

# Intermission complete

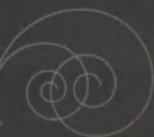
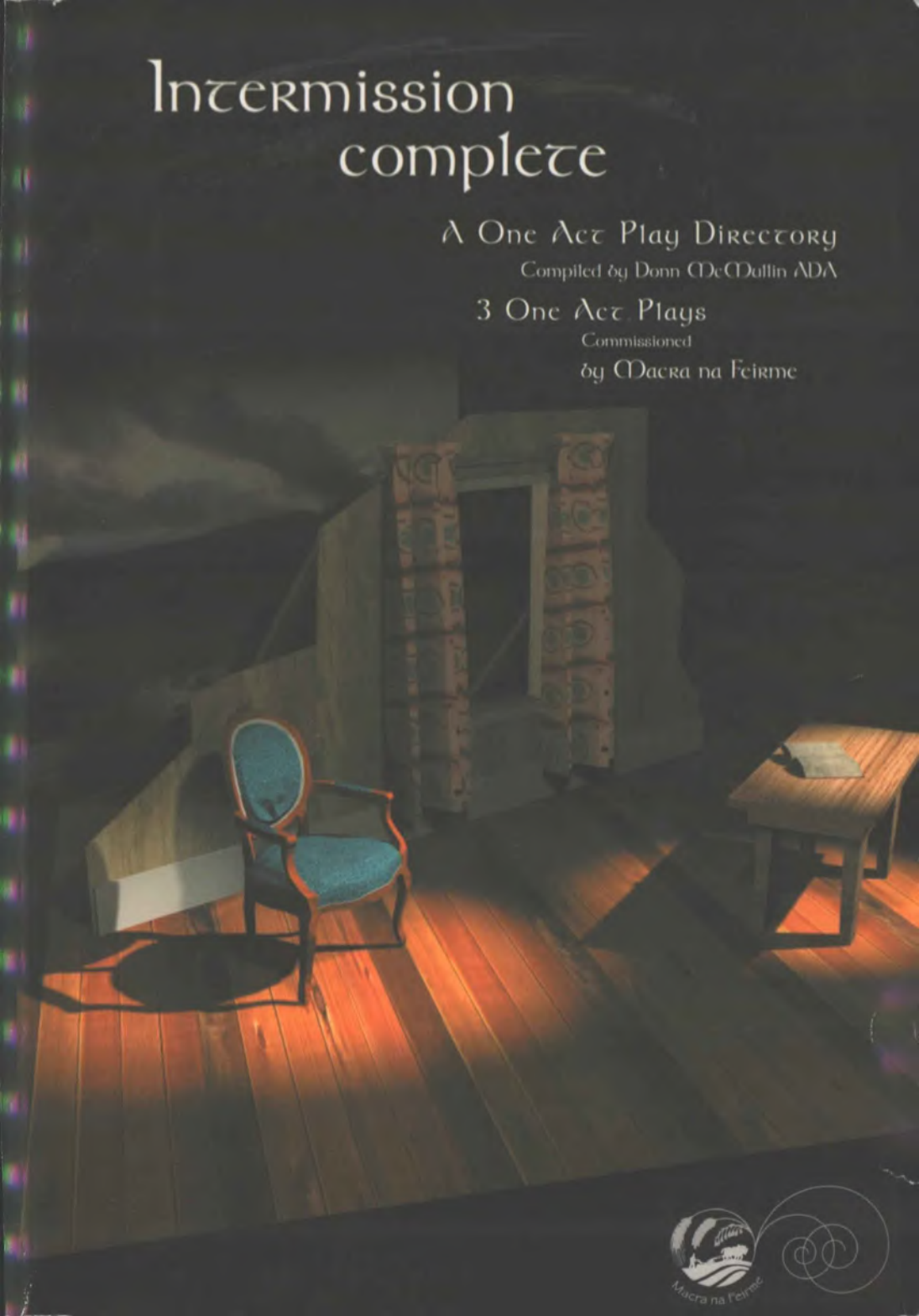
A One Act Play Directory

Compiled by Donn McDullin ADA

3 One Act Plays

Commissioned

by Macra na Feirme



*Intermission Complete*

# *Intermission Complete*

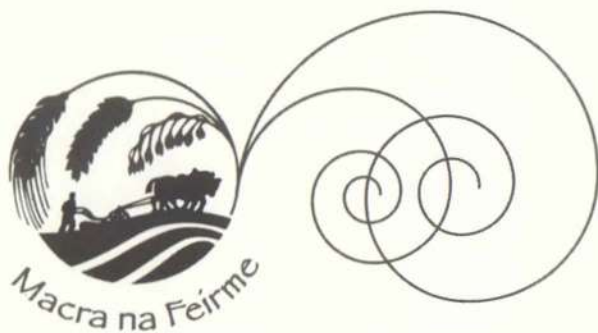
**ONE ACT PLAY DIRECTORY**

*Compiled by Donn McMullin ADA*

With

**3 One Act plays**

*Commissioned by Macra na Feirme*



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## *Intermission Complete*

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## *Foreword*

Welcome to Intermission Complete. This is the last in three publications Macra na Feirme committed themselves to produce. This project began back in 1997 with many Macra drama groups taking up the challenge to see nine one-act plays released over the following years. With determination and dedication Intermission Impossible was born. Intermission Impossible I and II were published and today we have achieved the aim of publishing nine one-act plays with the release of Intermission Complete.

All three scripts in this publication provide an insight into many different aspects of a contemporary rural Ireland. An Ireland that perhaps may have been quite unbelievable twenty or thirty years ago. But life has moved on and the Macra drama groups have explored and challenged the stereotyped view of rural Ireland in a provoking manner.

I would like to thank the authors Michael Harding, Nicholas Kelly and director Declan Gorman for the dedication in their work in the plays published in this directory.

On behalf of Macra na Feirme, I would like to extend a big thank you to Donn McMullin for his continued and excellent work in seeing all three publications compiled to the highest standard.

Finally, thanks to Marty Clare, the current National Arts Officer for his ongoing determination in seeing Intermission Complete becoming a reality.

*Damien McDonald*  
Chief Executive  
Macra na Feirme

## *Introduction*

It gives me great pleasure to see the launch of *Intermission Complete* and without doubt this publication will be of great value to drama groups within the organisation. Indeed my own involvement with drama through Macra was greatly enhanced with these directories.

*Intermission Complete* follows the same structure to that of the previous directories with a full list of over ninety one-act plays with an alphabetical listing of both authors and synopses of these plays. Also included is a newly updated guide to useful services for the amateur drama sector. Drama plays an important part within our club programme, giving our members the opportunity to discover and develop their skills, an opportunity they might not otherwise get.

The groups contributing to *Intermission Complete* have again proved that small ideas can be nurtured and developed to become big realities when written and directed under guidance. For example, following a series of workshops with Michael Harding, Tarmonbarry Macra saw the results of their ideas being adapted for the first full one-act play included in this directory. "Family Snap" looks into the lives of a family and friends coming up to a wedding and explores the harsh reality, yet sometimes humorous, direction events can take when things take a turn for the worst.

In the second one-act play by Nicholas Kelly "Blood and Lime" also commissioned by Macra na Feirme, we see a depiction of the reality and effect separation can have on all members of a family. In this moving play see how the characters although together as a "family" have very different views on what being a part of a family is really like. In this thought provoking play, the pain of separation and its affects to families, now a modern day occurrence is something that is not often explored or discussed but throughout this play there is a glimmer of hope that life can be survived after such situations.

Finally, the last one-act play included in this directory "Connected" written and produced by Monaghan Macra Arts Group with Upstate Theatre Director, Declan Gorman is a fine example of people coming together and exploring ideas and going beyond boundaries to explore issues relevant to their own life's. "Connected" is a community play set in a rural town and its surrounding townlands. It explores the pressures of life on young people living in a world where expectations and demands can sometimes be too much to bear. "Connected" is full of real life characters with some hilarious situations whilst also providing a thought provoking look into the realities and neglect that young can experience.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge all who were involved in compiling this directory and would hope that it will not only act as a guide but also an inspiration to all who dare to "break a leg". My best wishes to you all.

*Seamus Phelan*  
National President  
Macra na Feirme

*Acknowledgements*

When I first was appointed the Arts Officer for Macra na Feirme I didn't realise I was following in the footsteps of giants in the guise of Emer McNamara, Jackie O'Keefe and Jessica Fuller. These previous Arts Officers have laid down a track on which the Arts in Macra could aspire to, reach and go beyond. Their ideas to develop these publications and commitment to seeing the previous Intermission Impossible productions released has enabled many Macra Members throughout the Country achieve the highs of working and producing their own pieces of drama! Thanks to Emer, Jackie and Jessica!!

From the moment this project landed in my lap I began to realise that this was going to be a labour of love for all involved. My job was to carry on from Jessica fuller and ensure this publication became a reality. Thanks to Jessica my job has not been too difficult. I have been known during the run up to the release of this publication to have called this project "Intermission *almost* Impossible" but alas thankfully 'almost' has now become *Complete*!!

This is largely due to the unrelenting determination and passion of creative genius Donn Mc Mullin who compiled and edited this book and has my heartiest thanks and congratulations on again going above and beyond the call of duty! His dedication to the release of this book is based in a solid belief that any group interested in theatrical production can achieve those aims. *Intermission Complete* certainly will not disappoint!

Thanks are also due to Siobhan O' Dowd for routing out all the relevant names, addresses and other very important bits of information that were connected to this project.

Thanks also to Dan Cullen for producing a wonderful cover design and help in preparing the directory for printing, which adds to the professionalism of this publication!

No publication would be achieved without the insight and dedication of the playwrights, Michael Harding in collaboration with Tarmonbarry Macra Club, Nicholas Kelly and finally Declan Gorman with Monaghan Macra Arts Group who must be congratulated on their work and vision in seeing these projects to completion.

Thanks also to Seamus Phelan, National President and Damien McDonald, Chief Executive for their continued support throughout!

I would also like to acknowledge the support of the Staff at Macra na Feirme, Anne Berg, James Kelly, Mark Fagan, Terry Cooke, Mary O' Hare, Carmel Dooner, Audrey Mc Donnell, Niamh Hunt for connecting and redirecting me over the phone lines with the many 'help' queries I had in bringing this project to a close.

Big thanks to all the Training Officers Angela, Eddie, Colette, Margo, Mary, Kevin, Amanda and Gerry. And the ex- ones Liam and Brian for helping me keep my hair, all of it, in place!!

Finally I would like to thank and congratulate all of the Macra na Feirme members who enabled this project come to fruition. Good luck with your future endeavors!

Well done and take a bow now!

*Marty Clare*  
National Arts Officer  
Macra na Feirme



## *Intermission Complete*

### *An Aid to Play Selection*

(Containing important information on copyright, royalties, and play-writing competitions, together with agents' addresses.)

By Donn McMullin.A.D.A.

For many Macra Na Feirme Drama Groups the task of choosing a suitable play is an onerous and lengthy one. So, to make it both a little easier and shorter, this specially commissioned directory has been devised – like the two others, which preceded it – to meet with the particular needs of such groups. In choosing the plays contained herein, the actual selection pays particular attention to the One Act Festival regulations concerning setting and playing-time limitations.

While this publication cannot and does not claim to be a totally comprehensive or definitive guide to play selection, it is hoped that it will, at least prove to be informative and helpful regarding the titles chosen for inclusion. In addition, it is expected that it will reduce the chore of searching for a suitable play, by providing a wider and larger selection than has previously been known or available to interested groups.

At this point it is important to repeat the information given in both the previous directories regarding the law governing copyright and performing rights. Quite simply put, all plays are protected by copyright. This ruling covers not only all performances, but also public readings or charity performances – even where there is no admission charge. It is also an offence to photocopy any script, or make a video recording of a performance. Any of these activities constitutes an infringement of copyright unless the proper permission and written licence is obtained and paid for, in advance of any of these actions. All groups need to be fully aware that failure to observe the laws of copyright will certainly leave themselves open to costly legal proceedings.

Finally, it must be stressed the actual inclusion of any of the plays synthesised in this present directory, must not be taken as an indication - at any time - that the relevant rights are automatically available. Indeed before commencing rehearsals of any play, all groups are strongly advised to check with the appropriate agency as to whether the performance rights are even available, in the first place

The plays included in this directory are drawn from a number of sources, each of which is identified by the appropriate agent's initials after each individual entry e.g.

Samuel French Catalogue = S.F.C.

New Playwrights Network. = N.P.N.

The names, addresses, telephone numbers etc., of all agents can be found in Part One of this directory, under the heading "Agents' Listings." This also applies to authors who act as their own agents. The details of actual fees can be obtained from the relevant agent.

In the case of Cork Arts Theatre scripts, since the majority are unpublished, photocopies are available – with the author's permission, at a cost of £5 each. In addition, should any prospective producer wish to read any of these plays may then be read, in advance of purchase, he/she may do so by calling in person to the Cork Arts Theatre, 7 Knapps Square, Cork. The requested scripts may then be read, on the premises, at no cost.

A Final note of encouragement! The Cork Arts Theatre One Act Play Competition is an annual event, which is usually announced in spring of each year. It offers two prizes of £100 each – one for best writing and one for best production of the plays, which are short-listed in

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the competition. Maybe in your own group, there is someone with a burning ambition to write a play. Then, should he/she make the short list, they may even get to see it performed later in the year. So to make this dream come true all they need to do is write for details to the Cork Arts Theatre, 6/7, Knapps Square, Cork, or telephone (021) 508398. And if that is not enough to galvanise a budding playwright into composition, there is the further news that The Drama Association of Wales has also a similarly attractive competition, with the added bonus of possible publication for the winning entry. For further details of this competition, you should turn to the pages devoted to the Drama Association of Wales. This entry is listed under the heading 'Agencies and Organisations' in "Useful Services and Information" section of the directory. With either, or both of these exciting opportunities in mind, now is the time to take out your pen and pad and start writing! And good luck!

### *A Personal Word of Appreciation.*

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of the following for their welcome assistance in the compilation of this Play Directory:

The National Chairman and the Executives of Macra na Feirme  
For their continuing enthusiasm and support for this initiative.

Brown, Son & Ferguson Ltd.  
Cork Arts Theatre.  
Drama Association of Wales.  
Samuel French Ltd.  
New Playwrights Network.  
And the individual authors.

All of whom most generously supplied reading copies of the plays included – and many more besides.

Ms. Ruth Flanagan, Cork County Librarian.  
Mr. Tim Cadogan, Executive Librarian, Cork County Library.  
For further scripts and access to research material.

Mr. Marty Clare Arts Officer Macra Na Feirme.  
For his cheerful determination, enthusiasm and drive which proved invaluable in bringing this publication to a successful conclusion.

Ms. Siobhan O'Dowd of Macra Na Feirme.  
For her consistent co-operation and good humour.

Ms. Debbora Newman.  
For many hours of secretarial work.

And last but by no means least,  
My wife and family for their hard-trying patience, and their encouragement!

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*Part 1*

*One Act Play Directory*

*Intermission Complete**List of One-Act Plays per Title*

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Better Halves.	By Alan Ogden.	18
Bottles with Baskets on.	By Mike Tibbets.	18
Brainwaves.	By Pat Trevor.	19
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Buchan Trap, The.	By Charles Barron.	20
But with a Whimper.	By Pat Trevor.	20
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Day Trippers.	By Jean McConnell.	23
Death and Nellie Miller.	By Jack Boswell.	24
Different Way to Die, A.	By Lynn Brittney.	24
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Morley, Leonard.	<b>The Harpy and the Slob.</b>	27
Neild, Maureen.	<b>Kill Me a Dragon.</b>	31
Newmeir, John H.	<b>Babysitting Calvin.</b>	17
Ogden, Alan.	<b>Better Halves.</b>	18
O'Gorman Derek.	<b>Prisoners' Dilemma.</b>	39
Plowman, Gillian.	<b>Cecily.</b>	21
	<b>Me and my Friend.</b>	34
	<b>The Wooden Pear.</b>	45
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Richardson, Alan.	<b>Platform Party.</b>	38
Riordan, Arthur.	<b>The Last Temptation of Michael Flatley.</b>	31
Shirley, Rae.	<b>What Shall We Do with the Body?</b>	44
Steward, Hal D.	<b>The Nineteenth Hole.</b>	36
Tibbets, Mike.	<b>Bottles with Baskets on. Little Bro Morning, Big Sis Afternoon.</b>	18 32
Trevor, Pat.	<b>Brainwaves.</b>	19
	<b>But with a Whimper.</b>	20
Warburton, N.J.	<b>Music Lovers.</b>	35
Waterhouse, John.	<b>Jump Off.</b>	30



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*Agents' Listings*

The initials of the relevant agent to whom royalties are payable are printed after each synopsis in the Directory.

Samuel French Catalogue = S.F.C.

Warner/Chappell Plays = W.C.P.

Dramatic Publishing / Nick Hern Books = N.H.B.

Society of Authors

**N.B. The Agent for all the above play sources is,**

**The Drama League of Ireland (D.L.I.)**

Unit 2208,

Richmond Business Centre,

North Brunswick Street,

Dublin 8.

Tel: (01) 8090478

**Drama Association of Wales = D.A.W.**

The Library,

Singleton Road,

Splott,

Cardiff,

Wales.

Tel: (0044) 1222 452200 Fax (0044) 1222 452277

**New Playwrights' Network = N.P.N.,**

Cressrelles Publishing Co. Ltd.,

10 Station Road Industrial Estate,

Colwall,

Malvern,

Worcestershire,

WR13 6RN.

Telephone: (0044) 1684 540154

**Cork Arts Theatre = C.A.T.**

7, Knapps Square,

Cork.

Tel: (021) 508398 / 508699

*Agents' Listings (continued)*

**Brown, Son & Ferguson Ltd. = B. S. & F.**  
4-10 Darnley Street,  
Glasgow, G41 2SD,  
Scotland.

**Rod Hall Agency**  
7 Goodge Place,  
London,  
W1P 1FL,  
Tel: (0044) 171 6370706

**Mr. Johnny Hanrahan**  
Meridian Theatre Co.,  
11, Marlboro St  
Cork.  
Tel: (021) 276837

**Ms. Margaret Hawkins**  
C/O Drama League of Ireland

**Mr. Jack Healy**  
29 Alexandra Villas,  
St. Lukes,  
Cork,  
Tel: (021)504501

**Ms. Michelle Read**  
The Read Company,  
Tel / Fax (01) 4732285

**Mr. Arthur Riordan**  
Rough Magic Theatre Co.,  
5, South Great Georges Street,  
Dublin 2.  
(01) 671 9278

*Intermission Complete*

*Guide to Plays and Synopses of  
Plays*

*Intermission Complete*  
Guide to plays

The following cartoons are included beside the synopses of each play to act as an indicator as to the type of play. It is hoped that this will aid you in your selection of a particular play and ease the pain of having to read through every synopses in this directory.

