting in the Mansion House next Monday. I want to put a rocket under Redmond and Dillon. Make them earn their corn.

(enter Father Aloysius)

Father A: William Martin Murphy.

Harrington: That’s the boss.

Murphy: Father, what can I do for you?

Father A: Be fair, report the truth, that’s what you can do for me.

Murphy: Have I not done that, is there a particular incident you refer to?
Father A: Yes there is. I work in Church Street. The military have murdered innocent civilians in North King Street and you don’t report it.

Harrington: We had heard something but it was unconfirmed.

Father A: Unconfirmed. Men, women and children slaughtered by drunken soldiers. Totally innocent families terrorised by the worst thugs you could imagine and only a few hundred yards from this office and you won’t print it.

Murphy: Listen Father…

Father A: No you listen Mr. Murphy. These people are my parishioners, it is my duty and honour to serve them. They are poor people totally helpless. They are not insurgents as you call them.

Murphy: We can’t print unconfirmed stories. That’s not how a professional newspaper works. Do you realise the effort it took to get our paper out this morning? And the people were grateful for news.

Father A: One-sided news. I have met many of the rebels and given many of them the last rites of the church. And those men showed far more nobility than the savages let loose on my parishioners.

Murphy: So you are defending insurrection?

Father A: I am a man of peace Mr. Murphy but I believe in justice. I recognise bravery and brutality when I see it.

Murphy: The majority of law-abiding citizens of this city abhor what these ruffians have done. My own businesses and property have been destroyed. You’ve called on me on a bad day if you are seeking sympathy for those that set out to bring this country and its commerce to its knees.

Father A: So the poor people in North King Street are not citizens in your view?
Harrington: Father, I can assure you that if you furnish me with details of what happened my reporters will investigate. I guarantee that.

Murphy: Does that assurance satisfy you?

Father A: I’ll write down a full report for you this evening and the names of the many witnesses.

Murphy: I look forward to your report.

(Father Aloysius exits leaving two dumbfounded onlookers)

Harrington: Will I ask the Castle about those incidents?

Murphy: You can but I wouldn’t believe too much coming out of the Castle.

ACT 1 Scene 8

(Belvedere Place)

Lillie: Is there any mention of your father?

Ina: None but there have been four more executions.

Lillie: Who does it say?

Ina: Joseph Plunkett, Edward Daly, Michael O’Hanrahan and William Pearse. Why did they shoot poor Willie Pearse, he wasn’t one of the leaders even?

Lillie: Those poor men and God be with their families. Mrs.Pearse has lost her two sons. God have mercy.

Ina: Mama it says that a young woman Miss Grace Gifford was allowed visit the Prison after midnight and that she married Joe Plunkett in the prison chapel just two hours before he was brought out and shot. Oh Mama I know Grace very well and her sister Muriel.
Lillie: Two young women widowed in the same week. Ina they’ll kill your father too, that’s for certain.

Ina: No Mama, don’t say that. He’s injured in hospital.

Lillie: No they will darling, they’ll show him no mercy. If they shot poor Willie Pearse.

(Enter Nora)

Nora: Mama, Mama a wonderful surprise. Close your eyes.

Lillie: I’m in no mood for games Nora.

Nora: But you must close your eyes Mama. I promise it will be worth it.

Ina: Mama’s upset. There were four more executions yesterday.

Nora: I know Mama but this is really good news. Just for a second Mama.

(Lillie closes her eyes and Nora goes back to the door)

Now Mama, look who’s come back.

Lillie: Roddy, oh Roddy son. Thanks be to God. I thought they’d shoot you too.

(Roddy runs and embraces his mother and Ina hugs him too)

Nora: Where are the others?

Lillie: Out in the garden helping Mrs.O’Brien. Call them in to see Roddy, Ina.

Nora: Isn’t it great to have Roddy back Mama?

Lillie: How bad was your father hurt?

Rory: His leg looked really bad and he was in great pain.

Nora: Could they not get him to a doctor?

Roddy: Jim Ryan gave him chloroform, he’s a medical student and one of the captured English soldiers was a doctor but they had no medicine.

Lillie: Oh God.

Lillie: Did they hurt you in prison?
Roddy: No it wasn’t bad except we were starving.

Lillie: You must be famished. I’ll make you up some dinner.

Nora: And there’s lovely vegetable soup still in the pot.

Roddy: Great.

(Enter Ina, Edie, Maire and Fiona)

All: Ah Roddy, Roddy.

(They all hug Roddy and Fiona hangs on to him)

Edie: Mama said they might shoot you.

Lillie: Don’t tell him that.

Maire: But we were all afraid, weren’t we mama?

Nora: But he’s back now.

Edie: Why did they release you?

Lillie: We read that they were shipping the prisoners to England.

Nora: Not anybody under 16.

Lillie: But I thought because of your father.

Roddy: I gave them a false name. I said that I was Robert Carney and that I was from Bangor, Co.Down.

Ina: Why did you give that name?

Roddy: I knew that if I said Dublin they could check up on me but they wouldn’t have as much information about the country.

Lillie: How were you arrested?

Roddy: On Thursday after papa was injured they asked the younger lads to leave. Papa insisted I leave and said that we would live to fight another day. I was sent to look up William O’Brien but when I met up with him a traitor pointed him out to the police and we were arrested?
Fiona: Did they put you in chains?

(all laugh)

Roddy: They handed us over to the army and they marched us up to Richmond Barracks. Some of the people threw rotten cabbages at us and the soldiers allowed them close enough to spit at us. They were chanting ‘traitors, traitors’, but we still felt good and that we were right.

Nora: Did you see any of The Citizen Army?

Roddy: Yes but they put me in a room with Tom Clarke and Sean MacDiarmada. Then they moved me.

Lillie: They shot poor Tom.

Roddy: Tom Clarke is dead!

Nora: Last Wednesday with Patrick Pearse and Thomas MacDonagh.

Roddy: Oh.

Ina: And there were four more men shot on Thursday.

Roddy: But papa is safe, isn’t he?

Nora: Yes he’s an injured prisoner and he’s covered by a war convention.

Roddy: That’s good Mama, isn’t it?

Lillie: I don’t know son, all we can do is pray.

( a letter is dropped in the letter box and Fiona runs out to see)

Nora: (taking the letter) It’s for Mrs. Connolly.

Lillie: Read it for me Nora.

Nora: Sunday 7th May, “If Mrs. Connolly would like to see her husband James Connolly, she should call to Dublin Castle on either Monday or Tuesday morning at 11.00am. Signed: Captain Stanley.”
Lillie: Oh thank God for answering my prayers. Is that what it says, Monday or Tuesday?

Nora: Yes, so we were right, papa will be safe.

Ina: How can you be sure?

Nora: Because it says Monday or Tuesday. It doesn’t sound urgent.

Maire: When will you go mama?

Lillie: Oh tomorrow. My heart would not hold out until Tuesday.

Fiona: Can I see Daddy?

Nora: That’s a good idea Mama, bring Fiona.

Lillie: But it didn’t say anything about children.

Nora: They won’t refuse his little baby.

Lillie: We’ll see in the morning. Oh I am grateful for this day. Roddy is safe and I can see your father tomorrow. Now let’s look after my starving boy.

(They all leave for the kitchen in high spirits)

ACT 1 Scene 9

(Hospital, Dublin Castle. Darkened Room. James Connolly sleeps being watched by RAMC Officer)

(Ellis Island 1903. Connolly paces up and down and then sees Immigration Officer approaching)

Official: You’re back again.

Connolly: Are you sure my family haven’t arrived? This is my fifth morning coming out to Ellis Island. They should have been here a week ago.
Official: There’s about fifty families coming through this morning but no Scottish family with six children.

Connolly: Not Scottish, they’re Irish.

Official: Irish. Oh. There’s lot of Irish in there. I saw one woman with five children, I think she was Irish.

Connolly: Six children. I have six children, five girls and a little boy.

Official: Wait here and I’ll check again. What did you say the name was?

Connolly: Connolly. Her name is Lillie Connolly.

(Official goes back inside and then a few moments later he returns with Lillie)

Connolly: Lillie, thank God you’re here.

Lillie: Oh James.

(She falls into his arms)

Connolly: Where are the wains?

Official: There still being checked in quarantine Mr. Connolly.

Lillie: James…Mona is dead.

Connolly: What?

Lillie: We’ve lost little Mona, she was burned in a fire.


(Lillie holds James and he cries out uncontrollably)

Official: I’m sorry Mam but you must return to your children.

(The official takes Lillie back inside building)

(Hospital Room Dublin Castle)
Connolly: No Lillie, not my little Mona.

Mona: Don’t cry daddy, no need to cry.

Connolly: Who’s that?

Mona: Mona daddy, it’s Mona.

Connolly: You’re here now Mona?

Mona: I’m here with you now Daddy, don’t cry. Please.

Connolly: But Lillie said she lost you in a fire.

Mona: I know.

Connolly: But where are you now Mona?

Mona: I’m with John and Mary.

Connolly: You’re with John and Mary.

Mona: Yes Grandad and Granny.

Connolly: They’re with you now.

Mona: They’re with me all the time. They send their love daddy.

Connolly: Are they alright there?

Mona: They’re fine. Grandad tells me to tell you he’s very proud of you.

Connolly: Proud. He’s proud.

Mona: They are both proud papa and I’m always with you. Just rest papa, just rest.

(Mona exits)

Officer: Are you o.k?

ACT 2 Scene1

(Army Headquarters Phoenix Park)
Maxwell: What time do I go to the Castle?

Secretary: You meet Captain Stanley at 1pm. Mr. Dillon and Father Aloysius are due here at 11.30am

Maxwell: The great coming together of Church and State.

Secretary: Brigadier Young sent a memo on the burials while you were in London.

Maxwell: What did he say?

Secretary: Will I read it?

Maxwell: Yes please.

Secretary: After each prisoner has been shot, a Medical Officer will certify that he is dead, and his body will be immediately removed to an ambulance, with a label pinned on his breast giving his name. When the ambulance is full, it will be sent to Arbour Hill Detention Barracks, entering by the gate at the Garrison Chapel. The party will then put the bodies close alongside one another in the grave (now being dug) cover them quickly with quicklime (ordered) and commence filling in the grave. One of the officers with his party is to keep a note of the position of each body in the grave taking the name from the label. A priest will attend for the funeral service.

Maxwell: I’ll call up to Arbour Hill tomorrow and check that site out.

(Knock on the door and Secretary goes to answer)

Secretary: Mr. Dillon and Father Aloysius, General.

Maxwell: You’re very welcome sir, Father.

Dillon: General this has got to end now.

Maxwell: To what are you referring?

Dillon: My party leader received assurances from the Prime Minister that there would be no more executions.
Maxwell: You’ve obviously been deceived. I’ve just returned from London where I gave a full report to the Cabinet. Mr. Asquith is fully supportive of my decisions.

Father A: General, the feeling among the working-classes in the city is becoming extremely bitter over these executions.

Maxwell: We are all fully aware of the great work your people are doing Father. The Prime Minister has asked me to pass on his thanks.

Dillon: I don’t think you’re hearing a word we’re saying.

Maxwell: I’m hearing every single word I assure you.

Father A: This feeling is strong even amongst those who had no sympathy whatsoever with the Sinn Feiners.

Dillon: When is this period of martial law going to end?

Maxwell: When Ireland is peaceful and law-abiding. Let me show you something.

(Maxwell calls for his Secretary)

Kirby, get me those casualty figures.

(Secretary finds file and hands it to Maxwell)

Secretary: That’s the file General.

Maxwell: Good. Now Mr. Dillon these are the hard facts, unpalatable as they may be for you. Excuse me Father. Military 521 injured, 124 killed; Civilians 794 injured, 180 killed. Over 1300 injured and over 300 killed and you ask me when martial law is to end?

Dillon: Those casualties will be nothing compared to what is to come if the people are stirred to hatred by your oppressive measures. It is quite clear to me that the military are not informing the Prime Minister of what is actually happening. Does he know that corpses have lain in houses and in streets for five days unburied?
Father A: That is true General Maxwell.
Maxwell: With respect the Prime Minister has a much greater war on his plate to give his attention to. However he is fully aware of the gravity of the rebellion here and its connection with German intrigue. He agrees with my position that it is imperative to inflict the most severe sentences on the known organisers. All the trials and sentences have been conducted, passed and carried out under the Defence of the realm Act.
Dillon: Well then Mr. Asquith gives a different message to Mr. Redmond. My leader has threatened to resign.
Maxwell: Again with respect the machinations of party politics are not my concern Mr. Dillon.
Dillon: What about the prisoners?
Maxwell: You have an issue about prisoners?
Dillon: Thousands of men have been sent to England and their families know nothing of their whereabouts.
Maxwell: They’ll be informed in time. At the moment my priority is to remove them from this jurisdiction. They’ll present no danger when they are under lock and key.
Father A: And how will their families survive? They are starving as it is.
Maxwell: The forces were screaming for men; they had a choice.
Dillon: You just don’t understand do you?
Maxwell: What I understand is that the Irish will never settle down to any sort of government, the only thing all Irishmen are united on is a keen desire to get everything they can out of the British.
Dillon: I intend to report your actions in parliament.
Maxwell: That remains your privilege Mr. Dillon.

Father A: General I have a request from Mrs. Pearse for the release of the bodies of her two sons for burial.

Maxwell: I’m afraid Father I cannot consent to your request. It is the Cabinet’s view that Irish sentimentality would turn these graves into martyr’s shrines to which annual processions would be made.

Dillon: Come on Father I’ll speak to Redmond about this, we’re obviously wasting our time here.

Maxwell: So sorry I couldn’t have been of greater assistance.

(exit Dillon and Father Aloysius)

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ACT 2 Scene2

(William O’Brien’s House, Belvedere Place)

(Ina picks up page and reads as Nora looks out the window)

Ina: “Tears sighs and prayers and unabating pain
Tears falling swift as drear November rain
Sighs from a heart surcharged with pain
Prayer, dear God, must my prayers be in vain.”

That’s beautiful Nono.

Nora: It’s how I feel. Helpless.

Ina: I know. I feel the same. Not being able to do anything but wait and afraid to read the paper for fear of seeing papa’s name on the list.

Nora: They’ll never shoot an injured man.
Ina: Do you really believe that or do you just say that for mama’s sake?

Nora: I don’t know anymore. They shot Major MacBride yesterday. Madame MacBride was very good to us when we were young. She often left groceries for mama, when papa was working for the Socialist Party and he received no wages. We would have gone hungry many a time without her.

Ina: She’s such a beautiful lady. Did you ever meet Major MacBride?

Nora: Once or twice only. He fought in the Boer War in Africa against the British. Now they’ve got their revenge.

Ina: If they are singling out their enemies then father is surely one of them.

Nora: Mama’s back.

(Nora let’s Lillie and Fiona in)

Well how is he?

Lillie: Oh girls your poor father. He’s not well; he can’t move his head off the pillow. His leg was badly damaged and it is covered in a cage to protect it. They are looking after him very well. He was full of praise for the nurses and the doctor. Gangrene has set in to his wounds and the doctor is trying to control that. He’s still in great pain.

Ina: Was he glad to see you Mama?

Lillie: He was and his eyes lit up when he saw Fiona. She held his hand for the entire visit.

Nora: Does he know Roddy is back?

Lillie: He does but I don’t think he knows he was in prison. Where is he?

Ina: They went out with Mrs.O’Brien to Clontarf.
Lillie: They searched me from head to toe. The nurse told me that I could not give him anything for his pain or anything that would assist him take his own life. My God even the thought of it!

Nora: How heartless can they be?

Lillie: They made me promise that I would not mention anything that was going on outside. There were armed soldiers everywhere and even in the room, where your father is, there was a soldier with a rifle.

Nora: How brave they are, all that armed force to guard a man who could not raise himself in his bed.

Ina: Is he very depressed mama?

Lillie: No, no not at all. He’s still in high spirits, you know your father, he can never be kept down for long. He told me of a young boy who carried the top of his stretcher when they were leaving the burning Post Office. He said the street was being swept continually with bullets from machine guns. If a bullet came near your father the young boy would move his body in such a way that he might receive the bullet instead of James. He asked him his age. “I’m just fourteen, sir”, he answered. “We cannot fail now, Lillie. Those young lads will never forget.” He told me that with such pride.

Nora: Does he know about the executions?

Lillie: No he didn’t say anything and I couldn’t mention it. I think he’ll be spared to me for a little while anyway.

Nora: Don’t cry mama. Papa will be saved.

Lillie: I felt so helpless, there was nothing I could do to ease his pain.

Ina: Did you like to see your Daddy?

Fiona: Yes.
Nora: Your Daddy’s little girl aren’t you Fiona?

Lillie: She was so good.

Ina: When are you visiting again?

Lillie: Tomorrow and you’ve to come Nora. He asked to see you. They’ll only allow one Ina.

Ina: I understand.

Nora: I can’t wait. There’s so much I want to tell him.

Lillie: But they won’t allow you tell him anything. They might stop us visiting.

Ina: Be careful Nono. Mama has enough worries.

Nora: Don’t you think I’m worried as well.

Ina: But at least you’re getting the chance to see him.

Ina: Father asked to see me. Do you begrudge me that?

Ina: He’s my father too.

Lillie: Girls, girls stop this.

(Ina storms out of the room)

Nora: I didn’t say anything to upset her.

Lillie: It’s alright. None of us know whether we’re coming or going.

Nora: I’m not being selfish am I Mama?

Nora: No darling you’re not. Ina will be fine.

(Lillie consoles Nora)

ACT 2 Scene3

(Hospital Dublin Castle. Captain Stanley consults Surgeon Tobin and Nurse Sullivan)
Tobin: Has he been asleep long?

Sullivan: No, he was very restless after his wife’s visit but the morphine’s knocked him out.

Stanley: You’re certain about this?

Tobin: I am certain about the truth of it but not certain about whether I should have written it.

Stanley: What do you mean?

Tobin: My duty as a doctor is to save life not to endanger it.

Stanley: I accept that but is what you wrote accurate?

Tobin: It is accurate, I think Nurse Sullivan would agree.

Sullivan: Agree with what?

Stanley: General Maxwell is anxious that James Connolly should be tried under Courts Martial and has asked for a medical assessment of his condition. Doctor Tobin and Doctor Hollingsworth are agreed that the prisoner is fit to undergo trial.

Sullivan: Are you crazy?

Stanley: “We certify that during the entire period of James Connolly’s detention as a patient he has been perfectly rational and in full possession of his faculties. His mind, memory and understanding are entirely unimpaired and we agree that he is fit to undergo trial.”

Tobin: Nurse Sullivan, I have as much regard for Connolly as you have but I was asked for a professional opinion and I gave one.

Sullivan: But the man has been hallucinating, talking to ghosts. I have spent more time than anyone with him and it is quite obvious he is not fit to be tried.

Stanley: General Maxwell is aware of Connolly’s injuries but he is intent on bringing him to trial as soon as is possible.
Sullivan: He is certainly not fit to travel.
Stanley: Maxwell says the Courts Martial can be held here.
Sullivan: But this is a hospital Captain.
Stanley: It’s a Headquarter’s decision.
Tobin: I’m not happy with it either but it’s outside our control.
Stanley: Right then Tobin, I’ll send your report on to Army Headquarters,

(exit Captain Stanley)
Sullivan: I can’t believe you’ve done that.
Tobin: Do you want me to lie?
Sullivan: But you’ve tended to him with so much love and care.
Tobin: That’s my job.
Sullivan: The man is ravaged by gangrene and you say he is physically fit for to be tried.
Tobin: I was asked about his mental capacity only.
Sullivan: You’re a hypocrite. You told me how much you admired the man but now you’ve signed his death warrant.
Tobin: I’m sorry I have disappointed you but I was asked a question. I do admire him tremendously and I will admit to what I wrote.
Sullivan: If you had been here this morning and seen his distraught wife and little daughter you’d have thought twice about your report.
Tobin: I’m sorry.
Sullivan: It’s not to me you owe the apology.

(exit Nurse Sullivan)
Tobin: Have I made an error?
Officer: I think so, sir. The prisoner is still very ill.
Tobin: He is isn’t he and I’m supposed to be the expert.

Officer: I’m sure you’re doing your best, sir.

Tobin: Thank you. Let the nurses know if he needs anything.

   (Tobin exits)

ACT 2 Scene 4

   (Meeting at Mansion House Monday 8 May)

Lord Mayor: As Lord Mayor of this great city of Dublin, let me welcome you all here to The Mansion House. The last few weeks have been very difficult for all of us, it’s been an awful time, shocking altogether but in particular for you gentlemen of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce. Awful altogether. Anyway, you’re all very welcome here tonight, and I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of my Corporation to express our sincere gratitude to the business people of Dublin and especially to one of our greatest employers, Mr. William Martin Murphy.

Murphy: This is a most impressive meeting because tonight the business and commercial interests of Dublin City are sending out a very clear message to government. This city’s commercial heart has been ripped apart by lawless criminal acts committed by people with no mandate whatsoever. Let me read out the text of yesterday’s resolution. “The Council of Dublin Chamber of Commerce at a special meeting yesterday, unanimously passed a resolution assuring His Majesty of the loyalty of the commercial community to his person and throne.

   (loud applause)
Let this resolution dissuade our detractors and those who question the loyalty of the ordinary citizens of this city. We have no doubt that an inept government must bear huge responsibility for the destruction of our businesses and livelihoods.

(more loud applause)

Three years ago the employers in this city combined to face down and defeat the threat of Larkinism. We note that the leader of the Irish Transport Union, James Connolly, is also one of the leaders of this rebellion. So our enemies have not gone away. Tonight our campaign for compensation begins in earnest. Funds necessary for restoring the buildings and property of unoffending citizens, destroyed in the course of the rebellion, should be provided by the Imperial Treasury without delay. I would be honoured to lead this campaign on your behalf and I intend to bring a delegation to London tomorrow to lobby Prime Minister Asquith and his government.

Lord Mayor: The meeting would like to acknowledge the contribution of Mr. Charles Eason to assist with the expenses of the London delegation. On behalf of Dublin Corporation I would like to take this opportunity of thanking William Martin Murphy for his sterling work in protecting the interests of our business community. His own enterprises, which provide so much employment in the city, have been devastated by the horrible violence of the past fortnight and yet he is prepared to take up the cudgel for the whole city so that businesses can resume normal trading.

(huge applause for Murphy)
ACT 2 Scene 5

(Hospital Dublin Castle Tuesday Morning May 9th)

Major: Sit up. You know what this is.

Connolly: What?

Major: I told you to sit up.

Officer: But the man is dying.

Major: Get him up, we’ve to conduct a trial.

Officer: But the man is dying.

Major: Well, prop him up then.

Officer: I’ll get the nurse.

(Officer exits and comes back with Nurse Sullivan)

Nurse: Yes.

Major: We need the prisoner propped up for Court Martial.

Nurse: There must be a mistake?

Major: What are you talking about madam?

Nurse: General Connolly cannot move himself. He is not well enough to be tried.

Major: Raise him up with pillows. General Maxwell insists on Connolly being tried.

(Nurse Sullivan gathers extra pillows and props up Connolly)

Nurse: How do you feel?

Connolly: I’m feeling the strain but I’ve faced worse.

Nurse: Don’t over exert yourself and try not to speak too much.

Connolly: Speech would be wasted here.

Major: If the prisoner is ready you can leave the room Nurse.

(Exit Nurse Sullivan and RAMC Officer)
Let me introduce the members of the court. I am Major Groves, President of the Court. This is General Middleham, and we have officers Wilson and Rhodes who have volunteered to give witness accounts. Shall we proceed?

Right then.

General: Name?

Connolly: You wish to know my name?… James Connolly.

General: Occupation.

Connolly: Soldier.

General: I meant previous occupation.

Connolly: General Secretary, Irish Transport and General Workers Union.

General: (holding up a copy of Proclamation) You confirm that this is your name.

Connolly: I am proud to say I am one of the signatories.

General: Were you in command in the General Post Office in the last week of April 1916?

Connolly: I was.

General: What was your title?

Connolly: Commandant-General of the Dublin Division, Irish Republican Army.

General: Major Groves I would like to call a witness.

Major: We’ll first take the account from Colonel Wilson.

Wilson: On the afternoon of Monday 25 April I was taken prisoner by the rebels outside the GPO in Sackville Street. It was clear to me that Mr. Connolly was in command of operations there and I felt that he took no steps to ensure my safety and actually ordered that I be placed in a position where there was constant fire putting my life in jeopardy.

Major: Does the prisoner wish to reply to this charge?
Connolly: I do not wish to make any defence except against charges of wanton cruelty to prisoners. These trifling allegations that have been made, if they record facts that really happened, deal only with the almost unavoidable incidents of a hurried uprising against long established authority, and nowhere show evidence of set purpose to wantonly injure unarmed persons.

(short consultation between Major and General)

Major: The Court has decided that these charges are irrelevant and will not be placed against the prisoner. On the substantive charge of playing a leading role in an illegal insurrection against His Majesty’s Forces in Ireland does the prisoner wish to reply?

Connolly: We went out to break the connection between this country and the British Empire, and to establish an Irish republic. We believe that the call we then issued to the people of Ireland was a nobler call, in a holier cause, than any call issued to them during the war, having any connection with the war.

Believing that the British Government has no right in Ireland, never had any right in Ireland, and never can have any right in Ireland, the presence, in any one generation of Irishmen, of even a respectable minority, ready to die to affirm that truth, makes that government forever a usurpation and a crime against human progress. I personally thank God that I have lived to see the day when thousands of Irish men and boys, and hundreds of Irish women and girls, were ready to affirm that truth, and to attest it with their lives if need be.

Major: Very well, that concludes the business of the Court.

Connolly: Major, could a copy of the Court Martial proceedings be given to my wife Lillie Connolly?
Major: You will have to make a formal application to the Headquarters Irish Command. It is outside the remit of this court to make such a decision.

Connolly: I understand.

General: The decision of this court will be conveyed to you this afternoon.

(Major, General and other officers leave and RAMC officer returns with Nurse Sullivan)

Nurse: What have they done to you? Wait till I fix your bed.

Connolly: Thanks. Could I have a drink of water?

(Connolly winces with pain)

Nurse: Drink that and try get some rest.

ACT 2 Scene 6

(Kingstown Ferry-Port platform)

Dillon: Making the trip across.

Murphy: Yes, our party will be lobbying the government.

Dillon: I wish you success.

Murphy: I expect you will be lending your support.

Dillon: Are you asking me?

Murphy: Well you are a man of considerable influence. You have the ear of the Prime Minister.

Dillon: The Prime Minister doesn’t seem to have any power here.

Murphy: Of course he has power.
Dillon: Maxwell holds all the power. He appears to be able to override the Prime Minister.

Murphy: No, you know right well that martial law is only an emergency provision. The real power resides with the Cabinet. The military cannot compensate us but the Chancellor can.

Dillon: I was referring to this policy of dribbling executions.

Murphy: I’m confused Dillon, why does that perturb you?

Dillon: Asquith promised Redmond that there would be no further executions. He said he had sent the General a strong telegram and yet yesterday four more men were shot in Kilmainham Jail.

Murphy: He’s been playing games with Redmond for years.

Dillon: What’s your problem with the party?

Murphy: Straight and simple. Your Home Rule Bill will lead to my country being partitioned.

Dillon: We don’t want the country partitioned.

Murphy: Look you’ve already proved a thousand times, you never get what you want. Carson is running rings around you. Now I have to catch up with my delegation. Excuse me.

(Murphy walks on and boards)

ACT 2 Scene 7

(Hospital Dublin Castle, Tuesday 9 May)

Tobin: Go on James. Don’t be bashful. Even one verse.
Connolly: You’re a well read man Doc, you don’t wish to embarrass me surely. I’m no poet.

Tobin: But you didn’t write it just as a secret did you?

Connolly: I won’t remember it.

Tobin: James!

Connolly: Well a small piece then. I called it Be Moderate.

Some men faint hearted ever seek

Our programme to retouch

And will insist when e’er they speak

That we demand too much

’Tis passing strange yet I declare

Such statements cause me mirth

For our demands most modest are

We only want the earth.

Tobin: Is that it?

Connolly: No there are five verses but I’ve punished you enough.

Tobin: No, no I’m genuinely impressed. Please let me hear more.

Connolly: I’ll give you the last verse then but I won’t be hiring you as a critic.

For labour long with sighs and tears

To its oppressors knelt

But never yet to aught save fears

Did heart of tyrant melt

We need not kneel, our cause is high

Of true men there’s no dearth

And our victorious rallying cry
Shall be “We Want The Earth!”

Tobin: That’s excellent.

Connolly: Easy on.

Tobin: When you were reciting the poem I had visions of thousands of men behind you rallying to your call like a storming of the Bastille.

Connolly: You liked it?

Tobin: Loved it. You must have read a lot of poetry.

Connolly: I liked the Romantics, Coleridge, Shelley but Wordsworth was my favorite. They were all radicals and wanted to change the world.

Tobin: Poor Shelley died too young.

Connolly: Did you know that he spoke at political rallies here in Dublin?

Tobin: I didn’t.

Connolly: And Wordsworth visited France just before the Revolution.

Tobin: I love Wordsworth myself.

Connolly: You know sometimes a poem seems to have been written just for you. I read a poem of Wordworth’s called Surprised by Joy about 1905 when I was living in Troy in America. I had lost my eldest child Mona just over a year before that. She was burned in a fire in Dublin. The reason I went to America was to build a life for Mona and the others but she never got the opportunity. I never got over her loss, it darkened my life forever. Wordsworth had lost his daughter Catherine too.

Tobin: I don’t think I ever read that poem. Can you remember any of it?

Connolly: Every word.

But how could I forget thee? Through what power,

Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind,
To my most grievous loss?

Tobin: God that’s very moving, so sad. I’m sorry about your loss.

(enter Captain Stanley who takes Surgeon Tobin aside)

Stanley: How is he?

Tobin: In good spirits.

Stanley: I have to speak to him, it’s not good news I’m afraid.

(turns to Connolly)

James I have to convey the judgement of the Court-Martial. The Court has found you guilty and a sentence of death by firing squad has been passed on you.

Tobin: Oh my God.

Stanley: I am sorry to have to relay this news.

Connolly: That’s o.k. I never expected anything different. Have they decided when?

Stanley: I was given no other information.

Connolly: Will I be able to see my family again?

Stanley: Your wife is calling today but after that it would be in the hands of Headquarters. I will make a request. You have my word on that.

Connolly: Thank you.

Stanley: Is there anything I can get you?

Connolly: No thanks.

Stanley: Right then I will leave you with Surgeon.

(exit Captain Stanley)

Connolly: He’s an honourable man Captain Stanley.
Tobin: Far more honourable than me. James I am so sorry. I have done you an awful deed.

Connolly: What? You’ve been nothing but kind.

Tobin: No James, I beg for your forgiveness. I was asked to sign a report of your fitness to undergo trial. It was I who certified your fitness.

Connolly: So that was your job; you were only doing your duty.

Tobin: But maybe I should have delayed things.

Connolly: Believe me my fate had nothing to do with you.

Tobin: But you will forgive me.

Connolly: I bear you no grudge whatsoever, I am indebted to you for all your care.

Tobin: You are the most courageous man I have ever met. I’ll give you something to help you rest before your wife arrives.

(Tobin gives Connolly an injection)

Connolly: Thanks.

Tobin: I’ll call by later.

(Tobin exits)

Officer: I’m sorry sir.

Connolly: I know that, thanks. You know I once was in your very shoes.

Officer: You were.

Connolly: I was serving in the British army, I was only sixteen and I was asked to guard a man called Myles Joyce. He was to be hanged for being involved in agrarian strife at the time. I’ll never forget that.

Officer: I’ll never forget being here.

Connolly: What’s your name?

Officer: Thomas, sir.
Connolly: I have a brother Thomas.

Officer: You have.

Connolly: Well Thomas we soldiered together for a while.

Officer: We did, sir.

(RAMC Officer moves away from the bed)

(1896 Foster Place Dublin, Connolly 28)

Man: Gentlemen let me introduce our new organiser James Connolly.

(Connolly jumps up on stand)

Connolly: Comrades many of our countrymen and women still hold out hopes for a Home Rule Parliament but what we should be aspiring to is not a capitalist monarchy with an elected head but a republic that would be a beacon-light to the oppressed of every land. If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the socialist republic, your efforts would be in vain. England would still rule you. She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers.

Voice: So you would do things differently then?

Connolly: Yes my friend we would bring things into our own hands.

Voice: Like what?

Connolly: We would nationalise our railways and canals. We would replace private banks by State ones, with popularly elected boards of directors that would issue loans at cost.

Voice: Will you give me a loan and I can go get a few drinks?

Voice 2: Shut up amadain, the man’s speaking sense.
Connolly: We would have a graduated income tax on all incomes over £300 in order to pay pensions to the aged, infirm, widows and orphans. We would establish a minimum wage and a 48-hour week. We would provide free education up to the highest university grades. 

And most importantly we call for universal suffrage.

Voice: University! Did he say university? University is not for the likes of us. Come off it man.

Connolly: As the great Irish patriot Thomas Davis said: “Educate that you might be free.” If they deprive us of education they keep us ignorant and downtrodden.

Voice: Are you calling us ignorant? You’re not even an Irishman.

(a few throw cabbage stalks at Connolly)

Connolly: Is it my accent comrade? You’d surely not condemn me because my father and mother had to leave this country after the Famine or else die of starvation in the poor fields of Monaghan. I’m an Irishman right enough and a proud one at that, but Ireland as distinct from her people is nothing to me; and the man who is bubbling over with love and enthusiasm for Ireland and yet can pass unmoved through our streets and witness all the wrong and the suffering, the shame and the degradation brought upon the people of Ireland -aye, brought by Irishmen upon Irishmen and women, without burning to end it, is in my opinion, a fraud and a liar in his heart ,no matter how he loves that combination of chemical elements he is pleased to call Ireland.

ACT 2 Scene 8
(Hospital Dublin Castle, Tuesday 9 May)

(Nora and Lillie visit)

Connolly: Ah, Nono, Nono.

Nora: Papa, I couldn’t wait to see you.

Lillie: How are you today James? Is there much pain?

Connolly: No, but I was court-martialled today. They propped me up in the bed. The strain was very great.