**COMEDY**



**DRAMA**



**THRILLER**

**MONOLOGUE**



## *Intermission Complete*

### *Synopses of Plays (In Alphabetical order)*



#### **AMBUSH.** By Bernard G. High 1M. 2F.

The play is set in the comfortable converted cottage. Violet works in the laboratory of a secret research station situated on a stretch of bleak coastline in the North of England. Across the moor, some miles away, is an experimental prison for female offenders.

As the play starts a young woman Mary, furtively enters the house and proceeds to search and investigate her surroundings. Almost immediately Miss Grant lets herself in. She is Violet's chatty neighbour. She is startled to find anyone in the cottage, but Mary introduces herself as Violet's niece. However, a much more sinister atmosphere starts to develop. Whatever or whoever else she is Mary is definitely not Violet's niece! Is she an escaped prisoner? Is she unstable? She's certainly scary and violent enough. Then, it begins to emerge that Violet herself is not quite as proper or respectable as first appeared.

She's also concealing more than one guilty secret. The play twists and turns, building in tension to a gripping, surprise ending.

Crisp dialogue, strong plot and well-written characters make this an attractive choice for an experienced group. Setting, while simple, requires attention to props and costume. Good lighting will considerably help this tense, atmospheric play.

**\*(Agent: B.F.& S)**



#### **AMELIA AND THE MAN.** By Christine Lang. 4M. 4 F.

Richard and Sarah are about to end their marriage. Richard's mother Eileen is upset by this development though his father, Gerry, sadly accepts the seemingly inevitable outcome. Later, when they are invited to a party at the young couple's house they accept, thinking that Richard and Sarah have decided not to separate after all. Then they learn that it is to be a "divorce party"!

Shortly afterwards Sarah discovers she's pregnant. Richard is delighted but Sarah is very undecided. And this is a big problem for "Amelia and the Man" of the title, because their very existence depends on the outcome. If Sarah decides against having a baby then neither of them will be born, as they are "children in waiting"! Unseen by the other characters in this unusual play, Amelia and the Man watch and comment continually on the unfolding story. A very original script with many twists before the curtain falls.

Staging can be very simple though the action calls for a number of locations. However, careful lighting will resolve the difficulties. Skilful, firm direction is called for. The four main roles are particularly rewarding and the lesser roles leave plenty of scope for satisfying characterisation. A good choice for an ambitious group. **\*(Agent: N.P.N.)**

**AS THE BAT AT NOON.** By Charles Barron. 2M.



As the play opens Andy, a young burglar, breaks into the darkened and seemingly deserted flat belonging to Barron, a middle-aged bachelor. As he starts to search for money and valuables by the light of his torch, Barron addresses him from the darkness. When the lights are switched on, the reason for sitting in a darkened room become apparent. Barron is blind, and has been for

20 years. However, with his intimate knowledge of exactly where every piece of furniture, every book, ornament and knick-knack is placed, he can move round his limited kingdom with amazing ease. In addition he can also tell precisely where Andy is standing or sitting. Moving from initial anger, the mood of the play wings wildly and rapidly as an elaborate game of cat and mouse develops, building to an unexpected, tense and explosive climax.

This is a taut, exciting psychological thriller providing two very meaty acting roles. A firm directorial hand is needed to maintain the necessary tension. The setting is very simple. However, meticulous propping is required in order to establish the required clutter. If you want to keep your audience on the edges of their seats, this is the play for you!

**\*(Agent: B.S.&F.)**

**BABYSITTING CALVIN.** By John H. Newmier. 2M.



3F.

Calvin is no ordinary baby! – Though only 10 months old, in this zany comedy, he is played by an adult. Even more unusually, he can remember a previous existence when he was very happily married to Laura. The only fly in the ointment at that time was Bob – who nursed an unwelcome lecherous yearning

for Laura. Having died young, he is now reborn as Calvin, to Katie, a single mother. As the play opens, Calvin is seated in his king-sized playpen waiting for the baby sitter to arrive and for Katie and her friend, the curvaceous Donna, to go out night-clubbing. Calvin also knows that he can only remember his previous existence until he is one year old – or until he says his first intentional word. So he deliberately indulges in the normal childish “goo-ing and gaa-ing”, in order to hold on to his cherished memories! But there are a few shocks in store for this cunning baby! Firstly, his baby-sitter is none other than Laura – his one-time wife – and worse still – her companion for the evening is the lecherous Bob! This situation forces Calvin into a constant stream of tricks and stratagems in order to keep Bob’s eager hands off Laura, and foil his less than honourable intentions! The action becomes fast and furious with many laughs along the way. As the curtain is about to fall, Bob retaliates with a hefty dose of deeply hated grip-water. Calvin, stunned and disgusted screams “Mummy” only to realise too late that his cherished memories are now ended!

An unusual, fast-paced comedy, *Babysitting Calvin* won a special award when first produced in 1997. While setting is minimal and easily achieved, it does call for a specially constructed playpen. However, the author’s production notes should prove very helpful in this, and other, respects. For a group hankering for something different this should present an attractive possibility. All roles offer scope for satisfying comic interpretation. A dedicated director should welcome the inherent challenges.

**\*(Agent: S. F.C.)**

## *Intermission Complete*



### **BETTER HALVES.** By Alan Ogden. 4F.

The title of this unusual play says much about its plot! The Fishwick firm is a successful family business run by Daniel and his brother James. As the play starts there is a whiff of board-room rebellion in the air, headed by Eunice, Daniel's wife and Freda who is married to Eunice's brother. To add to the confusion Bertha (nee Fishwick) is married to Eric another director. Far from being docile dutiful wives, all the women consider themselves the 'Better Halves' of their respective marriages. Indeed, though they have gathered to celebrate Daniel's birthday it becomes patently obvious that as far as the 'Better Halves' are concerned their men-folk might just as well not be there! In fact, that idea is the pivot and core of the play's plot - i.e. although the men enter, exit, stand, sit and address their wives or each other - they never physically appear on stage! It is the women's reactions that tell the audience where and when the men actually are on stage, what they have said and what they are doing. This extremely clever device however demands that the actresses, apart from creating their own roles, also create their men! This causes a great deal of fun, as the struggle to keep the family birthday celebrations on track becomes ever more difficult. When James makes his customary late appearance - to the annoyance of all the women - a further twist to the plot occurs. He has secretly and suddenly married and the stunned women have yet another 'Better Half', ready to join the board-room battle.

The play provides splendid parts for all four actresses, but also demands that they play double roles, as each controls an absent partner! While there is much comedy to be had by all concerned, there will be a definite need for four strong experienced actresses and a firm directorial hand. The setting is the comfortable lounge of the family home and offers no problems. Props and lighting are also easily manageable.

**\*(Agent: N.P.N. Triad Series No.68.)**



### **BOTTLES WITH BASKETS ON.** By Mike Tibbits.

2M. 2 F.

It is the eve of Nicola's marriage to Tom and the tensions in the house are increasing by the minute. Most of these are caused by the endless fussing and organising of the mother-of-the-bride, Sheila. Nothing is too small or insignificant to escape her attention. By contrast David - Nicola's father is cool, calm and collected. Or is he? A chance remark by Sheila about David's guitar-playing abilities during their courtship of twenty five years ago; the unearthing of a guitar case in the attic containing that same guitar and some revealing papers; the present of a bottle of Chianti - "the bottles with baskets on" of the title - all lead to disturbing, painful and surprising revelations. A promise of silence made by David over twenty years before and honoured to the letter by him is due to be broken - after the wedding is over and all the guests have departed. However present events forestall that decision by a matter of hours. The result is shattering for all concerned and the play moves to a poignant and provocative climax.

Based on a true story, this is a dramatic, clever and witty play with a very human and moving theme. Well-crafted, it provides worthwhile roles for all concerned. Neither costuming, lighting nor propping will provide any difficulties. However, it does demand firm direction and strong performances from all the cast.

**\*(Agent: S.F.C.)**



**BRAINWAVES.** By Pat Trevor. 3M.3F.

Mark Hunter, an author is deeply immersed in writing a new play called "A Share of the Profits". It is set in the offices of a major electronic company, which has just made a breakthrough with a revolutionary new radar and early warning missile-detection system. There is huge international interest, as many nations recognise the vast potential of possessing such a capability. However, there is a major board-room skulduggery going on, as two of the directors, Liz Johnstone and Gus Maclean plot to oust their fellow-director and major shareholder, Henry Fordyce.

As Mark struggles to develop plot and characters, Liz, Gus and Henry seem to acquire a life of their own and proceed to take over from the author, guiding and directing the action. Has Mark been working too hard? Certainly his wife Margaret seems to think so, as she gradually becomes more and more concerned and disturbed by her husband's total immersion in the lives of his fictional creations. Then, gradually the characters become 'real' and appear to Mark, and even finally, to the disbelieving Margaret! Both of them find themselves taken over completely! As the play draws to its end, Dorothy, Mark's literary agent and her husband arrive at the cottage, to the horror of Mark and Margaret, but to the delight of the others – who feel they need additional characters to bring the action to a successful solution! Who then is real and who is only a figment of the distraught author's imagination?

This is a clever and unusual black comedy with satisfying roles to all concerned. The cottage-lounge setting should not provide any great difficulties for an experienced stage manager. This play should appeal to a director looking for a script that is decidedly different and challenging.

**\*(Agent: B.S. & F.)**



**THE BRIDGE.** By Joe Corrie. 2M. 3 F.

Set in the small, isolated cottage of John and Sarah Talbot, the play takes place in the time before the introduction of electricity. As it starts night is closing in. John's elderly mother who has little love for her daughter-in-law has come to visit and is about to return to her own house. Because of the darkness and wildness of the night, John is escorting her home. They have only departed when Sarah calls out to David Rusk, her lover, whom she has hidden in the attic-storeroom. Together they have plotted to murder John as he returns across the recently damaged and dangerous bridge over the flooded river. David is to be hidden and waiting. A sudden and unexpected push, and they will be free to marry – after a respectable waiting and mourning period. David leaves to get to the bridge before John does. Shortly afterwards Mary Kent, a young village girl arrives, wanting to talk to John Talbot. Not realising that there is any connection between Sarah and David she lets slip to Sarah that she is pregnant by David. This news stuns Sarah, but she hides her feelings and promises to tell her husband that Mary has called. Left alone as the play moves to its surprising and chilling climax.

The play should prove particularly attractive to newly-formed groups by reason of the simplicity of its setting and set dressing. The only prop, which might provide a problem, is an old-fashioned bull-lantern. All five roles afford good characterisation opportunities for the actors involved.

**\*(Agent: B.S.&F.)**



## *Intermission Complete*



### **THE BUCHAN TRAP.** By Charles Barron. 2M. 2F.

The particular strength of this play lies in its deliberate contrast and conflict between the ages of the characters. Throughout the action the audience is made fully aware of the 'generation gap'. Set in the attic of a large house, the play concerns itself with the breakdown of the water supply to the home of the "country" gentlemen Major Andrew Taggart and his starchy sister Alison.

Having summoned a plumber, they are startled when faced with the usual plumber's apprentice in the shape of the young, brash and attractive Fiona Buchan. Feminist to her fingertips, Fiona is not prepared to be patronised or treated as a 'raw recruit' by the old soldier, Andrew. His old-fashioned attitude to the "dear ladies" in his life irritates Fiona, and this causes verbal explosions and a battle of the sexes – and of the generations. While she proceeds with the job, a gradual understanding and mutual respect for each other's attitudes and opinions develops. This softening of the gruff major's approach does not escape the attention of his ex-batman George, who now acts as the family odd-job man. Then a revelation from Andrew's past adds a special poignancy to the situation, leading to a delicate and moving conclusion of the drama.

The cleverly contrasted moods and manners of the protagonists provide very satisfying characterisation opportunities for all the actors. However, English accents are a "must" for a number of the characters. George's strong Scottish dialect can easily be exchanged for an Irish one. The setting is relatively simple, but will also require some careful thought. However, a good designer will soon make short work of these problems. For a director wishing to tackle something different and wanting to develop the talents of his cast, this could prove a very attractive option.

**\*(Agent: B.S.&F.)**



### **BUT WITH A WHIMPER.** By Pat Trevor. 1M and 1F, 1 boy and 1 girl.

This is a chilling and taut play, dealing with a nuclear disaster that seems to have wiped out the entire human race with the exception of Ian and Babs. At the time of a series of horrific explosions they were potholing deep down inside the earth.

As the play opens they emerge to find the world in ruins. They have only the provisions they took on their expedition. Desperately, they try to carry on a normal conversation, make a meal – and above all - to avoid panic. How and why did it all happen? Is every place destroyed? Their conversation and moods swing from the fearful to the almost hysterical, then back again to the desperate and the powerless. Suddenly they hear a small noise in the low bushes near their fire. Immediately they spring to defend themselves against whatever lurks there. It is only a young boy, frightened and hungry. He cannot, or will not, talk and even attempts to attack Ian. Before they settle down to sleep, Ian and Babs decide to head for the coast, in case a ship may have avoided the holocaust and arrived in harbour. But the boy has other sinister plans, which end in the death of both Ian and Babs and the appearance of a young girl. Together, the two young people will take over the world and make it, safe from destructive and deadly 'Grown-Ups'.

This is a bleak and disturbing play, which provides strong roles for all four members of the cast. It does however call for two mature performances from the boy and girl. The setting is very simple. Special sound effects, while important, should not prove too difficult for a keen sound technician. This is a meaty option for the director who aims to rattle his audience and to send them home with plenty to think about!

**\*(Agent: N.P.N.)**



**THE CAVERN.** By Dilys Gator. 2F. (4 offstage voices).

As the theatre lights dim, we hear a babble of voices and then the beginning of a séance. Anne is heard to say "Spirits of the dead, can you hear us"? Following this are some horrified screams and a voice frantically shouting "No! No!" Then in silence the play begins!

The woman, Jennet is sitting at a small table. The only light comes from a single candle. Then, Anne enters only to find herself in some strange tunnel or cave. It appears that Jennet has been waiting for someone, though she does not know that person's name. Anne is bemused and feels she must be dreaming. As the conversation develops, it is obvious that something strange, even sinister, is afoot. Then Jennet declares that she is the spirit of the dead! She reveals that she was a witch who was burned and buried at a crossroads with a stake through her heart! Terrified, Anne tries to escape but the entrance has disappeared! She is entombed! So begins a battle of wills and words, as Anne tries to remember long-abandoned prayers. The tension continues to build, as the women engage in a psychological struggle. Suddenly a dim light appears and begins to grow and intensify and Anne's terror reaches a peak – only to hear her husband's voice calling her! Her agony is over!

The setting is the simplest imaginable. Essentially a two-hander, the play requires strong dramatic acting if the creepy atmosphere is to be achieved and maintained. Suitably eerie lighting will be required. The director will also need to exert a tight control on his/her cast in order to achieve the final chilling effect.

**\*(Agent: N.P.N.)**



**CECILY.** By Gillian Plowman. 3F.

As the result of a motorcycle accident, Cecily, a bright and attractive young student, is now brain-damaged and her boyfriend Michael is dead. Now, she is being cared for by two sisters Sheila and Ellen – her mother and aunt. But which is her mother and which her aunt? Even as children, in order to confuse the teachers at their new school, they had swapped names. Again, in later life, when

bored with their current occupations, they had swapped jobs. Then when Gary, Ellen's fiancé was away on a long contract in the Middle East, Ellen had had a fling with Sheila's boyfriend. When pregnancy followed Ellen was terrified that Gary would learn about the affair, as she knew he would never marry her after having another man's child. Though saddened and angry by her sister's betrayal Sheila begged Ellen to have the baby in secret, saying she would declare it was her own and take on the role of a single parent. Once again a swop was made and so Cecily was born. Despite difficulties in the years that followed, Sheila has maintained the deception. However, the accident and Cecily's unpredictable and often-violent behaviour have placed a huge strain on Sheila.

All this and more is learned as the play progressed – switching backwards and forwards in time, to before and after the accident. A powerful and deeply emotional drama, "Cecily", provides three strong female roles. The use of inventive lighting is needed to create the required atmosphere. Setting and costume should be fairly easily achieved. Firm, but sympathetic direction is very much the order of the day

**\*(Agent: S. F. C)**

## *Intermission Complete*



### **A CHANGE OF NAME.** By Julie Leather. 2F.

Mary, now in her late 20's, was adopted as a baby. She has returned to her birthplace to meet with her natural mother. While she is nervous about the forthcoming meeting, her mother is ever more apprehensive. After an awkward, stilted start the conversation becomes a little easier. As the action progresses we learn about the background to the adoption and the mother's deep sorrow at being forced by her strict, narrow-minded parents to give up her baby. When she eventually plucked up the courage to tell her parents of her pregnancy, she states "I took it for granted they'd react with red hot rage It wasn't red hot rage I got, but ice cold practicality. Within an hour of telling them I was on a train to my Auntie's. It was as if they'd discussed the possibility years ago. I sat on the train - numbed!" Then, there was a loveless marriage, followed by desertion four years later. Now this meeting with her long lost daughter is to be a day of celebration. However, it does not turn out quite as hoped.

This is a delicate and moving play on a painful subject, providing fine roles for both actresses. A director looking for an interesting play, well crafted, with good dialogue should find this an interesting possibility. Though set in Wales it could easily translate to an Irish background – or provide a challenge for those with an ear for accents. The setting – the living room of a small terraced house – should provide no difficulties. This is also true of both lighting and sound.

**\*(Agent: N.P.N. Triad Series No.60.)**



### **CHRISTINE.** By Jennifer Johnston. 1F.

Christine is a young woman from the South of Ireland who has married a North of Ireland man Billy Maltseed. She is Church of Ireland and he is Presbyterian. While this causes some friction within the immediate families, Billy and Christine have a warm and happy marriage. Their only regret is the lack of children. When Christine consults a specialist she learns that the problem is not due to her inability to conceive. However, rather than wound Billy's male pride, she hides the fact and lets him think it is her fault. When Billy's lifelong friend Sammy is killed in a savage sectarian attack, Billy joins the U.D.R. Then he himself is killed in a brutal attack and his aged and sick father dies. Christine, whose closest friend is Dolores – a Catholic – is stunned and shocked and decides to leave her home, move to Belfast and find a job.

This is a tough, troubling monologue, giving rare insight into the situation in Northern Ireland. At the same time it has its dark, comic aspects as well. It provides a major and challenging role for an actress and calls for delicate and incisive direction. This play is a companion piece to "Mustn't forget High Noon" which views much of the same action, told from Billy's point of view. That monologue is also contained in this directory.

**\*(Agent: D.H.& A)**



**CROSSFIRE.** By Charlotte Hunt. 3M. 1F.

Set in an abandoned warehouse in the Bogside area of Derry, this play deals with the relationship between two brothers, Frank, an active member of the I.R.A. and Robert, a priest. However, as the play opens we are unaware of this relationship, which only emerges as the play progresses.

Robert is deeply concerned at his brother's continuing involvement in the violent political struggle, and particularly Frank's responsibility for the recent death of a young English soldier. Frank is now on the run. In addition, their mother is ill and Robert begs Frank to come and see her but Frank replies that he cannot at this time. He is waiting for a colleague who is due at any time with an important message. Kathleen, Frank's girlfriend also tries to persuade him to end the killing, which to her, is totally wrong, - whatever the reason for it may be. Again Frank refuses, telling her he must make a journey over the border with vital documents. Much as he loves her he owes this commitment to his country. Broken-hearted Kathleen leaves, just as his long-awaited colleague arrives with the vital papers. There's been a change of plans and Frank is now on his own. No sooner has his colleague left than there is a burst of gunshot. However, it is Kathleen who's shot, and as the play comes to an end, an English soldier cuts off Frank's escape.

Pace is needed in order to maintain the tension for this taut tragic play. There are worthwhile roles for all the cast. The setting is easily achieved. Atmospheric sound effects and mood lighting will enhance the production considerably.

**\*(Agent: N.P.N.)**



**DAY TRIPPERS.** (One-Act Collection 'Deckchairs 2')

by Jean McConnell. 2F.

Beryl and Doris are on a works outing to the seaside and have decided to slip away from the rest of the gang for a quiet picnic, a bit of sunbathing and perhaps even a paddle in the sea. Both are well on the shady side of thirty, but there the similarity ends. Beryl is spunky, ever ready for a laugh and a bit of fun. From the conversation we learn that she is also popular with the men in the factory - a fact that she impresses on the seemingly duller Doris. For her part, Doris is practical, coming well-prepared for a nourishing picnic, reserved and a bit prudish, and often a bit shocked by Beryl's saucy comments. As they munch away, we are treated to some caustic comments on their fellow workers from Beryl. Doris is much gentler and far less critical and is uneasy with some of Beryl's outspoken remarks. Beryl, tiring of the conversation, decides to take a nap but not before advising Doris to "lighten up". However as she tries to snooze, Doris keeps up a running commentary on windsurfers, her magazine and finally on the other people down by the water's edge. Then suddenly the reason why the beach is so deserted strikes. They are on a nudist beach and how are they to escape without being noticed? The play reaches its hilarious climax as the quiet Doris declares emphatically that one of the group is Sam, their Foreman. Now it is Beryl's turn to be shocked "Doris, he's stark naked! How can you possibly tell!"

This is an hilarious two-hander, with clever, sparkling lines and providing two beautifully contrasting roles. The setting is delightfully simple. Costumes and lighting will provide few difficulties. Light-handed direction is called for to maintain the cracking pace required.

**\*(Agent: S.F.C.)**

## *Intermission Complete*



### **DEATH AND NELLIE MILLER.** By Jack Boswell. 2M. 1F.

Nellie, neat and methodical, is married to ineffectual George Miller, who likes nothing better than a good few beers at his local with his mates. While fond of his wife in his own way, he is neither romantic nor a particularly good provider. However his real weakness is gambling. Indeed it has all but destroyed him. As Nellie says "I've known him to lose a week's wages on tomorrow's weather". So

Nellie has been forced to take him in hand and to try to manage his money. It has not been easy, and many times Nellie has proclaimed that she is tired of the endless struggle and wishes she were dead. As her gas-stove had been giving trouble and she had stayed at home all day waiting for the repairman. Now, as the play opens, she has returned in the late evening from shopping for weekend groceries. So, on her return, when a strange man turns up on her doorstep she immediately jumps to the conclusion that the Gas Company has at last answered her calls. Though the stranger introduces himself as Death, Nellie fails initially to take in the information and chatters away, inviting him in and indicating the faulty stove. An unusual conversation follows, until Nellie really becomes alarmed and tries to escape. The stranger is polite but firm – she will die at the appointed time of 7 o'clock! Frantic at this stage Nellie stabs the stranger fatally. At this point George, accompanied by a mate in motor-cycle gear, returns home. George launches into a long and bizarre story of a bet he had made with a stranger he'd met in the pub. He had wagered that the stranger couldn't convince Nellie he was the Angel of Death! Nellie's hysterical laughter alarms George, who calls on his mate to help him. When the mate removes his motorcycle helmet, Nellie, faced with the stranger she believes she has just stabbed, collapses. The stranger catches her and carries her upstairs just as the clock strikes 7! This decidedly offbeat black comedy provides excellent opportunities for all three-cast members. The setting however is tricky and will need very careful attention. Accurate lighting and attention is also needed. However a director with an eye to the unusual and challenging could find this play a very attractive option. **\*(Agent: N.P.N.)**



### **A DIFFERENT WAY TO DIE.** By Lynn Brittney. 2M. 2F.

The time is 1950. Anna Gruber has survived the horrors and brutalities of the concentration camp in Germany. However the price she has paid to do so has taken a terrible toll on her emotions and self-esteem. Now, arrived in the newly established state of Israel, she must be interviewed in order to establish her right to stay in that country.

When her interview starts Anna learns that there are two major obstacles to her being granted asylum. Firstly, she must both provide concrete proof of her identity. Secondly, she must also have a relative living in Israel. "I have no relatives whatsoever" the defeated woman says. Then to her stupefaction Dr. Feldman, a psychiatrist and her interrogator declares "You are wrong, Mrs. Gruber. We have found your husband". From here on the tension rises, and the questions come thick and fast. Why was she moved from one camp to another? What was the name of the second camp? While other female prisoners had been brutally sterilised without anaesthetic Anna had been granted an anaesthetic. Why was this? When the reason for her survival is revealed we have learned the full horror and barbarity of Anna's treatment and can understand why she is so terrified of meeting the husband she has believed to be long dead. We have also learned that in the concentration camps there was another and probably more horrific "way to die" than in the gas chambers. Tautly written, this compelling and deeply moving drama provides good roles for all the cast. The setting of an ordinary hotel bedroom is easy to achieve. There are no special lighting or sound effects required, though the provision of women's costumes of 1950's will need attention. **\*(Agent: S.F.C.)**



**FAMILY PLANNING.** By Michelle Read. 3M. 4F.

(Specially commissioned by Macra na Feirme)

Jim O'Brien, a middle-aged county councillor and publican has arranged a party to celebrate the first anniversary of his marriage to Ginger, his second wife. While Barbara, the feisty eldest daughter, does little to hide her dislike of her stepmother and the whole idea of celebration, Mary the second, gentler daughter has accepted the situation. The youngest daughter, Sarah, has been away in Australia for 3 years and is due to arrive home that day. As the play opens we see that the bar is undergoing alterations and renovations. These are being done by a local builder, Lucky Doyle. As shrewd as they come, Lucky suspects that Jim may not have the necessary planning permission and decides to manipulate the situation to his own advantage. Ger, Lucky's young side-kick, who fancies himself as an experienced ladies man, suddenly finds himself deeply smitten by the newly returned Sarah.

As the party gets under way Barbara lets her stepmother know that she's aware of Ginger's past employment in an escort agency. Ginger in return, retaliates with an equally explosive revelation. Just as Jim is about to announce proudly that he is about to become a father, Sarah breaks the news about her own imminent single mother status! After the initial pandemonium caused by this revelation Sarah gets some advice from Lucky, and a proposal of marriage from Ger! This is followed by a tippy truce between the warring sisters, Barbara and Mary and a reconciliation between her father and Sarah. All-in-all, it's an anniversary to remember! The play combines the comic and the dramatic and careful direction is called for, so that this balance is maintained. It offers satisfying roles. Costuming should provide no difficulties. Musical links between some scenes are indicated and specific and appropriate music is suggested in the script. The setting is relatively simple and clever design and propping will be needed to hint at a lounge bar undergoing renovations. **\*(Agent: The Author)**



**GRADUATION.** By Denis Byrne. 2M. 2F.

Christy, a young accountant, has lodgings with the extremely talkative and 'mothering' Mrs. Brophy. As the play opens she is serving him a slap-up breakfast, while she regales him with colourful details of her martyrdom at the hands of the late Mr. Aloysius Brophy, whose ashes now repose in an urn on the mantelpiece! Then as she leaves to refill the teapot, Christy gets the shock of a lifetime when a voice addresses him from the urn! Aloysius Brophy has returned with a vengeance – and is about to send Christy on a merry dance. It seems that Aloysius is 'stuck' in eternity! As he says "I'm rather limited, neither up nor down, fish nor flesh but learning as I go, like". A real sign of progress is needed from him before he can graduate and get his scroll all tied up with a nice red ribbon! However, with his late wife continually sending up wafts of complaints, it's proving very difficult. And with her endless chatter he needs peace and quiet to plan his strategy. He begs and cajoles Christy into getting him both out of the urn, and out of the house! A trip to the seaside and a near drowning combine to achieve Aloysius' goal and bring this light-hearted and inventive play to its conclusion.

The three major roles should prove very enjoyable for the actors. The setting requires a few locations but these are easily achieved. A director looking for a challenge could well find this play an attractive possibility. The major consideration for the director is whether to have Christy represented as a disembodied voice or as a 'ghostly' presence on stage! Either way it should place an intriguing demand on his/her skills. **\*(Agent: C.A.T.)**

## *Intermission Complete*



### **GROUND PLANS.** By J. B. Cooper. 4F.

Liz and her sister have been left some land by their father and are about to sign a contract, selling it for £30,000. However this decision gives rise to doubts and recriminations as the potential purchasers intend to build a research laboratory on the land. Now, word has escaped that the research will mean animal research!

Liz and Mother are now forced to think again as an Animal Rights' Group has been formed and violent protests have erupted – including the smashing of the window of the local butcher's shop owned by Bob, the father of the family. To add to the tension, one of the leading lights in this Group is Vicky, the daughter of the house. Liz, Vicky and her mother each has their own personal dream and the conflict between these differing visions is at the heart of this tough, hard-hitting play. Gran, who also lives in the house, doesn't help the situation with her insensitive and often sarcastic comments. Harsh words and strong emotions keep the action moving briskly to a powerful climax.

All four roles provide great opportunities for the cast. For a director looking for a play with a different and provocative plot, this could prove to be the end to his search. The living room setting is easily achieved. Lighting needs care but should pose no problems.

**\*(Agent: N.P.N. Triad Series No. 68.)**



### **THE GUILT CARD.** (One-Act Collection "Deckchairs 2") by Jean McConnell. 2F.

Deborah and Marion are sisters, living in a large comfortable Georgian house named "Curlews", situated on a cliff-top, overlooking the beach. Deborah, the elder sister and the darling of her father, has always been delicate, needing daily care and attention. So, when their father died, it was expected that his will would reveal that he had left his money and the house to Deborah – so as to provide for her adequately, for the rest of her life. However, in his final months his mind had become confused and in error all was left to Marion instead. His sudden death took place while Marion and her new husband Donald were on their honeymoon. When they returned there was no other course open to her but to nurse and take care of her sister at the expense of her husband's love. When Donald, in final desperation, issued the ultimatum that it was either himself or Deborah, Marion knew she could not desert her invalid sister.

Now as the play starts Marion, who has herself been unwell for some time, has been to see a specialist. The news is bad. Her remaining time will be short. Stunned, but ever practical, she visits the family solicitor to ensure that Deborah will not be cheated of her birthright a second time. There she is confronted with another startling revelation. She returns to find Deborah on the beach, ready for a picnic and a game of cards – a game they devised for themselves many years before. This time however it is to be a game of cat and mouse – but with the usually mousy Marion who takes on the role of the waiting cat! The truth of the matter is that "Curlews" had indeed been left to Deborah, as promised by her father all those year ago, but she had lied in order to keep Marion in constant attendance! As the play ends Marion reluctantly hands Deborah her stick so that they may climb the steep cliff path. Will they make it – together? This is a taut drama with two meaty roles for accomplished actresses. The setting is easily achieved and costumes and lighting provide few difficulties. Strong direction and suitable sound effects will make this a gripping drama and an attractive option for an experienced group.

**\*(Agent: S.F.C.)**



**THE HARPY AND THE SLOB.** By Leonard Morley.

1M. 1F.

There is a noisy party going on, close at hand but out of sight, as Maggy a forthright and sparky lady enters the bedroom being used as a cloakroom for the occasion. She is trying to escape the amorous attentions of a drunken partner, and at the same time attempting to repair the damage done to her wine-soaked dress. She has no sooner slipped out of that dress than she is interrupted by the arrival of crumple-suited Richard, who is also seeking temporary escape. Maggy dives for cover – under the stack of coats on the bed. Building on this promising and compromising start the play develops into a lively battle of the sexes. Richard is a bachelor who runs his own sanitation business – ‘Phone-a-Drain!’ Maggy is a spinster and a top executive in the local branch of Prudential Insurance. It is in this line up of occupations that the nub of this comedy lies. Richard has an insurance claim pending and the person holding up the settlement is Maggy – though neither is aware of the other person’s involvement. However knowing of this ongoing battle, and being friendly with each of the parties concerned, the party’s hosts have deliberately invited them both – as a practical joke. They know that Richard refers to Maggy as “a gruesome harpy”, and that on her part, Maggy has dubbed Richard as “a grubby little slob”! When the realisation of the connection between them hits Richard and Maggy, the verbal fireworks explode in earnest, and the trade in insults becomes an absolute barrage. From such a start, it doesn’t seem likely that “romance” could possibly bloom, but it does, bringing this sprightly comedy to the proverbial ‘happy ending’!

The bedroom setting is simple but a large teddy bear is called for! Lighting is also simple and sound requires only the background noise of a party. Both roles give scope for assured comedy playing. A director seeking a neat and different comedy should find this play an attractive choice.

**\* (Agent: N.P.N. Triad Series No. 76.)**



**HEALING THE DEAD.** By Johnny Hanrahan. 1M. 2F.

**\* (Agent: The Author)**

**(Specially commissioned by Macra na Feirme)**

Pearl, living in the family home, has nursed her Aunt Sally for many years. Now, her aunt is dead, and Pearl’s brother, Michael and her sister, Sadie have arrived for the funeral. While the corpse lies in a coffin, on stage, behind them, the trio reminisce, drink and quarrel, as they give vent to their frayed emotions. Pearl is exhausted and bitter, declaring that she’s glad that Sally is dead! Sadie, who has had a string of casual affairs, including one with her current analyst, is drifting through life without purpose or ambition. Michael, a priest, is devastated by his total loss of faith, but still longs to help, and serve the drug-addicts in his current parish. The dead woman has made a strict stipulation in her will that all three beneficiaries must act by mutual agreement about the family home. They must all consent to sell it, or to keep it and live in it together. She has also left a letter for each of them. When the third letter has been read, and a long-concealed secret has been revealed, a sense of peace and healing is granted to this wounded and troubled family. Their decision about the family home made, it is then time to bid their final farewells to the mortal remains of the enigmatic Aunt Sally. However they find themselves unable to pray. Instead they agree to read from a favourite book of hers, which she had read to them, many times, as children. Pearl commences, and then the others join in, reciting the well-remembered and



## *Intermission Complete*

loved words from the Dickens' classic, "Great Expectations". This is a finely tuned and moving play, packing an emotional punch, and providing three attractive, and equally rewarding roles. The author also provides most useful suggestions on setting, lighting, and the effective linking of the short scenes, which go to make up the action of this play.



### **HOMEGROUND.** By Margaret Hawkins. 3M. 2F.

(Specially Commissioned by Macra na Feirme)

It is the year 2050, and the last family-owned farm in Ireland is waging a losing battle against Brussels, bureaucracy and a snake-in-the-grass nephew! Silage, headage, set-aside and journeys to the creamery and mart are a thing of the past.

The computer with the inevitable e-mail and the ever-chattering fax machine has taken over control of farmers' lives. To gain access to their own houses they must have sterilisation rooms installed at front and back doors! Not alone are the cattle tagged but the humans also sport colourful triangular ear tags. Ostrich farming has been introduced, rabbit numbers controlled by contraceptive darts, and all calves are photographed for identification at the Euro-mart!

So, it is little wonder that Sadie is at her wits' end. Since her husband's death she has been struggling to run the farm, while being bombarded with directives from Brussels. Her son, Jim has little interest in farming and is presently studying mechanical engineering. However, Leo, Sadie's nephew, who helps in the running of the operation, has his eyes on the farm and has become known among the others as "the Euro clerk from hell"!

Also living on the farm is Alex, an attractive young woman with a passion for farming, who has been taken on as farm manager. The final inhabitant of the farm is Micky, Sadie's uncle-in-law, of advanced years, wheelchair-bound. Tough and outspoken he has a hearty dislike of Leo. This attitude does little to ease the tension in the house. When yet another directive arrives from Brussels, stating that it has the power of compulsory purchase of any farm lacking a blood relative under fifty who is also capable of running such a farm, the fat is well and truly in the fire!

By the time the curtain falls, much has happened in this diverting and inventive play, as all – but Leo – unite and conspire to defeat the might of the bureaucrats of Brussels.

This is a clever and fanciful comedy. All roles are equally interesting. Attention to costuming is needed and a computer would be an added bonus – though it can be sited less effectively off-stage.

The setting is easily realised and neither sound nor lighting should pose any real problems. A director with an eye for something different will find this an amusing possibility.

**\*(Agent: The Author, Margaret Hawkins.)**



**INDIAN SUMMER.** By Lucy Maurice. 2F /12F.

Set in a typical British railway station café, this slice-of-life drama can be performed either by two actresses each filling six different roles, or by twelve individual actresses. The entire action takes place between 7.30 p.m. and 11.30 on a Sunday evening; during the evening shift of the two friends Laura and Stephanie. However, as the play starts there is tension behind the refreshment counter, as the cappuccino machine is on the blink and Stephanie is late arriving for duty. Then the customers start to arrive – each with their own problem – agitated Mrs. Newman; crisp executive Elaine and her harassed secretary Amy; Vic, who has just broken up with her violent boyfriend; young, gauche schoolgirl Alison and her cool mate, Sarah; the sad Sam, continually searching for Mr. Right and always ending up with Mr. Wrong; the restless, rootless married woman, seeking excitement outside her marriage; the “sleeping” woman, unable to come to acceptance of her husband’s death; the student Emma, spoiled and just back from a journey round the world – a victim of rich quarrelling parents. Each has their own problem, their own story. Throughout the play the inevitable tannoy system punctuates the action with announcements of arrivals and departures. Well written and neatly plotted, these cleverly connected cameos of the everyday experiences of ordinary people are beautifully realised and are sharply contrasted with the humdrum existence of the two café assistants. When first produced in 1996 “Time Out” magazine’s critic said of this play “short and sweet, it combines fond portraiture with nice insights”. The setting is relatively simple and clever stage management will overcome any propping difficulties. As the language can be strong at times, the conservative or prudish might find it off-putting. But for those seeking something different it should provide a challenge.