Nora: You were court-martialled here in the hospital.

Connolly: Ay, the Empire never sleeps Nono, you know that.

Lillie: Oh God James.

Connolly: Forget about that now. Lillie I think you should bring the girls back to America. You’ll have a far better life there.

Lillie: We’ll be fine, don’t be thinking like that.

Connolly: No you won’t Lillie. I’ve put you through too much misery already; you’d have no life here at all. Have you any money?

Lillie: We’re managing.

Connolly: Nono I want you to gather all my songs and get Sheehy Skeffington to get them published. Your mother will get some money from them.

Nono: Skeffington is gone.

Connolly: What?

Nono: They shot him in Portobello Barracks.

Connolly: Skeffington dead.

Nono: Larry Ginnell is fighting for all the men in the House of Commons.

Connolly: Good man, Larry, he can always be depended on. It was a good clean fight. The cause can’t die now. The fight will put an end to recruiting. Irishmen now
realise the absurdity of fighting for another country when their own is
enslaved. And no one can ever say enough to honour or praise the brave
women and girls.

Lillie: (whispers) Roddy is home from prison.

Connolly: So Roddy was in prison. How long?

Lillie: For eight days.

Connolly: He fought for his country, and has been in prison for his country and he’s not
sixteen. He has had a great start in life hasn’t he Nono? How did yourself and
Ina get on up North?

Nora: MacNeill’s countermand made all the volunteers disband. The army closed the
railway. We had to walk back from Dundalk. It was all a waste, papa, and
when we got back to Dublin the fighting was over. We did nothing.

Connolly: (hugging Nora) I think my little woman did as much as any of us.

Nora: But I wanted to fight like you did.

Connolly: You’ll find a way Nono don’t fret. Did you see any socialist papers?

Nora: No, I don’t think there are any.

Connolly: The socialists will always wonder why I am here but they must never forget
that I am an Irishman.

Nora: Everybody is saying that because you are wounded they will not execute you.

Connolly: No, no. There is no hope of that. Remember what happened to Scheepers in
South Africa. He was wounded and they executed him. That will have no
effect on what they decide to do, and that’s that.

Lillie: But you’re too ill James.

(Enter Captain Stanley and Nurse Sullivan)

Stanley: Sorry ladies but the visit must end now.
Connolly: Say hello to all the children and tell Roddy I’m proud of him.

Nora: Bye papa.

Lillie: Can we visit tomorrow?

Captain: We’ll send a message. Please wait till then Mrs. Connolly.

(Captain Stanley and Nurse usher Nora and Lillie out)

**ACT 3 Scene 1**

(Belvedere Place Wed. 10 May 1916, Lillie and the family kneeling in prayer)

Lillie: We pray for your father, Jesus watch over him and be at his side. We pray for the doctors and nurses who have looked after him, remember their kindness. Lord please bring a special blessing on my family to give them strength during this awful time. Keep them steadfast and firm in their faith.

Fiona: When will papa be coming home?

Lillie: I don’t know luvvie? I want you all to listen now that we are together. Your father was court-martialled yesterday. We have been praying that because he was badly hurt he would be left alone. But we could get news any minute that he has been shot. I want you to be prepared. You’re going to have to be strong and I’m going to need you to be strong for me.

Edie: We will mama, won’t we?

Roddy: But Nono said there’s a military rule that you can’t shoot an injured man.

Lillie: Your father believes they will shoot him. And I’m asking you all now to accept this. Your father wants us to plan for the future.

Maire: You mean without him.
Lillie: Yes darling. The next few days could be terrible but I have to know now that you will all be alright, that we will all stick together.

Fiona: Don’t let them shoot papa.

Lillie: If only I could stop them pet, but I can’t. It’s all now in God’s hands.

Edie: We will mind Fi won’t we Maire?

Maire: Yes mama we will.

(enter Nora and Ina)

Lillie: Is there news?

Nora: No but the paper has a picture of papa and the editorial calls for the worst of the ringleaders of the rebellion to be singled out and dealt with as they deserved. Murphy won’t be happy until they shoot him.

Lillie: (reads) Mr. James Connolly, still lies in Dublin Castle recovering from his wounds. Where did they get his picture?

Ina: The police I’d say.

Nora: Mama I’m not going to let Murphy away with this.

Lillie: What can you do? It’s printed now.

Nora: No I’m going to let him now what our family thinks about him?

Lillie: Why can people hold such hatred?

Ina: Because papa attacked his businesses.

Nora: I’ll strangle him if I get my hands on him.

Lillie: He’ll only get the police for you and what then? If they find out you were involved you’ll be sent to prison.

Nora: I have to do this for papa.

Lillie: But he has loads of companies Nora, he mightn’t even be there.

Nora: I’m going to find him mama.
(Nora exits)

Lillie: Where is this going to end?

Ina: Don’t worry mama.

Maire: Will I make tea?

Lillie: That’s about all I’ve been doing, praying and drinking tea.

Roddy: Nono’ll be alright. That man deserves an earful anyway.

Lillie: Don’t go outside after curfew tonight. It’s too dangerous son.

Roddy: I won’t.

ACT 3 Scene 2

(Army Headquarters Phoenix Park)

Secretary: Another letter to the Prime Minister. He’s keeping you busy General.

Maxwell: Now that the rebellion is over the government is getting cold feet and afraid. They are at me every moment not to overdo the death sentences. Not just from London, Wimbourne the Lord Lieutenant condemns the executions too. The Prime Minister is also worried about ‘the grave danger of general and bitter reaction at what appeared to be periodical acts of vengeance on the part of military authorities in Ireland’.

Secretary: That’s Mr. Asquith?

Maxwell: Please steer me away from politicians. I was sent to put down an insurrection but now they haven’t got the heart for the dirty work. He now feels that the executions are creating ‘a revulsion of feeling in Britain and will lay up a store of future trouble in Ireland’. How am I supposed to separate Redmondites.
from Sinn Feiners? Asquith’s too weak, he’s far too responsive to The Irish Parliamentary Party and he’s too willing to pander to public criticism.

Secretary: That man Dillon, he’s Irish Parliamentary Party isn’t he?

Maxwell: Indeed he is, he’s hard at it throwing mud and making political capital out of events. He’s afraid, like his boss Redmond, that more will be got by rebellion than by constitutional methods.

Secretary: Did you speak to the Prime Minister when you were in London?

Maxwell: I think I shocked him. I told him that the Pope might be induced to prevent priests messing themselves up in political matters.

Secretary: Maybe he now regrets sending you here.

Maxwell: I think we’ve come near the end anyway. Just add in last paragraph – Connolly having been reported fit to be tried, was tried and sentenced to death. This I confirmed. He will be shot at dawn on the morning of May 11th. Sign off as before. Now I need one more Public Notice, as follows: Political Meetings, Parades or Processions. I General Sir John Grenfell Maxwell hereby order that no parade, procession, or political meeting, or organised Football, Athletic or Hurling Meeting shall take place anywhere in Ireland without the written authority previously obtained of the Local County Inspector of the Royal Irish Constabulary, or, in Dublin City of the Chief Commissioner of the Dublin Metropolitan Police. That’s quite urgent, they use these sports to plot against us.

Secretary: Done General.

ACT 3 Scene 3
Harrington: Yes, can I help you?
Nora: I’m looking for Mr. Murphy.
Harrington: I’m afraid he’s not here Miss.
Nora: It’s o.k. I’ll wait.
Harrington: You’ll have a long wait then, he’s over in London.
Nora: When will he be back?
Harrington: Sunday I think. You look anxious Miss, can I be of any help?
Nora: When did he go?
Harrington: Yesterday.
Nora: But did he not write the leading article?
Harrington: You mean for today’s Irish Independent? No, Mr. Murphy didn’t write for today’s paper.
Nora: So who wrote it?
Harrington: The editorial was written by the editor, of course.
Nora: And who is that?
Harrington: Tim Harrington at your service.
Nora: You wrote it, but why?
Harrington: You found fault with it obviously?
Nora: Have you got children Mr. Harrington?
Harrington: Three children, two sons and a daughter.
Nora: How would they feel if the newspaper called for you to be shot?
Harrington: What’s this all about? Who are you?
Nora: Your paper has a picture of my father in it this morning and you asked for him to be executed.

Harrington: Who are you? How did you get in here?

Nora: My name is Nora Connolly. My father is James Connolly. Mr. Murphy knows my father, they were never friends but I didn’t think he’d wish him dead.

Harrington: I know all about James Connolly. The situation your father finds himself in is unfortunate but don’t blame William Murphy on it.

Nora: My father lies gravely ill and you beg the authorities to shoot him.

Harrington: He was one of the leaders of a rebellion which destroyed this city. The people would agree with what I wrote.

Nora: My father will be honoured for what he did and you and Mr. Murphy and your paper will be despised.

Harrington: Have you anything else to say Miss Connolly? I have work to do, I am a busy man.

Nora: You’re doing the work of the enemy, I hope you’re proud.

(Nora storms out)

ACT 3 Scene 4

(Hospital Dublin Castle)

Mona: Daddy.

Connolly: Mona.

Mona: Yes daddy, I’ve come to visit you again.

Connolly: But where is Lillie? They promised me I could see her once more before I leave.
Mona: Don’t worry daddy I’ll be with you?
Connolly: Will you?
Mona: I’ll always be with you, I won’t leave you now.
Connolly: That’s good.
Mona: Why are you crying?
Connolly: I’m worried about Lillie.
Mona: But we can look after her.
Connolly: But I’ve left her nothing. No home, no money, nothing.
Mona: Mama will be fine.
Connolly: But how will she fine? I’ve failed her and now I can’t do anything.
Mona: You don’t have to do anything now papa. She’s got Nono and Edie and Maire. They’ll mind mama for us.
Connolly: I want to talk to her just one more time Mona. One last time.
Mona: You will daddy. I have to go now but I will be there with you.
Connolly: When will you come back Mona?
Mona: At the end daddy. I’ll be there at the end.
Connolly: Mona, Mona are you there?

ACT 3 Scene 5

(House of Commons, London, Thursday 11 May)

Speaker: Order, Order, Order. The Right Honourable Laurence Ginnell.
Ginnell: I ask the Prime Minister to confirm whether the authorities had tried James Connolly after the surgeon had reported that he was dying of his wounds and is there a precedent for the summary execution of a dying man?
Asquith: On the contrary the doctors confirmed that Connolly was fit to undergo trial and therefore the other question does not apply.

Ginnell: But it has been ascertained that Connolly had suffered horrific wounds and is there not a protocol in relation to the treatment of wounded prisoners of war?

Asquith: This erroneous reference to war is typical of the language and emotionally charged rhetoric of Mr. Ginnell and consistent with his recent speeches in this house. General Maxwell was well aware of Connolly’s condition but decided that the court-martial could be convened in the hospital.

Ginnell: Shame on him and further shame on a government that sanctions such barbarity. Does the decision making now lie with the Military and have you Prime Minister lost all control?

Speaker: Order, order, order. The Right Honourable John Dillon.

Dillon: I feel bound to protest in the most solemn way against the large number of military executions of men, many of whom were not prominent leaders of the insurrection. Any further military executions will have the most far-reaching and disastrous effects on the future peace and loyalty of Ireland. The primary object of my motion is to put an absolute stop to these executions. Is that nothing? It is the fruit of our life’s work. We are held up to odium as traitors by the men who made the rebellion but you, you are washing out our whole life’s work in a sea of blood.

(Boos are heard across the chamber)

Speaker: Order, order, order.

Dillon: I declare most solemnly and I am not ashamed to say it in the House of Commons, that I am proud of these men. Yes they were foolish, and yes they were misled but who could ever doubt their courage?
Voices: Shame, shame, shame.

Member: Now you have shown your hand Dillon.

Dillon: Did I ever fail to show my hand in the House of Commons or conceal anything? I say I am proud of their courage and if you were not so dense or stupid, as some of you English people are, you could have had these men fighting for you, and they are men worth having.

Member: You stopped them.

Dillon: That is an infamous falsehood. I and the men who sit around me have been doing our best to bring these men into the ranks of the army. It is not murderers who are being executed, it is insurgents who have fought a clean fight, a brave fight, however misguided, and it would be a damned good thing for you if your soldiers were able to put up as good a fight as did these men in Dublin.

Secretary: Mr. Speaker, I demand that The Right Honourable Gentleman withdraws these abominable lies.

Voices: Shame, shame, shame.

ACT 3 Scene 6

(Belvedere Place Thursday 11 May 1916)

Lillie: What’s wrong Edie?

Edie: It’s Mrs. O’Brien. She found out that William has been sent to an English prison. She’s crying her eyes out.

Lillie: Who’s with her?

Edie: Maire and Fiona.
Lillie: God love her and we are nothing but a burden on the poor woman.

Edie: Can we go back to Belfast?

Lillie: I just don’t know Edie.

Edie: But our house is still there?

Lillie: But we won’t be able to pay the rent.

Edie: You mean without papa.

Lillie: They told me they’d contact me. They promised me but maybe he’s gone already.

Edie: No mama they will contact you, they couldn’t break a promise.

Lillie: Edie love I don’t know where we’re going to end up. They’re a long time away. Maybe it’s bad news about your father.

(Edie goes to the window)

Edie: Here they are mama.

(Lillie falls to her knees and Nora, Ina and Roddy enter)

Nora: Mama papa is safe. The executions have been suspended.

Lillie: What?

Ina: Papa will be saved.

Nora: The Prime Minister has stopped the executions. Mr. Asquith has instructed General Maxwell to stop. They are having a debate today in Westminster.

Roddy: It’s true mama, read it yourself. Look at the headline.

Edie: Oh mama papa is safe. Can I tell the others?

(exit Edie)

Lillie: Oh thank God, thank God for being merciful.
Nora: I told you mama, the paper says that the government are afraid of a change in public opinion. People in Britain and America have condemned the executions as well. They can’t shoot papa now.

Lillie: I can’t believe it, I just can’t believe it. Are you sure? Did you read all the paper?

Ina: Yes mama, it gives the total number of people. Look thirteen. It was thirteen since Tuesday. There haven’t been any more.

Roddy: Nora read the paper from cover to cover.

(Enter Edie, Maire and Fiona)

Maire: Is it true?

Nora: Papa’s going to be alright.

Fiona: When is he coming home?

Lillie: We don’t know that yet luvvie, all we know is that today he is safe.

Roddy: They’ll still send him to prison.

Nora: Stop Roddy, stop that. This is the news we’ve been waiting on.

Roddy: I was only saying.

Nora: Well don’t. Can’t you see Fi is excited?

Lillie: He didn’t mean anything bad Nono.

Ina: Mama can we buy a brack. To celebrate. We saw lovely fresh bracks in Kelly’s window. Can we?

Roddy: There’s always cats peeing in Kelly’s window.

Lillie: Roddy.

Roddy: It’s true I saw them yesterday and you can smell them when you go into the shop.
Lillie: Enough. Ina bring Fiona with you down to Findlaters. I’m sure they have bracks down there.
Ina: Ah mama.
Lillie: No fighting now, not today of all days.
Maire: Can I go with them?
Lillie: Alright darling. Now I want to see poor Mrs. O’Brien. I wish we had good news for her.

(Nora and Edie hug their mother)

ACT 3 Scene 7

(Hospital Dublin Castle)
Nurse: Good morning Father. James is very weak today.
Father A: Ah I’m sorry to hear that. Is he still in pain?
Nurse: He had a very restless night.
Father A: How are you James?
Connolly: I won’t be jumping in with John L. Sullivan anyway.
Father A: I’d say not.
Connolly: Father would you ask Captain Stanley if I can see Lillie again?
Father A: Of course I will. I went looking for him on the way in but he wasn’t there but I will make it my business to find him.
Connolly: There’s so many things that I need to settle. Haven’t I left her in an awful situation Father?
Father A: You have no need to feel guilty James; that was never your intention. Women have a great capacity for surviving and from what you told me Lillie is a strong woman.

Connolly: Ay she’s strong right enough but it’s going to be different for her now.

Nurse: Now James drink that.

(Nurse hands Connolly medicine)

Father A: James try and get a little sleep now. I’ll ask the Captain about Lillie’s visit.

Connolly: Thanks Father, will you call to see me again?

Father A: I will. I’ll call in the morning and give you Communion. Thanks Nurse.

ACT 3 Scene 8

(Dublin Castle later)

Father A: Ah I’ve found you at last.

Captain: Sorry Father Aloysius, things are still very chaotic around here.

Father A: I won’t take too much of your time but is there any news on Connolly.

Captain: None so far. The death sentences on Connolly and MacDermott have been suspended on Mr. Asquith’s instructions.

Father A: So nothing will happen today?

Captain: I doubt very much if anything will happen today but you never know with Army Headquarters. I could get an order at any moment.

Father A: He asked me about his wife? Will she be allowed visit?

Captain: Again Headquarters have to sanction visits and we are still waiting. I did communicate with them.
Father A: Thanks Captain. You’ll be in touch if you need me.

Captain: I will Father.

(exit Father Aloysius)

ACT 3 Scene 9

(House of Commons, Thursday 11 May)

Speaker: Order, order. I now call on the Prime Minister to reply.

Asquith: Today’s debate has only copperfastened my opinion that we will never get to the bottom of this most perplexing and damnable country. In reply to the Right Honourable Gentleman let me state that there are still two other persons who are under sentence of death- MacDermott and Connolly – a sentence which has been confirmed by General Maxwell. Both of these men signed the Proclamation and took an active part, one of them the most active part of all, in the actual rebellion in Dublin. I do not see my way, and the Government do not see their way to interfere with the decision of Sir John Maxwell, that in these two cases the extreme penalty must be paid. If it was justifiable, as we think it was, in the case of the five other persons who signed the Proclamation, it would be extremely difficult, on any ground of justice to discriminate between them and these two others simply for the reason that they happen to have been tried a little later. I cannot – I tell the House fairly and frankly – reconcile it with my conscience or my judgement that preferential treatment
should be accorded to men equally or even more guilty. I would like to advise
the House that I am travelling to Ireland this evening, I will meet with General
Maxwell and I will report back to the House next week on the state of things
in that troubled and unfortunate country.

ACT 3 Scene 10

(Belvedere Place Thursday 11 May)

Nora: A penny for them.
Lillie: What’s that love?
Nora: What are you thinking?
Lillie: About your father.
Nora: He’ll be o.k. now.
Lillie: Why will they not let us see him?
Nora: I think that’s good mama. It means there’s no emergency.
Lillie: Please God you’re right. I don’t know what I would have done without all of
you.
Nora: We’re a family.
Lillie: If your father recovers and if they ever let him out I wouldn’t like to go
through this again.
Nora: I don’t think papa will ever change.
Lillie: When you get married make sure you marry an ordinary man.
Nora: You wouldn’t swap papa now would you?

Lillie: Not for the world darling but I never knew when he’d come home or when he came home if his head wouldn’t be smashed open by some policeman’s baton. He wanted to take on all the ills of the world.

Nora: That’s why I love him.

Lillie: He was like that right from the very start. When I went to Scotland to meet him he wrote to me from Perth. I went up to Perth to get married to him but when I arrived he had gone down to Dundee to help organise a strike.

Nora: But you still married him.

Lillie: Yes Nono I did and I was the happiest woman in the world. I knew it would never be easy and I knew I would never be rich but one thing I was sure of, I had married a good man who loved me.

Nora: I hope I find a man like that.

Lillie: Well if you do girl you’ll be blessed but you’ll suffer too.

Nora: I won’t mind mama.

Lillie: And you’ll never be allowed stay in one place for long. I remember when we were living in Newark, one day we were sitting on the stoop and it was a lovely hot day. Your father never really took to the heat but you’ll never believe what he said.

Nora: What did he say?

Lillie: “You know Lillie I’d give my right arm now to be walking through the Phoenix Park in a shower of rain.”

Nora: He didn’t say that did he?

Lillie: He said it alright but I knew what he was angling for. You can keep your Phoenix Park and your shower of rain and your wind and your hailstones as
far as I’m concerned. Then I ran in to the house and just left him there
dumbfounded.

Nora: But you did make it up?

Lillie: Yes darling we did. At that time he had had enough of America and he
wanted to go back. You see that was our life. We’d have just settled in nicely
someplace and he’d announce he was upping sticks and wanted us to move.
We were never in the same place for more than five years. I never wanted to
leave America but wherever he was I would have to be there too.

Nora: You always stood by him Mama.

Lillie: I’d suffer anything for your father because all he wanted to do was to change
the miserable lives of the workers and the poor and make the world a better
place.

Nora: I’m very proud of you Mama.

(Nora hugs Lillie)

ACT 3 Scene 11

(Army Headquarters Phoenix Park Thursday 11 May)

(Maxwell is having an afternoon nap, enter Secretary)

Secretary: General.

Maxwell: Sorry, just resting the eyelids. What’s happening?

Secretary: A telegram from Lord Kitchener for you sir.

Maxwell: Maybe I’m being recalled. Did you read it?

Secretary: It’s about the executions General.

Maxwell: Read it for me Kirby.
Secretary: War Office 2.40pm. To General Sir John Maxwell, ‘Unless you have heard anything to the contrary from Mr. Asquith you may carry out tomorrow the extreme sentence of death on MacDermott and Connolly.

(Maxwell jumps up)

Maxwell: So they are letting me complete my mission. Glad The Prime Minister’s shown a little backbone. These two deserve to be removed especially Connolly. He was one of the worst.

Secretary: That will complete the seven men who signed that declaration.

Maxwell: And make others think twice about insurrection in the future.

Secretary: Will I inform Captain Stanley?

Maxwell: Do. I might go to the Castle myself.

Secretary: I have a request from Captain Stanley about a visit from Connolly’s family. Should I reply?

Maxwell: Yes we can allow that on humane grounds. Order transport I’ll speak to Stanley myself.

ACT 3 Scene 12

(Belvedere Place Thursday Night I1 May late)

Lillie: I hope the newspaper has good news for us tomorrow.

Ina: We’ll go down and get the earliest copy.

Lillie: Good girls, now go on and get a rest.

Nora: Are you not going up yet?

Lillie: No, I’d like to rest here for a while. I’ve a few prayers still to say.

Nora: Would you like me to stay with you?
Lillie: No you need your rest. Goodnight girls and thanks.

Nora: Goodnight mama.

Ina: See you in the morning.

(Nora and Ina exit)

(Lillie blows out the lamp and settles back into an armchair)

(1889 Lillie reading a letter from James and James composing the letter)

Connolly: Let me tell you, Lillie, that your letters form a really welcome change to the miserable monotony of my present existence. With your help Lillie, I had hoped to find happiness. In other words I had intended to ask you if you could find courage to risk your life and welfare along with such a scapegrace as myself. I am in a quandary, I am trusting but in spite of all my trust, I am often haunted by the fear that the much coveted prize may grow weary of such an uninteresting body or person as my humble self. I want advice, give it to me, Lillie. For the attainment of my desire I would wait and work a lifetime and think myself happy if I was able to, at least succeed. You see, mavourneen you have conquered me and reduced me to slavery. What will you do with your prisoner? I will look forward with anxiety to your letter. Write soon, Jim.

(Loud knocking at the door. Lillie rises and opens the door)

Officer: Are you Mrs. Connolly?

Lillie: Yes. Is there something wrong?

Officer: The prisoner James Connolly wishes to see his wife and eldest daughter.

(enter Nora)

Nora: What’s wrong mama?

Officer: Are you the eldest?
Nora: Yes.
Officer: You are wanted in the Castle Hospital.
Lillie: Please wait until we get our coats.

(Officer waits at the door for Lillie and Nora)

Lillie: Are they going to shoot my husband?
Officer: I can’t tell you. The soldiers will help you into the lorry.

ACT 3 Scene 13

(Dublin Castle Hospital Friday 12 May)

Nurse: Now you’ll be more comfortable in those.

Connolly: Thanks. Thanks for everything.

Nurse: It has been an honour. Now you’ll look a bit better for your family.

(enter Lillie and Nora)

Lillie: Oh James.

(Lillie holds his hand)

Connolly: Well, Lillie, I suppose you know what this means?

Lillie: Oh no, James. Oh no!

Connolly: Yes lovie. I fell asleep for the first time tonight and they wakened me up at eleven and told me I was to die at dawn.

Nora: No papa, no.

(Nora takes Connolly’s other hand)

Lillie: But your beautiful life, James, your beautiful life!

Connolly: Wasn’t it a full life, Lillie, and isn’t this a good end?

(Lillie weeps uncontrollably)
Nora: Oh mama.

Connolly: Look, Lillie, please don’t cry. Your tears will unman me.

Nora: Please mama.

Connolly: Put your hand down on the bed.

(Nora puts her hand down on the bed)

That’s a copy of my statement to the Court Martial. Try and get it out.

(Nora takes piece of paper)

Nora: I have it papa.

Connolly: How are the wains?

Nora: They’re all missing you papa but they’re healthy.

Connolly: Kiss them for me Nono.

Nora: I’ll look after things. Don’t you worry.

Connolly: I could always depend on you Nono. Lillie, William will organise something from the Union. They’ll help you get settled again.

Lillie: But it won’t mean anything now.

Connolly: Please do as I say Lillie. I need to know you will.

Nora: She will, won’t you mama.

(Enter Captain Stanley)

Captain: I’m sorry but the time is up.

Lillie: Oh please let me stay.

Captain: I’m sorry we have to end the visit now. Nurse.

(Lillie grips James in one final embrace and then the Nurse has to pull her away.)

Lillie: Please cut me a lock of his hair.

Nurse: I will I promise.
(Nurse and Nora help Lillie away and then Nora turns and runs back to her father’s side)

Nora:  Goodbye papa. I love you.

Connolly:  Look after Lillie for me Nono, and don’t forget we shall rise again.

(Nora kisses James and then Captain Stanley ushers Nora out)

(Enter Surgeon Tobin)

Tobin:  I’ve just heard.

Connolly:  Ah, Doctor.

Tobin:  I’m so sorry James. I really am sorry.

Connolly:  I knew the time would come, it was inevitable.

Tobin:  Your poor wife I’ve just spoken to her.

Connolly:  It will be very hard but Lillie is tough. She’ll pull through.

Tobin:  I’ll make enquiries about them. That’s a promise.

Connolly:  You’re a good man.

Tobin:  I’m going to miss you.

Connolly:  You didn’t just give me medicine; you gave me education.

Tobin:  I think you were the professor.

Connolly:  Thank all the other staff from me won’t you?

Tobin:  I will. Everybody loved you James, they all speak so highly of you.

Nurse Sullivan says you are an idealist.

Connolly:  An idealist! Bless her.

Tobin:  James will you do something for me?

Connolly:  Ay, if I can.

Tobin:  At the last moment will you say a prayer for me and the men about to shoot you.
Connolly: I’ll say a prayer for any man who does his duty according to his lights.

Tobin: Thanks.

(Enter Father Aloysius)

Ah Father. Goodbye James.

Connolly: Goodbye Doc.

(Tobin grips Connolly’s hand before leaving)

Father A: Would you like me to hear your confession?

Connolly: Thanks Father.

Father A: I’ll go to Kilmainham with you.

ACT 3 Scene 14

(Belvedere Place Friday 12 May at dawn)

(Lillie stands by the window and the children gather around Nora who is searching in a box of papers)

Ina: What are you looking for Nono?

Nora: Some of Papa’s songs?

Ina: Did he ask you for them?

Nora: Yes he wants them collected for Mama.

Lillie: (distracted) What’s that love?

Nora: Papa’s asked us to gather his songs. He wants us to have the spirit to carry on and to stay united and to mind Mama. This is it, I knew it was here.. The Rebel Song. Do you remember it Mama?
(Dublin Castle. We see the soldiers place James Connolly on a stretcher and take him away leaving an empty room)

(Nora sings The Rebel Song)

Come workers sing a rebel song,
A song of love and hate,
Of love unto the lowly
And hatred to the great.
The great who trod our fathers down,
Who steal our children’s bread,
Whose hands of greed are stretched to rob
The living and the dead.

CHORUS

Then we sing a rebel song
As we proudly march along
To end the age-old tyranny
That makes for human tears.
And our march is nearer done,
With each setting of the sun.
And the tyrants might is passing
With the passing of the years.

Ina: That’s beautiful Nono.

Nora: His last words to me were “We shall rise again”

(The first light comes up)
Lillie: That’s it now he’s gone. We’ve lost him.

(The family go to Lillie)

ACT 3 Scene 15

(Centre Stage Mona appears and calls James Connolly)

Mona: Come on Daddy.

(In a brilliant blue light Mona beckons Connolly towards her)

Come Daddy, come this way.

(beckons again)

This way Daddy, come on. Come with me.

THE END
Appendix 5: Oh When The Hoops

"OH WHEN THE HOOPS"

by Frank Allen

Play in Three Acts
"OH WHEN THE HOOPS"

Characters in the Play

Robbie Dolan  Newly-married man, owner of Showhouse
              Glenmalure Park

Debby Dolan  Wife of Robbie

Tim O'Shea  Neighbour of Dolans, a Sports Journalist

Mabel O'Shea  Wife of Tim, a part-time Psychiatric Nurse

Larry Kearns  Uncle of Robbie's, Property Developer

Peter King  Retired Gardener

Father Jerome  Jesuit Priest
Act One Scene 1. The action takes place in the kitchen area of Number One Glenmalure Park. Number One is a spacious well-furnished Showhouse in a new estate built on the site of a famous football stadium. The windows at the back of the house face onto the original wall of the football ground and there is a small garden out there. When the play opens the stage is dimly lit and Larry Kearns, 48, a dynamic property developer waits with Tim O'Shea, 35, a gregarious sports journalist and his wife Mabel, 32, a fussy psychiatric nurse for the newly-weds to arrive back from their honeymoon.

Mabel: The taxi's pulling away

Larry: Shish, wait till they come in.

(We hear laughter outside and then a key opens the door.)

Robbie: Now you wait there Mrs. Dolan.

(Debby lets out a shriek as Robbie picks her up and carries her over the threshold. Enter Robbie Dolan, 26, athletic looking young man carrying new bride Debby, 25, an attractive petite woman.)

Larry: (gestures to Tim)

Now Tim.

(Tim switches on the lights)

Surprise

Robbie: Ah Larry! Jesus. I thought you were a burglar.
Mabel: Well look at you Madam, will you look at the tan.

Debby: Ah Mabel, you're very good.

Tim: Here let me hug the bride as well.

Larry: I'd watch that lecher Mabel. Now give Uncle Larry a chance...

Tim: Are your cases outside Robbie?

Robbie: Yea, the weight of them, we were twenty kilos over the weight but Debby used her charm and told them that we were coming home from our honeymoon so they let us off.

Tim: Here I'll help you.

(Tim and Robbie carry in three suitcases)

Larry: Well what do you think? Have you noticed the changes?

Mabel: I'm mad jealous Debby. You've got everything.

Debby: Ah thanks. But sure it's only for Larry. He's been brilliant to us.

(Debby hugs Larry)

Mabel: I wish I had a generous uncle.

Robbie: The fridge. You fitted it in. Look Debby, the fridge.

Debby: Ah that's brilliant Larry.

(Larry opens the fridge and takes out a large bottle of champagne)

Robbie: Champagne God!

Larry: Right Tim, hand out the glasses till we toast the newly-weds.

(Larry fills all the glasses)

Right. Wait till we see, ah yeah - "To Debby and Robbie and a happy life together in Glenmalure Park."

All: To Debby and Robbie.
Debby: Thanks very much, you've all been very good. Thanks for watching the house for us.

Tim: No problem. Sure isn't that what neighbours are for. (sings) Neighbours everybody needs good neighbours.

Robbie: Any problem with the alarm.

Tim: No only Mabel couldn't remember the numbers.

Mabel: Only once.

Tim: More than once Mabel. My Mabel's got a head like a sieve.

Debby: Ah, don't be cruel Tim, the place is grand and that's all that matters.

Larry: And all your wedding presents are still under lock and key.

Robbie: God I'd almost forgotten about the presents. We haven't even opened half of them yet.

Tim: Sure you had better things to think for the last fortnight, what?

Mabel: Tim!

Larry: Well you the sun and the sex, so tell us what was the sea like.

Debby: Ah we didn't bother much with sex did we Robbie? Just visited churches and graveyards mostly.

Robbie: Liar, she has me worn out. I'm going to stop buying her that Cosmopolitan.

Larry: Eh, Tim here's a question for you. What does Mabel say after she's had a multiple orgasm?

Mabel: Hope springs eternal!

Tim: I dunno, what does she say?
Larry: Thanks Larry.

(Tim makes a playful swipe at Larry and the others crack up)

Debby: So how are you settling in across the road?

Tim: Great. It's a lovely house, not as big or as nice as this but we're happy aren't we pet?

Mabel: It'll take us years to furnish it like this but we'll get there.

Larry: Ah well, Rome wasn't built in a day, isn't that what they say? And that's because Larry Kearns didn't build it.

Robbie: My very modest uncle!

Larry: (sings) "Oh Lord it's so hard to be humble when you're perfect in every way
I can't wait to look in the mirror 'cos I get better looking each day,
To know me is to love me, I must be a hell of a guy
Oh Lord it's so hard to be humble but I'm doing the best that I can."

Debby: Anybody move in next door to you yet?

Mabel: Not that I know of.

Larry: No Tim and Mabel's is the only one sold in that block. Plenty of interest though. They're pricey you see. And that's not just for profit. Keeps out the riff-raff.

Debby: Eh, easy on the riff-raff. We would never have been able to afford this showhouse either.

Larry: Yes, but that was the agreement. Thirty per cent off the price once Robbie sells ten houses. And the other ten per cent was your wedding present. Now I can't be fairer than that now, can I?
Robbie: We're not complaining.

Mabel: Lucky things, you'll have your mortgage paid off years before us.

Tim: Ah forget about mortgages, tell us about Crete. I saw pictures on the telly.

What was it nearly 40?

Debby: It was boiling. You couldn't walk on the sand it was that hot. So we stayed inside most of the day and then went swimming in the evening. And the water it was beautiful, it was like being in a luke-warm bath.

Larry: What was the night life like? Good?

Robbie: Crazy, I swear the young wans were wearing nothing, weren't they Debby?

Debby: Yeah, we were in one town, what was it called?

Robbie: Malia.

Debby: Yeah, Malia. I never saw anything like it. They were just slappers. They were doing it out in the street in front of everyone, even in the daytime.

Larry: What did you say the name of that town was?

Debby: Ah no Larry, even you wouldn't have liked it.

Larry: What do you mean even me? I'm a happily married man you know.

Mabel: Sounds disgusting, can you imagine all the diseases they're spreading.

Tim: The nurse!

Mabel: I'm not that kind of nurse but it's true. When you sleep with a person then you sleep with every other person they've slept with.

Larry: Pity you can't add up all the fun what! Another drop of champagne.

(Larry pours out champagne for everybody)

Robbie: What type of nursing do you do Mabel?
Mabel:  Psychiatric. Just part-time now. I'm job-sharing.

Larry:  Have you worked out Tim yet?

Mabel:  Oh indeed I have. He's a man with a phenomenal memory except when it comes to remembering whose turn it is to wash the dishes.

Larry:  Ah domestic bliss, I remember it well! You two have all that to look forward to. Did you have even a tiny little row yet?

Robbie:  No we didn't sure we're madly in love.

Debby:  Well just one little one.

Robbie:  When?

Tim:  Go on tell us...Ah go on.

Debby:  I left the bed one night because he was snoring.

Larry:  Snoring. Ah Jasus Robbie! You're not supposed to snore on your honeymoon. You only start that carry on when your satisfied.

Robbie:  No but it was stupid. She kicked me a few times and then she just wrapped all the sheets around her and slept on the settee.

Mabel:  Ah, you poor pet.

Debby:  Yeah, but he was making noise like a drill. Anyway I bought ear-plugs the next day in the chemist.

Larry:  Sun, sea and snoring what! And you're a nephew of mine. God help me. I hope you can sell houses.

Robbie:  I'll sell them alright. I'm going to be a millionaire before I'm 35.

Larry:  That's the language I like to hear. Let's drink to that - "To 35 year old millionaires."
All: "To 35 year old millionaires."

Tim: *(To Mabel)* Did you tell them about the old man?

Robbie: What old man?

Mabel: Oh yeah, I'm sorry I almost forgot to mention. Ah it might be nothing but I spotted an old man wandering around your house two or three times last week. Three days I think. He may have been there on the other days but I was in the hospital.

Debby: What was he doing?

Mabel: Well nothing really. He just stood outside on your front path and then he started walking on the grass in the garden. It was funny really. He kind of waddled on the lawn as if he was testing the ground or something and then he just stroked the grass.

Larry: Are you having us on?

Debby: Jesus he sounds like a real creep. Was he here today?

Tim: No because I was out digging in our front garden most of the day.

Larry: He's probably one of those K.R.A.M. fanatics.

Debby: K.R.A.M. what's that?

Larry: Ah they're a shower of lunatics. It means Keep Rovers At Milltown.

Robbie: They're headers. They were all against this development. Two young fellows even tried to stand in front of a bull-dozer on the site.

Tim: Like the Chinese students in Tiananmen Square. You have to admire their courage.
Larry: Courage. I'd have run over the little bastards. They're only thugs. Sure the residents in the area were delighted when I developed this site. Rovers arse, they had the greatest shower of wankers following them. After matches on a Sunday they'd break every car and shop-window from here down to Ranelagh. On their way back to Ballier or Crumlin or wherever they came from.

Debby: I come from Crumlin Larry.

Larry: Yeah I know but they were nothing but gurriers. You'd want to see the letters I got from the residents on Milltown Road thanking me for this development. Keep Rovers At Milltown, huh! Good riddance to them.

Mabel: Ah now this old man was hardly what you'd call a gurrier. He just looked lost.

Debby: But what was he doing in my garden. God Robbie.

Robbie: Don't be worried about some old geezer. I'll soon clear him if he comes back. O.K, O. K?

Debby: O.K.

Tim: Your knight in shining armour.

Larry: Well Mabel I think we'll let these honeymooners have one more night of passion. And come here Sir Galahad, up bright and early. I'll see you in the office at half-nine, we've three new couples to show around. So save your tongue for talking!

Tim: Jesus Larry, that's awful crude have you no romance in you at all.

Larry: Tim me boy, I'm in love... with money. Come on folks and we'll leave these
Mabel: Good-night Debby, Good-night Robbie. I'll drop over to you in the morning Debby. Don't worry, not too early, I'll let you have a good lie-in.

Debby: Good-night and thanks again for minding the house. Good-night Larry.

(Debby hugs Tim, Mabel and then last of all Larry)

Larry: (To Robbie) You lucky bastard.

Robbie: Good-night Larry.

(Tim, Mabel and Larry leave)

Debby: Oh, I'm so happy to be home.

Robbie: Yeah, I know Crete was great but I wouldn't swop Dublin for anywhere.

Debby: No I mean home, here, Robbie, in this house. Our new home No. 1 Glemalure Park. Our home Robbie, you and me.

Robbie: You ain't seen nothing yet kiddo, I told you I was going to make you happy and give you anything you wanted. This is only the start.

Debby: But I don't want anything else, just you and me together.

Robbie: But I've loads of plans Debby and I'm going to prove myself to Larry.

Debby: You don't have to prove yourself to anybody Robbie.

Robbie: So you think I'm alright do you?

Debby: Well apart from your snoring.

Robbie: Funny haw, haw... well I won't snore tonight. Once I'm at home in my own bed and once my beautiful wife doesn't run away with the sheets.

Debby: Promise.

Robbie: I promise.
Debby:  You know that's the first time I heard you call me your wife.  I like the sound of it.  Say it again.  Go on say it again for me.

Robbie:  Again. O.K. then. Will my wife please now accompany me to the master bedroom?

(Debby jumps up into his arms)

Debby:  Ravish me husband.

(Robbie carries Debby away and switches off the light)

Act One Scene 2.

(Debby walks into the kitchen and switches on the kettle. She has just risen and is only wearing a shirt. She cuts some bread for the toaster and takes a jar of marmalade from the press. She walks over to pull over the blinds on the back windows)

Debby:  

(Screams as she witnesses an old grey-haired man Peter King, 68, just outside her back window. He looks in at her when he hears the scream. Debby is terrified and runs to the telephone.)

(Talking on the phone to Robbie)

Robbie, he's out in the garden. The old man. Now. Our back garden. He's there now. Oh, Robbie I'm terrified, he's looking at me now. Please quick, quick Robbie, I'm afraid.

(She leaves down the phone)

Go away. Get out of our garden.

(The old man taps on the back door)

Go away, my husband is coming. Go away.
Peter: Can I talk to you. I didn't mean to frighten you.

Debby:

*(From a safe distance)*

My husband will be here in a minute. He's just across the road. You better go away now.

Peter: I don't mean any harm. Can I come in?

Debby:

*(Screams hysterically)*

No, no, go away.

Peter: I just want to talk to you. Honestly.

Debby: My husband will call the police for you.

Peter: Please just let me talk to you. Five minutes. For five minutes that's all.

Debby: No, you have no business in our garden.

*(Enter Robbie all out of breath)*

That's him Robbie. Oh thank God.

Robbie: I'll kill him.

*(Robbie frantically opens the back doors and grabs Peter by the throat)*

What the fuck do you think you're doing? I'll fucking kill you. You've frightened the life out of my wife.

*(Peter gasps for air Robbie almost strangles him)*

What are you doing here? You fucking pervert. Ring the police Debby.

Debby: Robbie don't hurt him, he's old. Be careful, let him go.

Robbie: I'll break your bleedin' neck.

Debby: Leave him Robbie, just as long as he goes away.

*(Robbie releases his grip and Peter tries to regain himself)*

Robbie: Well, what are you doing in our garden? You better tell me or I'm getting
the Guards for you now.

Peter:

(Still badly shaken and hardly able to speak)

You had no need to manhandle me like that. I wasn't doing any harm.

Robbie: You were frightening the life out of my wife. And you're trespassing on private property.

Peter: I was only looking after the roses for my brother.

Robbie: What?

Peter: Could you give me a drink of water Mam, and I'm sorry if I upset you.

Robbie: You're getting nothing from us.

Debby: I'll get him water. He's shaking Robbie.

Peter: The roses out there, they need pruning. The brother planted them.

Debby: Bring him in. He'll collapse out there.

Robbie: Are you crazy?

Debby: Let him sit down Robbie, I think you hurt him.

Peter: Thanks Mam, I'm awful sorry for upsetting you.

(Robbie steps out of the way and Peter struggles in and sits down)

Debby: Drink that and I'll get you a cup of tea in a minute.

Robbie: For Christ's sake Debby.

Debby: No it's o.k. now Robbie once you're here. I just got a shock but I'm sure ... what's your name?

Peter: Peter, Peter King. Billy King's brother.

Debby: I'm sure Peter didn't mean to frighten me. I just got a shock that's all. Are you alright?

Peter: Ah yeah, I'm grand, not a bother. Sure I've a bad temper myself at times but not as bad as the brother's. He's a walking demon at times.
Robbie: You said you were pruning our roses for your brother?

Peter: You see they're not your roses really. They belong to the brother.

Robbie: Look it Debby I'm ringing the police, this fella's some kind of a nutter.

(Debby hands Peter a mug of tea)

Debby: No don't Robbie, do you take sugar?

Peter: No I have me own sweeteners, the old ticker isn't great and I'm a diabetic these two years.

Debby: God Robbie!

Robbie: Well you rang in a panic. How was I to know he had a bad heart?

Peter: You needn't worry son, I won't be suing you. I'm not like that.

Robbie: You sue me. You were on my property. If anyone around here is suing, it'll be me.

Peter: You mightn't win son, have you heard of squatters rights?

Robbie: What the fuck are you on about?

Debby: Robbie!

Peter: Well you see that garden out there by the wall. Well my brother laid out that garden nearly forty years ago. It was him planted the roses and all the other plants too.

Debby: Did he live here?

Peter: No he didn't live here but he worked here. Billy was the physiotherapist for Shamrock Rovers since the late forties. He came to work here not long after the war.

Debby: When did he die?

Peter: Oh, he's not dead. He's down in the Royal Hospital in Donnybrook. He's not too good to be honest.

Debby: I'm sorry.
Robbie: Listen, I can't stay around here all morning. Larry has buyers for me to interview. Now I don't want you around my house anymore do you hear.

Peter: Well I would have asked your permission but you were away.

Debby: We're just back off our honeymoon.

Peter: Congratulations to the pair of you. You're a fine young couple.

Debby: Thanks.

Robbie: How did you get out there anyway?

Peter: I climbed over the wall. Not bad for an old fella of 68 is it, even with a dodgy ticker.

Debby: *(warming)*

You didn't climb that, did you?

Peter: Sure manys the day I climbed over that wall, when I was a chiseller, to watch the Hoops playing. I couldn't afford the thruppence in.

Robbie: Well finish up your tea now and I want you to guarantee to me that you won't come back here again.

Debby: Ah Robbie, I wouldn't mind if Peter ...

Robbie: Well I would and that's that. Now have I got that guarantee?

Peter: I'm not sure I can guarantee that Robbie, do you mind me calling you Robbie?

You see I have to honour the brother's wishes.

Robbie: What are you on about?

Peter: Well my brother Billy that I was telling you about. He's very poorly, I don't mind telling you above in the hospital. Now I don't think he'll be long in it and he begged me to look after his roses. You see this house that you've bought is right where the Rovers pavilion was, where Billy worked for all those years. And he loved his little garden. Every year he'd plant a new rose
bush if the Hoops won the Cup. Sure in the sixties they had a great team altogether and they won the cup six years on the trot. Billy had more roses than the Botanical Gardens.

Robbie: Look it, we're well capable of looking after our own garden. So clear off now and don't come back. And I'm sorry about your brother being sick but that's all in the past now.

Debby: Robbie don't speak like that. That's not nice.

Robbie: Debby are you for real. You ring me frightened out of your wits by him and now I'm at fault.

Debby: I never said you were at fault, just don't speak to the man like that that's all.

Robbie: (Shouting at Debby)

Ah I'm going back to work, you sort this out. Why don't you invite him for dinner as well.

(Robbie storms out in a fury, leaving the door open)

Debby: Robbie ...

Peter: God I'm awful sorry for causing all this trouble.

Debby: No don't worry. He'll be fine.

Peter: You have a good husband there.

Debby: Do you think so?

Peter: Of course you have. The way he came to protect you. Jasus I thought he was going to strangle me.

Debby: Are you O.K. really? He didn't hurt you did he?

Peter: You don't worry about me petal, I'm a Raytowner. They built us tough down there in Ringsend. Here don't be crying love, it'll be alright.

(Peter holds Debby to his chest as she sobs her head off)
Now, now, now it'll be o.k. you wait and see.

Debby: He never shouted at me like that before.

Peter: Ah, like I was saying, he's only trying to protect you. And that's a good thing for a husband now isn't it?

Debby: I suppose so.

Peter: It is and this'll all blow over. Now wipe those pretty eyes of yours.

(Peter hands Debby a handkerchief and she wipes her eyes and hugs Peter with gratitude as Mabel enters)

Mabel: Oh my God!

Debby: Mabel ... eh, this is Peter.

Mabel: You're the gentlemen I was telling Debby about. I didn't realise you were related.

Debby: We're not.

Mabel: But ...

Debby: Mabel lives across the road, she's a psychiatric nurse.

Peter: Ah, well you'll get plenty of work around here I can tell you!

Mabel: Really! No I was tell Debby that I saw you in her garden a few times last week when she was away.

Peter: So you're the woman that was peeping out through the curtains at me. Ah well I suppose it's better than having a Rottweiler take a lump out of your arse.

Mabel: Excuse me sir, I was asked to keep an eye on the property as a good neighbour.

Peter: Jasus, I've heard of the Valley of the Squinting Windows but this is ridiculous. Do I look like a burglar? No wonder your husband wanted to string me up.

Mabel: Well I'll call back later so.

Debby: No, no stay have a cup of tea. I'll put the kettle on.
Peter: I'll be off anyway love. I'll just collect my secateurs from the garden.

Debby: Right o.k. but make sure to call back again and I'll say a prayer for your brother. I hope he gets better.

Peter: I doubt if he will, thanks anyway.

(Peter goes out to the back garden)

Mabel: Who is he? I don't like his attitude one bit.

Debby: He's Peter and Robbie nearly strangled him a few minutes ago.

Mabel: Good for Robbie.

Debby: Ah no, he's a lovely man, honestly. It's just that I was frightened.

(Peter comes back holding his secateurs)

Peter: Right I'll be off then. I won't chance the wall this time, I'm a bit winded.

Debby: You will call again won't you.

Peter: Yes, I will. I promise. And you look after that husband of yours. He's a good man. (To Mabel) See you Mam, that's if you don't see me first.

(Exit Peter)

Mabel: Well madam you've got a lot of explaining to do.

Debby: You wouldn't believe what happened. Come out and I'll tell you. Wait till you hear the story about my roses.

(Debby leads Mabel out the back)

Act One Scene 3.

(Debby makes some sandwiches and Robbie comes in with Larry)

Robbie: Everything o.k. now Debbs?

(Robbie goes over and hugs Debby)

Debby: Yeah, I'm sorry for panicking.

Larry: I believe you had a visit from Wurzel Gumitch this morning.
Debby: The old man, Peter.

Larry: Did he give you a fright.

Robbie: Not half, she was screaming down the phone. It was even worse than on the honeymoon when she found a little lizard in the shower.

Debby: It wasn't that little, it was a huge big thing.

Robbie: It was a little gecko Larry and she screamed the apartment down.

Larry: I never had you down as the nervous type.

Debby: I don't like creepy crawlies that's all.

Larry: You don't like creepy crawlies and you married Robbie.

Robbie: Here, I used to like your uncle.

Debby: We're just having a sandwich because Mabel and Tim invited us over for dinner at eight o'clock. Here Larry take a few, tea or coffee?

Larry: Quick cup of coffee love, I have to dash myself. There's a do on in the rugby club.

Robbie: You're not still playing rugby are you?

Larry: Ah no, I've hung up the boots. They dragged me out last St. Stephen's day for the married versus singles match. Jasus it nearly killed me, I was walking like John Wayne for a week after it.

Debby: You poor thing.

Robbie: But you're on the committee or something aren't you?

Larry: I'll have you know I'm Chairman no less. I tell you, it's great for business. Rugby is full of professionals, company directors, solicitors, shady
accountants, the odd planning official, that sort of person. You play a four ball of golf on a Monday afternoon, planning permission's in the post on Friday.

Robbie: I didn't know you were that devious.

Larry: That's not being devious, it's just keeping ahead of the posse that's all. Sport is like that. It's the old boys network. But rugby is special that way. It's far better than your Gaelic or soccer. Gaelic is full of teachers and civil-servants. Now that's all right if you want a maths grind for your daughter or a quick passport but it's not what we call heavy metal.

Debby: Here's your coffee.

Larry: Thanks love but the soccer crowd, now they're the real plebs. Soccer clubs they're at the yellow-pack end of the market. They have portocabins for dressing-rooms or else they tog off out of Hi-Ace vans on the side of the road. And you'll only ever get plumber, chippies and young fellas doing FAS courses playing it. Now that's alright if you want a leak fixed or a bit of plastering done, so you see, it's the good old rugger for Larry.

Robbie: You're a cynical bastard. I thought you actually liked the game.

Larry: Like the game, you must be joking. It's for barbarians. Not it's strictly a business option.

Debby: Do you know something?

Robbie: What?

Debby: Men think completely different to women. Everything seems to be a deal.
Larry: Ah, some women are high-fliers too. Better even. They'd have your balls for garters to get one foot up the ladder. I don't think it's women or men. What about you? Do you mean to tell me that you wouldn't like to be a successful business woman? Of course you would.

Debby: At what? Designing jewellery. Sure I'll be only selling at small markets or doing out pieces for friends. I'll hardly make a fortune.

Robbie: But you could if you patented your designs and started using the net.

Debby: But I don't want to. I want to work from home, be happy, maybe make a little money, just a wage so I can pay my own way. And I want to have a family.

Larry: And are you not ambitious at all?

Debby: No. Robbie has enough ambition for the pair of us. He wants to be a millionaire before he's thirty, he wants a summer villa in Spain, he wants a top of the range Jaguar and he'll tell you the rest himself. Oh and he wants to be like you as well.

Robbie: I do not.

Debby: Yes you do Robbie! Larry this man of mine thinks the sun shines out of your arse. You do Robbie. Ah, look he's all embarrassed now.

Larry: (American Accent) Don't be embarrassed kid, that's a fine aspiration. After all, I am a fine role model for the youth of this country.

Robbie: Bitch. He'll never let me forget this now.
Debby: I'm only telling the truth, lighten up will you.

Larry: And let me tell you that my protégé here, that's a lovely word isn't it, my protégé sold three houses today which keeps Kearns Properties bang on target.

I knew I had a good one.

Debby: Did you Robbie? Three in one day. Well done, ah I'm real proud of you.

*(Debby gives Robbie a big hug and he is pleased to accept praise)*

My hero. Larry he fought for me today as well, you'd want to see his temper, he's real savage.

Larry: What's he like in bed?

Robbie: Mind your own business.

Debby: The same, real savage and ambitious.

Larry: Then he's my protégé alright.

Robbie: Bragging again.

Larry: Well I can't spend all day nattering about Robbie's sexual exploits I have to go networking and drink a little brandy as well. It's a tedious job I know but somebody has to do it.

*(Larry heads towards the door)*

Robbie: See you in the morning.

Larry: Oh, I almost forgot. Debby, that old man that Robbie sorted out this morning.

I don't want him around here anymore. If you see him anywhere on the estate contact myself or Robbie. I'll get the police to remove him this time.

I don't want any court cases or anything like that, I couldn't afford that.

Debby: Ah, that's all o.k. now Larry, he's no problem.
Larry: No but I don't want him around. He'll frighten people off the houses if they see someone like him hovering around. Especially families with young kids. All this stuff about paedophiles and all. No it's better just to get rid of him.

Debby: But Peter's not a paedophile. He's a decent old man and his brother worked here for years. He even laid out our back garden.

Robbie: Larry is right love. He'll only cause trouble. See the way this morning he wouldn't give me a guarantee that he wouldn't come back. Said he had to do whatever his brother asked him to do. He'll only cause trouble. Keep him away love.

Debby: But I've already invited him back.

Larry: Ah no you can't. It's not on Debby. We've to think of the whole estate here and my investment. We've got to move these houses in the next six weeks or the banks are going to crucify me with interest. I'm not letting anything get in my way. I really can't afford it Debby. I've put millions in to this project. And it's not just me either, I'm not being totally selfish. Your future and Robbie's depends on this being a success as well.

Robbie: That's true love and sure I'll tell him that if he comes back. You needn't worry. Is that fixed up then.

Debby: No it's not fixed up Robbie. That old man is harmless and I'm disgusted at him being called a paedophile.

Larry: Now I never called him a paedophile, I just suggested that...

Debby: You suggested that people wouldn't buy your houses if they saw him visiting
here. It's none of anybody's business who I invite to our house is it?

Larry:

(Flustered)

Ah you're taking it out of context now Debby. There's nobody interfering with your visitors here it's just that old guy's a bit odd and he could damage my business, that's all I'm saying.

Debby: And nobody's going to interfere with who I invite into my home. Or is it my home at all? Maybe you still own this house but you don't own me.

Robbie: That's out of order Debby. She doesn't mean that Larry.

Larry: I'm sorry you feel like that.

Robbie: You owe Larry an apology.

Debby: Why? What did I say to apologise for.

Robbie: Look it were trying to run a business here and you're putting it in jeopardy by just being stupid.

Debby: I'm not being stupid, how dare you? There's a pair of you in it.

(Debby runs out of the room)

Robbie: I'm sorry about that Larry, I really am.

Larry: Jasus you married a little tigress there didn't you?

Robbie: But she shouldn't have insulted you like that. I'll make her apologise.

Larry: Ah she's just highly strung, she'll get over it. But seriously Robbie I don't want that old geezer next or near these houses. I've too much at stake here.

Robbie: You leave that to me, I won't be long clearing him off.
Larry: But no rough stuff Robbie, softly, softly use the Guards. That's what we pay
taxes for. No controversy, no newspapers, no nothing, you get my drift?

Robbie: Ay, ay Captain.

Larry: Good boy, Jasus will you look at the time.

(Larry runs out)

Robbie:

(From door)

See you in the morning.

(Robbie closes the door and leaves the room heading upstairs)

Act One Scene 4.

(Late that night Robbie and Debby come back from their dinner at Tim and Mabel's. Robbie is fairly drunk and Debby isn't a happy camper)

Debby: We didn't have to stay that long? Just because Tim opened another bottle of
wine doesn't mean you have to drain every drop out of it.

Robbie: I was just being neighbourly that's all.

Debby: You can be neighbourly Robbie without making a show of yourself. I was
never so embarrassed in all my life.

Robbie: Ah, did your poor little husband embarrass you pet. Ah come here to me.

Debby: Get away from me Robbie. If you could only see yourself.

Robbie: Why what’s wrong with me? I’m just a little merry, a small drop of vino.

Debby: I’m going to bed.

Robbie: Ah, don’t be like that. Let’s have a little drink. I’ll tell you what, let’s open
one of the bottles we brought back from Crete.
Debby: What and listen to you slurring your speech and telling me that you love me.

Robbie: But I do love you.

Debby: You can’t say you love somebody and then try and belittle them in front of everybody. You should stick up for me instead of putting me down.

Robbie: *(Puzzled and drunk)*

But I do stick up for you.

Debby: Well not tonight you didn’t and even earlier here with Larry you were trying to put me down.

Robbie: Ah you’re being paranoid, that’s what you are.

Debby: I am not. You took Mabel’s side in the argument about Peter.

Robbie: I did because Mabel was right.

Debby: How, how was she right?

Robbie: Mabel made the point and I agree 100% with her. That old geezer spun you a yarn and you bought it hook, line and sinker.

Debby: There you go again, questioning my judgement. Do I look like a thick

Robbie? I trust Peter; he was telling me the truth.

Robbie: How can you trust somebody you’ve just met? Don’t be ridiculous.

Debby: There you go again, my opinions are ridiculous. The same today with Larry.

The cheek of him telling me who I could have in my own house. Who the fuck does he think he is?

Robbie: Do you want to know who he is? Do you really want to know?

Debby: I presume you’re going to tell me.
Robbie: Yes I am when you give your mouth a rest.

Debby: Charming husband you turned out to be.

Robbie: Larry is my boss, I work for him. Our livelihood depends on him. When Larry says ‘jump, I say how high’.

Debby: Ah, now I understand.

Robbie: I kind of knew you would eventually.

Debby: Larry Kearns owns you body and soul.

Robbie: Larry doesn’t own me.

Debby: Yes he does Robbie and you’re so in awe of him that you cannot see it but I’ll tell you one thing, he’ll never own me.

Robbie: What do you mean by that?

Debby: I’ll invite my friends here without permission from him.

Robbie: No you will not Debby, I forbid it.

Debby: You forbid it. Did you ever listen to yourself properly? You forbid it!

You’re talking to your wife not your possession.

Robbie: Ah come off your high horse will you.

Debby: I’ll speak to you tomorrow when you’re sober. I’m off to bed.

(Debby leaves the room and Robbie looks in the fridge for a beer. He open a can and Slumps back down in his chair)

Act One Scene 5.

(Debby comes into the kitchen area and finds a note on the table under a rose. She reads the note, smiles and smells the rose. She opens the curtains on the back doors and walks out into the garden. The door bell rings and she rushes back in.)
Debby: Coming.

(Debby opens the door)

Oh, Peter come in.

Peter: I hope I'm not inconveniencing you. Am I too early?

Debby: No, not at all. I should have been up a lot earlier but we were over at our neighbours last night till late.

Peter: Have you a hangover?

Debby: No, I didn't drink much but Robbie got pissed.

Peter: Well at least he didn't have to drive home.

Debby: I'll put on the kettle. What have you got there?

Peter: It's compost. It's for the rose beds. The brother used to swear by the compost. It will give them nourishment now until next season's blooms.

Debby: Thanks very much. Do I put it all on or what?

Peter: I'll show you.

Debby: Sit down we'll have a cup of tea first. Would you like a slice of toast? You will. Take off your jacket.

Peter: God you're in great form this morning.

Debby: I shouldn't be. I had a fierce row with Robbie last night but when I came down this morning he left this lovely note and a rose for me.

Peter: Bejasus, he's a real romantic. You said he was drunk last night. Ah, you shouldn't be fighting with him when he has drink taken.

Debby: I didn't force it down his throat.

Peter: Ah, I know but you know what they say about drink - "In vino veritas".
Debby: What does that mean?

Peter: It means that the truth comes out in drink. It's Latin. Anyway I hope it was nothing too serious. It had nothing to do with me had it?

Debby: Ah no, it's nothing serious. It'll blow over.

Peter: An yeah, in vino veritas. And you never heard that before?

Debby: No, sure I never did Latin in school? Is that where you learned all that?

Peter: No sure I left school after the Primary. No I learned the Latin at the gardening. Do you know that you couldn't go into a nursery if you didn't know the Latin names for all the plants. That's how I picked it up.

Debby: God you're brilliant. Now a hot mug of tea for you Peter, you have your own sugars don't you?

Peter: Thanks darling. Oh yes, did you know that out against the wall out there you have pelargonium graveolus?

Debby: Christ that sounds like a disease. What are they when they're at home?

Peter: Rose geraniums, they're pink-flowered sweet-scented pelargonium.

Debby: Tell us another. This is fascinating.

Peter: You also have flowers out there, you know the bright blue flowers with the small yellow eyes on them.

Debby: Yeah, I love them. Go on what’s the Latin for them?

Peter: They’re called Myosotis, we call them Forget-me-nots.

Debby: So I have Myosotis, and what’s the other one again?

Peter: Pelargonium Graveolus.
Debby: Will you teach me all the Latin names for the flowers? I’d love that Peter.

Peter: Well I’ll teach you the ones that I know.

Debby: Thanks.

Peter: Not at all, it’d be a pleasure.

Debby: I’d love to be able to tell your woman across the road, you know Mabel, yeah you met her yesterday, well I’d love to tell her that I had Myosotis and Pelargonium Graveolus.

Peter: I spy with my little eye that one would have you up in Dundrum Mental Asylum. How do you get on with her?

Debby: She’s o.k. but she’s constantly moaning about the price of everything and telling us how lucky we were to get this house because Larry is Robbie’s uncle. Larry’s the developer of the estate. Robbie works for him.

Peter: Ah, the little green-eyed monster. She’s probably a bit jealous is she?

Debby: Jealous of me?

Peter: Sure she’s hardly short of a few quid. A psychiatric nurse. And what about her husband? What’s he like?

Debby: Tim, he’s a lovely fellow, very different to her. He writes sports articles in the paper. I’m not sure which one. He’s gas craic. He loves quizzes. That’s what we were playing last night.

Peter: I like quizzes myself but the old memory isn’t as good as it used to be.

Debby: Will you go away out of that and you remembering all those Latin names. I’m just running up to the loo.
(Debby runs out the door and while she’s in the toilet the telephone rings)

Will you answer that Peter, it’s probably my mother. I’ll be down in a minute.

(Peter gingerly approaches the phone and answers)

Peter: Hello. No Debby is upstairs. I'm Peter. Peter King. Can I ask who's calling...

(Peter put the phone down and Debby runs back in)

Debby: Who was it?

Peter: He didn't say, he just hung up.

Debby: He... was it Robbie? Would you recognise his voice?

Peter: I don't think it was Robbie, I'd remember your husband's voice. In fact I don't think I'll ever forget your husband's voice.

Debby: Oh yeah, you would. Ah, not to worry if it's important they'll ring back. I completely forgot to ask you about your brother. How is he?

Peter: Ah he's very weak, God be good to him. He's not going to get any better either. He's got everything in the book, he has Parkinson's Disease, he's a diabetic like myself and he has awful trouble with the water works as well. Sure he has no quality of life at all.

Debby: He's lucky to have you.

Peter: Lucky ah no. Sure I loved the ground he walked upon. You'd want to see him when he was a young man. He ran for Ireland in the Olympics. He was as swift as a hare and when he learned the physiotherapy they all loved him here at Rovers. They say he had great hands. A player might have a badly
injured ankle on a Friday evening, no hope at all of playing on the Sunday and
Billy would spend the whole weekend rubbing him, putting him in hot and
cold baths and bejesus more often than not the same lad would sprint out of
this pavilion on the Sunday afternoon.

Debby: God he sounds like a genius.

Peter: He had some of his own little secret medicines as well. He often used poitin
on injured limbs. He'd say to me - "Peter never run anything on the body that
you can't drink." And the crowd loved him here in Milltown they'd give him a
big cheer every time he ran on the pitch to look after an injured footballer.
But he had good fingers for the flowers as well. He loved that garden out
there. Come on now and I'll show you how to put down the compost.

(Peter and Debby go out the back to the garden)

Act One Scene 6.

(Later that afternoon Debby is sitting at the kitchen table working on her jewellery
designs when the door bell rings. She lets Mabel and Tim in)

Debby: Ah, come in.

Mabel: Hope we're not disturbing you. Just wanted to see if you recovered from last
night?

Debby: Oh, it was great thanks, I wish I could cook like that. I'm hopeless in the
kitchen.

Tim: And don't forget who made the banofi.
Debby: Oh that was absolutely scrumptious. I'll have to watch my figure though.

Tim: Will you go away out of that, sure there's hardly a pick on you.

Debby: I wish.

Mabel: Tim doesn't understand the female psyche. And we try to keep in shape for eejits like him, worse fools we!

Debby: I'll swop you anytime because Robbie can't butter toast let alone make banofi. Have you time for a quick cuppa?

Tim: Ah we won't thanks, we've the shopping to do. Best go now before the swarms arrive this evening.

Mabel: How is Robbie today? He was gas last night. I really enjoyed him.

Debby: He's an awful eejit when he gets jarred. And he's not used to wine. He left me a note this morning, said he had an unmerciful hangover. Serves him right the lunatic.

Tim: Is this your work Debby?

Debby: Yeah, I got boxes of lovely beads in Crete. The colours are fabulous, I'm just playing around with a few ideas.

Mable: Oh they're beautiful, will you make me something. Now I'll pay you...

Debby: Will you stop, if I couldn't make something for a neighbour.

Tim: No, no you've a business to set up and we'd like to support you.

Debby: Thanks you're very good.

Mabel: Is that drink still on for later?

Debby: Yeah of course, about nine or half-nine, will that be o.k.?
Tim: Perfect.

Debby: And promise me you won't bring anything, we've tons of drink here from the honeymoon.

Tim: I'm looking forward to it already.

Mabel: I see our friend gave you another visit. Are you not afraid?

Debby: Old Peter. Ah not at all. He's a real gentleman and he's going to help me with the garden.

Mabel: You're an extraordinary girl, you're so trusting for one so young. I mean he could be Jack the Ripper for all you know.

Tim: Jack the Ripper, Mabel, will you get a grip. You're watching too many Murder She Wrotes.

Mabel: I'm just concerned for Debby that's all.

Debby: No but his brother did really work here for the football team. His name was Billy King. Peter told me all about him. He used to rub poitin on the players legs to get them better.

Mabel: Sounds like a real medicine man!

Tim: As you can see Debby, Mabel has no time at all for alternative medicine.

Mabel: Well I've spent six years studying, I should know what I'm talking about.

Debby: Ah no seriously Mabel, I actually feel more at home now in a funny way. It's kind of like I've found a connection with the place. Do you know what I mean.

Mabel: Well just be careful love, that's my only concern. The world is full of weirdoes. Speaking of weirdoes are you ready or are you going to stop
playing with your worry beads?

Tim:   Who's worried? Not me?

Mabel:  Well you will be if all the fresh bread is gone. Come on.

Debby:  See you tonight.

(Debby lets Tim and Mabel out and goes back to her jewellery. She works away quietly for a few seconds and then she hears an almighty clamour. The whole house appears to be shaking. She hears sounds which she now discerns as the noises from a football stadium. Crowds are chanting, the noise reaches fever pitch, then subsides and rises again. Debby jumps to her feet terrified, she sees figures illuminating the walls. The noises now are louder, sound like people beating sticks off metal and chanting that is clearly discernible - "We are the SR the SR FC, We are the SR the SR FC", repeated incessantly with loud clapping and then fever pitch excitement again followed by more chanting - "You're hardly going to believe us, You're hardly going to believe us, You're hardly going to believe us, We're going to win the Cup, We're going to win the Cup, We're going to win the Cup, You're hardly going to believe us, You're hardly going to believe us, You're hardly going to believe us, We're going to win the Cup. Debby runs out of the room screaming at the top of her voice. The noises continue.)
Act One Scene 7.