**\*(Agent: S.F.C.)\***



**JOGGERS.** By Geraldine Aron. 2M. 2F.

Two couples meet on holidays at a fashionable hotel. For Gus and Sylvie, this is a hard-earned and long-saved for extravagance of a week’s holiday in luxurious surroundings. For Wally and Norma, it is a totally natural, understandable venue for a three week honeymoon.

On the morning after his arrival, Gus falls in with Wally as they both return from jogging. Soon the differences in the two men and their lifestyles emerge. Wally is a successful, self-employed businessman with a sleek, powerful new car, and a new, glamorous young wife. Gus on the other hand is a hard working, company man, just making ends meet and driving the ageing Ford. The two women are also in sharp contrast to each other – glossy, beautiful, self-centred and restless Norma, and Sylvie modest, gentle and quietly satisfied with her middle-class lot. In alternate scenes we hear each – wives and husbands – discuss their partners and reveal a little more than is wise about each other. However, over the week and during the men’s daily jogging session and the women’s sunbathing chats we see a subtle change take place in the relationships. After Gus’ initial and obvious envy of Wally’s secure and comfortable life, a gradual realisation of his own particular good fortune begins to dawn on him, and he realises that all is not champagne and roses for Wally and Norma. Indeed, by the final morning it is clear that the real winners in this particular quartet are, in fact, Gus and Sylvie. In the end, just as the men are about to make their ‘goodbyes’, and much to Wally’s embarrassment, Gus tells him of his initial envy and indeed outright jealousy. However, his confession ends with the final admission “The outcome is I’d rather be me, middle-aged wife, firm’s Cortina, package holidays and all. At last, at long bloody last, I can honestly say I’m satisfied with being Gus Armstrong”. This is a gentle and perceptive drama, with equally attractive roles for all four actors.

**\*(Agent: S.F.C.)\***

## Intermission Complete

### **JUMP OFF.** BY John Waterhouse. 3M.2F.



The author of this play refers to it as a “high comedy”, which is an apt description, as the action takes place on a window ledge of an office building, six storeys up! As the play starts, a young man, Aubrey, climbs out of a window and edges his way along the ledge until he manages to sit down, his legs dangling over the busy street some seventy feet below. He has scarcely settled himself when the young Pauline follows suit by clambering out of the adjoining window. Aubrey is enraged at this intrusion and lively exchanges follow, as each encourages the other to take the plunge! Pauline confesses that she doesn't get on with her parents. In addition, she has had a row with her boyfriend, and then in the same week, has been made redundant. Feeling that she has nothing to live for, she has left a farewell note for her mother and come to the building where she used to work, in order to end it all! Aubrey is aghast, “You know what is going to happen next? He declares. “The moment your mum cops a look at the note you left, she's going to be round here like a bullet with a copper, and I wouldn't mind betting she'll dig up a vicar from somewhere. There always has to be a vicar, did you know that?” And that's exactly how it turns out! Despite the seriousness of the underlying theme, this play abounds in comic dialogue and achieves a happy ending – even providing a neat twist as the curtain falls. There are satisfying roles for all the cast, but particularly for the two principal characters. The setting is simplicity itself. Lighting and costume are both straightforward. However, inventive direction is important for this inherently static play.

**(Agent: N.P.N. Triad Series No. 77.)**



### **KENNETH.** By David Foxton. 4M. 8F. (Doubling possible in most cases.)

One of the interesting and intriguing points of this unusual modern play is that the “Kenneth” of the title never appears on stage! Yet his presence is felt throughout the action. Kenneth and his younger sister are the victims of a violent father and an ineffectual mother. They are newcomers to the area, living on very little, and mostly ignored or even chased off by their peers. Some of the neighbours, particularly the local newsagent, and a few teachers try to help but to little effect. Then just before Christmas, Kenneth seems to disappear off the face of the earth. Only one person – his mother – knows of his whereabouts but she has – she considers – good reason to conceal where he can be found. Having left him with his father for a week, because she could no longer cope herself, she eventually relented and went to fetch Kenneth home. However, the boy had been savagely attacked by his father and was black and blue from the beating. Fearing that the neighbours would believe that she had done it, she locks her son into a large cupboard with a warning to stay quiet. As the school prepares for its Christmas party and Nativity play, and as neighbours gossip and one of them even writes to an “agony aunt” about Kenneth and his sister, the boy remains imprisoned, with only his timid and frightened sister to whisper encouragement to him. Then we learn that their mother has been knocked down in a road accident and lies unconscious in hospital. His sister is quickly packed off to stay with an aunt living a distance away. As the play ends with children's voices singing “Adeste Fidelis”, we are left with only weak tapping coming from the cupboard! Written in a number of short tense scenes, “Kenneth” gives actors a chance to adapt to a number of different roles each and offers a challenge to an adventurous director. Costumes are present day and should provide no difficult. The setting is simple calling only for some chairs and a variety of levels – plus one large cupboard. However, sensitive and clever lighting will greatly enhance any production. **\*(Agent: N.P.N.)**



**KILL ME A DRAGON.** By Maureen Nield. 2M .1 F.

The council has obtained a compulsory purchase order against Mrs. Ellis, who must now leave the house she has lived in all her life. When news of her misfortune reaches Taffy's ears, he enlists the help of Jambo and Josie. Together they barricade themselves into the threatened house. Then Jambo leaves to get provisions to keep them going during their vigil. In his absence Taffy and Josie discuss the situation. Taffy has joined the venture out of loyalty to Jambo, but Josie's motives are more complex and darker. She and Jambo had been involved in a similar incident some time ago and the outcome had been grim. When Jambo returns, an ugly confrontation takes place. Jambo is obviously spoiling for a fight and is ready to use drastic and dangerous methods. Quickly the action builds to an explosive conclusion. Crisp, tense dialogue, laced with quirky humour makes this an interesting and unusual play providing strong roles for all three characters. Though Taffy is intended to be Welsh this should not prove an obstacle for any group looking for something different. Neither setting nor lighting should cause any problems.

**\*(Agent N.P.N.)**



**THE LAST TEMPTATION OF MICHAEL FLATLEY.**

By Arthur Riordan. 3M. 2F.

**(Specially commissioned by Macra na Feirme.)**

This unusual play starts as all but one of the cast enters after attending a performance of "Lord of the Dance" at the Point Depot, in Dublin. With the sound and tempo of the music still echoing in their heads, they talk in a kind of jig-rhythm, or 'Diddly-Eye', as one of them puts it! Mick, Lorraine and Jackie are bowled over by the experience. Tom, Lorraine's boyfriend, is considerably less impressed. Lorraine's brother, Lar, who works as a bouncer in a country-town disco, owned by Mick, has not been to the performance, but has come to meet the others. They have made an arrangement to go on to Temple Bar after the show. While everything seems normal on the surface, there are hidden tensions and frictions. Apart from the usual rivalries between the city dwellers and their country cousins, the relationship between Lorraine and Tom has just ended - and none too sweetly at that! Jackie and Mick were also, at one time, very closely involved. However, Jackie has decided to pursue her career as a stand-up comedienne in England, and has only returned home on a flying visit. Mick still feels that he can rekindle the flame of their old love! . (At the same time he fancies himself as a second Michael Flatley!) When Jackie turns him down, he then sets his sights on Lorraine, and tricking her into believing that all the others have gone off, offers her a lift home to her flat. His plan backfires, and many cats are let out of many bags! Then the dirt truly begins to fly, and much is revealed before the play ends!

The setting couldn't be simpler, requiring only some chairs, which can be moved around as the script dictates. Effective, clever lighting is needed to suggest the various changes of locale. A director looking for something different from the norm should find this play an attractive option.

**(Agent: Rough Magic Theatre Company.)**

## *Intermission Complete*



### **THE LAST TIME.** By Colin Lawrence. 3F.

Twenty years ago, Jane, Ray, Alan and Helen had taken off in a car, en route to a dance. The car radio was blazing away, playing "The Last Time" by the Rolling Stones. Suddenly, out of nowhere came the lorry, on the wrong side of the road. Incredibly, Helen, Ray and Jane had walked away from the wreckage with only minor cuts and bruises. But for Alan, Jane's brother – and also Helen's fiancé – it proved catastrophic. Crippled, brain-damaged, and with the mental age of a young child he has lived in a special home ever since. Now, as the play starts, he is dead. With the funeral over, Jane has returned to the nursing home, to tie up the final loose ends. There she meets Mrs Robertson, Alan's social worker and is reminded of a music tape they had arranged to have recorded in order to help Alan. This was a tape contained the Rolling Stones number that was playing at the time of the accident and it was played repeatedly to Alan as he lay in a coma, in the hope of bringing him back to consciousness. The coma had ended but it was a tragically altered Alan who emerged from it! Strangely, Helen also decides to call at the home on the same day as Jane. She and Jane have purposely avoided each other over the intervening years. Now, Alan's death and the tape combine to reveal raw wounds, deep pain and pent-up anger, as the play moves to its affecting conclusion. This is a strong, emotional drama, providing three satisfying roles. The setting is simple. Costume and lighting will provide few difficulties. The important pre-recorded tape is available on loan, if required. This play should appeal to a director looking for a dramatic script.

**\*(Agent: N.P.N. Triad Series. No. 63.)**



### **LITTLE BRO MORNING AND BIG SIS AFTERNOON.**

By Mike Tibbits. 4M 4F. 1 Boy. 1 Girl.

A road accident has tragically robbed twelve-year-old Lottie and seven year old Dunkie of their mother. Heartbroken, their deeply depressed father tries to deal with his bereavement, but after two bleak years of mourning he finds he can cope no longer, and leaves the family home never to return. Sad, alone but determined to care for her young brother, Lottie takes over the management of the household. Because of a talk with her father before his disappearance, Lottie knows his credit card pin-number and is able to pay for day-to-day necessities. So successful is she in her deception that neither neighbours or school authorities suspect that there is anything wrong. Now, however, many months later funds are about to run out and a letter from the bank warns Lottie that their days as a family are at an end. So, for their last day she arranges with Dunkie that it will be a special 'Littlebro' morning when he can choose what they eat and do and then there will be 'Bigsis' afternoon when she must take the final decision. When Dunkie's time is up, Lottie has the heart-wrenching task of breaking the news to young brother.

The action of the play moves between the children's suburban home, the local Social Services Office, the school and the Bank Manager's office. The time moves between the past and the present. Deeply compassionate and moving this unusual drama provides a variety of satisfying and beautifully realised roles. Delicacy and sensitivity of touch is required from the director. Clearly determined playing areas and clever lighting can achieve much of the setting. Costuming should raise no problems.

**\*(Agent: S.F.C.)**



**THE LONG SHADOW.** By Peter Johnson. 3M. 2F.

The rivalry between Jim Rowland and Arthur Farebrother is of long-standing, both having joined the same company, at the same time, over twenty years before. They had been the bright young executives in a prospering business. Now, having risen to the top, Jim is faced with the prospect of being promoted sideways, or of resigning. He has decided on the latter course. As the play starts,

he is halfway through his last day as manager. While the prospect is bleak, it is made all the more painful by the fact that his replacement is to be Arthur. In Jim's opinion Arthur is "earnest, solemn: unhampered by imagination; undisturbed by original thoughts; honest, prosaic and painstaking" – in fact, all the things that Jim is not! Unexpectedly as Jim bids farewell to his colleagues and secretary, Arthur arrives with his wife Sheila. The tension increases, as it becomes apparent that Sheila had been an old flame of Jim's during his early days with the company. Simmering dislikes and suspicions come to the boil. A simple request of Jim's to hold on to some office mementoes is turned down flat by Arthur. But there is still a further vicious twist before the curtain falls.

The office setting should provide few problems though there are some essential props, which will need to be tracked down by stage management. Lighting is straightforward. There are well-drawn parts for all concerned, but particularly meaty roles for Jim, Arthur and Sheila. For the director who likes drama with a punch, this play should prove particularly attractive.

**\*(Agent: N.P.N.)**



**MARGARITA.** By Jack Healy. 6M. 1F.

**\*(Agent: The Author)**

**(Specially commissioned by Macra na Feirme.)**

Franky Stapleton, a middle-aged bachelor, runs a small country pub. Interested in classical music and a loner, the high point of Franky's drab existence is when Margaret Burke pays one of her unscheduled and dramatic visits. Margaret, attractive and bright, is bored to death with her stolid farmer husband Denis, and her life in a small rural community. When it becomes too much for her she erupts in a drinking binge which usually ends up in Franky's bar. For her, this is the highlight of her escape because Franky – due to a stint spent in London – has a magical touch with a range of potent and colourful cocktails. Franky has another souvenir from his London days – two well-thumbed pornographic magazines. These in turn, have a huge fascination for Alan, a regular visitor to the bar. In his mid-twenties, a bit of misfit, Alan works in his father's chipper, and has been systematically and physically abused by him over the years. Now, a tense and delicate relationship has developed between himself and Franky. As the play starts, Margaret and three cronies arrive and Franky gets ready to shake her favourite cocktail – a Margarita. By the end of the night a great deal more than cocktails will have been shaken! Skeletons tumble out of cupboards and raw emotions are revealed. By morning, a fatal car-crash has forced Franky into making a deeply painful and far-reaching decision. There will be no further visits from Margaret or Alan. Left alone at the play's conclusion, Franky muses "I am finally talking to the darkness, a conversation I have been avoiding for too long now. For much too long." This is a strong, emotionally charged drama providing a number of meaty roles but also demanding sensitivity in playing. Delicate but firm direction is also needed. The setting is relatively simple but attention needs to be paid to the important cocktail ingredients. Music and lighting also play an important part in the overall picture. This is a challenging choice and probably more suited to an experienced group.

## *Intermission Complete*



### **ME AND MY FRIEND.** By Gillian Plowman. 2M.

Bunny and Oz are patients recently released from a psychiatric hospital and are now sharing a flat specially provided for those undergoing rehabilitation. However, it soon becomes apparent that neither of the men is equipped to deal with their new environment. In rapid succession they attend a number of imaginary interviews for very unlikely jobs, taking on the roles of secretaries, interviewers, waitresses and others. In between all this activity we learn about the circumstances that resulted in their hospitalisation. Bunny's marriage had broken down because of his workaholic behaviour, which led to an unwanted divorce from a wife he obviously adored. Oz had been a postman smothered by an over-protective mother and, is now totally unable to cope with her sudden death "under the wheels of a silver-grey Ford Granada", as he so graphically recalls it. As the play progresses, the shifts and changes of roles and personalities become more and more frantic as the men struggle to deal with their problems. Even when Bunny slashes his wrists, Oz continues with another frantic and surreal interview until he decides to call an ambulance. At the play's end we hear the wail of the siren as the ambulance draws up, while the hysterical Oz chants over and over again "Oh please God on high, Don't let Bunny die!"

This award-winning and challenging black comedy depends on two strong performances together with tight, crisp direction. Setting and lighting are simple. Costuming, though present day, requires a number of changes, mostly basic i.e. hats, coats, dressing gown etc. All costume changes are performed in full view of the audience.

**\*(Agent: S.F.C.)**



### **MOONSET OVER ZERON.** By Martin Davies. 5M. 4F.

Middle-aged Bob Williams a school headmaster is critically ill in hospital, and the prognosis is not good. However, he does not believe in being a moaner, or in being sorry for himself. In his own gentle way, he tries to make light of everything, even trying to get a smile out of the starchy matron. He has more success with the young nurse, Janet Jones, and it is obvious she is fond of him.

When Paul Wilson, a sixteen-year-old boy arrives to share his room Bob welcomes him wholeheartedly and they soon become friends. Paul has become suddenly ill and is due to undergo exploratory surgery. Various visitors come and go – a doctor, Bob's wife, a colleague, and Paul's mother. When Paul becomes apprehensive about his operation Bob is able to reassure him, and even bets him that he will be out and about by the end of the following week. Sadly, that does not happen. Bob also has some startling news before the play ends. This play won the British Theatre Association's Geoffrey Whitworth Cup for best original One Act play in the All England Theatre Festival in 1988 and was also joint winner of the National Festival Association's George Taylor Award in the same year.

This gentle, but thought-provoking play could be an attractive choice for an experienced group. The hospital ward setting should not provide any great difficulty. Suitable lighting is easily achieved. Sensitive direction is needed. Well-rounded characters will appeal to all actors involved – particularly in the case of the two leading roles.

**\*(Agent: N.P.N.)**

**MUSIC LOVERS.** By. N. J. Warburton. 2M. 1F.



The rather vague vicar thinks he has disturbed a burglar in the Church Hall. However, it is only the apologetic music-lover and librarian Mr. Pauley, who has come to give a talk – with suitable recordings – to the local music appreciation society. However, only one member has turned up! This is the shy, nervous, middle-aged Miss Eames, who is afflicted with a tickling cough. While they wait for the other members to arrive a hesitant, edgy conversation takes place. We learn that the recital is specially arranged around Miss Eames' favourite instruments – the guitar and the lute. (As she becomes more animated and emotional, her nervous cough gets much worse). When the other members have not appeared, they decide to go ahead with the recital. Mr. Pauley locks the door so as to avoid unwelcome latecomers and intruders. Then the conversation turns to a particular piece of music recorded at the final concert of a mutually admired performer, who is now dead. Now, it becomes apparent that everything is not as simple as it first appeared. There is a deep and sinister hidden motive under the surface of this seemingly normal meeting. Alarmed Miss Eames becomes much more animated and emotionally disturbed. Her nervous coughing increases. Mr. Pauley quietly assures her he will get rid of the cough for her, which leads to a chilling final curtain.

This is a scary and gripping piece of theatre. The Times called it "an excellent black joke". For the director who likes to keep his audience on the edge of their seats, this should prove an ideal choice. The setting is simple, but must be suitably atmospheric. Lighting will increase the creepy impact. Actors will welcome the two unusual roles.