(Robbie sits in the kitchen reading and drinking a beer. The door-bell rings and he lets Mabel and Tim in.)

Tim: I see you're on the beer. Not mixing your drinks tonight?

Robbie: No way Timo, I was buckled. I was still drunk this morning. I didn't sell one house. I swear they could still smell the booze off me.

Mabel: Where's Debby?

Robbie: She's lying down actually. She's not feeling well. She got an awful shock today, she had a bit of a nightmare.

Mabel: God is she alright, can I do anything for her?

Robbie: No I think I'll leave her rest for a while if you don't mind.

Tim: Look it Mabel we'll go across, we can have the drink another evening.

Mabel: Of course.

Robbie: Not at all, stay. Sure we can have a chat can't we?

Tim: Are you sure? 'Cos there's no problem. We'll have many a night for a drink.

Robbie: I'm positive now sit down. What'll you have Mabel?

Mabel: Have you any dry white wine?

Robbie: Dry white wine and the memory man?

Tim: I can't even remember what I had last night.

Robbie: Do you get blamed for that as well?
Tim: Mabel doesn't fart, pick her nose or anything uncouth like that.

Mabel: Tim, don't be so crude in another person's house.

Tim: I'll have a beer with you Robbie, Heineken anything you have.

Mabel: So tell us what happened?

Robbie: Well the first thing, Larry rang me this afternoon. He tried to phone me here this morning and who do you think answered the phone? That old bollix that I had the run in with yesterday. Larry was furious, I've never heard him as angry. I wouldn't mind but we specifically told Debby yesterday not to allow him next or near the place again and if he did come back to let me or Larry know and we'd get the police for him. That old fella could ruin Larry's business.

Mabel: Sure I saw him coming up the path. I was looking out the window waiting for the postman to arrive, Tim was expecting a cheque for an article he had written. I must say I was flabbergasted when Debby let him in. And he was here for ages because I saw him leave and it must have been nearly two o'clock. He didn't attack poor Debby?

Tim: Don't be so dramatic Mabel. Robbie will tell us.

Robbie: No he didn't touch her or anything like that but he has certainly filled her head up about his brother and Shamrock Rovers and all that shite. She said they spent time in the back-garden and he left. Later she was working on her jewellery.

Tim: Yeah she was working on her jewellery when we called just before we went
shopping. She was grand then wasn't she Mabel.

Mabel: Well I actually thought she was a little hyper to be perfectly honest.

Tim: She was grand, I didn't see anything unusual about her at all.

Robbie: You thought she was hyper?

Mabel: Well I'm trained in that area. I see cases every day.

Robbie: No that's interesting because sometime in the afternoon she said the whole house started to shake and that there was unmerciful noise and she saw faces of crowds and footballers on the walls and the crowds were chanting about Shamrock Rovers. That old fucker planted all that stuff in her head and she must have dozed off and had a nightmare. When I came home she was up in bed crying and still shaking like a leaf. If I get my hands on him I'll kill him. That's two days in a row he's after frightening the life out of her.

Tim: God love her, did you give her anything to take?

Mabel: No that wouldn't help with something psychosomatic. She just needs plenty of rest and quiet and some specialised counselling of course. Would you mind if I spoke to her?

Robbie: No I'd appreciated that if you wouldn't mind. It's just so stupid and unnecessary but I wouldn't mind if we didn't warn her. But Debby's very stubborn, she won't listen.

Mabel: No I even said it to her earlier today that she was too trusting for her own good. You can't be too careful nowadays. But she's young and naive. Sometimes you have to learn the hard way.
Christ this is exciting, a haunted house. I know you bought the showhouse Robbie but there was nothing in the brochure about sound effects or films.

Don't be so insensitive Tim, can't you see that Robbie is under enough stress without you making a laughing matter out of it. Think of that poor young woman upstairs.

Ah lighten up woman will you. You know right well I was only jesting.

No problem but I am a little concerned. Debby has always been a bit highly-strung.

Could I drop up to see her. I'd only be a few minutes. Sometimes a friendly face can cheer a person up.

Maybe you should send me up so!

(Mabel glares at Tim)

Run up to her there. She'll be delighted to see you.

I won't be long.

(Mabel leaves the room to go upstairs)

Women!

I know. Mabel though, she seems to be a rock of sense. I hope she can get through to Debby, for her own sake.

Oh no fear, she'll take that on now like her special project. You don't know what you've let yourself in for. She'll have your poor missus wrapped in cotton wool and psychoanalysed from head to toe.

It'll do her good.

So how are the sales going?

Good until today.
Tim: Like Van the Man says - "Mama always told me there'd be days like this."

Robbie: Yeah, well today was a real bummer. And then coming home to find her in that state.

Tim: Is Larry a hard task master?

Robbie: Hard enough, he sets targets and he expects you to meet them. He's a great businessman. And he grafts hard himself so he won't tolerate slackers. That's how he took me on. The last salesman he had had a holiday booked a few months ago but then it clashed with Larry's marketing campaign for Glenmalure Park. Your man wouldn't cancel the holiday so Larry sacked him. He took me on but on the basis that I wouldn't get any favouritism because I was his nephew. If I don't do the business he'd fire me too.

Tim: Sounds ruthless.

Robbie: Ah yeah, I know Mabel thinks we got a special deal on the showhouse and I'm not saying we didn't do well. Like Debby really had her heart set on this house the minute she saw it, but I knew we couldn't afford it. The banks only laughed at us, me in the precarious position of depending on commission to top up my salary and Debby selling little rings and trinkets at a market out in Bray. So Larry did a deal with us, I'd get thirty per cent off this house when I had sold ten other houses in the estate. Now it's a good incentive for me but it's also good value for him. He does deals, there's no sentiment with Larry.

Tim: You were saying he went mad today.

Robbie: Mad isn't the word. He went ballistic. You see this place hasn't been all plain
sailing. He had deputation after deputation from that KRAM crowd.

Tim: That's the Keep Rovers At Milltown group

Robbie: They even offered him 500 grand for the site to keep the football ground here.

But that was a joke, this place is prime property, Dublin 4. It's worth a few million to Larry. He wormed his way in here with the old owners of the soccer club and he got the site fairly handy. He got an option on the property for a pittance from the Jesuit Priests. They owned the ground but they thought that the ground would always be a soccer pitch and that Shamrock Rovers would develop it. He hoodwinked them but it wasn't illegal.

Tim: I know a lot of the detail myself because the paper asked me to cover the Council Meetings when Kearns Properties sought planning permission. And the Councillors turned it down and said that it was zoned for amenities and that was that. But Larry appealed to An Bord Pleanala and they overturned the Council's decision and he got his planning permission for these houses. He must be some operator all the same. Would he drop an odd brown envelope?

Robbie: I wouldn't put anything past him. For years he had an old pal in the planning department of Dublin Corporation, some guy he played tennis with down in Fitzwilliam Tennis Club. He got loads of properties re-zoned for him. No bother to Larry.

Tim: He must be loaded is he?

Robbie: Ah yeah but he's clever. He knows how to court all these big-hitters.
Tim: So you'll take over the empire when he retires to Bermuda or somewhere.

Robbie: Oh no Tim, that's not my play. I'm not going to be anybody's stooge. I look at Larry and I learn. I'm going to build my own empire.

(Enter Mabel)

Mabel: God, you were right she's still shaken up. She told me exactly what happened but I've convinced her that it is entirely stress-related and psychosomatic. She kept going on about the noise being real and that the house was haunted and that she couldn't stay here if it happened again. I think I eased her mind. We do a lot of that kind of re-assurance work and sure Robbie don't hesitate, I'm only across the road.

Tim: The poor thing. I hope she'll be alright.

Robbie: So do I.

Mabel: A good night's sleep now will do her the world of good. We won't delay too long Robbie.

Robbie: Will you drink another beer Tim?

Tim: No thanks sure we'll do this again soon when Debby is back to herself. I have a few memory tests for her.

Robbie: She couldn't get over that, that you knew what was in the charts the day she was born.

Tim: Oh yeah, Leo Sayer was number one with "If you Leave Me Now" when Debby was born.

Mabel: Now do you remember where your house is?

Tim: Always the stinging remark. How do I put up with her at all Robbie?
Mabel: See you, and don't worry. I'll sort her out, she'll be as right as rain in a few days.

Robbie: Thanks a million. Call over for a few beers tomorrow Tim.

Mabel: He will not, my mother is visiting tomorrow evening.

Tim: Then I'll definitely be over.

Mabel: Come on you.

Robbie: See you tomorrow sometime.

(Robbie closes the door, takes a last swig of beer and leaves the room)

Act One Scene 8.

(In the middle of the night Debby appears downstairs and goes to the fridge for a drink. She pours out a drink of water and begins to drink it when the house again appears to shake. The clamour is like earlier, possibly noisier. Debby lets the glass fall to the floor and again screams. The faces flash around the walls and the excitement rises and falls and rises again as before. The chanting begins - Super Hoops, followed by regular clapping, Super Hoops, Super Hoops, Bring on the Hoops, Bring on the Hoops, Bring on the Hoops and We are the SR the SR FC, We are the SR the SR FC. Then we hear very clearly Frank O'Neill is King, Frank O'Neill is King, with your E I adeo, Frank O'Neill is King, repeated again and again. Debby lets out another scream and the noises seem to fade away as Robbie runs in and switches on the kitchen light. He holds Debby to his chest.)

Robbie: You're alright love, you're alright, I'm here, I'm here now.

(Debby is visibly shaking and sobbing her head off)
Hush now Debby, Debby, it's me. You're o.k., everything's going to be alright now. I'm with you. I'll look after you. Hush now. Hush.

Debby: I heard them again, I heard them again Robbie. The voices, it was terrible.

Robbie: Hush now love, it was just a bad dream.

Debby: But I heard them and I saw the faces Robbie. All over the kitchen, all over the walls. I heard them. You must have heard them Robbie.

Robbie: Quiet darling, quiet now they're gone now, all gone. I'll look after you. Quiet now, relax, that's my girl. Quiet now. That's my beautiful.

Debby: But you must have heard them too Robbie, the whole house was shaking.

Robbie: But I was asleep love. It was just another nightmare you were having. And it's over now.

Debby: No Robbie it wasn't a nightmare, why don't you listen to me.

Robbie: I am listening darling.

Debby: You're not listening to me. I heard those sounds real clear and I saw all the old footballers faces and the crowds. They were all around me. And I think there was a goal scored because the crowd went mad and I could feel the whole house shake.

Robbie: O.K. love but I was asleep. Now come back up to bed and we'll get a rest and you can tell me everything in the morning. Is that alright?

Debby: O.K. but I did hear the voices and I saw all those faces and men wearing caps. I know I saw them, I'm not going mad Robbie. You've got to believe me.

Robbie: I know you heard something darling and we'll get a night's sleep and talk
about this in the morning. O.K.

Debby:  O.K.  Hold me Robbie, please hold me.

Robbie:  I'm here, I'm here with you now, don't fret anymore. I'm going to be beside you all the time. Don't fret. It'll be alright.

Debby:  Robbie I'm scared.

Robbie:  No need to be now pet. I'm minding you now, I'll mind you the whole night through. Come on, come on back to bed.

(Robbie takes a large bottle of water from the fridge and links Debby out of the kitchen.)

Black out

Act Two Scene 1.

(Larry and Robbie drink coffee in the kitchen a few mornings later)

Larry:  Well you've half your quota sold now. That's not bad, five in less than a week. After that you're back to commission and making a few decent bob for yourself. Do you know something, wait another month or so, we'll have this estate nearly all sold by then and you and Debby should feck off to Paris for a long weekend. It'd do her the world of good.

Robbie:  I'll think about it.

Larry:  How is she anyway?

Robbie:  Very subdued, she's gone into herself. Hardly opens her mouth to me. Reads
all the time, won't touch the jewellery.

Larry: Why won't she talk to you?

Robbie: Because I won't believe her that the noises and the visions are real. Because I sided with Mabel and said that she was imagining everything.

Larry: Ah she had to imagine it, Jasus Christ, she's not a thick. She hardly expects us to believe that a new house is haunted.

Robbie: She won't speak to me until I agree to have the house blessed but I don't believe in all that shite. And if I keep on giving in to her she'll never get better.

Larry: There wouldn't be any problem getting the house blessed, that'd be a fairly simple enough operation. Sure I could get my old Jesuit mate Father Jerome to do the job. Throw him a bottle of Hennessy and he'd bless every house in the estate. No that's no problem, I'll ring good old Jerome and the job is oxo. You leave that to me.

Robbie: I'll tell her that before I go out, it might ease the tension a little. But I'm not conceding on the other issue.

Larry: What other issue?

Robbie: She wants me to contact that old guy Peter and invite him up to see her. I told her no way and I'm not backing down. It's him that has her sick in the first place.

Larry: You're right. Do you mind me asking you this Robbie. (whispers) She's not up is she?
Robbie: No she's fast asleep.

Larry: How long have you known her?

Robbie: Debby? About three years.

Larry: Now don't take this up wrong but is she all there?

Robbie: Ah for fuck sake Larry, you're talking about my wife.

Larry: I know, I know, I know. I'm not trying to insult anybody but she might, now just might, be a little unstable.

Robbie: In what way? Jasus Larry, I was worried enough getting up this morning without listening to this.

Larry: Well it's hardly normal behaviour is it, hearing voices, seeing visions. I mean it'd be understandable if she saw the Blessed Virgin but bleedin' footballers and old fellas wearing caps.

Robbie: Very funny.

Larry: You think I'm joking. If she saw the Blessed Virgin I'd knock down the houses and build a basilica.

Robbie: It's not funny Larry.

Larry: Think commerce boy, think commerce, their hardly going to run coach loads of pilgrims up here to Milltown to see visions of Sheila Darcy or Eddie Bailham or whatever your man's name was.

(Robbie turns away in disgust)

I've upset you haven't I? Robbie I'm known to call a spade a spade. She's a pretty little thing and I'm very fond of her but to be perfectly honest with you
from where I'm standing she's not in your league.

Robbie:    You're talking rubbish now Larry.

Larry:    I'm only expressing my opinion.

Robbie:    Yeah, well I never asked you for an opinion.

Larry:    Yeah, but are you thinking down the line kid? Suppose things take off for you. There's no way a bright kid like you will want to stay selling houses or apartments for me. You'll sell them for yourself, right or wrong?

Robbie:    Well... Yeah, I have my own ambitions.

Larry:    And you have ability. Do you think that I haven't noticed? Five expensive houses in six days. You're a natural. And you can go to the very top. And I see lots of you in me. And I also had a noose around my neck when I was your age. But I had to get rid of it or I'd have ended up selling the Evening Herald at traffic lights. No don't take umbrage son, listen to some good advice.

Robbie:    If you don't mind Larry can we look at these buyers. I'd really prefer...

Larry:    Enough said...Don't mind Uncle Larry. Come on let's sell mansions.

(Robbie puts the coffee cups in the sink, gathers his briefcase and they leave)

Act Two Scene 2.

(That afternoon the door-bell rings a few times before Debby appears from
Debby: How are you Tim?

Tim: Well there's no doubt, the dead arose and appeared to many. How are you?

Debby: I'm o.k. when I'm on my own but I get pissed off when nobody will believe me.

Tim: Do you want me to go so?

Debby: No I don't, God I wasn't speaking about you. To be honest I could do with a chat.

Tim: I'm sure Mabel has you driven mad, she drives me mad most of the time.

Debby: Ah I think you're really suited to each other. Sure you're a real joker.

Tim: So what was the expert's analysis.

Debby: I don't mean to be insulting Tim and I know Mabel means well and she's a very very nice person...

Tim: But...

Debby: I didn't imagine the noises Tim, I heard them as if I was there in the middle of the stadium.

Tim: I believe you.

Debby: Do you really, oh thanks be to God, I thought I was going off my head!

Tim: Tell us what happened. It happened twice didn't it?

Debby: The first time I heard it was just after you left on Monday. I was just sitting at the table concentrating on my jewellery when the whole place started to spin and I saw faces on the walls and footballers all in hooped jerseys and the noise
was unbearable. It was like an earthquake, I thought the walls were going to collapse around me.

Tim: That did happen once in Milltown, I was researching in the National Library today. Rovers were playing Dundalk and there were over twenty thousand people in Glenmalure Park that Sunday and a wall collapsed on the spectators but nobody was seriously hurt.

Debby: God! Do you believe in reincarnation? God, maybe I was there that day in an earlier life.

Tim: I wouldn't rule it out. Go on tell us about the chanting, Mabel said you heard loads of football chants, can you remember any of them. I'd be fascinated to know.

Debby: Yeah, I'll never forget them, wait till I see ah yeah - "We are the SR the SR FC"

Tim: Yes that's a deffo - We are the Shamrock Rovers, The Shamrock Rovers Football Club. Any others?

Debby: We're going to win the Cup, We're going to win the Cup, you're hardly going to believe us, We're going to win the Cup. It was real exciting but it gave me the willies. I went to Lansdowne Road once with my brother and it was great craic, all the singing and all and jumping up and hugging complete strangers when Ireland scored but I never expected to hear it in my own kitchen.

Tim: Were they the same chants the second time?

Debby: You mean when I heard them at night?
Tim: Yes.

Debby: Some of them but there were new ones as well.

Tim: Can you remember the new ones?

Debby: Why, you're not going to write an article on it are you? For your paper.

Tim: Well I thought it would be very interesting.

Debby: Oh, Robbie would really kill me. Himself and Larry are going spare over this. They're blaming old Peter on feeding me with ideas and then I'm supposed to be having hallucinations. You'd think I was smoking dope or something, I never touched the stuff.

Tim: You see that's what interests me. How much did Peter tell you about the old Shamrock Rovers?

Debby: Not that much, mostly about his brother Billy King, he was a trainer and physio.

Tim: Yes I've read loads about Billy King, he was a legend.

Debby: He's still alive but Peter says he's dying. He's down in the Royal Hospital in Donnybrook.

Tim: What else did he tell you about Rovers?

Debby: God you're like the detectives in the Bill. You're a real journalist aren't you!

Tim: Well I have to do my research.

Debby: O.K. but I didn't tell you. What do they say in the films, ah yeah, this is strictly off the record.

Tim: I respect my sources confidentiality.
Debby: You're funny when you put on accents like that.

Tim: *(American accent)* It's all part of my duty to my profession ma'am. *(John Travolta style)* Go on, tell me more, tell me more, did he get very far?

Debby: Well he told me about Rovers being Cup experts and that they won the FAI Cup, I think that's what he called it, more than any other Irish club. And every year his brother would plant a new rose in the garden behind the pavilion, that's where our house is now, if Rovers won the cup.

Tim: Now I know why our house is dearer than yours.

Debby: Why?

Tim: 'Cos our house is on the penalty spot. Do you get it?

Debby: *(Laughing)* I'm telling you, you should be doing stand up.

Tim: Now where was I? *(As in the Bill)* I am now recommencing my interview with Mrs. Debby Dolan at three thirty four on Thursday the 26th. Ah yes, you said that there were new chants. Can you recall what they were?

Debby: You won't be able to print this one in a family newspaper.

Tim: Is it very rude?

Debby: It went something like - "He shot, he missed, he must be fuckin' pissed, toor alu, toor alu."

Tim: That's tame enough really.

Debby: *(Debby jumps up excitedly)* God, oh my God. Tim I'm just after thinking of something. It's just after dawning on me now.

Tim: What's wrong? You're not hearing voices now are you?

Debby: No, no I'm not but you might know this 'cos you're a sports journalist aren't
you?

Tim: Go on.

Debby: Who was Frank O'Neill?

Tim: Who was Frank O'Neill? He was one of Shamrock Rovers greatest ever players.

Debby: Are you serious?

Tim: He played in the sixties when Rovers won six Cups in a row. He also played for Ireland and when he was a young player he played in England for Arsenal.

(Debby jumps for joy and rushes over and hugs Tim to his utter disbelief)

What was that for?

Debby: You've saved my sanity. (Debby dances around the kitchen chanting)

"Frank O'Neill is King, Frank O'Neill is King, with you E I Adeo Frank O'Neill is King"

Tim: That was the new chant?

Debby: Yes "Frank O'Neill is King".

Tim: Yeah he was a real hero in Milltown for sure.

Debby: But he's more of hero for me now.

Tim: Why?

Debby: Because Peter never mentioned his name to me, not even once.

Tim: Would you really object if I wrote this article?

Debby: Tim O'Shea, you can write what you like now. I'm no lunatic.

Tim: Do you think would Peter allow me do a piece on his brother? Would Billy be
too weak to interview?

Debby: I don't know. You could call to the hospital.

Tim: I'll call down now.

Debby:

(Debby takes Tim's arm and they swing around the room)

"Oh Frank O'Neill is King, Frank O'Neill is King, with you E I Adeo, Frank O'Neill is King."

Tim: He shot he missed, he must be fuckin' pissed, toor alu, toor alu.

Debby: Wait till I get a jacket, I'm going to the hospital with you.

(Debby goes upstairs for her jacket, then rejoins Tim and they leave in high spirits.)

Act Two Scene 3.

(Robbie opens the door and enters. He leaves his briefcase down, gets a can from the fridge, loosens his tie and then walks towards the stairs and shouts.)

Robbie: Debby, Debby.

(On hearing no answer, he leaves the room and runs upstairs. A few seconds later he reappears, a little perplexed, and he looks out the back garden. He comes back in and sits at the kitchen table. A few seconds later the door-bell rings and he rushes up to answer. Its Larry.)

Oh, it's you Larry.
Larry: Who did you expect to see? Elvis.

Robbie: No sorry, I thought you were Debby.

Larry: Why, has she done a runner on you?

Robbie: She might have, no sign of her when I came home. No note or nothing.

Larry: You mean she hadn't got your dinner ready on the table. Oh, another Chinese take-away so.

Robbie: It's unusual though, she'd usually ring me or leave a message.

Larry: She might be over with her shrink, what's her name ...?

Robbie: Mable's not a shrink, she's a psychiatric nurse.

Larry: Same department, proddin' the noggin.

Robbie: I'll run over and see.

(Larry starts to look behind pictures and then quickly stands on a stool and looks on top of the kitchen presses. He doesn't find what he's looking for, so he quickly resumes his position just before Robbie arrives back.)

Larry: Not there either?

Robbie: No answer there at all. Mabel must be working today.

Larry: Nurse Cratchett!

Robbie: Do you not like her?

Larry: Of course I like her, didn't she buy one of our first houses. Eh, maybe she brought Debby down for electric-shock treatment.

Robbie: You've a warped sense of humour do you know that?

Larry: No, seriously, the reason I came over was to tell yourself and Debby that Father Jerome could call to do the blessing tomorrow night if that's
convenient. You've no other plans for tomorrow night have you?

Robbie: Ah, that's brilliant news, that's a weight off my mind. Debby'll love that and I bet it does the trick.

Larry: Is she that religious?

Robbie: A bit yeah. It's more like superstition to me. She's always lighting candles for sick people and for kids doing exams. Even on the honeymoon she loved visiting churches and old graveyards.

Larry: I told you this morning she's straight from One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest!

Robbie: Larry! How much will it cost?

Larry: What cost?

Robbie: The blessing.

Larry: It's on the house. (Like Frank Carson) It's the way I tell'em.

(Key in the door. Enter Debby and Old Peter)

Debby: Well what are you two staring at?

Robbie: What's this?

Debby: What's what?

Robbie: What's he doing here?

Debby: Peter's got a name and as far as I'm concerned he's very welcome in this house.

Robbie: Over my dead body he's welcome here.

Larry: Are you crazy or what?

Debby: Mind your own business Larry, I've no argument with you, this is between me and my husband.

Larry: Mind me own business. Oh, I fully intend to mind my own business. I asked
you a question, are you crazy inviting him back here after him causing you to nearly go off your head?

Peter: I beg to differ sir.

Robbie: Shut your mouth you.

Debby: How dare you speak to Peter like that.

Robbie: I'll speak to him anyway I like.

Peter: No you will not. I've spent nearly seventy years on this earth and I'm not going to stand here and be abused by you or anybody else for that matter.

Robbie: I can't understand you Debby.

Debby: What can't you understand?

Robbie: *(Top of his voice)* What do you want?

Debby: I want to believed by my own husband.

*(Breaks down sobbing)*

Robbie: I do believe you but not when you won't face the facts.

Peter: Look gentlemen, hear me out for just one minute and then I'll go and I'll leave you alone. I don't want to be the cause of any quarrel between husband and wife. I came to tend to the roses at the back there because my sick brother begged me. But I never put ideas in this lassie's head to cause her nightmares. I'd swear that on the Bible.

Larry: Be that as it may, Peter, that's your name, well Peter my company now owns all this property. I've personally invested millions of pounds on this project alone. Now for the last time, with all due respects to your brother, he's yesterday's man. That's called progress. Life moves on. Now I'm asking you
Peter: I suppose you have them bought too.

Larry: Now I'm warning you.

Peter: Don't even think of threatening me. I don't give a tinker's curse about your millions of pounds. I've only one care left in this world and that's my brother dying down in the hospital. He's all I care about and I'll do anything to fulfil his last wishes. Goodnight gentlemen and thanks to you mam. You're a real lady.

(Debby runs to Peter and hugs him before he leaves, she closes the door, gives the other two a withering look on the way back and runs out of the room to go upstairs.)

Larry: Will you talk some sense into her or she'll do your head in. Tell her the Jesuit's coming down tomorrow night. That might help. I'll see you.

(Larry exits leaving a totally bewildered Robbie, who just flops back into a chair.)

Act Two Scene 4.

(Debby comes from the back garden with flowers. She takes some stems off and places them in a large vase. She puts water in the vase. Debby then puts a lace table-cloth down on the kitchen table to make an altar. She places the vase of flowers on the table. The door-bell rings. She opens the door and lets Mabel and Tim in.)

Debby: Ah, thanks a million for calling over.
Mabel: Not at all, it's a pleasure, isn't it Tim?

Tim: Oh, God yes. And sure maybe, if he has any holy water left over, he might slip across the road and bless our humble abode.

Debby: I'd say he would, why don't you ask him?

Tim: I'd be all for it but Mabel's all against superstitious practices.

Debby: Oh!

Mabel: No Tim, I didn't say I was against it. I just don't feel the need for external interference.

Tim: The priests I know drive nice new cars Mabel, they don't travel on broomsticks.

Debby: Ah, God I'm only having the house blessed.

Mabel: Oh well then you can blame Tim on the misunderstanding. He told me you were having an exorcism. Isn't that what you told me, I clearly recall your words, you said that Debby and Robbie were having their house exorcised.

Tim: Well it's nearly the same thing isn't it? The priest sprinkles holy water around the place to ward off evil spirits.

Debby: That's not what's going to happen Tim. No I just asked Robbie to get the house blessed so that we'll have luck here and that it would be a safe place for raising a family in the future, please God.

Mabel: So you're definitely not having an exorcism?

Debby: No way, are you mad? That'd spook me. No it's just a Christian Blessing. My ma had our house in Crumlin blessed and we never got into any trouble.
None of my brothers ever got into drugs or anything.

Tim: Fair crack to them, that's an achievement these days.

Mabel: But I thought ...

Debby: What?

Mabel: I thought that you were having the house exorcised because you believed that it was occupied by evil spirits.

Debby: No Mabel you've got it all wrong. I don't believe that my house is occupied by evil spirits, it's occupied by spirits alright but they're not evil.

Mabel: But you claimed that you were terrified. I associate terror with evil.

Debby: They frightened the life out of me but that was because I didn't understand them. I do now. They're not evil spirits.

Mabel: And does Robbie know this.

Debby: I don't know what Robbie believes in but he certainly doesn't believe me.

*(Robbie opens the door and comes in.)*

Tim: Ah talk of the devil, oh Christ I shouldn't have said that, should I?

Robbie: Why were you talking about me?

Mabel: Debby tells me that it's only a blessing tonight not an exorcism.

Robbie: Exorcism! You're not still at that game are you?

Debby: I'm not playing any game at all. I'm just preparing a little altar for a small Christian House Blessing, that's all.

Tim: And the flowers are beautiful I must say.

Debby: All from our own garden, well Billy's garden actually. He planted them.

Mabel: Who is Billy?
Tim: Billy King, one of the legends of Glenmalure.

Mabel: How do you know all this?

Debby: Tim is going to write an article about him for the Star, aren't you Tim?

Mabel: I didn't know anything about this love? You never mentioned any article to me.

Robbie: Let me get this clear. You're proposing to write an article about Glenmalure Park for the Daily Star.

Debby: Yeah, it's exciting isn't it!

Robbie: Debby, don't mess around here, you know my feelings.

Tim: My editor thinks it's a great idea and he gave me the go-ahead this morning.

But it's not just about Billy King and Shamrock Rovers, it's about us all really. We now live in the estate which used to be the home of Ireland's most famous soccer team and Debby there, her house and garden lie where the Rover's pavilion once was and she has felt the spirits of bygone years commune with her. Sure the readers will lap a story like that up.

Robbie: And now hold on here Tim. You don't believe all that bullshit about spirits.

Tim: As a matter of fact I do.

Mabel: You're as crazy as her.

Debby: Excuse me Nurse, I'm not crazy.

Robbie: But I was in the house the other night Tim and I heard nothing.

Debby: You were snoring your head off.

Robbie: Yes but you were still screaming your head off when I came down here to the
kitchen and I heard absolutely nothing.

Debby: That doesn't prove anything.

Robbie: If the noises were as bad as you made them out to be then I would have had to have heard them too. Now cut the crap Debby, this is too serious. If you persist with this hare brained scheme we're going to lose this house, I'm telling you.

Mabel: And you, you bloody eejit you stop encouraging her. Robbie's right. The girl was suffering from straight-forward hallucinations. Plain and simple. It's not serious, it can be treated with rest and with consultation with a trained psychotherapist.

Tim: So your lot can make money out of this and not mine. Now who's playing fair Mabel?

Robbie: Tim you can't write this article. I'm telling you. It's not on. Larry will stop you.

Tim: I'm surprised at you Robbie, I never put you down as someone who would be in favour of censorship.

Robbie: Ah, don't be twisting it Tim.

(Door-bell rings)

That's them, don't mention a word of this, do you hear?

(Robbie let's in Larry and Father Jerome, a rather portly Jesuit priest in his late forties)

Larry: Now Jerome, (pointing to the flowers) ah they're lovely Debby. Father this is Robbie's wife Debby.
Jerome: Pleased to meet you Debby.

Debby: You are very welcome into our home Father, thanks for offering to do this.

Jerome: An absolute pleasure Debby, no problem at all.

Robbie: Thanks Father.

Larry: And neighbours from across the road in Number 2, Mabel and Tim O'Shea.

Mabel: Father.

Tim: I see you're a Jesuit Father.

Jerome: Indeed I am Tim, Society of Jesus man now nearly twenty one years.

Tim: Are you based here in Milltown?

Jerome: For the last ten years or thereabouts. Ah I love Milltown. I'm very happy here.

Larry: *(Laughs heartily)* I'm very happy here myself Jerome!

Jerome: And sure why wouldn't he? Making a mint this fellow.

Larry: Ah sure God looks after his own, what?

Tim: You must have seen some great games played her Father?

Jerome: No, I've very little interest in sport actually. I'm more into cerebral sports like chess.

Debby: You wouldn't get much exercise playing chess Father!

Robbie: *(Coughs nervously)* Well will we get started?

Jerome: Yes why not, but before I start, could I insist that you call me Jerome. Please I'd much prefer the informality. Is that agreed?

Mabel: Agreed. Eh, Jerome could you clarify something for me before you begin?
I'm a psychiatric nurse by profession.

Jerome: Really how interesting, are you in private practice?

Mabel: No Jerome, I work in St. Vincents.

Jerome: Ah, a splendid institution. I spend a day there last week doing tests.

Debby: Nothing too serious I hope.

Jerome: Oh, just the old cholesterol. Have to cut back on the old cream cakes. But you were asking me a question?

Mabel: Are you performing an exorcism or is it something else?

Debby: No Mabel, I already told you, just a blessing.

Jerome: Oh, I thing a standard Blessing will suffice, an exorcism seems a bit extreme don't you think?

Debby: Will I light a candle Father?

Jerome: Jerome, Debby, have you forgotten already? Yes a candle would be splendid.

Better light one candle that curse the darkness, that's what I always say.

(Debby lights a candle and switches off the kitchen light.)

Lord Jesus Christ we gather here as believers in your infinite goodness and love and we pray especially for the new family that occupies Number One Glenmalure Park. We ask you to protect that family and to give them comfort in this beautiful home and also for your protection for all who visit this abode, all their neighbours and friends, workers who might maintain the house in the coming years and if your will ordains for the children that will grow up here and play and be educated here in the Christian way of life. We ask this through Christ Our Lord.
(Father Jerome sprinkle holy water around the room)

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Jerome: Now that was quite painless wasn't it?

Debby: Oh thanks Father, I feel a lot better now.

Jerome: Absolute pleasure, any friend of Larry's here is a friend of mine. Pleasure.

Robbie: Thanks Father.

Tim: Jerome, would you think me awfully cheeky if I asked you to do the same 

for our's across the street?

Mabel: Tim will you stop bothering Jerome.

Jerome: No problem Tim, no problem at all, as a matter of fact why don't we do it 

right now. Well we go over?

Debby: And then come back over Father for a cup of tea or a drink.

Jerome: Delightful. I'd be honoured.

Larry: Jerome I'll have to take a picture of you for our new brochure. House 

blessings an optional extra.

Jerome: Ha, Ha, good for you Larry, always the businessman!

Tim: Right so, will we go across to Number Two?

Debby: Will I bring over the candle Mabel?

Mabel: (sharply) Oh no, not at all, I have my own.

(They all exit)
Act Two Scene 5.

(Later that night Debby and Robbie are having a glass of wine together)

Robbie: It's real quiet now isn't it.
Debby: I hope it stays that way.
Robbie: It will. Don't worry... I'm glad we're not fighting any more.
Debby: Yeah, it hasn't been a great start to our marriage has it. Don't get me wrong, the honeymoon was brilliant, I couldn't have asked for more but since we've come back it's been horrible. And I don't like it that way.
Robbie: Me neither but it'll get better now.
Debby: Let's imagine we've just arrived back today and this is our first night in our new house, especially now after it has been blessed and all.
Robbie: Yeah, that's a good idea. Let's drink to that.
Debby: To Number One Glenmalure Park.
Robbie: Number One Glenamalure Park.

(They clink their wine glasses after the toast.)

Robbie: I have a surprise for you.
Debby: What?
Robbie: It's a surprise!
Debby: But what is it? Oh Robbie, I love surprises but don't tease me.
Robbie: Sure that's the whole fun of surprises, the teasing. Guess.
Debby: Ah Robbie!
Robbie: O.K. think of romance.
Debby: Jesus you're in good form, can you not wait till later.

*(Robbie grabs her and kisses her passionately.)*

Robbie: I really love you Debby, so much.

Debby: God, I must get that priest to bless this place more often.

Robbie: No I do. I just wanted you to know that.

Debby: Sure I've always known that, isn't that why I married you?

Robbie: Oh I thought it was for my good looks and my money.

Debby: No just your money sure that'll pay for your plastic surgery as well.

Robbie: Cheeky bitch. Give us a kiss.

*(They kiss again.)*

Debby: This is nice, isn't it? Just the two of us in our own place. No one to bother us.

Robbie: Yeah, it's special.

Debby: Yeah, I used to hate when we were in my Ma's, you know in the sitting room.

I was always real nervous that my Ma would just burst in with two cups of coffee.

Robbie: And the club milks. Don't forget the club milks. Jesus, she used to bring me in dozens of them. And if I didn't eat them all she'd always run out after me with a plastic bag full when I was going home. Do you remember? My brother used to love your Ma, the little fat fucker.

Debby: Eh, don't call my Ma a little fat fucker, the cheek of you!

*(They both burst out laughing.)*

You know that's the first time I've see you laugh this week.

Robbie: We're good together aren't we?
Debby: Yeah we are. Now what's the surprise?

Robbie: What surprise?

Debby: I'll kill you.

Robbie: Oh yeah, I was giving you clues.

Debby: You said romance first.

Robbie: Right, now think of romantic places.

Debby: Romantic places... eh, Rome, Paris...


Robbie: It was actually Larry's suggestion. He said that he expects to have this estate totally sold out in another four weeks. I've only four more to sell to clear this house and go back on commission basis. He recommended that next month we should have a romantic long weekend in Paris.

Debby: Why is he being so nice to me all of a sudden?

Robbie: Ah now, to be fair to Larry, he has always been very good to us, to the two of us.

Debby: I suppose you're right.

Robbie: Imagine, sell four more houses and I've earned thirty per cent of the price of this pad. I think I'm doing brilliant, even if I say so myself.

Debby: You are Robbie. Come here to me my hero.

(They kiss again.)

Robbie: I can think of another romantic place.

Debby: Where?

Robbie: Bed!
Debby: Only if you carry me up.

(Robbie lifts her up.)

It's not Paris but we'll do our best!

(Robbie, still holding Debby, reaches for the glasses and gives them to Debby to hold. He then picks up the wine bottle and Debby switches out the kitchen light and they merrily leave the room to go upstairs.)

Act Two Scene 6.

(Debby is up early cooking breakfast singing a pop song. Robbie comes down all flustered.)

Robbie: I'm after nicking myself shaving.

Debby: You shouldn't be rushing.

Robbie: We've to interview two new clients at ten o'clock.

Debby: Ah it's only gone a quarter past nine, relax.

Robbie: That smells nice.

Debby: Well I thought I'd better start proving myself as a wife. I've only been a nuisance so far. Anyway I haven't cooked you a breakfast yet, since we got married.

Robbie: I didn't marry you for your culinary skills.

Debby: Did you not? Well why did you marry me then?

Robbie: Why do you think? For nights like last night and because you have a great pair of ...

Debby: You cheeky pup. Do you want your eggs soft of mashed all over your head?
Robbie: You never like taking compliments do you? You have got a lovely pair of knockers.

Debby: That's a compliment and you use a word like knockers.

Robbie: Well what word do you like then?

Debby: Anything other than bleedin' knockers. Knockers are for doors.

Robbie: Alright then, I'll do a real Mills and Boon one, "He noticed her immediately when she entered the room. His heart raced, he felt a tingling sensation running down along his spine because Debby's breasts heaved in her bodice like two ripe melons.

Debby: Jasus, now they're melons. You better book into Specsavers. Here eat that and you can have melon for dessert.

(Robbie sits down and starts to eat.)

Robbie: Yeah, promise!

Debby: Will you look at the state of you. You won't sell any houses today with half a toilet roll sticking to your face.

Robbie: Am I that bad?

Debby: I've seen worse... up in the Wax Museum.

Robbie: I'll have to do. Are you going to work on your jewellery today?

Debby: Yeah, as soon as I've cleaned up. I'll have to start selling some soon. I'll want some spending money in Paris. I believe it's a very expensive city.

Robbie: You don't worry about money, leave all that to me. I'll have a nice chunk from my commission by then.

Debby: Yeah but I value my independence. I'm not going scrounging off you.
Robbie: You won't be scrounging, we're a married couple.

Debby: Yeah we are aren't we? It seems strange. I mean I know we're married and all that but it's only really starting to dawn on me now.

Robbie: You're crazy do you know that?

Debby: Don't say that Robbie even in jest. That Mabel one called me crazy yesterday.

Robbie: Ah I don't think she would have meant any offence. She's be concerned about you that's all.

Debby: But why should she be concerned about me? There's nothing the matter with me. She thinks she knows everything she does. She even pisses Tim off sometimes.

Robbie: Will you make me one promise Debby before I go to work?

Debby: What?

Robbie: Well you seem to get on with Tim.

Debby: Ah I like Tim, he's real genuine but he's great craic as well.

Robbie: Well will you promise me that you'll ask him not to write any articles about Milltown.

Debby: Tim mightn't listen to me Robbie, after all he's a freelance journalist and he has to earn a living too.

Robbie: But I'm asking you to try Debby. This is very important.

Debby: I'm not sure Robbie.

Robbie: Oh thanks very much. Now I know where your priorities lie. You talk one minute about being husband and wife and now I ask you for one small little
favour and you won't do it.

Debby: Because you're asking me to say I didn't hear those voices or see those people. And I did.

Robbie: I dunno.

*(Robbie shoves the breakfast plate away from him.)*

Debby: What?

Robbie: O.K. compromise. Ask him to promise not to write the article until all the houses are sold. At that stage Larry will be in the clear and we'll have done alright too.

Debby: That's all that matters to you, isn't it? Money. You and Larry are well matched.

Robbie: Look it Debby, the time has come for you to make up your mind whose side you're on anyway.

Debby: I'm on your side Robbie, you're my husband but I'm also on the side of the truth and there's no competition with the truth as far as I'm concerned.

Robbie: So in this case you're not on my side at all. You'd prefer to feed that newspaper hack a load of shite than to support your own husband's future.

Debby: Your future Robbie. What about our future? What sort of marriage is there if you won't believe your own wife that you say you love. Don't annoy me.

Robbie: Annoy you. I've to go off to work now. I can't concentrate on anything thinking about you here. If you're not seeing visions you're giving total strangers the full run of the house and the garden or else you're over helping Tim write a load of garbage, which will totally undermine Larry's investment
Debby: Well fuck you Robbie and Larry too. I'm sorry I ever came into this house. And that was what this Paris surprise was all about. Buy Debby off, let her buy a few new dresses for herself. Well you tell Larry Kearns from me that he can stuff Paris up his arse for all I care.

*(Debby throws the plates into the sink and storms out of the room.)*

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**Act Two Scene 7.**

*(Debby comes into the room with a box full of beads, copper strips, chains and threads. She clears a space on the kitchen table and then places the vase of flowers on the table. She starts to study the flowers and then begins to make designs with the copper. The door-bell rings. She goes to the door and lets Tim in.)*

Debby: Ah, come in. How are you this morning?

Tim: I just thought I'd drop over to see you. Am I interrupting your work?

Debby: Not at all, I'm just doing it to keep my mind sane.

Tim: Why? What's happened?

Debby: I had another flaming row with Robbie.

Tim: Over the voices?

Debby: Well sort of, but over you really.

Tim: *(Bewildered)* Over me? You were fighting over me?

Debby: Here I'll put the kettle on, sit down and I'll tell you.

*(Debby switches on the kettle and takes out a biscuit box and places it on the table.)*
Tim: Go on tell us.

Debby: Things were going grand again, he even had planned a trip for the two of us to Paris next month, when the houses were all sold.

Tim: And what went wrong?

Debby: Tim, do you mind me telling you all this?

Tim: I'd be disappointed now if you don't, especially as I'm now caught in the crossfire.

Debby: Tim I'm only married three weeks and I've learned more about Robbie in the last week than in the four years I've known him. He's got tunnel vision when it comes to money and Larry and the business and all that.

Tim: Why do you say that?

Debby: He tried to bribe me. That's what the Paris trip was all about and worse still it was his Uncle Larry's idea. He's a crafty bastard, I've always known that but Robbie is turning out to be just as bad, even worse.

Tim: And where do I come into the equation? You said the row was over me.

Debby: Wait till I tell you.

(Debby fills up two mugs of tea and hands one to Tim.)

He asked me to talk you out of writing the article on Glenmalure Park.

Tim: Robbie did?

Debby: Yes Robbie, because Larry has him under the thumb so much and what his Uncle Larry demands has to be obeyed. He's a dictator.

Tim: But what harm would an article about Billy King and his rose gardens be?

There's loads of people out there who adored the old fella, old Rover's fans.
And I suppose hardly any of them know that the poor old devil is dying in hospital.

Debby: I know, I think it would be lovely to write about him and maybe if some of them even sent him a card it would buck him up a bit. I know he won't get better. Peter reckons he's only got a few weeks, that's what the doctor told him.

Tim: I thought he was going to die yesterday when we were there.

Debby: I know sure he's only skin and bones, God love him. I'd hate to end up like that. I'd prefer if they shot me.

Tim: The way he clings onto Peter. They really love each other. Poor old Peter'll be devastated when he goes.

Debby: Yeah, but that's part of my problem as well. I'd love to have Peter come up here and visit anytime. He even offered to help me with the garden but Larry has him warned off, says he'll get him charged with trespassing on private property. Tim this is my house, this is where I live now. It's not just Robbie's house. And I can't invite who I like to visit me.

Tim: Well to hell with them, I'm going to write the article and fuck the begrudgers. I certainly don't owe Larry anything. We'll be paying a mortgage until we're on zimmerframes. No he's gotten all the profit he's going to get out of me.

Debby: Well I hope you do. Here have a biscuit.

(The house starts to rumble again.)

Oh Tim.

(Debby clings to Tim who appears startled himself.)
Tim:  Jesus Christ, Debby!

(Again there is an almighty clamour.  Faces from the past flash around the walls, spectators cheer wildly and hooped jerseys adorn the walls everywhere.  The noise rises into a crescendo and eases off only to rise again.  And then on almighty roar and it appears as if the roof will life off the house.  The chanting begins.  "Mick Leech for Ireland", followed by rhythmical clapping. "Mick Leech for Ireland, Mick Leech for Ireland" and then "Oh when the Hoops, Oh when the Hoops, Oh when the Hoops go marching in, I want to be in that number, Oh when the Hoops go marching in" repeated three or four times.  The chants fade away and the faces disappear off the walls.)

Good Jesus, what was that?

Debby:  Now Tim, that's it, that's what I heard.  Are you alright?

Tim:  I've never been as scared in my life.  Not even in Space-Mountain in Disneyland and I thought that was bad.

Debby:  Now you believe me Tim, I mean it's not my imagination is it?

Tim:  Imagination my arse!  The house is haunted.  You can't stay here Debby.

Debby:  But where will I go?  And Robbie won't leave.

Tim:  Well I couldn't live here, I'd end up in the looney bin.

Debby:  So much for the priest's blessing.  I need a drink, will you have one?

Tim:  Yes please, after that I could become an alcoholic!  You know I had my doubts about that fella Jerome.

Debby:  Had you?  He was a bit pompous but I thought his blessing was lovely.

Tim:  No, two things struck me about him.  First of all, himself and Larry were a bit too chummy for my liking and secondly he admitted to being a Jesuit.
Debby: So?

(Debby pours out two glasses of Brandy and hands one to Tim.)

To Billy King.

Tim: To Billy King.

(They both drink to the toast and recover slightly from their state of shock.)

No you see when I was researching this place down in the National Library yesterday I discovered that he Jesuits owned the land that Shamrock Rovers played on. Did you not think he was uncomfortable when I asked him about football? I thought that he changed the subject fairly sharply.

Debby: I didn't really notice to be honest. So what you're saying is that a blessing from a Jesuit wouldn't satisfy the spirits here.

Tim: Exactly, and today is the proof.

Debby: Oh, Tim I'm so glad you were here. I thought I was going off my trolley.

Tim: I'm not glad I was here. Christ, I don't want to experience that again.

Debby: But you know what I mean?

Tim: I do love, I do of course.

Debby: And now you know that Peter wasn't responsible for filling up my head. I mean you heard the chanting yourself. What was it again? "Mick Leech for Ireland." Do you know anything about Mick Leech?

Tim: Yeah, he was one of Rover's greatest stars of the sixties. He jointly holds the record for the most goals scored in a season. He scored an incredible 56 goals in one season. Imagine that 56 goals. He was also an Irish International and part of the great Cup-winning run. He scored in the 1968 Cup final against
Waterford, in a game watched by nearly 40,000 spectators. The Shamrock Rovers Team that day was: Smyth, Gregg, Courtney, Kearin, Brady, Fullam, O'Neill.

Debby: The Frank O'Neill is King guy?

Tim: The very same Frank O'Neill, then there was Lawlor, Gilbert, Leech, that's our man the famous Mick Leech and Richardson. The sub that day was Billy Dixon.

Debby: God how do you remember all that detail?

Tim: That's my speciality remember, memory. Listen I have to go into the paper. Will you be alright here on your own?

Debby: I'll be alright. I might go up to my mother's later. I'll see.

(Tim takes a final gulp from his drink and Debby shows him out. Debby comes back into the room, washes the cups and glasses, then goes over to her jewellery work but decides to leave it. She leaves the kitchen and comes down a few moments later with her jacket on and her handbag on her shoulder. She writes a note for Robbie and goes out.)
Act Two Scene 8.

(That evening Robbie comes in from work.)

Robbie: Debby.

(He goes to shout up the stairs.)

Debby, I'm home.

(He comes back into the room, leaves down his briefcase and then wanders to the table and discovers the note.)

Jasus, not again.

(He tramps dementedly around the kitchen before deciding to phone Larry.)

Larry, it's Robbie. Where are you? In the site office. Can you call down, please. No, it's an emergency. I'll tell you when you come down. Thanks Larry.

(Robbie takes off his tie and then goes to the sink and splashes some water over his face. He dry's his face and notices the brandy glasses. He finds the bottle of brandy and fills out a glass. The door-bell rings. He lets Larry in.)

Thanks for coming down.

Larry: Well, you said it was an emergency? What's up?

(Robbie shows him the note. He reads and goes into a fury.)

I told you Robbie, you married a headcase. She's going to destroy you. And now she claims your man Tim heard the voices as well. Ah, for crying out loud. Is the whole world gone fucking bonkers or what?

Robbie: There aren't any voices, I was here in the house a few yards away when she claimed she heard them before. That fellow's either a complete gobshite or he's just stirring her up for the sake of a sensational story.
Larry: His solicitors haven't finished his paper-work yet. I'll fuck him out, I'm telling you. Talk about Murphy's law. I put my last penny into this investment, my first decent sized project and I end up selling the first two house to complete fruitcakes. Christ almighty. I don't deserve this hassle Robbie, really I don't.

Robbie: I know that Larry, I'm really sorry about all this.

Larry: Ah, it's not your fault but I'm telling you now it has to stop. I'll leave her to you but I'm going to sort out that Tim fella myself. Jasus, if he writes an article about all this crap I could be ruined. Will you go up to Crumlin and speak to her tonight and tell her mother as well what she's doing to you.

Robbie: O.K.

Larry: I'm going over there now and if he's in he'll be lucky if he can spell Milltown after I've finished with him.

(Larry bursts out the door and Robbie looks after him and then closes the door. He pours himself another drink, drinks it in one gulp and leaves the room.)

Act Three Scene 1.

(One afternoon, two weeks later, Larry is searching the presses in Number One Glenmalure Park, when the key turns in the lock and Debby comes in dressed in a black jacket and black trousers.)

Debby: Oh my God! You gave me an awful shock. What are you doing here?

Larry: Ah, so you decided to come back then.

Debby: You didn't answer my question, what are you doing here? Where's Robbie?

Larry: I'll tell you Miss Fussyboots where your husband is. He's out trying to sell
houses to keep you in the style for which you are accustomed. And it's
getting harder and harder because of your pal Tim. He's written an article
about this place in one of those tabloid rags. Although I'm sure you're well
aware of that anyway.

Debby: I read Tim's article, it was very good but the next two will be very revealing.

Larry: What next two? You mean he's planning to write more?

Debby: Yes, now please explain what you're doing searching around my house,
uninvited or does your accomplice know you're here.

Larry: You're an ungrateful bitch. I don't know what Robbie ever saw in you.

Debby: What would I have to be grateful to you for? You mean this house? As far
as I can see, Robbie's working his guts out to pay you back your discount.
So I've nothing to be grateful to you for. You can't buy me.

Larry: Why didn't you stay up in Crumlin with your mother?

Debby: I came back for Billy King's funeral, if it's any business of yours.

Larry: He died did he? He must have read your man's article and decided to pack it
in.

Debby: You insensitive pig, get out of my house now.

Larry: I'll leave when I find these devices.

Debby: What are you talking about? What devices?

Larry: The tapes that that KRAM crowd planted here.

Debby: Larry get out of here. There are no tapes hidden here. What I heard was
genuine. Now please go.
Larry: I'll check this place from top to bottom with Robbie later.

(He heads for the door. Debby puts her hand out.)

Debby: No you will not. Key please!

Larry: I'm not giving you my key.

Debby: Well the next time I find you in this house uninvited, I'll have you charged with trespassing. Understood?

Larry: You'll come crawling to me yet, madam.

(Larry exits and Debby slams the door after him.)

Debby: Jumped up prick.

(Debby opens the back-door and then goes to a kitchen drawer and takes out a scissors. She goes out into the garden and comes back a few moments later with some roses. She puts some tin foil around the roses, closes the back-door and leaves the house.)

Act Three Scene 2.

(That night Robbie reads the second Daily Star article about Glenmalure and phones Debby.)

Robbie: Could I speak to Debby please, yeah it's Robbie. Ah I'm o.k. Mrs McGrath but I'd prefer if she'd come home. I know she's frightened but I can look after her Mrs McGrath. It's not that I don't believe her. I know she's hearing something but she's under awful stress and that can play... Yes but his articles are only sensationalising the whole thing. The sales have dried up. People who had put down deposits have withdrawn them after the first report in the
paper. I've lost three of my own definite sales already. It's a disaster. They're not haunted Mrs McGrath. O.K. put her on. Debby, are you going to come home? I miss you. Debby this is doing my head in. Well it's not my fault either. Well you're the one speaking to the paper. I didn't give them all those ridiculous quotes. They are ridiculous. There were students up her today from U.C.D. with special recording equipment trying to record the spirits as they called them. Me. You don't care about me Debby, if you did you wouldn't be keeping this up. Career! What career? My career is up in smoke.

(Door-bell rings.)

There's someone at the door. I'll ring you back later. Yeah, Debby we've got to do something. I'll ring later.

(Robbie goes to the door and lets Mabel in.)

Robbie: Ah, Mabel.

Mabel: I just called over to see if you wanted anything, she's not back?

Robbie: No, I was talking to her on the phone when you called.

Mabel: Oh sorry. I didn't mean...

Robbie: No, no you're alright. I wasn't getting anywhere with her anyway.

Mabel: God isn't she a very stubborn young woman?

Robbie: It's all about punishing me because I won't row along with her. If I said I believe her she might come home but I can't do that. And Tim's articles have us nearly ruined.

Mabel: I'm not defending Tim, I think he's deluded myself and God knows I've told him that often enough. But he wouldn't have printed those articles only for
Larry Kearns threatening to tear up his contract for our house. That was like a red rag to a bull for Tim. Tim might appear placid to you Robbie but if he's pushed over the edge he can go beserk.

Robbie: It's an awful mess. There's a T.V. crew coming to do a piece for the News programme tomorrow. Jesus, we'll be on SKY News yet.

Mabel: Tim's editor is delighted. The phones haven't stopped ringing at the Star all day. But did you see this evening's back page?

Robbie: No, ah don't tell me the evening paper's running this trash as well.

Mabel: They are. I have it over in the house, I'll bring it over to you.

Robbie: What does it say?

Mabel: A big headline on the back page - Developer blames KRAM on bugging Milltown.

Robbie: Not Larry?

Mabel: Yes Larry Kearns blames KRAM on planting devices in the houses to frighten the new tenants, as a retaliatory action against his legitimate development. I think they're his words.

Robbie: Jasus, the bloody idiot. What did he do that for? That KRAM crowd'll go and sue him now and then he's rightly up the swanee. Show us what he said.

(Robbie leads Mabel out and closes the door. Robbie comes back in a few moments later reading the evening paper report. He eventually leaves the paper down and fills up a drink, gulps it down and fills up another. He lets out a huge sigh of desperation.)

Robbie: Oh Christ.
(He buries his head in his hands and sits disconsolately for a few moments. The door-bell rings and Robbie opens it. Mabel and Tim come in.)

Tim: Hello Robbie.

Robbie: (Tersely) Yes Tim, I'm finished with your paper.

Tim: Robbie, can we talk?

Mabel: Tim and I are worried about you and Debby.

Robbie: You've a funny way of showing it, but talk away. Sit down.

Tim: Well Robbie, I'll come straight to the point. I've no real quarrel with you, as a matter of fact, I'd hoped, and I still hope mind you, that we can become friends.

Mabel: We would like to be good neighbours as well.

Robbie: Hold it Tim, just for one minute, please. Just hold it there. You're a journalist. That's your profession, am I right?

Tim: Yeah, you know that Robbie.

Robbie: So you're a journalist and that's how you make your living and between what you earn as a journalist and what Mabel there earns as a nurse, you'll be able to pay off your mortgage and pay your other bills?

Tim: I suppose so, as long as both of us remains healthy.

Robbie: So we've established that, now a big question for you Tim. You are asking me to be a good friend and a neighbour to you? Is that what you asked me a minute ago?

Tim: Yes, what are you getting at Robbie? I've no conflict with you.

Robbie: I'll tell you what I'm getting at. Did you ever see me down in the Daily Star
offices Tim?

Tim: No Robbie.

Robbie: Did you ever see me down in the Star offices saying that you were a bad writer
and that all you wrote was rubbish?

Tim: No.

Robbie: Did you hear that Mabel, the answer was no? I never went near the Daily Star
offices, because as a good friend and neighbour I don't interfere in my friend's
employment and I don't try and get him to lose his job. Because, believe it or
not Tim, that's what being a good friend and neighbour is all about.

(He fills up another glass and he also fills up a glass each for Tim and Mabel.)

I'm having a drink with my friends and neighbours.

Tim: I still don't get your drift Robbie.

Robbie: He doesn't get my drift, Mabel! Come on, you're the psychiatric nurse here.

Do you get my drift?

Mabel: Well I see that you're angry with Tim but I don't think that it is entirely
justified.

Robbie: Oh, do you not now. The psychiatric nurse doesn't understand my anger.

Tim: Don't resort to insulting Mabel. If you have a problem with me Robbie then
come straight out with it. Leave Mabel out of it. She asked me to come over
to see you because she was very concerned about Debby and yourself. Be fair
now.

Robbie: Be fair, you're asking me to be fair. You wrote three articles for your
newspaper in the past fortnight and they have destroyed my livelihood. Now
tell me about playing fair. Three articles full of gobbledygook which have led
to my clients withdrawing their deposits and cancelling sales. And you'd do
that to a friend and a neighbour? Come off it Tim. I'll give you one thing you
have some neck.

Tim: I'm sorry, genuinely sorry, about you losing sales Robbie but I can promise
you that was never my intention.

Mabel: It really wasn't Robbie. Tim wouldn't do that. He's not a vindictive type of
man.

Tim: When Debby told me about Peter's brother dying in the hospital and about
the rose garden, and him planting a rose each year when they won the Cup, I
thought that it would make a really good sentimental story. I'm a freelance
journalist. I have to trawl for good stories to make my living just like you
have to sell houses to make yours. I did not set out to damage your livelihood
in any way Robbie, that thought never crossed my mind. I want you to believe
that Robbie because it's the truth.

Robbie: Tim don't treat me like a complete fool. You stated that the houses in
Glenmalure Park were haunted.

Tim: And I was telling the truth. Debby experienced it and I experienced it myself.
Did you think I made that up? I'd be laughed out of town. I'd never get
another article printed in this town. Debby heard names mentioned that were
real names, players who had played for Rovers years ago. And Peter had
never mentioned any of that to her. So you explain that to me.
Robbie: Oh I don't know anymore. I just feel like packing it all in.

Mabel: And what about Debby?

Robbie: What about her? She's deserted me. It must be the shortest marriage in history.

Mabel: She'll come back when all this commotion has blown over.

Robbie: Come back to what. If I can't sell any houses then I can't buy this one. So she won't have this to come back to anyway.

Tim: Well we might be in a similar boat. Larry Kearns threatened me the other evening that he wouldn't finalise our contract with my solicitors because I was writing damaging articles.

Robbie: And he was right. They weren't just damaging, they've been devastating.

Mabel: Could we not all come together and work out some kind of compromise.

Robbie: Is it not too late?

Mabel: It's never too late. We're all adults, surely we can come to some arrangement that can stop all these arguments.

Tim: I'd do anything to improve relations.

Robbie: What do you propose?

Mabel: Well the way I see it, we have a problem with Larry Kearns, your work is linked to Larry Kearns. So will you set up a meeting with him for us to iron out our difficulties. Then of course, there's your own problems with Debby.

But they're all interlinked. I think, that if we all met here tomorrow night, we could all talk a little sense for a change.
Tim: What do you think?

Robbie: Look it, leave it with me will you? My mind is all over the shop at the moment. I'm going to have a bath and try to get a night's sleep. I'll ring you tomorrow if I can convince Larry. But you know him.

Mabel: Try Robbie, that's all we're asking.

Tim: Will you shake my hand Robbie, it would mean a lot to me.

(Robbie looks at Tim for a good few seconds before taking his hand. Mabel is happier now and she hugs Robbie.)

Mabel: It'll all work out for the better. Trust me.

(Robbie lets them out, closes the door, finishes his drink and puts out the kitchen light before heading upstairs.)

Act Three Scene 3.

(The following morning Robbie stands in the kitchen and Larry comes from the back garden carrying a few carnations.)

Larry: Jasus these are grand. That old fella left us something useful anyhow. You can't turn up at a wedding without the old carnation.

Robbie: Who's getting married anyway?

Larry: Georgie's youngest, Emma.

Robbie: Your man the planning official.

Larry: The very man. I've been at his three other kids weddings as well. I've put a fair few quid his way over the years. Jasus, a bit of nosh in the Killiney Court is the least he could do. Although this young one's a cracker. Emma. She
would have suited you down to the ground. A law student in Trinity. A bit of sophistication. That's what you need.

Robbie: Larry do I have to remind you that you were at my wedding only five weeks ago? I already have a wife.

Larry: Oh I almost forgot. But where is she now? Where is this wonderful wife of yours?

Robbie: Well she's...

Larry: Stuck up in her mother's house in Crumlin living next door to the Viper, and the Mechanic and every other gouger in town.

Robbie: Debby's family are respectable people, you know that.

Larry: Yeah, but they haven't got any class, that's what I'm talking about. That's what I was saying about Georgie's young one, Emma. Studying law, she wouldn't be a drain on your finances, she'd have her own career and she'd be nice to have on your arm at business functions as well. That's what business is all about, making a good impression.

Robbie: Debby's not a drain on me financially, she's very independent. She never asks me for a penny.

Larry: What's her career prospects, making bits of cheap jewellery, even Hector Grey wouldn't sell. Will you cop on to yourself Robbie and come into the real world for a change.

Robbie: Of course you always make the right decisions don't you?

Larry: I didn't say I was perfect but at least I think about things in the long term
before I rush in to them.

Robbie: So you were thinking clearly yesterday as well were you?

Larry: Yesterday? What do you mean?

Robbie: The evening paper, that's what I mean.

(Robbie angrily throws the paper on the table in front of Larry. Larry is taken aback by Robbie's vehemence.)

You're not proud of that are you? That was hardly a good business decision.

Larry: I'm delighted with that. I even got the headline on the sports page.

Robbie: That was a stupid move Larry and you know it.

Larry: How was it a stupid move? Go on tell me clever clogs. How was it a stupid move?

Robbie: Because you're stirring up a hornet's nest. You're bringing KRAM back into the equation. This is falling right into their barrow. They never wanted these houses to be built over their football stadium but they had almost gone away. Now they can sue you for defamation and haul you into the High Court.

Larry: But I had no choice. The other gobshite's articles claimed the houses were haunted, now I've planted suspicion elsewhere. You watch we'll get our sales back up. Mark my words.

Robbie: But what happens if they take you to court? You've no evidence that they bugged the houses.

Larry: They won't take me to court. Sure they haven't got a bean between them.

Robbie: But didn't they offer you a half-a-million for the site.
Larry: That was all promise money. Nothing up front. Most of them fellas could hardly scrape together the few quid to pay in here on a Sunday. Will you stop Robbie. Keep Rovers At Milltown me arse! They'd have more of a chance of keeping Fungi down at Dingle.

Robbie: Well I don't think it was a smart move anyway.

Larry: So what do you propose?

Robbie: We're going to have to try a more diplomatic approach. More conciliatory, far less confrontational.

Larry: Jasus who lent you the dictionary? Conciliatory, less confrontational.

Robbie: Ah, if you're going to make fun of me forget about it.

Larry: No, go on wonderboy, I'm all ears, we're in this together.

Robbie: We should cut our losses and look at a compromise.

Larry: Compromise with who?

Robbie: Well with KRAM for a start. I'd write to them and apologise immediately.

Larry: You must be joking.

Robbie: I'm serious, say you were misquoted, that you only heard rumours that the houses were bugged.

Larry: No way, I'm having no more dealings with those lunatics.

Robbie: Larry we've got to get the public back on our side. Then get the local residents to make a positive statement about the new development.

Larry: Well I can swing that easy enough. Go on. Who else is on your list?

Robbie: The newspapers.
Larry: What do you want me to do there?

Robbie: Do a deal with Tim O'Shea. Clear up his contract with his solicitors and get him to give you good press about the development here.

Larry: After what he's done to me. He could have destroyed me.

Robbie: It's called damage limitation Larry. Do you want to salvage something from your project or sink with the ship?

Larry: Jasus how am I going to enjoy this wedding today with all this crap going around my brain.

Robbie: I'll sort most of it out for you. You're not available tonight, no?

Larry: No, I'll be out at the reception. Tomorrow night I'm free. Will that do?

Robbie: O.K. tomorrow here at eight. I'll let Tim know.

Larry: Tonight I'll be networking. There's another piece of prime land I'm interested in. And I'll be looking for a good lieutenant. Are you with me?

Robbie: Of course I'll be with you, especially if you do one more thing for me.

Larry: Jasus, you drive a hard bargain, you remind me of myself. Shoot.

Robbie: I want you to go easy on Debby.

Larry: Runaway Sue? O.K. but just because you asked me Robbie. Tell her I'll even build her a grotto in the front garden.

Robbie: No, just go easy, she's very fragile at the moment.

Larry: Say no more kid. Now I'm off to get into me Louis Copeland. (Sings) "A white sports' coat and a pink carnation."

(Larry picks up his carnations and heads for the door.)

Robbie: Enjoy yourself and thanks.
Larry: And come here, will you do something for me today?

Robbie: Yeah, what do you want me to do?

Larry: (Laughs) Sell a few houses!

Robbie: You bastard!

(Robbie looks after Larry and then comes back in, finds his tie and puts it on as he goes upstairs.)

Act Three Scene 5.

(Debby opens the door and comes in. She pulls the curtains over to let in the last of the evening sunshine from the back. She starts to tidy and notices the empty spirit bottles on the press. She then switches on the kettle and leaves the room to go upstairs. Robbie comes in and hears the kettle boiling. He looks out the back garden and then rushes back in and shouts upstairs.)

Robbie: Debby, Debby are you home?

(Debby comes into the room and Robbie embraces her needingly.)

Oh Debby, I've really missed you.

Debby: I'm not staying. I've just come to talk. We need to sort a lot of things out.

Robbie: Oh, I know that. I'm just saying how much I've missed you.

Debby: Really?

Robbie: Yeah, it's been hell here without you. I've never felt so lonely in all my life.

Debby: Well it didn't have to be that way.

Robbie: I know that, I know. Look it, I don't want to argue.
Debby: There is no argument Robbie, it didn't have to be that way. All that was required was to treat each other with mutual respect. I kept my end of the bargain, you unfortunately did not.

Robbie: But I never asked you to leave. You left of your own consent Debby.

Debby: But you gave me no choice. I couldn't remain in a house, in a marriage that was supposed to based on equality, when my husband didn't support me, didn't believe me and even prevented me from inviting in my own friends. That's not equality and that's not what I signed up to.

Robbie: You're talking like a solicitor now.

Debby: Well we may have to talk to one soon.

Robbie: What do you mean?

Debby: You know what I mean.

Robbie: You're not threatening to leave me?

Debby: You've changed Robbie. I thought I knew you but I don't think I know you anymore. I don't think I can trust you anymore.

Robbie: That's rubbish Debby. We were on our honeymoon in Crete three weeks ago now you tell me that you don't know me. How can you say that?