**\*(Agent: N.P.N.)**

**MUSTN'T FORGET HIGH NOON.** By Jennifer Johnston. 1M.



In this monologue we learn of the everyday life of Billy Maltseed, a Northern Presbyterian married to Christine, a Southern Church of Ireland girl. They are a childless couple and live with Billy's father in the old family home. Now the father, an ex- B. Special, is dying of cancer, is doubly incontinent and is being nursed by Christine. Throughout his youth and teenage years Billy has shared his passion for Western movies with his long-time pal Sammy Hickson. Their heroes are James Stewart, John Wayne, Randolph Scott – and especially Gary Cooper. Their all time favourite film was "High Noon" – and Grace Kelly their ideal woman - even if she was married to a French Prince and was a 'Taig', or Catholic! As Billy's turbulent and painful thoughts roll on, we learn that Sammy has been riddled with bullets. Sammy's farm is up for sale and Billy is now armed himself, having joined the U.D.R. The familiar and terrifying story rolls on, as the sad Northern conflict continues.

This is a moving and shocking one man show, but shot through with dark, comic touches. It requires firm, deft direction and a major performance. It needs only the simplest of settings. It is a companion piece to "Christine" by the same author. "Christine" is also included in this directory.

**\*(Agent:D.H.& A.)**



**THE NINETEENTH HOLE.** By Hal D. Stewart. 6M.



A game of bridge is in progress in the member's lounge of a golf club. Arthur Gray, the Club Secretary, is seated at a table, together with club members Major Armstrong, Bertie Carter and Dr. Hardcastle. Slumped in a chair near the window is another member Johnson Mowbray. Noted for his drunken binges he is decidedly the worse for drink. Dr. Hardcastle has only arrived some hours before, to take up a post in town and has been invited to take a hand at Bridge before returning to his newly-acquired accommodation. In between games, the members give him the background on the drunken Mowbray. Obviously he is nobody's favourite person. However when Hardcastle goes to examine him he declares that he's not sleeping, but dead. Furthermore he has only died quite recently – and it's murder! So, who among them is the murderer? Accusation is followed by counter-accusation and tempers flare. Then Hardcastle tells them it's all a hoax! Mowbray's not dead. He had declared him dead just to see what the reaction would be! He did it as an experiment as his major interest is in human psychology. While relieved, the other three are naturally angry. Dr. Hardcastle decides it's best to leave. Not long afterwards a young man arrives looking for help. Some lunatic driving his car at speed has driven him off the road. As they are all about to go, they debate about whether they should leave Mowbray behind, as he looks fairly ill. The young man declares he's a doctor – Dr. Hardcastle, the real Dr. Hardcastle! Then, on examining Mowbray he declares him dead! This is a good thriller, with a number of twists. Setting, set-dressing and sound effects are important. Direction and acting will need careful attention in order to achieve the necessary tension.

**\*(Agent: B.S.&F.)**

**NUCLEAR FAMILY.** By Jane Liddiard. 5F.



This play is set in the distant future and deals with the nuclear annihilation of civilisation, as we know it. The setting is a nuclear shelter, which has been specially constructed for the family, made up of a mother, her sister and her three daughters. Anna, the eldest daughter who is also a biologist, has supervised the construction, furnishing and stocking of the shelter. She is only too aware of the horrendous prospect of a nuclear war. As a young woman she had been one of those who had for many months protested at Greenham Common against the storing of the nuclear Pershing Missiles. Disillusioned by their eventual failure, she returned to her family and convinced them – her mother, Rachel, her two sisters Kate and Juliet that they must be prepared for the worst. Now that awful doomsday seems inevitable and imminent. However, their Aunt Gwen is ill and unconvinced of the danger, refuses to co-operate. This leads to tensions and verbal explosions between Anna and the rest of the family. When the inevitable detonation happens Aunt Gwen chooses to stay behind, which leads to the final confrontation, with fatal and shocking results.

This is a tense, tough drama with a chilling theme. The setting can be quite simple but it must create an atmosphere of underground claustrophobia. A tightly focussed lighting plot is necessary. Costumes should pose few difficulties. There is a range of well-contrasted roles. It should appeal to a director seeking a strong, meaty subject that provides food for thought.

**\*(Agent: N.P.N. Triad Series. No. 58.)**



**ONE MAN DOWN.** By Loughlin Deegan. 3M. 2F.

(Specially commissioned by Macra na Feirme)

Set in a country town, the play charts the events immediately before and after an important county final hurling match. Tommy and his friend Murph are guiltily enjoying a prohibited pint, while keeping a watchful eye out for their trainer!

Tommy has recently returned to his hometown after an unsuccessful stint at college in Dublin. In reality, he is only just recovering from a nervous breakdown, a fact that he angrily denies – even to himself! Tommy's father had been a centre forward in the local hurling team, when they had last been victorious in the championship – sixteen years before. Indeed, his father had played on the team on all four occasions that the team had won. Tommy now occupies that same position on the team and is obsessed with winning. In this way he can live up to his father's reputation as a footballer and local hero. Murph, who also plays, would like to see the team win, but cannot go along with Tommy's fanatical preoccupation with success. Also on the team is sharp tongued and dangerous Pete. He is married to Susan, who works behind the bar in O'Loughlin's Lounge – the team's 'local'. It is well known in the town that Susan's marriage vows sit very lightly on her conscience. In fact, her various fleeting liaisons include both Tommy and Murph. However, Tommy resolutely refuses to believe in the well-founded gossip, and remains staunchly convinced that this is neither a casual affair, nor a passing infatuation on his part. Mary, Murph's adoring and naive girlfriend remains blissfully unaware of the dangerous emotions bubbling away, just below the surface. Then, on the day of the match Tommy fails to turn up! The team is forced to play 'one man down'. And not surprisingly, they lose. The following day there is still no sign of Tommy. Where can he be? An air of suspense and menace pervades the end of this chilling, tense play. The setting is made up of the frontages of the pub and a 'take away, which should prove possible to achieve quite simply and effectively. All five roles offer attractive acting opportunities and the director should enjoy the challenge of knitting together the thirteen short, tense scenes, of which this up-to-date is comprised.

**\*(Agent: The Red Hall Agency.)**



**OUT OF HOURS.** By Richard C. Reyland. 1M. 1F.

Penny Bains and Tom McGinley had been teenage students at the same school but have never met in the fifteen years since then. Now, by strange coincidence, they do meet. Tom, the school diving champion, has become a successful computer salesman. Penny, the school mimic, after a disastrous marriage to a gambling Greek restaurateur, is now an office cleaner in the building, which houses Tom's firm. Despite a smooth accomplished exterior, Tom is going through a temporary crisis of confidence and has returned to the office late in the evening in the hopes of drumming up business. His efforts go unrewarded. When Penny takes a 'phone call intended for Tom things take a different and surprising turn. However, there is no magical solution for either of them, but as the play ends, each makes a decision that may yet redirect the current drift of their lives.

This is a gentle two-hander with a nice quirky sense of humour. It should appeal to both actors and director. While the office setting should provide few difficulties, it does require good dressing and propping.

**\*(Agent: N.P.N..Triad Series No. 71.)**

## *Intermission Complete*



### **OVER THE EDGE.** By Paul Gater. 3M. 1F.

Eunice Brewster a tough lady with a tart tongue is seated on a bench on a hilltop, overlooking the city. Actress and comedienne, she has come up here to escape from a stressful encounter. She is soon followed by Archie Metcalfe, her agent who tries to persuade her to return. The root to her complaint is that Archie has signed up Gladys Miller to appear on the same show as herself. Once friends, they are now mortal enemies, trading insults and nursing all sorts of grievances. When Archie fails to persuade her he marches off. Almost immediately a young man, Robin, wanders on followed by his Uncle Horace. Each in turn is treated to Eunice's sharp-tongued comments – but mostly her caustic remarks about Gladys, her erstwhile friend. Everything, from her appearance to her talent, excites Eunice's scorn and biting observations. But in between we learn a little about Eunice and her harsh childhood. Gradually, with prompting from Horace she talks herself to a standstill and to of some sort of calmness and peace. In the final moments we learn that Eunice has slipped away from a special bus outing arranged by the home where she now lives, in the care of Doctor Archie Metcalfe! The final, and startling line of all tells us that Gladys and Eunice are one and the same person!

While comic in many ways, this play has a serious and emotional core. The setting is very simple, but imaginative lighting will add greatly to the play's impact. While all the roles require delicate handling, the part of Eunice is a particularly challenging one. Delicate direction is required.

**\*(Agent: N.P.N.)**

### **PLATFORM PARTY.** By Alan Richardson. 3M. 3F.



And extras.

This is a "far out" comedy set in very familiar surroundings for many dramatic groups, societies and players. It is the final night of a Drama Festival and the committee, other dignitaries and the adjudicator are on stage, ready to make the presentations of the various awards. However few such occasions could possibly be as calamitous as this! The "Platform Party" of the title is made up of Chairperson, Madge Drummond, a bossy school teacher; Rowena Evans, the vague, long-serving committee member and tonight's presenter of prizes; Miss Cartwright, one of the sponsors, bored but determined to do a spot of commercial plugging; Councillor Gray, ex-shop steward, with a splendid line in malapropisms and gobbledegook; John Mitchell, the harassed and disaster-prone stage manager; and Gilbert Hammell the exhausted, testy and finally unbalanced adjudicator! Also scattered through the audience are various 'plants' from the committee and the performing groups. Starting relatively slowly and orderly, the evening plunges ever downward into total chaos. Curtains stick, lights fail. Pointless speeches, an intrusive P.A. system, the inevitable raffle, and enraged group members – each play their part in the proceedings.

While all this adds up to merry mayhem, a director will need to exert very tight discipline in order to ensure that the comic effect is not destroyed by 'over-the top' playing. The setting is very simple, but sound and lighting play an important part. For a group wishing to involve all its members in a comic production, this play should provide an attractive choice.

**\*(Agent: B.S.& F.)**



**PRISONERS' DILEMMA.** By Derek O'Gorman. 2M.

2F.

Garda Susan Kennedy, the daughter of a detective killed in the line of duty, has only recently graduated from Templemore Training College. She now finds herself teamed up with Detective Sergeant Sean Breen, a seasoned officer with twenty-one years of service behind him. While Sean has a great admiration for

Susan's dead father, he considers Susan a raw rookie and treats her accordingly. The atmosphere between them is tense and uneasy. As the play opens, they are preparing to interview alcoholic Paul Walsh, the father of young Sinead Walsh who has gone missing. The sergeant knows that the situation in the Walsh household has often been fraught and that, on at least one occasion, an argument had ended in violence. On that particular occasion he had been called to the scene. Now, suspicion falls on Paul who strongly denies it. When Aisling O'Connor, the missing girl's closest friend is interviewed, her evidence seems to incriminate Paul even further. However she subsequently retracts what she has said. Later still, she tells the sergeant and the Garda that Sinead had been pregnant when she had broken off her studies the year before and had

gone to America. Prospects begin to look extremely black for Paul. But then a chance remark changes everything and brings the action to a surprising conclusion.

The setting is simple – a police interrogation room. Costuming may possibly provide some difficulty. There is a good sense of tension between the four principal roles. A firm directorial hand is needed. The play was short-listed in the Cork Arts Theatre One Act Competition 1999.

**\*(Agent: C.A.T.)**



**PRODIGAL DAUGHTER.** By Louise Johnson. 2F.

In a tragic accident, Sinead and Grainne Walpole have lost both their mother and their adored Aunt Clare. Now, as the play starts, the sisters are in the process of sorting through the belongings of their late mother, Frances. A talented pianist, Frances Walpole had retired from the concert stage some forty years before, in order to rear her children.

As the two women go through their painful task, the rivalries and antipathies between them bubble to the surface. Grainne had taken after her mother and is an accomplished violinist. Sinead has become the perfect wife and mother, and as Grainne says sarcastically, "the paragon of virtue who adapts her life to the wants and needs of others". In return, Sinead counters by comparing Grainne unfavourably with their mother. "She didn't have the ego to go with public recognition of her talent. Unlike you, little sister". It is in this sparring atmosphere that they discover a locked wooden box in their mother's wardrobe. When they eventually succeed in opening it up their world is turned upside down. They are stunned to discover they are not sisters but cousins – Sinead being Aunt Clare's daughter. A delightful and intriguing ending rounds off this thoughtful play..

Actors who enjoy contrasting, feisty characters will welcome both roles. A director should find the script a departure from the norm, requiring subtle handling and an eye to detail. Special music effects are needed in order to set the mood of the play. Set-dressing and costuming are also important factors of the production.

**\*(Agent: C.A.T.)**

## *Intermission Complete*

### **PROPERLY PROCESSED.** By Lynn Brittney. 2M. 1F.



As the play opens, the exceedingly efficient and short-tempered Ms. Carol Benson-Brown inexplicably finds herself in the dreary office of nondescript Mr. Simpkins. Carol, a high powered chief planning officer has no memory of how she has got there, and faced with Simpkins' unflappable bureaucratic approach, her short fuse is ready for a major explosion. Then Simpkins detonates his time-bomb under her dogmatic feet. He informs her she is dead as a result of a traffic accident, and is now in the process of being assessed regarding a suitable placing in the after life! Carol refuses to believe this scenario and it is left to Smith, Mr. Simpkins' superior to prove this to her in a very graphic and positive way. From there on Carol finds herself subjected to an in-depth quizzing on all aspects of her life – her relationships with her mother, partner, colleagues and some suspect dealings with property developers applying for planning permissions! Under normal circumstances the weight of damning evidence would have caused the total collapse of a lesser mortal – but Ms. Carol Benson-Brown is made of much sterner stuff as both Simpkins and Smith discover during the action of the play!

Bitingly funny and up-to-date this tightly written drama provides three delightful roles for the cast. A further advantage is the simple office setting, and straightforward lighting plot. Crisp, imaginative direction is required in order to maximise the potential of this sharp and unusual dark comedy.

**\*(Agent:S.F.C.)**

### **REALITY DREAMT.** By Keith Edmund. 3M. 1F.



Three years ago Duncan, his brother Sam and his friend Ross went out to celebrate Duncan's purchase of a new house. Driving too fast on a wet road, the car had skidded and crashed. Ross, a promising Olympic sprinter was flung through the windscreen and shattered his leg. Sam received severe head injuries and now spends most of his time confined to a wheel-chair, incapable of most communication skills. Duncan, married to Kate, Ross's sister, has taken Sam to live with them, but the responsibility and demands this decision make are wrecking their marriage. As the play starts Ross has come on a visit and insists that Kate and Duncan go out for the night while he babysits Sam.

Sam never initiates a conversation and responds only to the most direct and pressing questions. Ross tries to stimulate him into answering a number of questions with no result. In frustration he asks the blockbuster question "What is life" – and is astounded when Sam answers in a monotone giving a detailed, analytical answer. "What is time?" is greeted with another scientific response. However, it is when he asks, "Why are we here?" that the real revelation occurs and resultant shock is delivered! A strange discussion ensues when Sam talks of the difference between "here" and "the other place"! "This is just bullshit" Ross shouts "The other place. Hasn't it got a name?" From here on this highly unusual - almost sci-fi - play, tricks around with ideas about 'time' and 'space' and 'consciousness'. It even appears that Sam is able to cure Ross' limp completely! Then just as suddenly, Sam shuts up again as Duncan and Kate return. What has happened? Has it all been an illusion? Has everything occurred in another dimension? Original, almost spooky, this play will appeal to those seeking an unusual script. It is best suited to the more experienced groups, and offers major challenges in the roles of Sam and Ross. The living room setting is easily achieved. Careful direction and good lighting are needed.

**\*(Agent: N.P.N.)**



**RED BOX.** By Peter Mercer. 4M. 5F. And extras.

This is an absurd, zany comedy with a satirical undertone. Loco, a clown-like young man has the misfortune of encountering a large red box, which is in the habit of scuttling about the stage. Puzzled by this strange behaviour, Loco accosts a number of people to help him explore this odd situation. A cleaning lady shows little interest and Brenda and Maureen, two hard-boiled young women, think he's trying to pick them up and call on the stereotypical policeman, Ivor Flatfoot. He takes the whole outrageous situation very seriously, cautions Loco in proper legal fashion and informs him of his rights. Just on cue Lady Araminta Scattergood, a County Magistrate enters, and on learning of the situation, decides to call a court hearing there and then! Loco is then charged with disturbing the peace, being in charge of a red box without a proper licence and insulting a policeman on duty! In next to no time a jury of three is sworn in, and a clerk of the court and a prosecuting council are appointed. The only person to appear for the defence is Loco's mother, who rapidly calls on the cleaner lady, and the person seated in seat number 4 row C to give evidence! The jury delivers a 'guilty' verdict and Loco is sentenced to stay where he is for an unlimited time, not to speak or to be spoken to by anyone and refused the right to appeal! The author of this original and unusual play declares that it "can be approached on two levels – one, as a straightforward comic piece or two, pointing out the moral behind the humour – the impossibility of remaining an individual in a society where to conform is the rule." For a director and a group searching for something different, this play presents just such an option. It is also better suited to an experienced group. The setting is a bare stage. Costumes and propping need particular attention.

**\*(Agent: N.P.N.)**



**RED WINE OF LOVE.** By Patrick Fagan. 2M. 2F.

**\*(Agent: The Author)**

The time is the 1980s – a time of considerable change in Ireland. The old certainties are being challenged everywhere – even within the ranks of traditional Irish Catholics. One of those caught up in these difficult and disturbing times is Fr. John Murphy, a country curate in his mid-thirties. Recently returned from a holiday in Salthill in Galway, he is facing the arrival of a new Parish Priest Fr. O'Shea who is preceded by a reputation of being a formidable disciplinarian. Finding his priesthood and especially his vow of celibacy too great a burden, he has given great thought to been seeking laicization for some time. After the recent death of his mother he has decided to go ahead with this course of action. Already overly-fond of the bottle and permanently without his Roman collar – he has met, and fallen in love with Kathleen, a young Dublin woman. By the end of his holiday he had actually asked her to marry him. Shocked and confused on learning that he is a priest, Kathleen will only promise 'to think about it'. However, word of his holiday high jinks has already reached the ears of his straight-laced housekeeper who is upset. When the new P.P. arrives, he very quickly assesses the situation and is deeply disturbed by what he sees and hears. However, when he tries to exert pressure on Fr. John, he is instantly informed of his curate's position and his intentions. Going even further Fr. John asks his new superior to read his message of resignation from the curacy to the congregation on Sunday. Stunned, the P.P. leaves after telling Fr. John that he must inform the Bishop about the situation. When Kathleen arrives a little later to give her answer, Fr. John is in for a further shock. Love him though she does, she sadly feels unable

## *Intermission Complete*

to quell her conscience or to deal with his drinking. Devastated, he must now face his own demons alone. This is a powerful and provocative play dealing with an up-to-date problem. The setting requires thought and good propping. Costuming provide few obstacles. Lighting and sound make few demands.