Debby: I would have done anything for you Robbie, I would have gone anywhere with you. I thought you were so special. But I expected something back.

Robbie: So I was special five weeks ago and now you want to leave me? How am I different? How have I changed? Go on Debby, you better tell me because I haven't got a clue what you're talking about.
Debby: Loyalty for one. I expected you to stick by me. But no, you keep all your loyalty for Uncle Larry. He comes first, business must come first at all costs.

I couldn't believe the way you abused that old man. Peter is one of the nicest human beings I've ever had the privilege to meet and yourself and Larry treated him like a dog that you'd want to put down.

Robbie: That's not fair Debby.

Debby: But you did, there's no point denying it now.

Robbie: Ah there's no getting through to you.

Debby: No, I blame myself. I should have seen what you were really like. Don't get me wrong, I knew you were ambitious, all that talk about being a millionaire before you were thirty, but I never knew you were vicious. I never believed that you would trod on a defenceless old man, just so that you could make more money for that creep of an uncle of yours.

Robbie: Now who's being fair? Larry is not a creep and he's been very good to you.

Debby: Good to me. Larry hates me, he thinks you married beneath you. Well he was wrong. And he is a creep. In fact that's exactly what I caught him doing here the other morning, creeping around our house, searching through our presses. So much for privacy. And you expect me to put up with that?

Robbie: Well that was wrong.

Debby: God you've actually admitted something against him.

Robbie: It was wrong, he shouldn't be in here when we are out, but he thought that the house was bugged by the KRAM crowd.
Debby:  *(Screaming)* When are you going to get it into your thick head that the house
isn't bugged? I know what happened. It was real.

Robbie: O.K., O.K., O.K. Debby I want to fix things up. That's all I'm trying to do.

Debby: *(Crying)* What I heard was real but nobody would believe me.

Robbie: It's o.k. now, take it easy. Please don't get upset. I hate to see you like this.

Debby: What are we going to do Robbie?

Robbie: Well you're not leaving me for a start. I love you Debby and I know I've made
mistakes but I was trying to make the best start for the two of us.

Debby: I want to love you Robbie but not the way things are.

Robbie: Well you tell me what you want, I'll do anything you want? I promise.

Debby: It's not difficult, I want our marriage to be one of equals.

Robbie: But it is Debby?

Debby: No it's not. What about my friends?

Robbie: Your friends, I'm not with you?

Debby: Peter, for instance.

Robbie: Oh him.

Debby: Yes Robbie, Peter has lost his brother now and he's grieving for him and I
want Peter to visit me here and also to help me with the garden.

Robbie: Well there's no problem there as far as I'm concerned.

Debby: As far as you're concerned but what about Larry? He threatened the police on
him for trespassing.

Robbie: I'll put it to Larry, you know Larry, his bark is worse than his bite. I really
can't see any problem. That's why I called the meeting tonight. I want everyone to say their piece and agree a compromise.

Debby: Well that's my bottom line. And Robbie believe me I won't come back here to live if I can't invite Peter and anyone else I choose.

Robbie: Look it Debby, I want you back. I'll speak to Larry and I'll agree to Peter. Now I can't do anymore than that, can I?

Debby: Yes you can.

Robbie: What else?

Debby: I don't want Larry having a key to this house. I want our privacy.

Robbie: He probably had a master key just for security.

Debby: Robbie. They're my conditions.

Robbie: Alright I'll explain that to him.

Debby: Well that's that then. I'll see you tonight.

Robbie: You're not staying?

Debby: Not until my conditions are rubber-stamped.

Robbie: But you're welcome to stay, you don't have to go back to your mother's now do you?

Debby: Yes.

Robbie: O.K. then and thanks for coming down. It'll work out. I miss you Debby.

Debby: We'll see. I'll be here at eight, I've to collect Peter.

Robbie: Peter is coming tonight?

Debby: Yes, why shouldn't he?
Robbie: Oh, no reason.

Debby: Right I'll see you tonight then.

(Debby gathers up her handbag and avoids Robbie's attempts to embrace her. Robbie comes back in and contemplates the situation before leaving the room.)

Act Three Scene 6.

(That night Robbie uncorks a bottle of red wine and a bottle of white wine. He sets out six glasses on the table. The door-bell rings and Robbie lets Larry in.)

Robbie: Come in.

Larry: By jasus, is this a party or a meeting you invited me to?

Robbie: Well that's up to you.

Larry: Up to me? Why me?

Robbie: Because everybody else is willing to compromise. It now depends on your agreement. But it'll be easy.

Larry: Hang on a minute Robbie. Now I know we went to different schools but we had good English teachers too in Terenure College and as far as I can remember the definition for compromise was a settlement by mutual consent.

Am I right?

Robbie: Go I'm impressed, you can remember that.

Larry: So would you agree with my definition?

Robbie: Sounds right to me.
Larry: So what's all this shite about me having to agree to everything they want?

Robbie: I didn't say that. We're all just looking for a settlement.

Larry: Well that's different. I'm a reasonable man, despite what some people say but I'm nobody's fool. I'll agree to reasonable demands if it's good business.

Robbie: Look it there won't be any more problems.

Larry: Right wonderboy, I'll leave most of the talking to you. You're my representative but don't pull the wool over my eyes. I've too much at stake here.

Robbie: We'll start with Tim and Mabel, clear that up first. You rang his solicitors?

Larry: Yeah this afternoon. Breaks my heart I should have broken his neck. The houses are moving very slow.

Robbie: Yeah but they are moving. I have two very strong possibilities from this morning and three or four more enquiries. It's picking up again. All this commotion will blow over. People will still want to buy here, it's a prime area with the right address.

Larry: I know you're right but we shouldn't have had this hassle.

Robbie: Did you apologise to KRAM?

Larry: Ah take it easy Robbie!

Robbie: O.K. then, but you know my feelings. We can't afford any more band P.R. (The door-bell rings and Robbie lets Mabel and Tim in.)

Come in Mabel, how are you Tim, you are very welcome.

Mabel: Hello Mr. Kearns.

Tim: Larry.
Larry:  *(Disgruntled)*  Good evening.

Mabel:  Are we too early?

Robbie:  No, no it's after eight now. We're just waiting for Debby now. She's collecting old Peter.

Larry:  Can we get started Robbie, I can't hang around here all night.

Robbie:  Right we'll start now, I'll just get Mabel and Tim a glass of wine and then we'll fire away. Red or white Mabel?

Mabel:  I'll take white if you have it opened.

Robbie:  It's a Chilean dry, is that o.k.?

Mabel:  Sounds great, thanks.

Robbie:  And the red for you isn't it Tim?

Tim:  Red for blood, that's me Robbie.

*(Robbie hands them the wine.)*

Robbie:  Larry?

Larry:  I'll have his blood as well thanks.

*(Larry snarls at Tim as Robbie hands him a glass of red wine. He pours a glass for himself.)*

Robbie:  Well, you all know why we're here. I think we'd all agree that we have run into difficulties recently but the bottom line is that we all want to work together here. The houses are beautiful, the area is grand, the setting is perfect. Those of us who have bought houses here want to stay here. I think we'd all agree on that.

Mabel:  Absolutely.
Robbie: Now I talked to Tim and Mabel yesterday and I now accept in all good faith that Tim did not write his articles with any malice to Kearns properties in mind. However Tim now fully accepts that his stories created a sensation and that this severely affected our sales and temporarily at least put Larry's project here in jeopardy. Tim has agreed that the articles are now finished and he has undertaken to stop writing about Glenmalure Park in the future. Is that a fair summing up of your position Tim?

Tim: Essentially yes.

Larry: What do you mean essentially? Is that your position or is it not?

Tim: Well yes it's a fair account of what I discussed with Robbie.

Larry: So there'll be no more airy-fairy in the papers.

Tim: No more articles from me yes.

Robbie: Well once that's agreed, I know that Larry has spoken this afternoon with your solicitors and your final contracts are being drawn up with Kearns Properties and can be signed within the coming week.

Mabel: Oh, that's a relief. Thank you very much.

(The key turns in the lock and Debby enters. Peter remains at the door.)

Debby: Come in Peter.

(Peter comes in gingerly, feeling very uneasy. He is carrying a small cardboard box.)

Robbie: Debby, thanks and come in Peter. Wait till I get you a chair.

(Robbie sits Peter down. He still holds on to the cardboard box.)

You know everybody here.
Mabel: I was so sorry to hear about your brother.

Peter: Thank you mam.

Tim: How are you keeping Peter?

Peter: As well as can be expected Tim, as you know, myself and the brother were very close. I miss him terrible.

Robbie: Can I get you a drink Peter, a glass of wine or a whiskey?

Peter: I wouldn't say no to a little whiskey. Just a small one.

Robbie: No problem.

(Robbie finds the whiskey bottle and pours a glass for Peter. Debby pours a glass of white wine.)

What was your brother's name?

Peter: Billy, Billy King.

Robbie: Now Debby just to fill you in on what's been happening, we've already come to an agreement acceptable to Tim and Mabel and Larry, so I'd like to conclude that end of proceedings now by asking you to shake hands.

Tim: No problem whatsoever and no hard feelings.

(Tim extends his hand and Larry shakes it. Mabel then shakes hands with Larry and with Robbie. Tim and Robbie clink glasses.)

Robbie: Right I'd like to move on now to Debby and Peter.

Mabel: Would you mind awfully if Tim and I left now?

Robbie: You don't have to. It's all going to be very civil.

Tim: With respect though Robbie, this is about your own domestic arrangements.

We'd really prefer to stay out of it.
Robbie: No problem. Whatever you like.

Tim: *(To Debby)* You don't mind Debby do you?

Debby: No, not at all. Sure I'll drop over to see you later.

Tim: Do and bring Peter. You're always very welcome to drop in to Number Two anytime Peter.

Peter: Thanks Tim.

*(Robbie lets Mabel and Tim out.)*

Debby: Well Robbie did you tell Larry what my conditions were?

Robbie: I spoke to Larry, yeah.

Larry: Hold on for a minute here. Let me get one thing clear from the outset. I'm not going to be held to ransom here. Now I didn't know that you were arriving with a set of conditions because as far as I'm concerned I don't owe you anything.

Debby: Oh yes you do. You owe me an apology for a start and you also owe one to Peter.

Larry: For what. I'm not going to apologise for trying to run a legitimate business. I haven't done anything illegal here.

Robbie: Larry cool it down, we're getting off on the wrong foot here. Everybody cool it down. There shouldn't be a problem.

Larry: Set of conditions!

Robbie: What Debby meant was that she wants, which I think she's entitled to, is to be able to invite whoever she likes into her own home. Now that is reasonable, I don't think anybody could object to that.
Larry: But sure I never objected to you doing that.

Debby: You did!

Larry: Ah now Debby, whoever you invite in here is your own business, it's got nothing at all to do with me.

Debby: But you specifically warned Peter there that you would get him charged for trespassing. I invited Peter into my house as my friend.

Larry: Well that's different, I didn't know then that he was a friend of yours. I'd much prefer that he was in here with you than wandering around the estate looking in windows.

Peter: Excuse me sir. That's a lie.

Larry: Well I'm trying to sell houses here and what would prospective buyers think if they witnessed you looking into their gardens or climbing over walls. Don't deny that you climbed over that wall out there and you can't deny that either.

Peter: Well I was just trying to look after my brother's roses. I didn't know that the house was occupied. I'm sorry if I caused offence.

Larry: Well that's o.k. then. I accept your apology.

Debby: And?

Larry: And what?

Debby: Your apology to both of us for the abuse you hurled at us.

Larry: Right I'm sorry if I offended either of you.

Debby: Do you accept that Peter?

Peter: Oh yes, that's grand. I'm not easily offended. I'm too long in the tooth for
holding grudges.

Debby: My next condition is that you don't hold a special key for our house.

Larry: Robbie told me about that and I must say I resent the allegation that I was invading your privacy. You weren't staying here at the time, I used a security key to let myself in and I was searching for tape recorders. But I have promised Robbie that I won't enter the premises again, without his invite. So now are you happy?

Debby: I am. It's not that you're not welcome here Larry, your Robbie's uncle after all but I don't like the idea of anybody else having a key to our house unless we arrange it. You're very welcome here in the future.

Robbie: Oh thanks be to Christ, that's settled. Now can we shake hands on that.

(Debby shakes hands with Larry and Robbie hugs Debby.)

Now will you have another small drop Peter?

Peter: No I won't be stopping too long, I don't want to hold Debby up too late, she's been more than kind to me already. If you don't mind me saying you're a very lucky young man to have married a great lass like that.

(Robbie stands holding Debby's hand.)

Robbie: Believe me I do know how lucky I am.

(Robbie kisses Debby.)

Peter: Would you mind sir, if I made one request?

Robbie: Not at all, what is it?

Peter: As you can see I'm not travelling on my own.

(Peter takes out the urn containing Billy King's ashes.)

These are the brother's ashes. I only collected them from the undertakers
yesterday afternoon. Now it was Billy's last wish that his ashes be spread
here in Milltown. He always wanted that but he never dreamed that the pitch
would be gone and that Rover's would be gone out of here. So in recent weeks
when I told him that his garden was still here he begged me to spread his ashes
out there. Would that be alright?

Larry: No way I'm sorry.

Debby: What?

Larry: I said no way. You're not turning this place into a shrine to Billy King or to
Shamrock Rovers either. I'd have bus loads visiting here every weekend
paying their respects. No way. The new tenants would never accept that. No
way now and that's my final word on the matter.

Debby: You can't deny a man's last wish.

Larry: Watch me. I'm deadly serious on this now Robbie. There'll be no
compromise. I've done all the compromising I'm going to do for one evening,

thank you very much.

Robbie: I wouldn't have any objection Larry.

Debby: And it's our house. You've no say in the matter.

Larry: Of course I have a say in the matter. Whose side are you on Robbie? You
brought me over here tonight and now you're springing this on me. I'm in
charge of this whole development. Not just this house, the whole development
and I'm not turning any of it into a graveyard.

Peter: How long are you here, sir, in Milltown I mean.
Larry: A few years, what does that matter?

Peter: Because my brother Billy came here to work with Shamrock Rovers in 1945. Long before the Second World War, long before any of you here were born. Do you not think that that gives him any rights? Do you think that after over fifty years he shouldn't be entitled to that much. To allow his sacred ashes to spread out in the garden there that he built. Every plant, every flower out there, every shrub, my brother brought here. And you talk about your development and your tenants and their rights. If you don't mind me asking, who are you anyway? You're just one man and you think that because you have money and because you're well connected that you can ride roughshod over the thousands of people that came here over all those years. What? You think that one man is entitled to destroy all the history of this place and all the dreams and memories that people had, generation after generation. Shamrock Rovers was founded in the same year as the Lock-out in Dublin in 1913. But that wouldn't mean a thing to you, I know which side you would have been on.

(Peter starts to put the urn back into the cardboard box but Debby runs over and takes it from him. She runs towards the back-door.)

Debby: This is our house and I'll put them in our garden.

Larry: Debby I've warned you.

Debby: Get out of my way.

(Larry steps in her way and wrestles with Debby and the ashes spill out on the kitchen floor. Peter jumps up in horror.)

Peter: Oh My Jesus, look what you've done.

(He breaks down and kneels to the ground near his brother's ashes.)

Christ why did he do that to my brother.

Debby: (Screaming) You bastard, you bastard.
(Debby strikes Larry a few times before Robbie manages to pull her away from him.)

Larry: It was your own fault. I warned you not to interfere.

Debby:

(Still screaming and under restraint.)

You are nothing better than an animal. I knew you were low but not that low.

You bastard, may God forgive you. Leave me alone.

(Debby breaks free from Robbie's grip and goes over to console Peter who just sifts his brother's ashes.)

Come here Peter.

(She manages to get Peter to his feet.)

It'll be alright Peter. Robbie you gather those ashes and keep the urn here for me. I'm bringing Peter over to Tim's house.

(Debby puts her arm around Peter, who sobs inconsolably and she leads him out of the house.)

Robbie: Larry don't even open your mouth.

(Larry just stands there and watches Robbie who gets a new dust-pan and brush and gathers up Billy's ashes and pours them back into the urn. He places the urn on the table and prepares to leave.)

Larry: Where are you going?

Robbie: I'm going to see my wife and try and save my marriage.

(Robbie storms out and slams the door behind him. Larry just stands there mesmerised and rooted to the spot.)

Larry: Oh Jesus, what have I done?

(The whole house appears to shake once again and the noise is incredible. The chanting starts, followed by what appears to be the loud banging of the metal roof of a stand. "We are the SR the SR FC, We are the SR the SR FC, We are the SR the..."
SR FC" and then "Frank O'Neill is King, Frank O'Neill is King, with your EI adeo, Frank O'Neill is King" repeated a few times. The excitement rises to a crescendo as before and then fades and rises up again. Larry is still rooted to the spot but now with a look of terror on his face. Faces of spectators flash around the wall and then there is an almighty roar followed by the chant - "We're going to win the Cup, We're going to win the Cup, You're hardly going to believe us, You're hardly going to believe us, You're hardly going to believe us, You're hardly going to believe us, We're going to win the Cup." Larry rushes to the table and takes up the urn with Billy King's ashes and then opens the back-door and goes out into the garden. The faces still flicker on the walls of the kitchen and now the singing begins - "Oh when the Hoops go marching in, Oh when the Hoops go marching in, I wanna be in that number, oh when the Hoops go marching in." Repeated a second time and then the pictures fade off the walls and the song fades away as Larry comes in from the back-garden with the empty urn in his hands. He places the urn on the kitchen table and then closes the back-door behind him. He looks towards the urn and then he takes out his mobile phone and rings Robbie.)

Larry: Hello, Robbie. Robbie listen, I've spread the ashes in the garden. Yes. (He finishes the call and he leaves the house, closing the door behind him.)

The End.

Appendix 6: Cafe Slices: Poet's Corner and In the Picture

Early afternoon in a city cafe ROSIE KENNEDY is clearing away some dirty delph in an empty corner of the cafe.
ROSIE is about nineteen years of age, very pretty and happy go-lucky. She is singing a new pop song as she wipes down one table.

Enter PETER O’DRISCOLL, a bothered looking man in his mid-thirties. He stands near ROSIE looking very stern and unhappy with his lot.

PETER. Could you clear this table please?

ROSIE. I will in a minute, just finished here. You can sit here if you like. It’s nice and clean now Sir, just for you.

PETER. No, I’ll wait.

ROSIE. Suit yourself ..........your own favourite seat?

PETER. What’s that?

ROSIE. That must be your own favourite seat, that one.

PETER. Do you think it be possible to clear this table, say, anytime before next Christmas?

ROSIE. Here, no need to be sarcastic, I said I’d do it now.

PETER. Are you allowed to argue with customers? Is that company policy?

ROSIE. No, we’re not allowed but most customers are nice.

PETER. You can take my order now.

ROSIE. I’ll have to finish this corner, then I’ll be over to take your order. Here’s the menu. I won’t be long.

PETER. I want to order now. I don’t want a menu.

ROSIE. How come, are you a regular in here?

PETER. As a matter of fact I am. You’ll never be a regular if you don’t sharpen up a bit Miss.

ROSIE. Rosie. Rosie Kennedy. The pleasure is all yours.

(She extends her hand, he recoils in disgust)

Enter SOLO MCGRATH, a slob of a man in his mid fifties. SOLO has a full head of grey hair and has an easy-going air about him.
SOLO. Ah, I knew it.
   You kept this spot especially for me.
   You’re a little darling, do you know that?

ROSIE. You’re welcome.......very welcome.
   Would you like a menu or are you a regular
   who knows it off by heart?

PETER. Waitress please, I haven’t got all day.

SOLO. Well, how much of it have you got?
   Ha ha..Do you like it? Ha ha.. How much of it
   have you got? No offence, pal.

PETER. I’ve a good mind to send for the manager.
   This is outrageous treatment.

ROSIE. You want the manager?
   Very well Sir , I’ll get the manager.

SOLO. Ah, now hold on pal.
   What in the name of all that is holy is wrong
   with you?
   Jasus, I was only taking the mickey.

PETER. It has nothing to do with you Sir.
   It’s between the waitress and me.

SOLO. What’s between the waitress and you?...
   Only jesting. What if a fella couldn’t laugh.

ROSIE. Do you still want to see the manager?

PETER. Not if you’ll take my order and give me some
   service.

ROSIE. O.K, have you decided yet?
   I mean what you want?

PETER. I had decided before I came in at all, what I
   wanted.

SOLO. Before you came in?
   Bejesus, if you don’t mind me saying, you don’t
   hang around.
   Decided before he came in!

ROSIE. Well?
PETER. I’ll have the Mini-Mixed Grill with a pot of tea for one and two slices of homemade brown bread.

SOLO. Can I suggest something?

ROSIE. What’s that Sir?

SOLO. Why don’t you get a large pot of tea? I’ll have a few mugs with you. It’ll work out cheaper in the end, look...

PETER. No, thank you. I’d prefer to stay on my own.

ROSIE. Is that all?

PETER. Yes, that’s all.

ROSIE. I’ll take your order in a minute Sir.

SOLO. Take your time love, take your time. The man that made time made plenty of it.

ROSIE. You’ve got a good philosophy.

SOLO. Ah, it’s not a philosophy at all.
   It’s just common sense.
   Sure what’s the point ending up with ulcers, like some people.
   Relax, take your time.
   That’s my motto, anyhows.

ROSIE. I won’t be long. (Exit Rosie)

SOLO. She’s a fine lassie isn’t she?
   She reminds me of a younger version of me own Aunt Moll. Christ she was some character, Moll, she surely was.

PETER. I’m sure she was.

SOLO. Oh, she was...she is, sure she’s still smoking and drinking and she’ll be eighty-four next birthday.

PETER. That’s hardly to be admired.

SOLO. What’s that?
PETER. Smoking and drinking.

SOLO. Why do you not do anything like that yourself?
   Ay, and she’s still chasing the young fellas
   as well. By God she is now.
   Do you think I’m having you on?

PETER. I’m not interested.

SOLO. Why, because she’s old?

PETER. No, no....not because she’s old.
   Don’t be so ridiculous.
   Because I’m just not interested in your Aunty
   or Granny or whatever she is.

SOLO. My Aunty, Aunty Moll, well Mollser we
   all call her.

PETER. Well that one.

SOLO. Could I ask you a question?
PETER. Do you have to?

SOLO. No, I don’t have to ....Yes I do have to.
   I’m curious, curious to know something.

PETER. To know something .....about me?

SOLO. Yes, I’m really curious to know something about
   you.

PETER. Why, what do you want to know something
   about me for ? I’m a stranger to you.

SOLO. Well, I want to know something about you, well,
   because you know something about me.

PETER. No, I do not.
   I know nothing in the wide world about you
   and what’s more I don’t want to know.

SOLO. That’s not very Christian, now, is it?

PETER. Who said I was a Christian?

SOLO. Oh, you’re not a Christian.
   Ah well, now I’m learning something......
   something about you.
PETER. Listen, I don’t want to listen to any more of this

SOLO. You’re not a Christian, you don’t like listening and you don’t like sharing your tea.

(Enter Rosie)

SOLO. Oh and you’re a very impatient man and you can be extremely rude to women as well. That’s enough to be going on with.

PETER. Who is rude? I am not rude. Was I rude to you, Miss?

SOLO. Oh, it doesn’t surprise me at all, no, not one little bit of a surprise. You’ve got problems pal.

PETER. Shut up, shut up now. Is my meal nearly ready? I’ve a good mind to.....

ROSIE. Mini-Grill normally takes about twelve minutes Sir, it won’t be long.

PETER. That’ll be fine.

SOLO. Begod, I’ll have one of those Mini-Grills too. Twelve minutes, sure that’s super bleedin sonic!

ROSIE. Do you want the tea and brown bread as well as this man?

SOLO. Oh, just as well as that man. Sure I’ve been working hard all morning.

ROSIE. Is it hard work that you do?

SOLO. Not physical work like.....no, no. I’ve done me share of hard grafting. No, I’m a student now, in Trinity. Trinity College Dublin.

PETER. Excuse me.

(Peter heads in the direction of the gents)
SOLO. Isn’t he some tulip?  
Jesus, the face on him and the price of turnips.

ROSIE. Ah, he doesn’t worry me.  
You get all kinds of cranks coming in to this place, they think that they’re the bees-knees.  
Anyway, I won’t be here all my life.

SOLO. Have you another job to go to?

ROSIE. No, I’m going to college myself in October.  
This is just part-time.

SOLO. Which college, you won’t be going to Trinity will you?

ROSIE. Maybe, it all depends where I get a place, I want to study languages.

SOLO. Languages. I could tell you a lot about languages English, Irish... Conas ta tu ar maidin and of course Dublin as well.

ROSIE. Dublin?

SOLO. Yeah, you know ‘bleedin dis and bleedin dah and bleedin dudder and how’s yer mot’!  
That’s Dublin.

ROSIE. I know it’s gas isn’t it, but I won’t be studying that, thanks be to God.

SOLO. You’re mad, you should.  
That fella Roddy Doyle’s after making a fortune out of it.

ROSIE. What are you studying yourself?  
Were you joking me?

SOLO. No, why would I be joking?  
Do you not think I look like a student?  
Well I am, a very mature student of only fifty-seven summers.

ROSIE. And what subjects?

(Peter returns from the toilets)

SOLO. Sociology and Psychology.
ROSIE. God.

SOLO Yeah, the figaries of society and the workings of the human brain.

ROSIE. Janey, that sounds brilliant. Do you really enjoy it?

SOLO. Enjoy it. I can’t get enough of it. I lap the stuff up.

ROSIE. So you know all about the human mind?

SOLO. Well not all, but I’m getting there. In four years time I’ll be able to host my own television programme.

ROSIE. I wish you’d analyse my mind for me. Sometimes I don’t know whether I’m coming or going.

PETER. Well would you mind going out to the kitchen and bringing in my meal. It’s at least twelve minutes by now.

ROSIE. Oh, pardon me for being cordial with my customers. It’s company policy to be friendly you know!

PETER. Well, I’m in a hurry.

ROSIE. I’m going.

(Exit Rosie)

SOLO. Have you got important business to attend to?

PETER. No, I’m just pressed for time that’s all.

SOLO. Ah, that’s a pity.

PETER. How do you mean, a pity?

SOLO. Ah no, it’s just that you’re in an awful hurry but you’ve no important business to attend to. It’s a pity to worry now and to be hurrying yourself if your business is not important .... if it’s trivial like.

PETER. I didn’t say it was trivial.
I should be somewhere else, that’s all.

(Enter Rosie carrying two Mini-Grills)

ROSIE. Now gentlemen, enjoy your meals.

SOLO. Bygod, that was quick.......Ah no, I can’t.
       Here take this back, please.

ROSIE. Why Sir, what’s wrong?

SOLO. Ah no, I couldn’t, I just couldn’t.
       Sure this only took one minute.
       It’s not fair on my pal here, not fair at all on
       .....what’s your name?

PETER. Eh, Peter.

SOLO. No, it’s not right that the chef could keep poor
       ould Peter waiting all that time and then come
       along and serve me in a jiffy.
       That’s not playing the game at all.
       And me only a student with oodles of time on
       me hands, while Peter there has some very
       important trivial business to handle.

ROSIE. Stop messing you.
       You had me worried there for a minute.

SOLO. Only having a bit of crack with you Rosie.
       Solo McGrath.
       I’ve been acting the clown all my life.

ROSIE. Solo, that’s a gas name.

SOLO. I’m a bit of a card, what? Solo...a bit of a card.

ROSIE. There’s no stopping you at all.
       Wait till you learn all this psychology stuff.

ROSIE. It’ll be dangerous to let you out on your own.

SOLO. Sure, I know most of it already.
       I could be giving the lectures myself.
       The human mind’s no great mystery, you know.

ROSIE. I don’t know about that.
       No two people coming in here are the same.

(Solo studies Peter for a second)
SOLO. Yes, I agree with you Rosie. You’re right. But we all work, in the mind like, on the same principles.

ROSIE. Could you analyse how my mind works?

SOLO. Not a bother. Of course I could.

ROSIE. And what about Peter here?

SOLO. Well now, it is the study of the human brain... Ha, ha...only joking Peter, me ould son.

PETER. I don’t normally come in to restaurants to be insulted.

SOLO. And where do you normally go then? railway stations ...Jasus, only having a bit o’ crack, son.

PETER. I don’t find your ‘bit of crack’ funny at all! Not even mildly amusing. In fact, I think your conversation inane, tedious and to be quite honest, PETER. .......just plain stupid.

ROSIE. Woh.....go for it Peter. Now that’s what I call a speech. My God, Peter, I could fall in love with you when you’re angry. You’re so definite about things, so...masculine.. ooooh!

PETER. Well, I’ve no intention of falling in love with you. Now please, I came in here for some peace and quiet.

ROSIE. Not on the menu Sir, sorry.

PETER. Well, that’s what I’m used to in here. Before you came. So please, entertain that man there, if you like but ....

SOLO. Here, hold on a minute. If there’s any entertaining to be done around here, that’s my area. I can give you a Solo concert all of me own...
what do you think...a Solo...no..oh, alright then.
Do you sing Peter?
You must have an ould song or two?

PETER. God Almighty...Yes, yes I do sing.
I am a very good singer actually.
I sing with my musical society.
I sing with my parish church choir.
I even sing in my shower.
Now are you happy?

ROSIE. Oh, I’d love to hear you singing in the shower.
I’d say now that you are a legend in your own bathroom.

SOLO. No messin, Peter. Are you a singer? Really like?

PETER. Yes, I told you. I don’t invent things.

ROSIE. What’s your favourite song?

PETER. My favourite song!
Well, I’d say now, if you pushed me to make a choice .... let’s see now.... I suppose I’d plump for “The Lark in the Clear Air”.

SOLO. I know it well.
(Solo starts to sing) Dear thoughts are in my mind, and my soul feels enchanted.

PETER. Yes, that one.
I like that and of course I like my church hymns.

SOLO. Which ones?
Do you know “Panis Angelicus”?
Do you sing the latin?

PETER. Yes, I know “Panis Angelicus”, but my favourite hymn is “Be Not Afraid”.
That’s a really beautiful hymn, when it’s performed well, I mean.

ROSIE. Such law-de-daw, God, the pair of yous are too cultured altogether for me.
Be Not Afraid and Pawnese Angeldust, I ask you.

ROSIE. What about “Father and Son”?

SOLO. What about it?
PETER. “Father and Son”, you mean the
   Cat Stevens song?
   Yes, not a bad song.

ROSIE. That must be a different one,
   no, Boyzone.
   You know.....Find a girl, settle down,
   if you want to you can marry, look at me,
   I am old but I’m happy. I was once as you
   are now and I know that it’s not easy to become
   ....... oh, I love that song.

SOLO. Begod Rosie me girl, you sing like a lark yourself
   Do you know what I am going to tell you, if I
   was twenty years younger, you’d be wrapped
   around me arm like a pad-lock round a gate.

PETER. Yes, Cat Stevens, he recorded “Father and Son”
   in the early seventies.
   He’s a Muslim now.

SOLO. What do they play?
   Is that reggae stuff?

ROSIE. Ah, stop Solo, you’re awful... what do you think
   of Peter now, isn’t he a real dark horse?

SOLO. Dark horse is right.
   He talks better than Mr. Ed when he gets going.

PETER. No, well you asked me a question and I gave
   you an answer.
   I love music.
   Is that a crime?

SOLO. No crime at all, Peter, me son, no crime at all.
   It’s just that you wouldn’t say a dickie-bird to
   us earlier.

PETER. Do you know why?
   Do you want to know? Seriously.

SOLO. Yeah.

PETER. Well, you see I don’t presume anything.
   You arrived in here.
   You presumed I wanted to chat.
I didn’t.

SOLO. But you’re chatting now.

(A voice calls Rosie from the kitchen off)

ROSIE. Here, I’ll leave you two to have a little natter. Yeah, I’m coming... that’s what the actress said to the sailor. I’m coming.

(Exit Rosie)

PETER. My God, do you see what I mean? That girl presumes that we would find that crude remark funny. I don’t find that funny, not funny at all. She has made a false presumption.

PETER. I actually consider that to be an invasion... into my privacy, I mean.

SOLO. God, you’re amazing! Do you know that?

PETER. Why, why am I amazing? Surely...

SOLO. I’ll tell you why. Because if you take that girl there, Rosie. She’s a sweet young thing, trying to make her way in the world. She’s as insecure as anything and a little smile from the likes of me and you, well, it can’t do her any harm, now can it?

PETER. It can’t, I know that. Do you think that I’m unfriendly?

SOLO. Well, you’re hardly a very social animal, now, are you?

PETER. I’m never negative towards people, initially. She just rubbed me up the wrong way, that’s all.

SOLO. And do you always expect everybody to dance to your tune? She’s doing her best. Would you have rubbed her up the wrong way? Did you ever think of things that way?
PETER. No, I didn’t rub ....

SOLO. Look it...what age are you?

PETER. I’m thirty-four, but that’s hardly any of your business.

SOLO. Look, cut the baloney.
   This is man to man, here.
   You’re thirty-four years old and you don’t appear to know the least thing about life or people for that matter.

PETER. I resent that.

SOLO. Resent all you like.
   Communication is a two-way street, you know.
   You obviously got that young girl’s hackles up and she responded in kind.
   She was very pleasant to me, then again, I didn’t abuse her.

PETER. Abuse......how dare you!
   Now, I’d advise you to be extremely careful.

SOLO. Don’t threaten me, pal.
   You’re not talking to a young whipper–snapper now, no, nor a young schoolgirl either.
   You’re not too fond of the truth, are you?
   Well, I’m going to ..... 

PETER. You’re going to nothing.
   I’ve to make an important phone-call now,
   I’ve got business to attend to and then I’m going to leave and, hopefully, I shall never see you or her ever again.

SOLO. That’ll be a pleasure.
   (Exit Peter to make a phone-call)
   Bloody, obnoxious jumped up prat.
   (Solo looks into Peter’s half opened briefcase and looks about him for a few seconds. He pulls out a page and proceeds to read its contents under the table, half covering the page.)

(Enter Rosie)

ROSIE. Doing your eccer?

SOLO. (embarrassed) Ah just eh...reading a little piece
ROSIE. Is it psychology or sociology?