### **SLOW DROPPING VEILS OF SMOKE.** By

Marjorie Dickinson. 2M. 1F.

It is Guy Fawkes Night on Beacon Hill. A big bonfire has been build ready for lighting. A bag-lady and a young man, Hughie, are poking around for anything they can find. This visit is a routine they have engaged in on other years. As they chat and disagree, Hughie plays on his fiddle while she sings snatches of long-remembered songs. Then a man enters. He tells them that he has been ill and is now convalescing. This place he declares holds happy memories, as he was married in the church at the bottom of the hill. However, his wife left him and his children years ago. Now as he reminisces and produces a newspaper clipping about their wedding, the bag-lady tells him she herself had a daughter and shows him a small, crumpled photo. He is stunned and declares that it's a photo of his wife as a young woman. She scoffs at the notion and he stumbles away even more upset and unsure. Is the bag-lady his wife? Why did she show him the photograph?

In the second scene – the bonfire has been lit and burned down, and the bag-lady and Hughie are alone again and he talks of leaving and going to do some busking in London. The man returns and again tries to discover if she is lying. She again tells him he's totally wrong, but asks him to give back the photo. He does so and wearily leaves. Talking to herself, she burns the photo and the newspaper clipping. So, is she the long lost wife? As the play ends, the doubt remains.

This is a gentle and delicate play requiring sensitive playing and direction. The actor playing Hughie, will need to be able to play some musical instrument, even if not particularly well. While the setting is simple, the heaped junk for the bonfire, in the first scene, and the remains of the bonfire, in the second scene, may pose some difficulty. However, a dedicated and inventive stage manager will soon overcome this problem. Lighting is very important for setting the mood.

**\*(Agent: D.A.W.)**



### **SOW THE WIND.** By Patrick Fagan. 3M. 2F.

**\*(Agent: The Author)**

Martin Doyle, a farmer would appear, on the surface, to be a fortunate man. A sizeable farm, a comfortable home, his only child, Kate a successful doctor, it seems that good fortune has smiled on him. However, the situation between himself and his wife Bridie is tense and abrasive. Indeed, since the birth of Kate their life together has been for him, a marriage in name only. His wife's ensuing ill-health, backed by the doctor's warning against another pregnancy deprived him of a possible son. This lack of a male heir has been a bitter blow. His resultant frustration led him to seek a relationship with a woman of dubious reputation in the locality. When she became pregnant she insisted that Martin was the father. Martin totally denied it. As a result of his rejection the mother of the boy (whom she named Tom) threatened to expose him, and in panic, Martin paid a considerable sum to ensure her silence. Years later when Kate became friendly with Tom, Martin was both horrified and desperate. However, their relationship seemed to have

ended when Kate decided to pursue her career abroad - much to her father's relief. Now, as the play begins, we learn that Kate is returning after some years. When she does so, it is to announce her intention of marrying Tom, who unknown to her parents has kept in close contact with her during her absence abroad. Indeed he had joined her on holidays in the Canaries, some months before and they now intend to marry! Suddenly, Martin's guilty past has come back to haunt him. Forced to tell his wife the truth, a vicious and bitter row erupts. This is overheard by the stunned and devastated Kate. So, when Tom calls to see Martin and Bridie, the scene is set for a violent and shocking conclusion to this drama. This play has a tough dramatic theme, which will need tight control on the part of the director.



**THIN ICE.** By Denis Byrne. 1M. 2F.

Eileen and Maura are neighbours and long-term friends. When Maura discovers that she is pregnant she storms into Eileen's house, to voice her anger and shock at the news. She has one daughter and neither she, nor her husband Peter, wants another child. Her carefully arranged life and plans are upset by the unwelcome news, and she and Peter have had an almighty row. Eileen is saddened and appalled at the outburst and deeply envious of her friend. Her own marriage to Jim has been childless. She is currently consulting a specialist without Jim's knowledge. Indeed, at this moment, she is awaiting the final results of her recent tests. Maura is remorseful about her outburst and urges Eileen to talk to Jim about adoption as a possible alternative. Later, when Eileen visits her specialist, she is given the "all clear." At the same time the specialist suggests that Jim should arrange an appointment. - "Just for a chat", as he diplomatically puts it. When Eileen arranges a special meal and broaches the subject, Jim's reaction and responses stun her. From there the play builds in intensity to an explosive ending.

This is a thought-provoking dramatic play on an up-to-the-minute theme. There are three 'meaty' roles, calling for deft and disciplined direction. While there are three different acting areas required by the setting of the play, a careful design should solve any difficulties. Neither lighting nor costume should pose any problem.

**\*(Agent: C.A.T.)**



**TWINKLETOES.** By Jennifer Johnston. 1F.

In this powerful monologue we meet Karen, the wife of a top I.R.A. prisoner. Already slightly tight, she pours another vodka and talks to herself. She has just returned, to an empty house, from her daughter Noreen's wedding. Memories crowd in on her, and her jumbled thoughts race backward and forward over the lonely landscape of her life. Her husband, Declan, revered locally as a hero, is serving three life sentences. Her father loathes Declan, referring to him as a terrorist. Her daughter Noreen, who has just been married, has ditched her career and gone up the aisle pregnant. Still a young woman herself, and fond of company, dancing and socialising, Karen finds herself lonely, trapped, longing for love and affection, but knowing she is tied to her husband who will not be released for many years to come - if at all! And then there is Danny McCarthy - fun loving and handsome - but tied to a wife who is in and out of hospital since her brother was shot by the army. All the pain, torture, destruction and grief of the conflict in Northern Ireland is packed into this deeply moving and tough monologue. This monologue was originally produced by the Project Theatre in Dublin in 1993.



## *Intermission Complete*

Powerful and disturbing it requires a strong performance and delicate direction. It will appeal to the more experienced groups, who should enjoy the challenge it offers. The living room setting is simple. Neither costume nor lighting should provide any difficulties.

**\*(Agent: D.H. & A.)**



### **THE WARMTH OF THE SUN.** By David McCall.

6M. 3F.

It is the summer of 1995 and Tommy Collins, a self-employed builder and dedicated windsurfer is making the most of the unusually hot weather. His wife Nuala and her friend Frances enjoy a more leisurely game of tennis. Willie, Frances' husband has been unemployed most of the time, and baby-sits while Frances has become the breadwinner of their family. Nuala has been trying for some time to persuade Tommy that it's time to start a family, but Tommy keeps making excuses for the delay. However, Nuala confides in Frances that she has stopped taking 'the pill' six months ago with no results! After tests her doctor has confirmed that there is no reason why she should not have children. Now the problem is how to break the news to Tommy! A clandestine party while Tommy and his helper 'Weasel' are way on a job, followed by Tommy's unexpected return, result in a huge row. Nuala storms out and Tommy, in remorse and loneliness, tries to cajole her to return. When she does, he is a chastened man, vowing to give up the fags and the booze and to take up regular exercise. 'Weasel' is disbelieving and then springs his final surprise!

Despite the serious theme there is also warm-hearted comedy in this play, which won the All Ireland One Act Drama Festival in 1998. While there are a number of scenes, the sitting room setting is quite simple. Neither propping nor lighting provides any difficulties. The four principal roles should pose few casting difficulties. The other characters appear only in the 'party' scene. Tight direction is needed in order to maintain the momentum and forge a neat and speedy link between the scenes.

**\*(Agent: C.A.T.)**

### **WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH THE BODY?** By Rae

Shirley. 1M. 2F.



Pauline Temple, a writer of lurid detective stories lives in an isolated cottage. As the play opens she is dictating her latest gory imaginings to her new secretary, Miss Worthington. Headless bodies have a habit of making frequent appearances in all her novels, and the present one is no exception! Just as she reaches the appearance of yet another one there are a number of bloodcurdling screams. Oddly, only Miss Temple hears them! They are immediately followed by loud knocking on the front door. When they screw up the courage to open it, a strange man stands there dressed in dazzling pyjamas and carrying an umbrella! He brings a scary story of a lunatic escaped from a nearby asylum. As the plot gallops along, it becomes apparent that there is something very strange afoot. The newcomer claims to be a member of the Special Branch – going as far as to claim that his

code name is "Double Seven O!" At one moment he seems to be in league with Pauline Temple to entrap her secretary – but when Pauline leaves momentarily it appears that Miss Worthington is actually a colleague. So what is the truth? One thing is certain. There is a homicidal maniac on the loose with 13 victims to his/her name. In addition at least two of those in the cottage are superstitious and urgently require an additional victim in order to escape from that unlucky number!

This is a decidedly wacky, black – or at least 'dark' – comedy with crazy situations, off-beat dialogue and an unexpected and spooky climax. Crisp, tongue-in-cheek performances are called for all round. The director will need to exert a firm hand to ensure that the playing is not allowed to go over-the-top, which would spoil the effect of this manic and merry mayhem. The comfortable cottage setting should be easily achieved. There are no special lighting or sound effects required. Costuming is also straightforward. **\*(Agent: S. F.C)**

### **WITHIN EYESHOT.** By Robert Earnest. 3M. 2F.



Madge has just been fired from the job she has held for the last three years. Together with fellow worker Trish she makes for a pub to drown her sorrows. Seated in a booth, as they chat it emerges that Madge has one, very unusual gift. Knocked down by a car when she was only six, she had remained deaf until an operation when she was a young teenager restored her hearing. In those

intervening years she learned to lip-read. Fascinated by this story Trish asks her to tell what other people are saying at the bar counter and at various tables. From there the plot takes off in an unexpected direction. Though the women are unaware of it Dan, a complete stranger to both of them, is seated in the darkness of the booth behind them and has overheard all their conversation. When Trish leaves, Dan gets into conversation with Madge. He says he is a detective following a man suspected of stealing art treasures. But is his story true? And where does Dougie, the barman, fit into the picture – and the two men at the bar? What or who are they waiting for? When Dan departs hurriedly to make a phone call Madge, a trifle tipsy, decides its time to leave only to discover a canvas-wrapped package has been slipped into her carrier bag. On opening it, she discovers that it contains a valuable miniature painting! After a shooting in the street outside, a menacing stranger appears and threatens Madge. However, once again her lip-reading skills come to her rescue. Indeed, by the end of this hectic night, she even has an offer of working with the police!

This fast-moving comedy-thriller offers plenty of scope for an adventurous director. The role of Madge is a major one, but there are also three solid and interesting male roles. The setting is simple. Lighting will prove very important, if the right atmosphere is to be achieved.

**\*(Agent: N.P.N.)**

### **THE WOODEN PEAR.** By Gillian Plowman. 1 or 2 M. 1F.



Deleine, a middle-aged woman sits on a park-bench feeding the birds. Now partially paralysed down one side, ten years ago she had been an attractive vivacious woman with an adoring husband. Her life had been happy and successful. Then a chance meeting with a young man in the same park where she now sits, had dramatically and drastically changed all that. On that fateful occasion, angered and disgusted when he "flashed" her, she had shouted at him and threatened him. In retaliation, he had beaten her savagely. Since then she has been unable to walk properly, is given to dribbling and subsequently divorced by her husband who could

### *Intermission Complete*

not cope with her disfigurement. As the play starts she has come to meet her attacker, Daniel, now in his late twenties. He has only recently been released from jail after serving 10 years for the attack.

In the edgy and angry exchanges that follow we learn of Daniel's deprived background and traumatic childhood at the hands of his disturbed and brutal mother. Sad though his story has been, Madeleine finds in it no excuse or pardon for his monstrous behaviour. He has destroyed her life and now it is his duty to take care of her and repay her for all she has lost because of him. All he can offer her is a woken pear he has carved and polished in the prison workshop. In the emotionally charged ending to this hard-hitting and thought-provoking play, these two wounded people reach a place where healing can begin.

Basically a two-hander this play calls for strong performances and a delicate directorial touch. The required setting, lighting and sound are readily achievable. Costuming is that of the present day.

**\*(Agent: N.P.N. Triad Series. No.74.)**

*Useful Services and Information*

## *Intermission Complete*

### *Agencies and Organisations*

In order to help Macra na Feirme groups to expand their knowledge of all aspects of Theatre, and to encourage them to widen the range of their theatrical activities, the following extended section has been added to this present edition of "Intermission Impossible." The aim of this particular section is to provide information on Drama organisations and on business concerns, which provide services that are especially geared toward theatrical productions.

#### **Drama League of Ireland**

Down the years Amateur Drama has been energetically undertaken and enthusiastically supported all around Ireland. It is a source of expertise, innovation and skill. It provides a training ground for actors, directors and technicians, and The Drama League has been continuously fostering this activity.

#### **What is The Drama League of Ireland?**

It is a National Association dedicated to amateur drama.

It provides Training Workshops and Seminars in all aspects of Drama.

It organises and runs a one-week residential summer school annually.

It maintains regular contact with its members through a newsletter, which ensures that members are informed and can contribute to their organisation.

It provides National representation for over one hundred groups (and growing) and more than one hundred individual members.

It provides a County network, bringing groups together and listening to members.

It offers participation in an Insurance Scheme specially devised for Drama Groups.

#### **What are the Aims of the Drama League of Ireland?**

The aim of the **Drama League of Ireland** is to promote and foster all aspects of amateur drama in Ireland. The DLI represents the interest of members and provides them with relevant services to encourage and assist the improvement of standards in acting, production and presentation of amateur drama.

The **DLI** works to foster awareness and sensitivity to amateur drama through innovative and inclusive links with appropriate agencies.

**The Drama League of Ireland** was founded in 1966 (as the ADL) and is an umbrella body for groups and individuals. The DLI believe that amateur drama is making a significant and positive contribution to the arts in Ireland.

The **DLI** co-ordinates activities of groups and festivals abroad and is a member of IATA  
The National Association of Youth Drama was established as a result of an Amateur Drama League initiative.

The **DLI** is a nominating body for Seanad Eireann.

**For further details Application should be made to:**

**The Drama League of Ireland, Carmichael House, Dublin 7.**

## **The Drama Association of Wales**

Founded in 1934 and a registered charity since 1973, the Association offers a wide and varied range of services to Community Drama. Among others, the members include amateur and professional theatre practitioners, educationalists and playwrights.

### **Library**

The D.A.W. has been running a playscript library for over sixty years. The D.A.W. now hold the world's largest specialist drama lending library. Over 200,000 volumes of plays, biographies, critical works and technical theatre books including the entire Playsets and Lending Collections of the former British Theatre Association. Members in the UK, Europe and worldwide are served by return of post from Cardiff.

### **Playwriting Competition**

An annual competition is run with a typical entry of between eight and a hundred scripts. The competition is for one-act plays between 25 and 45 minutes running time. The theme is changed annually.

### **Script Reading Service**

The script reading service costs (£10 Sterling). For this authors get three scripts from potential end-users of their work. The scripts are not edited in any way and they are anonymous. This service typically takes three months from receipt of your play to the issue of the scripts. If you get three "raves" or a strong recommendation from the reviewers, the script is automatically considered for the publication service.

### **The Publication Service**

Selected scripts from the reading service or from the playwriting competition are considered for publication. The criterion is always: "will this play get performed?"

D.A.W. arranges for publication of a short run (typically 250-750 copies). The editions are professional printed with art board covers.

D.A.W. welcomes enquires from interested individuals and groups world wide.

For further Details, applications should be made to:

**Drama Association of Wales,  
The Library,  
Singleton Road,  
Splott,  
Cardiff CF2 2ET.  
Wales**

**All Ireland One-Act Festivals**  
**Under the auspices of the joint committee ADCI/DLI**

- The spirit that lies behind these festivals is more one of participation than of competition. Therefore every effort should be made to emphasise the experience of sharing.
- There need only be three (3) small awards in any festival and these will be awarded totally at the discretion of the Adjudicator. It will not be essential that these awards be given to the winning plays if the Adjudicator feels they should go to other areas of excellence. In addition to the awards, merit certificates may be given.
- There will be two grades for groups (open and confined). The choice of grade is at the discretion of the group prior to entry on the festival circuit. Each adjudicator shall declare publicly at the end of the competition a winner in each section and shall communicate that decision in writing to the festival organisers.
- In addition, each adjudicator shall place all entries in an order of merit at the end of the Festival and communicate full details to the festival organisers immediately.
- The Finals Adjudicator shall declare a winner in each section, Open and Confined.
- The marking system applicable is intended only as a help in determining the order of merit Acting (30%), Production/Direction (30%), Stage Presentation (20%), Teamwork (10%), Attainment (10%). Guidelines: Excellent 85%+ Very Good 80%+ Good 75%+ Fair 65%+ Poor 50%+.
- Each group (including the first competitor) is allowed only ten (10) minutes to set up and five (5) minutes to strike (i.e. fifteen minutes between each play). Exceeding this time limit will lead to a deduction of ten points in total from either Stage Presentation or Teamwork.
- Absolutely no sets will be allowed. Only free-standing pieces essential to the setting of the play may be used. Adjudicators will be concerned to especially encourage groups showing imagination in dealing with this limitation. It is the responsibility of the Adjudicator – as opposed to the Festival Committee – to determine if a competing group has exceeded the prohibition in the use of sets.
- Festivals are for bona fide amateur groups only. Any group using professional assistance in any form must acknowledge same in all programmes. No award may be made to a professional.
- Adjudicators shall report to the National Festivals Sec. of the Joint Committee ADCI/DLI. any attempt by person(s) to influence his/her decision in any matter pertaining to the competition.

**RULES – One Act Festival Circuit**

**Under the auspices of the Joint Committee of the DLI / ADCI 1.**

1. Festivals are confined to amateur groups only.
2. Plays must not exceed fifty-five (55) minutes in duration. Penalty for exceeding this is automatic disqualification. Approximate running time must be stated in advance.
3. Plays must commence at the specified time and intervals between them will be limited as follows: Each group will be allowed a MAXIMUM of ten (10) minutes to SET UP and five (5) minutes to STRIKE. Groups who over-run this schedule will be penalised by a deduction of ten (10) marks from their total. Each Festival Committee shall appoint a timekeeper whose duty it is to inform the adjudicator of groups who exceed these limits.
4. The use of sets is prohibited. Penalty for violation on prohibition of set is disqualification. Only free-standing pieces, which are essential to the setting of the play, may be used. Festival Committees shall endeavour to provide adequate storage space for groups' props, etc. prior to and if necessary after their performance. Festival shall provide plain drapes and/or masking side flats and the use of cyclorama or cyclorama cloth.
5. The Festival will provide no props, ornaments, cushions, etc.
6. The festival accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage to persons or property that might occur during the Festival.
7. Author's permission to perform must be obtained and appropriate fees must be paid in advance. Copy of script and any other items designated on application form must be forwarded to the Festival Secretary by the specified date. Photocopies are not acceptable.
- 7a. Results must be sent by Festival Secretary to competing groups within one week of conclusion.
8. Successful entries are at the discretion of the Festival Committee. All such entries shall be advised immediately.
- 8a. There must be a specified opening time for the venue.
9. All copies of plays shall be returned to groups.
10. The following marking system shall apply to each Festival: Production (30), Acting (30), Presentation (20), Teamwork (10), Attainment (10), Total (100) marks
11. There shall be an Open and Confined Section, if possible, in each Festival. Each section shall have a minimum of 3 plays.
12. Each group may compete in a maximum of five (5) festivals.
13. Any group involved in the organisation of a festival may not participate in that festival except on a non-competitive basis.
14. Festivals must furnish groups with stage plan and details of lighting facilities, together with official entry form and set of rules.
15. Two players minimum in each play.
16. Adjudicators must be chosen from the recognised panel.
17. Entries shall be considered a complete acceptance of these rules and must be signed by an officer of the group.



## *Intermission Complete*

18. All perpetual trophies shall be returned after ten months or when requested to do so by the Festival Committee. Groups shall be liable for any damage or loss sustained to these trophies during their tenure.
19. The All Ireland Finals shall rotate annually.
20. The Finals Festival shall be held with a minimum of eight (8) plays over three (3) days.
21. Entries to the All Ireland One-Act Finals shall be determined on the basis of nominations by Adjudicators at preliminary festivals.
22. Points system shall be as follows: 1st = 12 points, 2<sup>nd</sup> = 5pts. 3<sup>rd</sup> = 2pts. Points for 3<sup>rd</sup> place may only be awarded where a minimum of four groups has taken part in competition (open and confined).
- 22a. An adjudicator has the discretion to withhold any award or placing, if in his/her opinion an adequate standard has not been achieved.
23. The Finals festival shall take place annually during the first week of December, unless otherwise directed by the Joint ADCI/CLI Committee.
24. The final date for conclusion of preliminary festivals shall be decided annually by this Committee.
25. The dates for the holding of any preliminary festivals are to be notified each year to the Hon. National Secretary with the name of the Adjudicator if possible.
26. An Open Draw shall be held for the order and dates of participation in the All Ireland Finals, which will be supervised by members of the Joint Committee for the One Act Circuit.
27. The rules governing the One-Act Festivals shall also apply to the All Ireland Finals.
28. Results of preliminary festivals must be sent to the National Secretary IMMEDIATELY on conclusion of each festival on the official Results Sheet issued.
29. The Joint Committee of the ADCI / DLI reserve the right to amend these rules and shall have sole discretion in any matter regarding their interpretation and observance of same by any participating group. The decision of the committee in any such matter shall be final and binding.
30. Festivals who fail to comply with any of these rules may have their nominating status withdrawn by the Joint Committee for the One Act Circuit.

## *One-Act Festival Circuit*

Information on the One-Act Festival Circuit, run by the Drama League of Ireland (D.L.I.) in conjunction with The Amateur Drama Council of Ireland (A.D.C.I.)

All One Act Festivals are held annually between the last week of October and Late November. Details of actual dates can be obtained by writing to the respective secretaries at the addresses given below. The Festivals are listed in **present** chronological order – Naas Festival being held in late October and Waterford in late November.

### **NAAS**

Not held in 2000  
2001 Doubtful

### **HAULBOWLINE**

Pat Mahony,  
Inver,  
Rushbrooke,  
Cobh,  
Co. Cork  
021-397577/ 813307

### **DALKEY**

Mary Rigney,  
2, Saval Grove,  
Dalkey,  
Co. Dublin  
01-2859758

### **SKERRIES**

Marianne Gibney,  
114 Downside,  
Skerries,  
Co. Dublin  
01-8491936

### **PALMERSTOWN**

Molly O'Callaghan,  
15 Turret Rd.,  
Palmerstown,  
Dublin 20  
01-6269924

### **TRIM**

Elaine McLaughlin,  
21 Newtown Abbey,  
Trim,  
Co. Meath  
046-37204

### **CORK**

Jo White,  
Ballyphillip,  
White's Cross,  
Co. Cork  
021-308814/ 506374

### **LIMERICK**

Joe O'Connor,  
Mary Ville,  
O'Connell Ave.,  
Limerick  
061-315120

### **CARRICK ON SHANNON**

Not held in 2000  
2001 Doubtful

### **KILTIMAGH**

Not held in 2000  
2001 Doubtful

### **NEWPORT**

Temporarily Suspended

### **KILMALLOCK**

Helen Ryan,  
Kilbreedy West,  
Kilmallock,  
Co. Limerick  
063-98498

### **NEWTOWNABBEY**

Maureen Dunn,  
11 Doagh Road,  
Newtownabbey,  
Co. Antrim  
1232-862960

### **SCREEN**

Temporarily Suspended

### **BALLYMAHON**

Sheelagh Stafford,  
Ballymahon,  
Co. Longford  
0902-32252  
0902-32338

### **MANORHAMILTON**

Hubert McMorro,   
The Glens Centre,  
Manorhamilton,  
Co. Leitrim  
072-55833

*Intermission Complete*  
*One-Act Festival Circuit continued*

**TUAM**

Jarlath Canny,  
The Square,  
Tuam,  
Co. Galway  
093-24463/ 24141

**PALLASGREEN**

Aine Commins,  
Templebraden,  
Pallasgreen,  
Co. Limerick  
062-57366

**SHANNON**

Joe Walsh,  
9Tullyglass Hill,  
Shannon,  
Co. Clare  
061-362894/ 364970

**GLENAMADDY**

Not held in 2000  
2001 Doubtful

**BALBRIGGAN**

Monica Cullen  
9 Pinewood Green Dre,  
Balbriggan,  
Co. Dublin  
01-8414725

**LONGFORD**

Grainne Milner,  
38 Demesne,  
Longford  
043-41706

**ROSSMORE**

Mary Deasy,  
Gearagh,  
Rossmore,  
Clonakilty,  
Co. Cork  
02338607/33205

**PROSPEROUS**

Not held in 2000  
2001 Doubtful

**MAUDABAWN**

Bridie Farrell,  
Maudabawn,  
Cootehill,  
Co. Cavan  
049-5552454

**PORTLAOISE**

Eamonn Conroy,  
Dangans,  
Mountmellick,  
Co. Laois  
0502-24180

**KILMUCKRIDGE**

Anne Furlong,  
Killincooley,  
Kilmuckridge,  
Co. Wexford  
053-30211

**DOONBEG**

Murt McInerney,  
Mount Rivers,  
Doonbeg,  
Co. Clare  
065-9055010

**DOWNPATRICK**

Temporarily Suspended

**WATERFORD**

Geri Oakes,  
Cuil Coille,  
Doneraile Place,  
Tramore,  
Co. Waterford  
051-381006

*Costume Hire*

**Mr. Pat McGann,**  
Ballycarney,  
Clarina,  
Limerick.  
Co.Limerick.  
Tel: (061) 353160

**Nomac Productions,**  
Unit 1A,  
Tycor Trading Centre,  
Tycor Avenue,  
Waterford.  
Co. Waterford.  
Tel: (051) 379829  
Email: [nomac@iol.ie](mailto:nomac@iol.ie)  
(See also 'Make-Up'.)

**Ms.Breege Fahy.**  
Tel: (091) 846046.  
Mobile: (087) 2716327  
Also makes costumes

**A ONE COSTUMEA**  
**1 Costume**  
16a Eastmoreland Lane,  
(re Baggot St. Hospital)  
Dublin 4  
Tel: (01) 6685200

**Ace Party Shop**  
Nielson Centre,  
Monastery Road,  
Dublin 22  
Tel: (01) 4640220

**Ballina Heritage Costume  
Company**  
The Quay,  
Ballina,  
Co. Mayo.  
Tel: (096) 72154

**Maurice Butler**  
52 O'Connell Street,  
Dungarven,  
Co. Waterford.  
Tel: (058) 41505

**Clown Around**  
5 Clarendon Market,  
Dublin 2.  
Tel: (01) 6775040  
Fax: (01) 6770405  
Em: [sales@unique-art.ie](mailto:sales@unique-art.ie)

**The Costume Company**  
15 Sackville Place,  
Dublin 1.  
Tel: (01) 8735056

**Costume Corner**  
Unit 14,  
Shandon Craft Centre,  
Shandon,  
Co. Cork.  
Tel: (021) 4506133

**Costume World**  
44 Thomas Davis Street,  
Blackpool,  
Co. Cork.  
Tel: (021) 4397935

**Crazy Costumes**  
33 Silverheights Road,  
Silversprings,  
Tivoli,  
Co. Cork.  
Tel: (021) 4500045

**Doghouse Theatrical Stage  
Supplies**  
36 Auburn Heights,  
Athlone,  
Co. Westmeath.  
Tel: (0902) 78887

**Dublin Costume Co.**  
Same as A ONE  
**COSTUMEA**

**Fun & Frolics**  
3 Adelphi Mall  
Long Walk,  
Dundalk.  
Tel: (042) 9329700

**False Impressions**  
Unit 2,  
Enterprise Centre,  
Castleblayney,  
Co. Monaghan.  
(042) 9746258

**Fancy Dress Fun**  
Ballygoran,  
Maynooth,  
Co. Kildare.  
Tel: (01) 6285240

**Harlequin**  
44 Botanic Avenue,  
Belfast,  
Co. Antrim.  
Tel: (048) 90231660

**Image Health Studios**  
Patrick's Square,  
Wexford.  
Tel: (053) 22368

**Jesters**  
74 Allenview Heights,  
Newbridge,  
Co. Kildare.  
Tel: (045) 432612

**Kildare Fancy Dress**  
"Golden Falls",  
Ballymore-Eustace,  
Co. Kildare.  
Tel: (045) 864235

## *Intermission Complete*

### *Customs Hire continued*

#### **Laughinstock**

7 Bon Accord Terrace,  
Smithfield Square,  
Lisburn BT28 1TL,  
Co. Antrim.  
Tel: (048) 92674601

#### **The Magic Shop**

6 Mallow Street,  
Limerick City,  
Co. Limerick.  
Tel: (061) 341839

#### **Masquerade**

Ballymahon Road,  
Athlone  
Co. Westmeath.  
Tel: (0902) 93765

#### **Party World**

Sean Mulvoy Road,  
Galway City,  
Co. Galway.  
Tel: (091) 756383

#### **Silgo Living**

#### **History & Heritage Ltd**

Forthill,  
Silgo.  
Tel: (071) 47616

#### **Thimblinas Alterations**

7 Mainguard Street,  
Galway City,  
Co. Galway.  
Tel: (091) 568865

#### **Space 2 Change**

Derryhee,  
Emyvale,  
Co. Monaghan.  
Tel: (047) 87172

### *Make Up*

#### **Ferguson's**

20 O'Connell St.,  
Limerick,  
Co. Limerick.  
Tel: (061) 414917  
Fax: (061) 415057

#### **Make-Up Forever**

40, Clarendon Street,  
Dublin 2.  
Tel: (01) 679 9043  
(01) 672 9012

#### **Minihane's,**

108 Oliver Plunkett Street,  
Cork,  
Co. Cork.  
Tel: (021) 273900

#### **Nomac Productions**

Unit 1A,  
Tycor Trading Centre,  
Tycor Ave.,  
Waterford,  
Co. Waterford.  
Tel: (051) 379829

#### **Playlight**

12, Mount Carmel,  
Newbridge,  
Co. Kildare.  
Tel/Fax: (045) 433082  
Mobile: (087) 2229470  
(See Wigs & Lighting)

#### **O'Beirns**

11, Henry Street,  
Galway,  
Co. Galway.  
Tel: (091) 582479

#### **Stage Services North**

Unit 10,  
6-16, Duncrue Crescent,  
Belfast BT3 9BW.  
Tel: (0801) 23277668.  
(See Lighting)

### *Wigs*

#### **Cork Hair Clinic.** (Contact : Kay.)

129, Oliver Plunkett Street,  
Cork,  
Co. Cork.  
Tel./ Fax: (021) 275027

#### **Playlight**

12, Mount Carmel,  
Newbridge,  
Co. Kildare.  
Tel/Fax: (045) 433082  
Mobile: (087) 2229470  
(See Make-Up/ Lighting)

*Intermission Complete*

*Lighting Equipment - Hire*

**Allight**

37 John Street,  
Cork.  
Co.Cork.  
Tel: (021) 505881

**Mr. Tom McGann**

Barrington's Bridge,  
Co. Limerick.  
Tel: (061) 386180

**Dundrum Lighting**

Main Street,  
Dundrum,  
(beside Church)  
Dublin 14  
Tel: (01) 2951857  
Fax: (01) 2951861  
Email: [lighting@iol.ie](mailto:lighting@iol.ie)

**Playlight**

12 Mount Carmel,  
Newbridge,  
Co. Kildare.  
Tel/Fax: (045) 433082

**Soundtrax**

11 Mulgrave Road,  
Camden Quay,  
Cork,  
Co. Cork.  
Tel: (021) 509888  
Fax: (021) 509777  
(See Sound Equipment)

**Stage Lighting Centre**

12 Brunswick Place,  
Dublin 2,  
Co. Dublin.  
Tel: 01 677 3044  
Fax: (01) 677 3724

**Stage Services North**

Unit 10,  
6-16 Duncrue Crescent,  
Belfast BT3 9BW,  
Co. Antrim.  
Tel: (0801) 23277668.  
Fax: (0801) 232 771707.  
(See Sound Equipment/  
Make-Up)  
(See Make-Up & Wigs)

**The Electric Light Co.**

Unit 3D,  
Three Rock Road,  
Sandyford,  
Dublin 18  
Tel: (01) 2953999  
Email: [elight@indigo.ie](mailto:elight@indigo.ie)

**Spectrum Lighting**

74 The Grove,  
Celbridge,  
Co. Kildare  
Tel: (01) 6272212

## *Intermission Complete*

### *Sound Equipment – Hire*

#### **Soundtrax,**

11 Mulgrave Road,  
Camden Quay,  
Cork.  
Co. Cork.  
Tel: (021) 4509888  
Fax: (021) 4509778

#### **Stage Services North**

Unit 10,  
6-16 Duncrue Crescent  
Belfast BT3 9BW,  
Co. Antrim.  
Tel: (0801) 232777668.  
Fax: (0801) 232771707.  
Mob: (0044) 410 017066

#### **T.M.P.A**

2 City View,  
Gardeners Hill,  
Cork City,  
Co. Cork.  
Tel: (021) 4503057  
Email: [tmap@eircom.net](mailto:tmap@eircom.net)

#### **Sound To Light**

Hill Street,  
Ballina,  
Co. Mayo.  
Tel: (096) 70007

#### **Riverside Sounds Systems**

Pillar Park,  
Buncrana,  
Co. Donegal.  
Tel: (077) 61911

#### **Sessions Hire & Sales**

10 Grand Canal St. upper  
Dublin 4  
Tel: (01) 6606777  
Fax: (01) 6607086  
Email:  
[info@sessionhire.com](mailto:info@sessionhire.com)

#### **Kiernan Sound Services**

Main Street,  
Maynooth,  
Co. Kildare.  
Tel: (01) 628 6294  
Mobile: (087) 2320642

#### **Star Systems**

Loughlahan,  
Thurles,  
Co Tipperary.  
Tel: (0504) 21073  
Fax: (0504) 21075

#### **Sound To Light**

Unit 2,  
Liosban Ind. Est.,  
Liosban,  
Galway City.  
Tel: (091) 773773

#### **Pro Sound Munster**

2 Oakridge Drive,  
Killen Road,  
Tralee,  
Co. Kerry.  
Tel: (066) 7128367

#### **Paul Hennessy Sound Systems**

Grove Lane,  
Eyre Street,  
Newbridge,  
Co. Kildare.  
Tel: (045) 431632  
Mobile: (086) 8128432

#### **Panic Hire**

Tuckmiltate,  
Co. Monaghan.  
Tel: (047) 85015

#### **Pelican**

9 Francis Street,  
Dundalk,  
Co. Louth.  
Tel: (042) 9333675

#### **Planet Sound**

54 Main Street (Rear),  
Bray,  
Co. Wicklow.  
Tel: (01) 2762030

#### **JD Acoustics**

11 New Ballinderry,  
Mulligar,  
Co. Westmeath.  
Tel: (044) 40771  
Email: [jd@eircom.net](mailto:jd@eircom.net)

#### **Essaness Music**

Kieran Street,  
Kilkenny City,  
Co. Kilkenny.  
Tel: (056) 65693  
E: [essaness@eircom.net](mailto:essaness@eircom.net)

#### **H.F Sound Systems**

Bowmore Cottage,  
Rosses Point,  
Co. Sligo.  
Tel: (071) 77602

#### **Arigman Productions**

24 Kincora Park,  
Ennis,  
Co. Clare.  
Tel: (088) 2568250

*Part 2*

*New Works Commissioned by  
Macra na Feirme*



*Intermission Complete*

*Family Snap*

Written by Michael Harding

*In collaboration with Tarmonbarry Macra na Feirme*

*The Cast*

Brendan.....	<i>The Groom</i>
Mary Kate.....	<i>His Mother</i>
Lloyd.....	<i>His Brother</i>
Sullivan.....	<i>The Best Man</i>
Marie.....	<i>The Bride</i>

*The Setting*

The Action takes place in a hotel room on the fourth floor.

It begins when the four main participants at the wedding are stopped on the corridor as they head for breakfast and are all bundled into the brides room, by Lloyd.

*Set*

A bed – Very narrow, in the centre. Head at upstage foot at downstage.

Two cube stools in soft materials on stage right.

Two similar stools on stage left.

Upstage right a door to the bathroom.

Upstage centre a door to corridor.

*The Set should be minimal and not overdone with naturalistic detail.*

*Intermission Complete*  
*Scene One*

*Family Snap*

*Marie busies herself with her make up and preparations.  
She hums a happy song to herself.*

*She is alone and fussing because she cannot think where Veronica, here bridesmaid, is gone to.*

**MARIE:** Flip it, what time is it. Two hours left. And not a sign of a bridesmaid.  
I don't know. I really don't know about that one.

*Suddenly there is a knock on the door.*

*A fuss outside.*

**ALL:** What's going on?  
Lloyd what are you doing?  
You can't do this?  
What are you pushing us in here for?  
We want to get our breakfast.