SOLO. No, no, shush... it’s his.

ROSIE. Peter’s? Did he ask you to...?

SOLO. No, I just took a glance. He’s a writer, a bleedin poet!

ROSIE. You’re joking, him?

SOLO. Here, have a gander, be careful. He’s on the phone... probably to his publisher. Is it any good, the poem?

ROSIE. It’s gorgeous .......

“I’m sorry there were no candles, Or that my words were so unclear, If only you could understand My pleasure when you’re near”

God, Solo, that’s real romantic, isn’t it?

SOLO. He hardly wrote that! Do you think? That heap of misery. Would he have?

ROSIE. No, I’d say he did. I saw it when he got real narky with you, he can use words. They just seem to flow from him.

SOLO. Christ, talk about never judging the book by the cover, I wonder if he’s famous. Peter... I can’t say I ever heard of any Irish poets beginning with Peter. Jasus, put it away, quick.

(Enter Peter)

ROSIE. Can I clear this table for you now, Sir?

SOLO. Ah sure, clear Peter’s first.

PETER. No, no hurry at all.

ROSIE. You sound excited.
SOLO. Put it there, pal.
No hard feelings.

*(Peter reluctantly shakes Solo’s hand)*

SOLO. No, I’d hate to leave with any kind of sour taste between us.
Sure I’m only a bit of a codder.

PETER. It’s okay.

ROSIE. I’d say you’re gas at home.
Does your wife laugh at all your jokes?

SOLO. She did one time.
She left....well, we separated two years ago.

ROSIE. Ah, I’m sorry, I didn’t mean to.

SOLO. Not at all, don’t worry.

PETER. It must be tough on you.
Do you live alone?

SOLO. Yes, just me and Harry.

ROSIE. Whose Harry, your son?

SOLO. Me dog, he’s a little scotch terrier.
We’re the best of pals, the two of us.

ROSIE. Harry, God, I thought you were talking about your son.

SOLO. No, me and Harry, we go back a long way.
We discuss everything, no secrets, at all between us.

ROSIE. You talk to your dog?

PETER. That’s not unusual.

ROSIE. Yeah, I know but...

PETER. A pet can bring great joy.

ROSIE. Yeah, no, I’m not saying that.
I mean I have a canary myself at home but it’s not like a relationship with a human.

SOLO. Better in some cases.
I fought like hell with Mary, never fight with Harry.

ROSIE. You must miss her all the same.... Mary?

SOLO. I do.
I’ll be honest.
I miss her nagging, I miss her mother,
I miss her sisters, I miss her marmalade.
I’ve never been so happy in all my life.

PETER. Sounds horrific.

ROSIE. But there must have been some romance, when you were younger, like when you met her?

SOLO. Rosie, me little darling, you’ve a lot to learn.
Did you ever here this one?
It’s an old one.
(Solo starts to sing)

“Love is pleasing and love is teasing
And love is precious, when first it’s new
But as love grows older, sure love grows colder
And fades away like the morning dew.”

ROSIE. That’s a very cynical song.
It doesn’t have to be like that at all.

PETER. Unfortunately, Solo is right.
Romance is often short-lived.

ROSIE. Are you married?

PETER. Yes, I am ... happily.

ROSIE. So there is romance.
It can last.

SOLO. Some are lucky.

PETER. It’s all about change.
People change, that’s the problem.
Have you ever been in love?

ROSIE. Well... I think so....well not really love.
Oh, I dunno...

PETER. No seriously.
   When you thought you were in love,
   how did it effect you?
   Did you wake up at night thinking about him,
   I mean your boyfriend?
   Or did you go off your food?
   I mean did it affect you chemically?
SOLO. Good Jesus, you’re a real Dr. Ruth.

PETER. No, no, these are serious questions.
   I’ve been in love, what I’d call love,
   at least four times in my life.

SOLO. Are you sure you’re not Peter O’Toole?

ROSIE. But did you leave them or did they leave you?

PETER. They all just ran their course.
   It’s like in the supermarket.
   Everything has a shelf-life.

ROSIE. God and I thought you were romantic.
   You’re just as cynical as he is.

SOLO. I’m not cynical .... I haven’t sinned in ages,
   more’s the pity.

PETER. Whatever gave you the impression that I
   was a romantic?

ROSIE. Well, the way you were speaking earlier.

PETER. No, romance is, and I don’t mean to patronise
   you, it’s for starry-eyed teenagers.

SOLO. I’d have to say he’s right.
   You’re spot-on, Peter.

ROSIE. But you write poetry.

PETER. I don’t write poetry.
   Who told you I wrote poetry?
   My God!

ROSIE. This fell out of your bag when I was clearing
   your tray.

PETER. What ..... oh, that.
   That’s for my cards, my greeting cards.
I design and sell greeting cards.  
It's hardly poetry.

SOLO. And do you write the ...

PETER. Yes, I write all the soppy verses.  
They're for the punter.  
You tell people what they want to hear.  
Roses are red, all that rubbish.

ROSIE. So you don't mean it?  
The verse doesn't mean anything at all.  
You just contrive the whole lot?

PETER. It's my business, my livelihood.

ROSIE. I think that's awful.  
You're so insincere.

PETER. No, I am not insincere.  
But I tell people what they want to hear.  
It's called the feel good factor.  
I provide a service and I do it well.

SOLO. That's the harsh reality of life, me sweet thing.

ROSIE. No, no, no, I'm not buying this at all.

PETER. That's exactly it.  
You've just unwittingly knocked the nail on the proverbial head.

SOLO. He's a fair man with the lingo, what?

ROSIE. He's full of shit, if you ask me.

SOLO. Ah now Rosie, easy, easy, the man has expressed an opinion, that's all.  
You mightn't agree.  
But experience tells me he's dead right.

ROSIE. Well, if it's right to con people with verses that mean nothing, you can stuff your experience.

PETER. You're funny.  
I'm actually quite enjoying this, I really am, watching your young fury.

ROSIE. Don't be so condescending.  
I'm totally serious.
PETER. I know you are.
    That’s why I find it amusing.
    You said a minute ago, think about what
    you said .... “ I’m not buying any of that”...
    that’s exactly the market I’m working in.
    People either buy my cards or they don’t.
    Now if I can come up with some nice verses,
    which tug at the old romantic heart-strings,
    I’ve a better chance of making a decent living.

ROOSIE. So the end justifies the means, does it?
    Your methods are questionable.
    At least when a poet writes a poem, you know
    that the poet means what he says.

SOLO. I’m not taking sides, Rosie, but, and I know
    what you’re saying but...

ROOSIE. There is no but.

SOLO. Do you mean to tell me that, that fella Heaney,
    your man that won the Nobel Prize, that he
doesn’t ever think about what his readers
    like to hear.
    I’m bloody sure he does.
    Sure songwriters do it all the time.

PETER. Exactly my point.
    How many times, Rosie, have you heard a song
    and you almost believe that the singer knows
    something secret about you.
    Well, that’s it.
    It’s the same thing.

(A voice calls Rosie from the kitchen off)

ROOSIE. Yeah, yeah, I’m coming.
    (Under her breath) I’m not bloody deaf.
    Excuse me, con men!

(Exit Rosie)

SOLO. Jesus, she’s really riled up.
    She’s a gas young one.
    I wouldn’t fancy burning her toast in
    the morning.

PETER. I like her, she’s spirited.
    She’ll make a great lover, a great wife.

SOLO. Do you think so?
She’ll change.
Life’ll change poor little Rosie.
I wish it wouldn’t but that’s ....

PETER. I’m not so sure.
I think it’s important that she holds on to her ideals.
I mean she’s actually right, you know, if you really think about it.
The kind of love she talks about is worth fighting for and it does exist, out there, all over the place.

SOLO. Christ, you’re starting to sound like Mother Teresa now.
That’s not the same world I’m living in.

PETER. Are you talking about love in general, the universality of our experience, or are you talking about yourself?

SOLO. No, not just myself but I’ve seen enough to know.

PETER. To know what?
Here can I get you...?
We’ll have another pot of tea.
Rosie.....
To know what, you’ve seen enough to know what?

SOLO. That to really love someone, you have to destroy yourself.

PETER. God.

SOLO. I’m serious.
Love is not a liberating experience.
Quite the contrary, in fact.
It causes more damage and destruction.

(Enter Rosie)

PETER. That’s rubbish.
Eh, could we have a pot of tea for two?

ROSIE. Tea for two.
A pot of tea for the two amigos, sorry the two chancers, coming up.

PETER. Now Rosie, don’t forget ‘the customer is always right.’
ROSIE. Oh, Sir, you’ve misunderstood my words.  
I wasn’t being sincere.

(Exit Rosie)

SOLO. Got you.  
Very clever.

PETER. You surprise me, Solo.  
I would never have had you marked down as a bitter man.  
You seem to have suffered a lot from your relationships.

SOLO. Words, you’re into words.  
Well now, what is language if it’s not about shared communication.  
When you use the word love and I use the word love, we’ve a fair idea of what each other means.  
The meaning is shared.  
Agreed?  
That’s how language operates.  
Are you with me?

PETER. Yes, I suppose.

SOLO. Well then, how would you define love?

(Enter Rosie)

ROSIE. Your tea, gentlemen....not!

SOLO. Thanks love.

PETER. Listen ,Rosie, do you know what Solo is after asking me to do?

ROSIE. What, I dunno... sleep with him.... and of course, don’t forget Harry.

PETER. He has asked me to define love.

ROSIE. That’s simple.

PETER. Is it?  
Well then, define it.  
What is love?

ROSIE. Love is a feeling..... an intense feeling
of affection and desire to care for another human being.

SOLO. Not bad, me girl, not bad at all.
I like that.
An intense feeling.
Jesus, it sounds great.
I must try it sometime myself.

PETER. Okay, I’ll come back to you on that.
Now Solo, go on...

SOLO. Well now, Rosie’ll kill me for this, but to me, love is an illness, an irrational, illogical lunacy that attacks human beings. It’s nearly the equivalent to the flu or measles. and the only antidote is a large dose of cop-on. We all need ought to have more sense, and I mean common sense now, than to ever tell anyone that we love them. Now, that’s love for me.
I’m sorry.

PETER. That’s the worst load of tripe I’ve ever listened to. What age are you, Rosie?

ROSIE. Impertinent pup....me, I’m eighteen, nineteen in April.

PETER. Eighteen and this guy here, what are you, fifty, fifty something and you haven’t got a clue.

SOLO. What, you asked me to give my definition. I’ve defined love as I’ve seen it. But, haven’t I proved my point? You’ve been bandying around with language for the last half-hour and now we realise that your language is not the same as my language or Rosie’s language or anybody else’s language for that matter. So don’t be getting so high and mighty.

PETER. But you’re talking through your posterior.

SOLO. Arse, why don’t you say arse, like the rest of us, that don’t write Christmas cards.

PETER. I feel so sorry for somebody like Rosie, that has to listen to that.... that appalling drivel.
ROSIE. Here, don’t be feeling sorry for me. I’m well able to look after myself.

PETER. No, but I do. I genuinely feel sorry for somebody like you, somebody young, idealistic, hopeful having to endure such a cold cynical view of this world.

SOLO. What world do you want me to talk about?

PETER. You have a responsibility to the young, you know. Don’t you realise that?

SOLO. Hey, easy on. Don’t you lecture me, don’t you even dare to try and lecture me on responsibility to the young. I’ve raised three children. They fend for themselves now but I was there for them when my wife walked out. A woman who swore on an altar of God that she’d stand by me, that she loved me. Love, don’t talk to me about love. Love me arse!

(Peter’s mobile phone rings)

PETER. That’s my call now.

(Exit Peter to take call)

ROSIE. I’m sorry.

SOLO. The likes of him. He can write all the verses he likes. Mother’s Day, Valentine’s Day, Wedding Anniversaries. A load of codswallop. I’m telling you. If you’re lucky enough to love someone and they love you, you don’t need a card to tell you. You know. You know yourself.

ROSIE. You’re right, I’m sorry. I’m very sorry if I upset you, I didn’t mean ...

SOLO. Not a bother in the world. I’m not upset with you me little darling, at all.
It’s that gobshite.
He just got me going with his definitions.
I’ll give him a few more definitions before I
finish this pot, I’ll guarantee you that.
I walked into it though, hook, line and sinker.
It was me that asked him to define love.
I’m a bigger eejit....

ROSIE. Ah you’re grand. Don’t let him upset you.

SOLO. Good girl.
    Well, you know, I hope you go to Trinity.
    Jasus, we’d be great mates.

ROSIE. Yeah, it depends on the points though.
    Trinity or U.C.D.
    I think I’d like Trinity, you know being in the
city centre and all.

SOLO. It’s a fabulous place.
    Even walking through the main door,
it’s like going back in history.
    You’re away from the hustle and bustle
and everything.
    It’s the best thing I’ve ever done in all my life,
I tell you that much.

ROSIE. Well, if I get a place there, the two of us’ll
    have some craic.
    You could be my sugar-daddy.

SOLO. Sugar-daddy, your sugar-daddy.
    God, you’re gas.
    What in the name of all that is holy
is a sugar-daddy?

ROSIE. Ah, you know, you do know what a
    sugar-daddy is?
    The ould fellas, most of them married,
down in Leeson Street.
    They hide their wedding rings and chase
the young ones.

SOLO. Would you believe me now, if I told you
    I was never in Leeson Street in my life.
    Well I was in the street many’s the time
but not in any of those night-club places.
    So I could be a sugar-daddy?

ROSIE. You’d need plenty of money,
American Express Gold Cards and a nice car outside with reclining seats, of course.

SOLO. Reclining seats, what?
Here, I hope you were never on the reclining seats?

ROSIE. I might have been .... I’m only joking.
I wouldn’t let any of those grandfathers near me, money or no money.
You’d see more life up in the wax museum, I’m not joking you.

SOLO. Do you know, you’re a rock of sense.
You’re a credit to your parents anyway.

ROSIE. Thanks a million.

SOLO. No, I mean that. You really are.
I’ve only one daughter, Angela, and she’s as scattered as the salt there.

ROSIE. Is she married?

SOLO. No, she’s still finding herself.
She was running a pub in London for a few years but she’s back now.
I wish she’d settle down.
And Leeson Street!
She lives in Leeson Street and I don’t know how many other streets.

ROSIE. I’d like to meet her.
She sounds great craic.

SOLO. Oh no, steer well away from Angela, me good girl.
You’ll make something for yourself...
Look out, here’s William Wordsworth back.

(Enter Peter)

PETER. Fantastic, fantastic news.
Yes. (punches the air)

ROSIE. What happened?

PETER. That was Margaret, my wife.
She’s my business partner as well.
SOLO. So.

PETER. We were expecting a result on a proposal today. I’ve just won a huge contract with W.H Smith in Britain. W.H. Smith, they’re the major book-store chain in England and Scotland. They’ve hundreds of outlets all over the country. They’re taking my new stock.

ROSIE. God!

PETER. They were impressed with my designs and particularly taken by my verses. Margaret said that their buyer said that my verses were poignant. So there you are, Rosie. This is my big breakthrough.

SOLO. Fair crack to you ould son. That’s brilliant. Will it mean much, money like?

PETER. Much... potentially a small fortune. These cards will be on the shelves in every W.H. Smith in London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Birmingham, the airports, everything. Here, Rosie, I don’t suppose you stock champagne?

ROSIE. Champagne, I don’t think so, I’ll ask. Are you serious?

(Exit Rosie)

PETER. Oh, Solo, this is a great.

SOLO. I love to see someone getting a break. The only breaks I ever got left me in the hospital. I’m absolutely delighted for you.

PETER. You will join me for a drink? Will you? Come on, celebrate with me, please do...
SOLO. Ah no, I won’t Peter, if you don’t mind.

PETER. You will.
    Please, Solo, I’d like that.
    You’re not angry with me from before.
    That was just ...

SOLO. No, nothing like that...no, I don’t take a drink anymore.
    I’ve had a problem with it.

(Enter Rosie)

ROSIE. No John only has a wine list.
    He’d never have champagne.
    Sorry about that.

SOLO. Champagne Charlie what!

PETER. Do you know what we’ll do, Solo?
    Rosie, bring us the menu, please.
    I’m going to start my celebrating with a nice dessert.
    A Knickerbocker Glory or something.
    And Solo’s having one as well.

SOLO. Knickerbocker Glories, Jesus, he’s really pushing out the boat.

ROSIE. I thought you knew the menu off by heart.

PETER. Not the desserts.
    I never knew the dessert menu.
    But today is different.
    You could almost say that, wait for it, today is the icing on the cake.

SOLO. Do me a favour Rosie.
    Remind me never to buy one of this fella’s cards, won’t you? The icing on the cake!
    Christ, I’ve heard them all now.

ROSIE. I’ll get the menu.

(Rosie exits and returns immediately with two menus)

SOLO. I don’t believe I’m doing this.
PETER. Go on, lighten up.
Let’s have a treat.
I can’t tell you what this means to me.

*(Rosie is meanwhile studying Peter’s cards)*

ROSIE. This is good.

PETER. Which one?

ROSIE. This one.
I think this is brilliant.
Listen to this, Solo.

“When we are apart my spirits seem to dip
I beg for relief ‘cos my heart can’t bear the separation....I cry out for divine intervention, anything to disperse the dark clouds of my desperation, but then my thoughts seek you out relentlessly, like the waves rushing towards a lonely shore.
Never to be repelled and never to be denied again.”

PETER. Well, Solo?

SOLO. Ah, that’s mind-blowing, mind-blowing that is.

PETER. Do you think so?
You’re just saying that.
You don’t ...

SOLO. You’re right.
I don’t.
It’s not the words mind you.
They’re grand.
They’d bring tears to a wedding –cake, they would.
No, not the words at all, it’s just that I can’t share the experience.

ROSIE. Do you not miss your wife at all, even a little?

SOLO. Miss her.
Not in the slightest.
In fact, give us up your first line again?

PETER. “When we are apart, my spirits seem to dip”

SOLO. Yeah, well my first line would be-
“The longer we’re apart, my spirits seem to soar”
and I’ll have the Mississippi Mud-Pie as well.

ROOSIE. God, that’s awful.
Did you never love her?

SOLO. Oh, I used the words, right enough.
What are you ordering, don’t be keeping
the girl.

PETER. I’ll try the Banana-Split with lashings of
fresh cream, thanks.

SOLO. There you are now.
I’m not all on my own, even the poor
old banana is split up.

ROOSIE. Here, stick to the psychology.

(Exit Rosie)

PETER. How long did you stay together?
You and... what was your wife’s name?

SOLO. Mary.
Mary, Mary quite contrary.
Eh, nearly thirty years, thirty years
of penal servitude.
You think I’m joking?
I’m not joking you at all.
She made my life a misery.

PETER. But you don’t, well at least, I don’t think
you are contented at all, with your lot now
I mean.

SOLO. Oh, I am happy now.
I’m living now.
For the first time in my adult life, I am in
control and do you know something, Peter,
it’s great, it’s a bleedin great feelin.

PETER. You must like the college.

SOLO. It’s out of this world.
The lectures, the young kids, the debates,
it’s a new life for me.
And I’m not looking back, ever again.
It’s forward from here!
PETER. You’re dead right.

(Enter Rosie)

ROSIE. Now children.
   One Banana-Split for you Peter and
   the Mississippi Mud-Pie for you
   Huckleberry.

SOLO. Huckleberry.
   I like it.
   Huckleberry Finn.

PETER. Can you imagine being in the same class
   as him?

ROSIE. I’d like that.

SOLO. Wouldn’t it be magic?
   Rosie and Huckleberry at the Trinity Ball.
   What! .....Jasus, this is lovely.

ROSIE. I’d say it’s far from Mississippi Mud-Pie you
   were reared.

SOLO. Are you joking?
   Mary, that’s the ex-wife, she was that sour,
   even the jelly wouldn’t set for her.

PETER. I’m the chef in our house.
   Would you believe that?
   Cordon Bleu, no problem.

ROSIE. Do you really do the cooking?

SOLO. Is that why you eat in here all the time?

ROSIE. Solo!

PETER. No offence taken.
   No I like it in here.
   But it’s the truth, I actually do the
   cooking at home.

ROSIE. Do you cook for yourself?

SOLO. Oh, I most certainly do.
   I’m a dab-hand with the old chip-pan.
   My fish-fingers are famous all over Finglas.
ROSIE. I’d say there are. I like fish-fingers.

SOLO. I’ll cook you some sometime.

ROSIE. I can’t wait.

(Exit Rosie)

PETER. She’s brilliant.

SOLO. A breath of fresh air, no doubt.

PETER. So, tell me.
   How’s the study going?

SOLO. Great, it’s going along nicely.
   Do you know what I was just thinking about, what we were saying a minute ago.
   I’m studying Psychology and Sociology in College.
   In four years time, they’ll give me a degree, please God, anyway.
   And do you know what I’m going to tell you? They should’ve given me a doctorate for living with that bitch for thirty years, an honours Ph.D at that!

PETER. You paint some picture.

SOLO. Well, it sure isn’t the Mona Lisa ....more like the Mona Mosta.

(Enter Rosie)

ROSIE. Now children, how are the desserts?

PETER. Scrumptious.

ROSIE. I think Solo’s going to lick his plate.

SOLO. I would if I was at home.

PETER. My wife would kill me.

ROSIE. I’d say she rules the roost.
   Where did you meet her?

PETER. We came from the same street.
   We were childhood sweethearts.
   We went out together right up until
our early twenties, then she went away
to nurse on famine relief in Ethiopia.
We sort of went our own way then for years,
even for a few years after she came back.

ROSIE. And you got back together?

SOLO. She couldn’t get enough of him, what?

PETER. She was actually engaged to a fellow from the
North and I thought I had lost her.
But then she rang me one day after she had
split up with your man.
You’ll never believe this.

SOLO. Go on. Hit us with it.

PETER. I met her and then one evening we came in
here for a snack.
And I just went for it.
I proposed to her.
This is where I asked Margaret to marry me.

ROSIE. In this cafe?

PETER. Not just this cafe, at this table here.
This one.
That’s why I told you this was my lucky spot.
She was so shocked when I asked her, she just
laughed and then jumped up and ran off to the
toilet.

SOLO. But she came back and said yes.

PETER. No, she didn’t.

ROSIE. She didn’t say no!

PETER. Relax the pair of you and I’ll tell you.
She laughed so much at my proposal
that tears ran down her cheeks and she then
reached for her handbag and started to re-do
her make up.

PETER. So there I am thinking that my heart-felt
proposal is just one big joke to Margaret
when a sudden flash of inspiration came
over me.
About a month before that I had seen a movie
called Dead Poets Society.

ROSIE. Oh I loved that film.
    Go on tell us what happened.

PETER. Well you remember the motto-
    Carpe Diem-Seize The Day.
    That’s what I did.
    On the back of the menu I wrote
    out my proposal in verse and
    when she had finished making up
    her face, I went down on one knee
    and handed her my poem.

SOLO. You proposed in poetry.

ROSIE. What did the verse say?
    Can you remember?

PETER. I will always remember those words.

SOLO. Go on.
    Try it out on Rosie here.

ROSIE. Yeah do and then I’ll give you my answer.

PETER. Okay Rosie.
    This is a magical moment now
    Ordained by the stars above
    This is the time to just reach out
    And cherish our true love
    This is the day of all the days,
    The one to change your life,
    Just say yes my darling love.
    Say yes you’ll be my wife.

ROSIE. Oh yes, Oh yes, Oh yes.
    She said yes, I knew it.
    So you are a romantic after all.

PETER. And then I said to myself, if my
    words can woo Margaret why not
    write verses for greeting cards.
    And today in this same corner I get
    my big breakthrough.
    It’s hard to believe isn’t it?

SOLO. Do you know something Rosie?
    There is something about this place alright.
    The inspiration is oozing out of the walls.
I think the two of us should write one of those Mills and Boons books.

ROSIE. Yeah, Nurse Rosie and Doctor Solo.

SOLO. I love it.
   Now you’ll have to bring me down to Leeson Street tonight.

ROSIE. You sugar-daddy!

SOLO. Well, how are we going to research the bedroom scenes?

ROSIE. No harm wishing old man!

(Solo waltzes Rosie around the floor as Peter sings)

PETER. (Sings) “You’ve got to have a dream,
   If you don’t have a dream,
   How you gonna make that dream come true.”

THE END

“In The Picture”

It is a grey drizzly October, just after midday.
BARRY GILMORE sits in a city-centre cafe waiting.
He rolls a cigarette while constantly looking towards the door.

EMER O’MALLEY enters carrying a tray.
The only space available appears to be beside BARRY.

EMER. Could I?

BARRY. Yes, no problem.

EMER. I’ll shove this brolly under the table.

BARRY. Is it still bucketing down?

EMER. Just a light drizzle now.
   It’s very busy here this morning.

BARRY. This place always is.

EMER. Is it?
I haven’t been here in years.

BARRY. Are you from the country?

EMER. Oh no, I’m from here originally but I’ve lived in London for nearly eight years now.

BARRY. Back on holiday?

EMER. No I wish, just a little business. I’ll be here for a week.

BARRY. I hope you enjoy your stay anyway. Have you noticed many changes?

EMER. Well I only arrived last night but the place is hardly recognisable. It’s teeming with life and all the new buildings.

BARRY. Yes, they call it the Celtic Tiger.

EMER. The Celtic Tiger, that’s an amusing title.

BARRY. It hasn’t been too amusing for me.

EMER. Why? No good for your business?

BARRY. No business at all. I’m a struggling artist.

EMER. Ah, now I understand. Artist’s always struggle, eh, what’s your name?

BARRY. Barry, Barry Gilmore.

EMER. Emer O’Malley. Very pleased to meet you, Barry.

BARRY. So you reckon that’s my future?

EMER. As an artist?

BARRY. No, as a struggler.

EMER. Surely it comes with the territory.

BARRY. Are you talking about the activity or the pay?

EMER. Art for art’s sake. Your work depends on your hunger. The pay can be an accident.

BARRY. God, recommend me for an accident then. It would take a month in casualty to clear my bills.

EMER. You haven’t lost your sense of humour anyway. That’s important.
BARRY. Very little choice.

EMER. Yes but some people choose to be miserable.
What do you paint?
It is painting isn’t it?

BARRY. Yes.
I like portraits but my stuff now is mainly
surrealist I suppose.
I’m a Dali disciple.

EMER. Dali, you mean you paint your nightmares.

BARRY. Well dreams anyhow, not always nightmares.
You seem to know a lot about Dali’s work.

EMER. Not really but I investigate dreams too.

BARRY. As a hobby?

EMER. No, not a hobby.
It’s part of my profession.

BARRY. Why, what do you do?

EMER. I’m a psychic healer.

BARRY. A who?

EMER. A psychic healer.
It’s nice to have a job with a grandiose title, isn’t it.
People come to me with their problems and I heal.
well most of the time.

BARRY. Go away, and you earn a good living.

EMER. Reasonable living yes.
Now I train other healers.
That’s what I’m back here for.
I’m giving a seminar for Irish healers.

BARRY. So it’s big business?

EMER. There’s a huge interest in it now.
Here let me get you a coffee.
We’ve got to look after our struggling artists.
Black or white?

BARRY. White, thanks very much.

EMER. A mug of white, then I want to hear more about
your art.

(Exit Emer, Barry has another glance out the window. Emer comes back with the coffees)

EMER. Now Barry.

BARRY. Thanks.

EMER. So do you have exhibitions?
BARRY. I've only had one.
It wasn’t that successful.
I've nearly enough work now for a second.
My surrealist phase.
I'm not sure whether Dublin is ready for me yet.

EMER. I don’t know, I read that they’re very cosmopolitan here now.
You might blow their minds.

BARRY. It’s their pockets I’m after.

EMER. You’re not interested in posthumous acclaim.

BARRY. It might come very soon if I die of starvation.
No, seriously I’ll throw in the towel if I don’t make a breakthrough soon.

EMER. Oh, oh, am I talking to a defeated man?

BARRY. Not defeated, not quite yet.
But I have what they call cash-flow problems.

EMER. (pointing to a picture on the wall)
What about that there?
Would they be lucrative?

BARRY. It doesn’t appeal to me.

EMER. Do you not think it’s pretty?

BARRY. What that?
I suppose it’s pretty but I prefer art to make a statement.

EMER. Do you not think it does?

BARRY. Go on tell me, what statement does that make?

EMER. That nature can provide things that are red, and rich, and ripe.
That picture makes me happy.

BARRY. That’s a very romantic view.
Don’t cherry trees have thorns?

EMER. I told you you liked nightmares.

BARRY. No but artists shouldn’t just record, they should disturb.
That’s what I believe.

*Enter* LINDA, eighteen and agitated.

BARRY. Linda.

LINDA. Did he buy it?
Did you get the money?

BARRY. No.
He hasn’t come in yet.

LINDA. You were spoofing me all the time.

BARRY. I’m not spoofing.
He hasn’t arrived yet.

LINDA. Look it, I need the money this morning.

BARRY. He said on the phone he’d meet me.
He’ll turn up.
If he buys the painting, I’ll have it for you
by lunchtime.

LINDA. He bleedin’ better.

BARRY. This is my sister.

LINDA. Who is she?

BARRY. This is Emer.

LINDA. You were meeting her all the time.
Well I’m pissed off with your arty friends.

BARRY. Linda, stop it.
Emer is a stranger.
We’ve only...

LINDA. Yeah, pull the other one.
Look it, you better get it.
BARRY. He should be here before one.
I’ll wait here till one.
Will that do?

LINDA. It’ll have to.

(Exit Linda)

EMER. Whew.

BARRY. I’m sorry about that.

EMER. Don’t apologise, I feel sorry for you.
She thought I was one of your arty friends.
That was funny.
Is she always like that?

BARRY. Sometimes.
I’m sorry.
I really am.

EMER. Look it, calm down.
She didn’t upset me.
What does she need the money for?
She’s not on drugs?

BARRY. No, no.
It’s for her Deb’s dress.
Her Debs is on tonight.
She has this dress picked out for weeks but I just hadn't got the money.

EMER.  Why do you.... what about her father?

BARRY.  He's dead.
    Both my parents were killed in a car accident.

EMER.  Oh my God.
I'm so sorry.
Oh that's terrible.
Is it long?

BARRY.  Nearly three years now.
    They were on their way home from a neighbour's wedding.
    A lorry jack-knifed.

EMER.  How many of you are left in the family?

BARRY.  Just three.
    Myself, and Linda, and John.
    He's only nine.

EMER.  So you're the breadwinner.

BARRY.  Yeah, but not a great one.

EMER.  All the same, it must be very tough on you.

BARRY.  I'll give this game another year or so.
    If I can't make it, I'll have to get something else.

EMER.  But that would be awful.

BARRY.  I'll have no option.

EMER.  Is that the painting?

BARRY.  Yeah, I was hoping to flog it this morning.

EMER.  Can I see it?

BARRY.  Sure, but you might prefer the cherries?

EMER.  Wow.
    That's beautiful.
    Sorry cherries but you're outclassed.

BARRY.  Some nightmare what?

EMER.  You're big into mythology.
    So many symbols.
    I'm afraid you'll have to explain them to me.

BARRY.  Eh, you're the psychic.
You explain them to me.

EMER.  Let me see it in more light?
Are you religious?

BARRY.  Not formal religion but I do believe
in spiritual forces.

EMER.  That's obvious.

BARRY.  Why?
From the painting?

EMER.  Well this is the God-Head isn't it?

BARRY.  I suppose.

EMER.  And you're a feminist.
This is all matriarchal.
Is this your sister, mother, or lover?

BARRY.  I just wanted to surround it with the colours
of love, blue and gold.

EMER.  And your warriors red and bloody.

BARRY.  Yes.
Is this how you analyse your patients?

EMER.  No, but I'm just interested.
The art tells me a lot about the artist.
I'm really impressed.
The colours, the images, the intensity.
I think it's brilliant.

BARRY.  I bet you say that to all the struggling artists you
meet?

EMER.  Cheeky.
No, I'm serious.
If you look into that picture you'll see
different things at different times.
It's complex but it's so visually stunning.
So don't reject a compliment.
Lighten up.

BARRY.  I'm sorry.
Thank you.
It's nice to be encouraged.

EMER.  I've only seen one of your paintings but you
have a unique talent.
Don't ever even think about giving up.
I'm very serious, you owe that to yourself.

BARRY.  Yeah, but there's more than myself.

EMER.  Your sister and brother?

BARRY.  I don't want them to suffer?
EMER. They won’t suffer, surely.

BARRY. No, they do.
They deserve better, they’ve lost enough already.
I know Linda was very rude to you,
but this Debs, it’s a big night for her.
Her friends seem to have everything.

EMER. I know but most of their parents are in debt
to the banks.
Deep down she admires you.
She wouldn’t ask you to give up your painting.

BARRY. No but I feel it.

EMER. You feel guilty but you can’t take on the world
on your own.
Believe me, you have a duty to yourself,
to your art, to your own career.

BARRY. Is that not just selfish?

EMER. No, it’s not selfish.
You’ve got a life-force and you’ve got to answer it.
Linda’s the same.
We all are.

BARRY. I’m not convinced.

EMER. Why, tell me?

BARRY. Look it.
The world can survive very well without that picture.
Even if I paint another hundred.
It’s not important.

EMER. I’m not hearing this.
Of course it’s important.
The world is enriched by that painting.
Just as a garden is enriched by another rose.

BARRY. I wonder.

EMER. You’re most unusual you know.

BARRY. How do you mean?
Unusual?

EMER. For an artist.
Most artists are selfish people, very selfish.
Maybe because it’s a solitary occupation.

BARRY. I don’t accept that.

EMER. It’s true.
I’ve met enough of them.
I knew one artist who wouldn’t accept a phone-call
from his mother when he was painting.
He didn’t want anyone interrupting his
protected time, that’s what he called it.
Protected time.
His art was more important than any human relationship.

BARRY. But he couldn’t paint anything worthwhile if he didn’t understand human relationships.

EMER. Well he did.
Maybe he painted the cherries there.

BARRY. No seriously.

EMER. I am serious.
His wife left him as well.
He was unbearable and an almighty bore to boot.
You’re different, you care about people.

BARRY. Was he successful?
Did he make money?

EMER. It depends how you measure it?
He ended up with a big mansion by the sea, a big studio space and two Rottweilers.
Nobody else would live with him.

BARRY. A big house doesn’t interest me.
I’ve no interest in material things.

EMER. I know that, it’s written all over you.

BARRY. How can you be so sure....about your judgements?

EMER. It’s simple and don’t forget it’s my job.

BARRY. Just by discussion, by interviewing somebody you feel you can tell things.

EMER. Of course.

BARRY. But what if somebody is hiding something or telling lies?

EMER. Simpler again.
I can sort out a liar as easy as you can draw a straight line.

BARRY. Most artists can’t.

EMER. Tell a lie?

BARRY. Draw a straight line...
So you can really tell a liar?

EMER. It’s the eyes.
Just look into a person’s eyes when they are talking.
A lot of people don’t do that.
They just hear the words.
But I look for the source of the words.
BARRY. The eyes are the windows of the soul, is that it?

EMER. Exactly.
We’ve all told lies, little white lies.
But if you could see a close-up camera shot of your face when you are telling lies, your eyes will dart around in your face.
You can actually observe the lie being constructed.

BARRY. God, and you study that, that closely?

EMER. All the time, I have to.
It happens in theatre.
When an actor forgets his lines.
You know he’s not in tune with his feelings or his actions because you can actually see him trying to recollect, trying to reconstruct.
It’s exactly the same.
Acting is professional lying.

BARRY. Now I’m impressed.
What else can you do?

EMER. You make me sound like a magician?

BARRY. But you said you were a psychic.

EMER. I am.
Most people are, in fact everybody has psychic ability.
Most people will admit to deja-vu.
I just specialise in it, that’s all.

BARRY. So do you predict the future?

EMER. I don’t predict it as such.
I get very strong feelings about the future.

BARRY. And have you been proved right?
With your patients?

EMER. Yes, patients have verified my feelings later on.
Is this your man?
Your buyer?

BARRY. No, that’s not him.
It’s not looking good is it?
Hey, what do you think?
How about one of your strong feelings?
Will my buyer come?

EMER. Most unfair of you Barry.
And I complimented your picture.
Now you’re testing my credentials.

BARRY. Only jesting.
Go on, just an experiment.
Well, will the buyer come?

EMER. Yes, the buyer will come.
BARRY. That’s a comfort.
   It’ll get Linda off my back.
   Now for that good news, I’m going to buy you
   a coffee.
   The artist is soaring once again.
   Just black?

EMER. No let me, please.

BARRY. I can afford a coffee.

EMER. Oh, protect me from temperamental artists!

(Exit Barry, Emer studies the painting until Barry returns)

BARRY. Black magic, sorry, black coffee.

EMER. You’ve a lovely smile.

BARRY. Me?

EMER. Yes, you haven’t smiled much today but when you do
   it’s quite endearing actually.

BARRY. If you want to see me really smiling, wait till this
   bastard comes in and buys my painting.

EMER. Hardly a nice term for a prospective buyer.

BARRY. You know what I mean.
   Well he is a bastard for not turning up on time.

EMER. You’re funny.

BARRY. Do you think?

EMER. Have you got a girlfriend?

BARRY. Talk about changing subject.
   No one special.

EMER. Still selecting.

BARRY. No, not selecting.

EMER. But that’s what we do.

BARRY. You make it sound like a computer.
   Are you married?

EMER. Not married but I have a partner.

BARRY. Happy?

EMER. Yeah, well relatively so.

BARRY. So you might select again?
   Jesus, what am I saying?
   Isn’t it amazing sometimes the things you
can say to someone you’ve just met?

EMER. Why are you embarrassed?
  Don’t be.

BARRY. No, but I shouldn’t have said...

EMER. You’re far too apologetic for your own good.
  You’ll need to change.

BARRY. Will I do you think?
  Will I change?

EMER. It’s inevitable.
  We all change.
  We wouldn’t grow if we didn’t change.
  Do you want to?

BARRY. I suppose.

EMER. What would you like to change about yourself?

BARRY. I’d love to be more disciplined.
  Even like now, I should be at home painting.

EMER. But you came here for a genuine purpose,
  to sell a picture for your sister.

BARRY. I suppose but I am too easily distracted.
  I’d love to be able to say no.

EMER. Just say it.

BARRY. I wish it were that easy.

EMER. It is.
  The things you mentioned are yours for the asking.
  You just learn to become the coach of your own life.
  No magic required.

BARRY. You make a lot of sense.

EMER. Look it Barry, you’re worried about the future.
  Your future, your family’s future.

BARRY. Of course I am.

EMER. Well don’t be.

BARRY. But I have to.

EMER. No you don’t have to.

BARRY. What do you mean?

EMER. Because the future’s going to happen, it’s going to
  happen anyway.
  Just learn to be...

(Barry jumps up, looks towards the entrance, sits down again and looks at his watch.)
BARRY. False alarm.
   It’s not looking good.

EMER. Your buyer will come.
   Have faith.

BARRY. I wish it was that simple.

EMER. It is.
   Look again at your painting there.
   You said, you agreed that the God-Head surrounded
   all the chaos with love, with blue and gold.
   Well subconsciously that’s what you believe in.
   That’s what your life is like.

BARRY. But what happens when you can only see chaos.

EMER. Do you believe in providence?

BARRY. Providence?

EMER. Yes.
   I’ll give you an example.
   Have you worried in the past about paying bills?

BARRY. Yes.

EMER. But you did pay them?

BARRY. Well yes, eventually.

EMER. So you have arrived at this point here,
   you’ve worried yourself to death, but
   providence has always provided.

BARRY. Do you mean God?
   Is that providence?

EMER. Call it what you will.
   God.
   Life-Force.

BARRY. Do you not think that’s too simplistic?

EMER. No, providence does exist.

BARRY. For everybody?

EMER. For everybody.

BARRY. But what about the Jews in the concentration
   camps?
   What about the starving children now in Africa?
   Where was providence for them?

EMER. But that was only one life.
   There are others.

BARRY. You’re not into re-incarnation?
EMER. We've all suffered in some existences.
You did exist before.
You don't believe me?

BARRY. I'm sorry Emer I don't, unless you can show me
the evidence.

EMER. You're now sounding more like a scientist than
an artist.
I'm disappointed.

BARRY. Disappointed because I don't agree with you?

EMER. I never asked you to agree with me.
I'm just speaking about what is, what I know.

BARRY. But how can you speak with such certainty?
You could be deluding yourself.
Telling yourself things you want to believe.

EMER. When I met you this morning, you admitted
to being spiritual.

BARRY. Yes, I am.

EMER. So you acknowledge your spirit, you accept
that there is a spirit world?

BARRY. Well yes, well I don't really know.

EMER. No, I'm sorry Barry.
Forgive me.
You don't feel comfortable with all this.
I'll stop now.
I'll have to go soon anyway.

BARRY. It's alright.

EMER. No, no.
I'm not at work.
I shouldn't be going on like that.
I tend to get carried away. I can never separate my
work from my social life. Now I'm
going to buy you one of those nice cakes.
When I come back it's strictly painting, o.k.?

BARRY. I wasn't uncomfortable, you got me wrong.

EMER. Enough said.
Relax there.

(EXIT Emer. Barry looks at his watch and looks towards the door. Enter Linda)

LINDA. He didn't buy it?

BARRY. He didn't come.

LINDA. But you said...

BARRY. I know what I said Linda but I can't force someone
to come.

LINDA. But it’s five to one now.
    You said he was meeting you at half-eleven.

BARRY. That’s what he told me on the phone.

LINDA. Are you sure he said here?
    Are you sure he didn’t say somewhere else?

BARRY. No, it was definitely here.
    Half-eleven Bewley’s.

LINDA. He’s some prick.

BARRY. I thought he would come, he’s a mate of Tommy’s.

LINDA. Tommy, he’s another one.
    I don’t know where you get your friends from.
    What am I going to do now?
    I can’t go like this.

BARRY. I’ll try something, I dunno.

LINDA. Don’t bother, I’m not going.
    It’s not worth it.

BARRY. No, you are going.
    Even if I have to rob a bank.

LINDA. Get real Barry.
    How can I go?
    I’d be like bleedin’ Cinderella.

BARRY. Dave is taking you, isn’t he?

LINDA. And how am I going to meet him,
    in a black plastic bag?
    No, I’ll phone him.

BARRY. No, don’t.

LINDA. I’ve made up my mind.
    I’m not going.

BARRY. Don’t play the guilt trip on me, Linda.
    I’m doing me best.

LINDA. I’m not playing any guilt-trip.
    It’s just not fair.

(Enter Emer with coffee and pastries)

LINDA. I thought you said she was a stranger.

BARRY. You don’t have to be unfriendly.

EMER. Hello Linda.
    I’ve heard lots about you.
    Have one of those coffees, I’ll go get another.
LINDA. No thank you.

EMER. Come on, have something.

BARRY. She can have mine, Emer.

LINDA. I don’t want coffee.

BARRY. Linda.

LINDA. I just came to talk to my brother.
    He never mentioned meeting you.

EMER. No, no Linda.
    I’ve just met Barry this morning.
    You should be very proud of him.

LINDA. Sorry, what has it got to do with you?

BARRY. Linda, you’re making a show of us.
    Now stop.

LINDA. I won’t stop.
    I don’t need anyone telling me who to be proud of.

EMER. But are you not?

LINDA. Listen, I’m talking to Barry.

EMER. I must have misunderstood the situation.
    I thought you were brother and sister.

LINDA. We are, but it’s none of your business.

EMER. You’d never guess it.

LINDA. Guess what?

EMER. That you were related.
    Yes, you do look alike but your manners are
    so different.

LINDA. Can we move?
    I want to talk.

BARRY. We can talk here.

EMER. I’ve to visit the bathroom.
    Would you keep an eye on my bag, Barry?

BARRY. Yeah, no problem.

(Exit Emer)

BARRY. You’re really acting the bitch.

LINDA. So what, I don’t like her.

BARRY. She’s a very nice woman.
She's been kind even to you.

LINDA. A cream cake and your anybody's.

BARRY. It's not the cake, she's a very intelligent lady.

LINDA. You're very easily taken in.
    Just because she praises you.

BARRY. Jesus, what's wrong with you?
    I'll get you the money.
    You don't have to take it out on everyone else.

LINDA. She said I was bad-mannered.

BARRY. Well you were bad-mannered.

LINDA. You're supposed to be on my side.

BARRY. I am on your side but I won't allow you...

LINDA. You can't tell me what to do?

BARRY. Yes I can.

LINDA. Not when I'm eighteen.
    After my birthday I'm moving out.
    Then I won't embarrass you in front of your friends,
        you needn't worry anymore.

BARRY. Is that a promise?

LINDA. Wait till you see.

BARRY. And what are you going to live on?
    Fresh Air.

LINDA. I'll get a job.
    I'll survive.

BARRY. I thought you were going to study Photography?

LINDA. I'll do that at night.

BARRY. Where did all this come from?

LINDA. I'm just pissed off, that's all.

BARRY. You're pissed off.
    Not half as pissed off as I am.

LINDA. Why because I made a show of you in
    front of your snobby friend?

BARRY. Look it I don't even know her and she
    isn't snobby.

LINDA. Well, I don't have to like her.

BARRY. Fine, fine, don't like her but don't be rude.
Your letting yourself down not me.

LINDA. I’m responsible for myself so just leave me alone.

BARRY. So you reckon I don’t give a damn?

LINDA. What does it matter to you?

BARRY. What do you mean by that?

LINDA. All you want is your art.
   The famous painter Barry Gilmore.

BARRY. That’s rubbish.
   I don’t believe this.

LINDA. Truth hurts big brother.

BARRY. Are you serious?
   You actually....

LINDA. Why do you do it then?
   Be honest.

BARRY. You’re something else, do you know that?
   Jesus, I thought you...

LINDA. Well you do want to be rich and famous don’t you?

BARRY. You think that’s what motivates me?
   Rich, stuck here in a cafe waiting for tomorrow’s dinner to come along.
   Don’t annoy me.

LINDA. You’re annoyed.
   But I’m not allowed, I’ve to be lady-like.

BARRY. Do you know why I paint?
   Do you really want to know?

LINDA. I suppose you’re going to tell me.

BARRY. Yes I am.
   I was given a talent.
   It’s not unique but it is a talent.
   You were given a talent too.
   Ma and Da made sacrifices for me.
   I owe them that.
   They would have made the same for you.
   I’m not special.

(Enter Emer)

EMER. My God, you’d need to be an orienteering champion to find those toilets.
   Why do they put them so far away?

BARRY. I dunno.
   I suppose they don’t want people coming in off the street.
EMER. God, isn’t that mean?
   It doesn’t say much for civilization that they’d
   deprive somebody of taking a pee.

BARRY. That’s the business ethic.

EMER. I believe this is your big day, Linda?

LINDA. Sorry?

EMER. Your Debs.
   Is it tonight?

LINDA. I won’t be going.

EMER. Ah, you will.

LINDA. Look it, I don’t want to discuss it.

BARRY. Linda.
   Cool it.

LINDA. You shouldn’t have told anyone.
   It’s none of their business.

BARRY. I got a megaphone actually and I made an
   announcement.

LINDA. It wouldn’t surprise me.

BARRY. It’s hardly a state secret.
   We were just talking about you.

LINDA. Well I don’t want anybody talking about me.
   Right.
   End of story.
   I’m going to ring Dave to tell him I’m not going.

BARRY. Don’t, not yet.
   He still might come.

EMER. Barry’s right.
   The buyer will come.

BARRY. Emer is psychic.

LINDA. Cut the crap, Barry.
   You believe that?

BARRY. No, no joking.
   That’s her profession.
   Tell her.

LINDA. You’re a fortune-teller.
   Where did you see it, in his tea-leaves?

BARRY. I was drinking coffee, smartie.

EMER. I’m not a fortune-teller, Linda.
I’m a healer actually.

LINDA. But you told Barry.

EMER. Yes, I do have psychic powers.  
We all have.  
You have.  
I’m sure.

LINDA. I’m getting worried about you.

BARRY. Well, there might be something in it.  
I’m too poor to be cynical.

LINDA. You’re crazy.

(Linda stands up to go)

EMER. Your dress.  
Barry told me you were buying a dress for the Debs.  
It’s red isn’t it?

LINDA. What?

EMER. The dress you’ve selected.  
It’s red yes, and it has gold trimming on the sleeves and around the neckline.

LINDA. What’s happening here?  
You told her?

BARRY. No I did not.  
You never described your dress to me.

LINDA. But you must have...

BARRY. I haven’t got a clue what sort of dress you want.  
It could be pink polka-dots for all I know.  
Why is it red, is she right?

EMER. I know I am.  
Tell him.

LINDA. Yes, she’s right.  
This is weird.

BARRY. Jesus.  
How could you tell that?

EMER. I just receive information.

LINDA. But you don’t know anybody that knows me.

EMER. Well in one way that’s right, I don’t but in another way I do.  
I do now.  
I didn’t an hour ago.

LINDA. What did you tell her?
EMER. Barry hasn’t done anything, don’t blame your brother. I’m very sorry Linda, about your parents.

LINDA. You told her that.

BARRY. Yes but not about you. They were my parents too, you know.

LINDA. I don’t want to talk about them.

EMER. Don’t worry Linda, you have two great advocates on the other side.

LINDA. Stop, stop this. Don’t let her talk like that.

(Exit Linda crying)

BARRY. Linda, Linda come back.

EMER. Do you want me to follow her? She’ll be fine. She really needs to cry, she needs to cry an awful lot.

BARRY. That’s really freaked her. You shouldn’t have done that.

EMER. Don’t worry. She’ll be fine, believe me.

BARRY. I’m serious. You shouldn’t do that.

EMER. Barry, you don’t understand either. Do you?

BARRY. No I do understand. You can’t do that kind of thing.

EMER. What kind of thing? Remember what is, is, Barry.

BARRY. You’ve spooked her. She’s been unstable enough without frightening the life out of her.

EMER. Look past the now Barry. Can’t you see Linda is lost at the moment?

BARRY. She’s lost her mother and father. Wouldn’t you be lost?

EMER. Of course I’d be lost.

BARRY. I don’t want anybody damaging her.

EMER. I don’t damage, Barry. I’m a healer, remember.
BARRY. That’s your idea of healing?
    Do you not have any ethics?
    Can’t you see how she has suffered?

EMER. It’s all part of a process.
    That girl needs to grieve properly.
    At the moment she’s locked into her trauma.
    It’s got to be released.

BARRY. Look Emer, leave the jargon at home.
    Linda needs love, she needs sensitivity.
    With respect you should be more careful with
    your powers.

EMER. I could help.

BARRY. I don’t need help.
    I’ll look after Linda.
    That’s my responsibility.

EMER. You still don’t understand, do you?
    I’ve no choice.
    I’ve been asked to help.

BARRY. I never asked you.
    Nobody asked you.

EMER. I’ve been asked, that’s all I’ll say.
    Don’t be afraid.

BARRY. Not this other world crap.

EMER. Reject what you will but it is there all the same.

BARRY. Look, please, ply your trade somewhere else.
    Just leave us alone.

EMER. I’m not plying any trade.
    God, you’re so far off track, you really are.

BARRY. Just leave it, please.

EMER. I can understand your confusion but I must
    defend my integrity.

BARRY. I haven’t questioned your integrity, just your ethics.

EMER. I’m afraid you have.
    Have I not been totally honest with you?
    I told you I was a healer and I told you I was psychic.

BARRY. You shouldn’t use it to terrify.

EMER. Your sister isn’t terrified.
    Believe it or not, Linda is actually starting to
    recover right now.
    I don’t blame you for trying to put a protective shell
    around her.
    But there are things she must overcome for herself.
    I’ve just set that in train.
BARRY. But you weren't asked to set anything in train.

EMER. Do you know you're living out a complete contradiction?

BARRY. What contradiction?

EMER. Your art, your work there.
That's the work of a man with great vision.
Are you quite sure you painted that picture?

BARRY. You know I painted it.
What are you suggesting?

EMER. Your painting is more courageous than you are.

BARRY. I'm not afraid of anything...

EMER. But you are afraid.
You're afraid of what I see.
But I do see things Barry.
I have vision too.
But I know why you don't respect my vision.
Do you know why?

BARRY. Why?

EMER. Because what I see is not on the wall inside a frame.
Isn't that it?

BARRY. Look, will you check if she's alright.
She's up there a long time.

EMER. She'll be fine.
Of course I'll check.
Just relax.

(Exit Emer. Barry looks at his watch. Enter George)

GEORGE. Are you Barry Gilmore?

BARRY. Eh, yes.

GEORGE. George Plant.
You're the painter.
I'm a friend of Tommy's.
Sorry I'm a bit late.
The missus, Jesus when they go shopping!

BARRY. No problem.
Would you like a coffee?

GEORGE. No thanks, I'd need something stronger
after that expedition.
No work away.

BARRY. Tommy said you were interested in a painting.
GEORGE. Yes, I am looking for a wedding present. They'd like a painting, so Tommy said you were the man.

BARRY. I hope you like it.

GEORGE. Meself, I don't know much about art but Tommy reckons you're another Leonardo De Vinci, Good Christ!

BARRY. What sort of age group are they?

GEORGE. Jesus, I couldn't give them that.

BARRY. Why?

GEORGE. They're friends of mine, I want them to remain friends.

BARRY. I take it you don't like it?

GEORGE. I don't fancy it, that's true, but it's not for me. I couldn't give that to anyone. What's it supposed to mean?

BARRY. It doesn't mean anything. It's a painting.

GEORGE. They're after buying a brand new house. I don't want to haunt the bleeding thing.

BARRY. Thanks a lot... I suppose you're honest anyway.

GEORGE. Don't get me wrong old stock, no disrespect intended. But I couldn't buy it, I'm sorry.

BARRY. It's O.K. Don't apologise. Just don't come crying when it's worth millions.

GEORGE. That? Do you not do nice pictures of places. Like Glendalough or Killarney or somewhere?

BARRY. I used to but that's not my type of art.

GEORGE. Jesus, you want to make a living don't you? Sure even if you didn't want to travel wouldn't the Grand Canal be nice to paint?

BARRY. Of course I want to make a living but not painting the Lakes of Killarney. What you want is a big postcard. I don't do that kind of thing.

GEORGE. Take it from me son you're slipping up. The Yanks love the old scenery.

BARRY. You think I'm mad.
GEORGE. No offence son, but I’d prefer to look at a postcard than that one. Jesus, I wouldn’t be able to sleep in the same room as that. What do you call that sort of picture?

BARRY. It’s surrealist.

GEORGE. Surrealist, begod.

BARRY. No match for Glendalough, what?

GEORGE. I’m sorry son. I wish you luck. I better catch up on the bosswoman.

(Exit George as Emer and Linda enter)

BARRY. Yeah, see you. Tell Tommy I was asking for him.

LINDA. Was that him?

BARRY. Yeah.

EMER. He didn’t like it?

BARRY. No, he wants a nice picture for a wedding present.

EMER. But that is a nice picture.

BARRY. When he saw it he said it would haunt their house. Maybe he’s right.

EMER. The man has no taste.

BARRY. It doesn’t matter now. Are you o.k.?

LINDA. Yeah. I’m sorry. I had a good chat with Emer.

BARRY. Are you sure you’re alright?

LINDA. I’m fine now. Seriously. Do you think they are o.k. Emer?

EMER. Of course they are. They’re outside the realm of pain now. But you can help them rest by being positive. They want you to help your two brothers. That’s most important to them now. I feel that strongly.

BARRY. I told you to lay off. Don’t listen to that rubbish Linda.
LINDA. It’s not rubbish. 
    Emer told me loads of things. 
    Honestly.

EMER. Linda understands now, Barry. 
    The mists are clearing.

BARRY. Look, I don’t want you interfering. 
    You won’t be around to pick up the pieces.

EMER. I’ve been asked to. 
    I’ve no choice. 
    You of all people should understand.

BARRY. Come on Linda. 
    We’re going.

LINDA. No wait. 
    I have to talk to Emer. 
    I’m o.k. really.

BARRY. She’ll only fill your head with bunkum.

EMER. Barry I’m so disappointed. 
    Have a little faith.

LINDA. Emer told me beautiful things.

BARRY. What did you tell her? 
    Tell me. 
    What did you tell her?

EMER. Only of what is. 
    Nothing else.

BARRY. Do you always talk in riddles?

LINDA. About Ma and Da. 
    They’re with us Barry. 
    They’re with us all the time. 
    I’m going to stay, I’m not leaving. 
    I’m going to stay with you and John. 
    And you shouldn’t feel like you’ve failed either.

BARRY. What do you mean by that?

EMER. It is true, isn’t it Barry? 
    That is how you feel right now. 
    That you’ve failed your parents, 
    that you’ve failed Linda and young John.

BARRY. Did she say I failed her?

EMER. No Barry, you’ve got the wrong end of the stick.

BARRY. Is that how you feel? 
    Is it?

LINDA. No, I don’t feel that.
You’ve done everything for us.

BARRY. Because if you feel that, that’s it. That’s my last painting. I’ll never...

LINDA. Don’t say that. That’s not what they want.

BARRY. To hell with what they want.

LINDA. Barry don’t...

EMER. Why are you fighting this? You’re not being totally honest now.

BARRY. God, you’re the most aggravating, arrogant person I’ve ever met. You haven’t got a clue about me. You don’t know the slightest thing about what I’ve gone through.

LINDA. But she does. She does Barry. She knows everything.

BARRY. Grow up Linda will you. You believe all that claptrap.

EMER. Don’t mind him Linda. When you confront a person with the truth, they find it hard to cope. Nobody can deny their destiny.

BARRY. Destiny!

EMER. Yes, your destiny is to become a great artist. You can’t walk away from that.

BARRY. Just watch me.

EMER. Just watch you become a bitter young man, defeated before the challenge even begins.

LINDA. Barry, listen to her.

BARRY. I’m not bitter or defeated. I’m just practical that’s all.

EMER. Practical. You’re sounding less like an artist every minute.

BARRY. So you know all about art now.

EMER. Very little actually, probably a millionth of what you know but I do know what the vital ingredient is.

BARRY. Tell me.

EMER. Vision.
Artists have vision.
But you, you’ve lost that.

BARRY. So I lack vision now.
Thank you a lot.

EMER. Well vision means being able to see more than
what appears in front of your face.

BARRY. So you give English lessons as a sideline.

EMER. Sarcasm doesn’t suit you, Barry.
Look it, I've seen your picture there.
You don't lack vision, your work inspires.
But what you're rejecting now is where your
art comes from.
Don’t kill your source.

BARRY. How do you mean?

EMER. Your source is your struggle.
Sweet are the uses of adversity.
You know that.

BARRY. So swim around in the pigsty for years
and I'll become a genius.
I'm fed up with the struggle.

LINDA. But I'll help you, Barry.
I can get part-time work.

BARRY. I don’t need help.
Just leave it.
I'm going to see if I can find Tommy.
You wait here.
I'll sort something out.
Mind the picture.

LINDA. I want to talk to Emer.

(Exit Barry)

LINDA. I've been an awful bitch to him.

EMER. He loves you very much.

LINDA. But I've said terrible things to him.
He won't give up painting, will he?

EMER. Absolutely not.
Barry will always be an artist.
He won't be the last artist to feel despair.
But his career will really blossom, quite soon
in fact.
And you've an important part to play.

LINDA. I'd do anything.

EMER. Just support him and always give him respect.
He deserves great respect.
LINDA. I know that and I will.

EMER. And do you know how to do it?
    You study hard yourself and develop
    your own career.
    He'll feel less pressure and then he'll flourish.

LINDA. Are they awful disappointed in me?

EMER. Anything but, they’re so happy now.

LINDA. How can you be so certain?

EMER. It’s just a sense.
    That’s how I feel it.
    It’s like when you throw a stone into a lake.
    You know the ripples?
    That’s the way I felt their presence.
    It’s all serene and still now.

LINDA. I’d love to be able to talk to them.

EMER. You can.
    Don’t ever doubt their presence in your life.
    They’re talking to you now.

LINDA. Through you?

EMER. Yes.
    But I’ve trained myself to listen.
    Did you ever find it hard to find a station on
    the radio?
    You just need to adjust.
    The station is always broadcasting
    .    Just get yourself on the right wavelength.

LINDA. What do they want from me?

EMER. To be happy.
    To stop grieving and start living again.
    To do your best.

LINDA. How can I stop grieving?
    I miss them.
    I never said goodbye.

EMER. But that’s it, Linda.
    You don’t have to say goodbye.
    You can talk to them now.
    I have another very strong feeling.

LINDA. Now?
    What is it?

EMER. What happened to you a year ago?

LINDA. To me?
    Oh, nothing.
EMER. Linda?

LINDA. Oh that, that was a mistake.

EMER. Some mistake.
You tried to take your own life.
And you’ve thought about it again since that time.

LINDA. No I haven’t

EMER. That’s not what I’m reading, Linda.

LINDA. O.K. I did.
I just felt so low sometimes.
I didn’t want to live.
Did Barry say something?
He did, didn’t he?

EMER. No, all my information comes from the same source.

LINDA. My parents?

EMER. Yes.

LINDA. Oh God.

EMER. It’s o.k.
It’s o.k.
It’s over now.
It’s all over now.
Let it go.
Just let it go.
You’re alright now.

(Pause)
You should have done a lot
more of this.
Let it go Linda.
Don’t be afraid.

LINDA. I’m sorry.

EMER. What are you sorry for?
You’ve no need to feel sorry.

LINDA. The way I spoke to you earlier.
I said awful things.

EMER. You didn’t upset me, pet.
I knew what was happening.
Listen, I’ll be in Dublin for a week.
I’m going to give you a number and you
contact me.
I’d like to see you again.

LINDA. Would you?
I’d love that?

EMER. There, now make sure.
Ring me.
LINDA. I promise and thanks.

EMER. Look after that big brother of yours.
He's special.
Will you take a look at the time.
I've got to get to a bank.
So remember, keep the chin up.

LINDA. I will.
Bye Emer.

(Exit Emer. Linda studies the picture. Enter Barry)

BARRY. She's gone.

LINDA. Yea, only a minute ago.
I'm going to see her during the week.
She's a good woman.

BARRY. You've changed your tune.
Eh, you were crying again.

LINDA. No, it's alright now, really.

BARRY. Don't tell me she was at her Mystic Meg stuff again.

LINDA. No, I'm not afraid anymore Barry.

BARRY. Anyway, I couldn't find Tommy.
I don't think I'll be able to raise the cash.
I'm sorry.

LINDA. What?
About the Debs, sure I'm not going.
It's the last thing on my mind now.
That's not important anymore.
Honestly.

BARRY. But it is important.
I thought I'd get it but that guy Tommy sent was a complete headcase.

LINDA. Forget it, Barry.
I mean that.
She knew about the overdose.

BARRY. Emer?

LINDA. Even when it happened.
She's amazing.

BARRY. What did she tell you?

LINDA. She's given me hope Barry...
have you enough for a coffee?

BARRY. Yeah.
I'll get them.
You better tell me what she was on about.
(Exit Barry. Linda looks at the picture again. Barry returns with the coffees)

LINDA. Who is she?

BARRY. In the picture?
    No one in particular.

LINDA. But the face.
    Is it our mother?

BARRY. She said that too.
    Emer.
    She said the same thing.

LINDA. She looks so happy.
    Is this heaven?

BARRY. Probably, something like that.

LINDA. Because she is in heaven.
    I know that now for certain.

BARRY. She was the most selfless person ever,
    wasn’t she?
    Everything was for us.
    Everything.

LINDA. But she wanted it that way, she never
    wanted anything for herself.
    I mean she had no career or ambition or nothing.
    But she was satisfied.

BARRY. Which of them do you miss the most?

LINDA. I missed Ma most at first.
    That’s because we talked to each other so much.
    Nearly like sisters.
    I could talk about anything to her.
    I never really had a deep conversation with my Da.
    But I’m not saying he didn’t love me just as much.
    It’s funny isn’t it, I think an awful lot about him now.

BARRY. It was a real Irish home wasn’t it.
    Like we knew he loved us but he could never actually
    tell us that.
    Irishmen are hopeless at articulating their feelings.

LINDA. I never minded that.
    I knew he was real proud of us, particularly you.

BARRY. I remember the graduation, he was gas.
    After the ceremony we put my robes on him and
    then took another photograph.
    The laughs of him.
    It’s in the album.

LINDA. Yeah, I know it.
    He looked funny.
BARRY. Ma was the same.
    I was always trying to get her to go back to the
    adult college, you know when John was a bit bigger.
    And she’d say...
    “I’ve no brains. I’d be embarrassed if they asked me
    a question. You don’t want me to make a show of
    you, do you?”
    And she probably had more brains than any of us.
    She just never got the chances we got.

LINDA. I know.
    That’s why it’s important now.
    We can’t let them down.
    We’ve got to make it for them.

BARRY. And we will.

LINDA. Do you know what I often wonder about?
    Do you ever wonder how much of Ma’s
    characteristics you have and how much of Da’s?

BARRY. Yeah, I do wonder about that sometimes.
    Da was a diplomat.
    He hated rows.
    He was a real peacemaker really.
    And I used to see that as a weakness,
    but not anymore.
    But she was as straight as anything.
    If you did anything on her she’d confront
    you immediately.
    And she prided herself on that.

LINDA. But she didn’t hold a grudge after that.
    That was good.

BARRY. You’re more like her than me.
    I’d prefer to be more direct.

LINDA. I don’t know, it can get you into trouble a lot
    of the time.

BARRY. No it’s better, people should always know where you
    stand on things.
    I should be more definite.

LINDA. You’re a dreamer.
    That’s why you’re an artist.

BARRY. Maybe John will be the practical one.
    Do you know what he wants to be?

LINDA. It used to be a fireman, why, what is it now?

BARRY. He told me the other day he wanted to be a
    criminal psychologist like Cracker.

LINDA. Well he can practice on us.

(Enter Emer)
LINDA. Emer.

EMER. I left my umbrella.
   Ah, it’s still there.
   I’ve lost hundreds of them in pubs and cafes.
   And I left my painting as well.

BARRY. Your painting?

EMER. Check that.
   Will it be enough?

BARRY. I can’t take this Emer.
   I don’t want charity.

EMER. Will that be enough?
   There’s five hundred there.

BARRY. Five hundred!
   I was only looking for...

EMER. A pretty girl wearing a red dress with gold trimmings would need a nice pair of shoes,
   wouldn’t she?
   At least she was wearing them in the picture I saw.

BARRY. What picture?

EMER. This picture.

LINDA. Thank you very very much.

BARRY. It’s too much.

EMER. Don’t argue.
   I feel I’ve got value.
   In fact I know I’ve got value.
   When your genius is recognised I will possess a real bargain.
   You forget my psychic powers.

BARRY. I hope you’re right.

EMER. No need to hope.
   Remember the buyer will always arrive.
   Linda don’t forget.
   Phone me.
   Eh, Artist? Would you please take my property to my taxi, he’s waiting just outside.

BARRY. Do you believe in angels?

LINDA. Could she be?

BARRY. This is incredible.
   I just love the feel of crisp notes.

LINDA. It’s brilliant, isn’t it?

BARRY. How much did you say you were paying for
the dress?

LINDA. I think it’s eighty-five.

BARRY. And what about shoes?
What do you think?
Fifty?
Sixty?

LINDA. Yea, easily.
Fifty would do.

BARRY. And what about drink and taxis and all that?

LINDA. Ah no, no Barry.
Dave’ll sort all that out.

BARRY. No leave Dave alone.
The Gilmores are back in business.
We’re an independent lot.

LINDA. O.K. it’s your money.

BARRY. I’ll say another sixty.

LINDA. That’s too much Barry.
I couldn’t.
Honestly.

BARRY. Couldn’t what?
Hold it there Linda.

LINDA. What’s wrong?

BARRY. I’m just getting a very strong feeling.

LINDA. Barry stop that.

BARRY. I can see a struggling artist walking up
Grafton Street in a brand new pair of
light-blue Levis and wait....
I can hear new brown leather boots
pacing along the red paving stones.
And my eyes are blinded by his new
cream Carlo Silvestre shirt.

LINDA. Is he handsome, this struggling artist?

BARRY. Kid sister, you are looking at that man.
Come one.
Drink up.
We’ve got some serious shopping to do.

THE END