**LLOYD:** Quiet. All of you! In. Get in. Get in here. Now! Quiet everyone. And sit down!

*Lloyd is very agitated.*

*Every one is bundled into the room. Seated. They stare at him in amazement.*

**MARY KATE:** Lloyd have you taken leave of your senses.

**SULLIVAN:** I've the taxis to organise. I said I'd be down at the foyer before breakfast.

**LLOYD:** Now just stay calm and settle down.

**BRENDAN:** Lloyd will you for jaysus sake tell us what is going on. I'm supposed to be getting married, not arrested.

**LLOYD:** Settle down will yis. And I'll explain.

*They all quieten.*

**LLOYD:** Will yous all just settle down now. There's been an accident.

*Family Snap*

MARY KATE:

What kind of an accident?

LLOYD:

I can't say. There's only the wedding party on this floor. Now if there's been an accident, the point is no one knows yet. No one downstairs. The police haven't been notified. Yet. But they will be. So we need to talk.

BRENDAN:

I might have known.

LLOYD:

What?

BRENDAN:

You're off duty Lloyd. That me brother would go spoiling me wedding day.

LLOYD:

I'm telling you there's been a serious accident.

BRENDAN:

Just because you're a guard doesn't mean you have to go spoiling the whole day on us.

LLOYD:

Do you want to be stuck here all day? And miss your wedding?

SULLIVAN:

And who is going to do that.

LLOYD:

Amn't I telling yis. The frigging cops.

BRENDAN:

You better have a good excuse.

MARY KATE:

For how long?

LLOYD:

Look we can settle this ourselves if yis all just calm down. Now settle down.

BRENDAN:

Big brother is a guard. Always has to get the fucking limelight. Even at my wedding.

*Bride cries.*

MARY KATE:

Ah Brendan, now look what you've done.

BRENDAN:

What?... I've done nothing.

*Everyone settles down, sits and stays calm for a few moments.*

*Sullivan slips over to Brendan.*

*Intermission Complete*

- SULLIVAN:** Look I was to make a phone call this morning. He won't mind if I just slip out for a few minutes. I think there's a public phone on the corridor.
- BRENDAN:** Where the fuck were you last night?
- SULLIVAN:** What do you mean? I was in me bed, that's where I was!
- BRENDAN:** You were alright. And who was with you?
- SULLIVAN:** Jesus Brendan, what are you talking about? And keep your voice down.
- BRENDAN:** I warned you. That young wan is innocent. She has no wit. You were leading her on.
- SULLIVAN:** I was not indeed. And what is it to you?
- BRENDAN:** She's me wife's bridesmaid. That's what she is to me.
- SULLIVAN:** So?
- BRENDAN:** I seen yis at the disco in the function room and you were plastered, and her hanging out of ye, and her arms so high up around your neck that her knickers were showing, and everyone laughing at the sight of it. I warned you.
- SULLIVAN:** Aye ye came over and ye warned me and I heard ye and I went to me bed.
- BRENDAN:** If I find that you took her up to your room, you'll never drink in our pub again. Do you hear that? That is, unless someone else hears and you end up in court, ye mad bastard.

*Mary Kate goes over to Lloyd.*

- MARY KATE:** My pussy needs attention.
- LLOYD:** What?
- MARY KATE:** I need to feed the cat.
- LLOYD:** What?
- MARY KATE:** I said, I need to feed the cat. Didn't you hear me right child, or did I not teach you English when I was rearing you?

## *Family Snap*

LLOYD:

Mammy, will ye sit down and be patient for a few minutes.

MARY KATE:

No. I didn't want to leave Pushkins at home alone for the weekend. So I brought her in the boot of the car. I didn't tell anyone. And I was going to let her out this morning, and buy a tin of Whiskas in the local supermarket, and she could roam around all day.

LLOYD:

That's cruelty that is. You can't leave a cat in the boot of a car all night. It would suffocate.

MARY KATE:

All the more reason why I have to go down to the car park now and let her out. And feed her some Whiskas. And then she'll be happy. I'll be happy. And maybe we can get on with the wedding.

LLOYD:

I told you to sit down. Now sit.

MARY KATE:

There's no need to talk to your mother like that. Shouting at me.

*She cries.*

MARIE:

You better tell us Lloyd. What is the matter? Why are you keeping us here?

LLOYD:

The superintendent will soon let yis know why if you don't shut up. I'm trying to help yis. If ye want the frigging wedding to go on. Otherwise fine. Let's go down and feed all the frigging cats in the countryside. And lets call the guards. And lets cancel the wedding.

MARIE:

You keep threatening to cancel the wedding. But why Lloyd? It's my wedding day. You must tell me?

LLOYD:

I know it's your wedding day. That's why I mustn't tell you.

*He has spilled some beans.*

Oh shit.

MARIE:

Come on Lloyd. What is it?

LLOYD:

Well there's been an accident.

MARY KATE:

Me cat?

- BRENDAN:** What kind of accident?
- LLOYD:** *Looking at Sullivan.*  
There's been a very bad accident. Veronica.
- MARIE:** She's not sick is she? She is. She's sick. She won't do the wedding. I've no bridesmaid. I knew I shouldn't have asked her.
- LLOYD:** She's dead.
- MARY KATE:** Sacred heart of Jesus.
- BRENDAN:** Dead?
- SULLIVAN:** Dead?
- LLOYD:** Yes Sullivan. She's dead.
- Marie starts crying. Mary Kate comforts her.*
- BRENDAN:** There's more, isn't there?
- LLOYD:** Well she didn't die of old age.
- SULLIVAN:** What happened?
- LLOYD:** Yeah. You'd love to know. Well she went into the bathroom last night after the disco. After hanging out of you for two hours. After being plied with bacardi and coke by you all night. After being led up the garden path and then dumped without ceremony, she must have struggled back to her bedroom. And drowned her self.
- SULLIVAN:** She drowned?
- LLOYD:** That's what I said.
- SULLIVAN:** It must have been an accident.
- LLOYD:** Why?
- SULLIVAN:** Well she was drunk. In a hotel room for the night. Must have been a novelty to take a bath. Got into it at that hour. And the next thing is she falls asleep.

## *Family Snap*

LLOYD:

You were with her Sullivan. How drunk was she, exactly?  
And when did you leave her?

SULLIVAN:

Well now, she had a skinful.

MARIE:

Wait a minute.

BRENDAN:

Stay out of it Marie

MARIE:

No.

LLOYD:

Stay out of what?

MARIE:

After Gerry left her last night. She came into me.

LLOYD:

Did she now?

MARIE:

She said she had something to tell me.

BRENDAN:

She was drunk, for frig sake.

MARIE:

She told the truth.

SULLIVAN:

Go one.

MARIE:

Maybe you'd like to tell them.

BRENDAN:

There's nothing to tell.

LLOYD:

Brendan. We don't have much time. Someone is going to have to phone down to reception and say that there's been a serious accident. And then the guards will be here. And your wedding us up the frigging spout.

MARY KATE:

Sacred heart the language of him.

LLOYD:

So you better tell us anything you know. And anything that happened. It won't look much good if you have to tell it to the police first.

BRENDAN:

I had a bit of a fling with her. Years ago. Frigging years ago. When she came first.

MARIE:

She was knocking for ages. I thought it was someone messing on the corridor. But then I heard her voice.

*Knocking on door.*

## *Intermission Complete*



*Others disappear.*

*Voice Off*

Marie. Marie. Marie. I have to talk to you.

*Marie goes to the door and lets her in. Marie acts as if veronica was entering. We imagine her coming in.*

**MARIE:**

*I was down in the bar with that Sullivan creep she says. I'm plastered.*

Come on in says I.

We sat there. On the bed. Flicking on the television.  
There was nothing on.  
So I says, how are ye?

*I'm upset she says.*

What are you upset about?

*Well she says you asked me to be bridesmaid and I couldn't refuse you. And to tell the truth over the past few years we've become great friends. What with you coming into the bar to see Brendan and me working there, and well, I wouldn't like to do a wrong thing against you. And I can't keep it to meself any longer.*

Keep what to yourself I says?

*It was about five years ago. When I came to work in the place first. And Brendan was home from Dublin. He came into my room one night. I was only seventeen. And he stayed with me.*

I was horrified.

Horrified.

But worse was to come.

*Oh she says he was very mannerly. And the first time he didn't do much. Just told me how nice I looked and how he was so appreciative of me working for his mother, and all that sort of stuff. And then night after night he would come back. And we had this going on.*

**MARY KATE:**

Under my roof?

## *Family Snap*

**MARIE:**

*I loved him she said. I thought he was god almighty. I thought we were doing right. I thought he was going to tell his mother one day and we'd be married and he'd just move into my room or I'd move into his room cos his room was bigger. I was sleeping in the attic she said.*

Anyhow. She sure got the wrong end of the stick.

*Then suddenly he stopped coming to me. Stopped talking to me. In the bar he treated me like a dog. Like I didn't exist.*

*But I couldn't let him go like that. I loved him. I loved and adored him, and I still do.*

She told me that. She cried on that bed and told me, my own bridesmaid that she was in love with my husband.

**BRENDAN:**

She was drunk.

**MARIE:**

She wasn't drunk when you were crawling and creeping into her bed in the middle of the night and her a teenager. She said that when I came along she just wanted to be close to me. She thought that if she was close to me then she might win you back. She started wearing my sorts of clothes.

If I got a new tank top or a new skirt in town she'd go in on the next day and buy the identical thing.

I remember giving off to her at the time But I didn't understand it.

Trying to be like me. As if that would win you back. Only you weren't interested.

**SULLIVAN:**

She was mad as a march hare. Not the full deck.

**MARIE:**

And I never noticed any of it. Only that whatever I said she seemed to agree with. What ever I liked in clothes or music or food, she seemed to agree with. And we got on together. She was my best friend. Or at least I thought she was my best friend. Until this happened.

**MARY KATE:**

You're lying.

**MARIE:**

What did you say?

- MARY KATE:** I said you're lying.
- LLOYD:** Now mam, I think Marie is telling us the truth. And I think it's very good of her to do that.
- MARY KATE:** Oh no. Excuse me. You see I had no sugar last night.
- BRENDAN:** Sorry.
- MARY KATE:** Sugar. Sugar for my cocoa. I always have cocoa with five spoons of sugar before I go to bed. It helps me sleep.
- BRENDAN:** Knocks you out more likely.
- MARY KATE:** Pardon?
- BRENDAN:** Nothing.
- LLOYD:** Go on.
- MARY KATE:** Well. I seen that they have these little sachets. Beside the kettle. sachets of sugar and salt and pepper and so on. But I had only three. So I thought. All I have to do is go two doors down to Marie here, and get her sachets. And that was after midnight. So I came down. The door was open. There was no one here.
- LLOYD:** Jesus.
- BRENDAN:** Is that true Marie?
- MARIE:** I forgot. Ok. It must have been down in her room. She came here, knocking the door, and crying and whinging, and .....she insisted we go down and talk in her room. She was afraid Brendan would come in here. If we were here, and he'd know what we were talking about.
- LLOYD:** But you said it was in here. You just told us a second ago that it was in here. On that bed. Why would you say that Marie. If it wasn't. If it was somewhere else you were talking with her.
- BRENDAN:** I'd say you might keep that to yourself.....Mammy is so accurate about things.....but it hardly makes any difference.
- LLOYD:** Cept that if you were the last to see her. And if when you were gone she just got into the bath and .....died.....well, the fact of you being in her room.....puts you very close to .....her death. I mean was she very upset when you left. Did

you notice or did it occur to you maybe that she shouldn't be left alone?

- MARIE:** Will you frig off. What did you expect me to do? She tells me that after five years of us going around together, and after her watching me and him get engaged and organise a wedding. And knowing that I loved him. And she comes barging in and telling me that she loved him too and that she still loved him. Me brides maid. At me wedding. Badness to her, I'm glad she's dead.
- LLOYD:** Tell the guards that as well, and you'll be going on no honeymoon.
- MARY KATE:** Well the guards will have to be told what they have to be told. There's no use in keeping things from the guards. If Marie here despised her, and if she went into her bedroom in the middle of the night, and if subsequent to that the poor creature is dead.....then those are the facts.
- BRENDAN:** Who the frig do you think you are? Ali McBean?
- MARY KATE:** Yes. And your Mister Bean. No. I'm sorry Brendan, but I don't know why you got involved with her in the first place?
- BRENDAN:** I wasn't involved with her for Christ sake.  
I had a bit of a fling with her seven years ago.
- MARY KATE:** I wasn't referring to the unfortunate deceased.
- MARIE:** You dirty bitch. Now it's coming out, isn't it. Come on say it. Say it. What's on your mind?
- MARY KATE:** Well I'm sorry if the truth doesn't agree with you but there you have it. My son had a future in front of him before you came on the scene my lady. He was going to be an Engineer. He had two years of university done.
- BRENDAN:** Yeah. And I came home to you when daddy died, to mind the pub. So I stayed at home cos I had to. What are you talking about?
- MARY KATE:** You stayed at home because of that one. Sure what degrees has she? An Inter Cert and a Fas Diploma for plucking turkeys or something. She's the one put it in your head to give up college. Oh you'll have your own money she told you. Your own car. Stay at home. It wasn't me nor the pub influenced you. It was her.

Marie starts crying.

- BRENDAN:** Now look what you've done.
- LLOYD:** Now just hold on everyone. Hold on. Settle.
- SULLIVAN:** She was trouble from the start that young wan anyway. If she did have to do away with herself why didn't she pick a more suitable time and place. And not go wrecking someone's marriage before it even begun.
- BRENDAN:** Because that's obviously what she intended to do. Isn't that clear?
- LLOYD:** I said settle down everyone. Now listen. There's a girl still lying in the bath, just two doors down. I have the key. She's dead as a dodo. Someone is going to have to find her. Call the manager. He'll call the police. And then they come.
- BRENDAN:** You said all that before.
- LLOYD:** They're going to ask questions. And it seems to me that they have more than one person who looks suspicious.
- SULLIVAN:** What do you mean, suspicious? Sure she topped herself.
- LLOYD:** Maybe she did. Or maybe she didn't. But even if she did it herself. Who is everybody going to look at? You Sullivan. Oh he was dancing with her and shoving drink down her throat. And then he leaves her in a desperate state and she kills herself.
- Or maybe they hear that she told her best friend how she was still in love with her best friends fiancée.
- Or maybe they start looking at the person who did have a fling with her. And wanted her out of the way before she told all and sundry about it.
- BRENDAN:** She killed herself Lloyd. What are you making a song and dance about? We can get someone else to be the bridesmaid.
- MARIE:** Are you mad? There's going to be no wedding now. Not on your life!

## *Family Snap*

**LLOYD:**

I said she was in the bath. Dead. I didn't mention something that I think someone in this room already knows. That her forehead has a big gash on the side. Like she walked into someone swinging a hurley stick or something. She must have got hammered in the face before whoever it was threw her in the bath.

**BRENDAN:**

She might have slipped. On the handrail.

**LLOYD:**

How did you know there was a handrail in her bath?

**BRENDAN:**

Jesus isn't there a handrail in every bath. Sure aren't all the rooms the same. Ye frigging gob shite ye, what are you implying be that?

**MARY KATE:**

You're not saying she was murdered?

**LLOYD:**

No mammy. I'm not saying that exactly. I'm saying she was murdered by someone that may or may not be in this room at this very moment. And I'm saying that the guards, that is my colleagues, whose devious minds I know well from working with them, will probably be of the same opinion as myself. So where does that leave us?

**SULLIVAN:**

Jesus. We better close the door. Sit down. Discuss this thing. Maybe someone has something to tell us that they haven't mentioned yet. Something they want to get off their chest. And .....

**BRENDAN:**

Yeah. Maybe you've something to get off your chest.

**SULLIVAN:**

Maybe?

**LLOYD:**

And then what?

**SULLIVAN:**

Well if we could sort things out among ourselves. That we knew exactly when she went to bed. That we knew what the rest of us were doing. Then it would be clear that she fell and had an unfortunate accident. And then we could get on with the wedding and no one would be a blind bit the wiser.

**MARIE:**

There's going to be no wedding!

**BRENDAN:**

There might have to be. If you want to save someone's neck. Or your own. Did you consider that?

**MARY KATE:**

Is that possible Lloyd? You're a guard you should know.  
Could we do that?

**LLOYD:**

Well the body is in the water since last night. So it doesn't matter if we don't discover it for another.....let's say another forty minutes. By then it's eleven o'clock. We could all be ready for church. Someone notice that the bridesmaid hadn't showed up.

Someone goes and checks. And she's found. Go immediately to the manager. Let the wedding go on as if only one of us knew.

**BRENDAN:**

Great. Sounds like the perfect circumstances for a happy day.

*Marie cries.*

**MARY KATE:**

Well it's the only way.

**SULLIVAN:**

Fine. Lets do it.

**LLOYD:**

There's just one thing.

**SULLIVAN:**

What's that?

**LLOYD:**

This won't work unless we know the truth?

**BRENDAN:**

But we know the truth. She's dead.

**LLOYD:**

Oh no. We need more than that. Someone in this room is not telling us the whole truth. So why should we cover up for someone, when we don't even know who we're covering up for. I'm laying down the law here. We have half an hour. Either you come up with who was with her and what happened. Maybe it was a row? Maybe someone struck her by accident and then ran. In fright? Maybe she did just fall on the railing and knock herself out. I don't know? But if I don't find out in the next half an hour I'm going down myself to the manager. And I'll have you all arrested. So there!

*Everyone watches him. They all find seats. All become absorbed in their own thoughts.*

*Veronica enters with a gash on his head.*

*She walks amongst them.*

## *Family Snap*

## *Intermission Complete*

**VERONICA:** *Singing* I am stretched on your grave  
I have been there forever

*She pauses. Walks around each one of them.*

*No One Sees her.*

**VERONICA:** Well you are all very quiet.

**MARIE:** *Bursting to tears.*  
She was my best friend.

**VERONICA:** I wouldn't say that exactly.

*Marie sees her. Is shocked.*

*During the following Marie and Veronica should find themselves in a single pool of light.*

*Lights on other characters should be taken down to 75%.*

*No other effects are required for the ghost.*

*No lighting change is required other than in this exercise with Marie, and in final exchange with Lloyd.*

**MARIE:** No. Maybe your right.  
We were never friends.  
We just pretended.  
I was always suspicious.

**VERONICA:** And do you think you'll ever marry him now?

**MARIE:** I will.

**VERONICA:** You will. And why will you marry him? Don't tell me because you love him.

**MARIE:** You were so selfish Veronica. That was your problem. I told you that last night. The way you were making a show of yourself with Sullivan. Hanging out of him. Trying to let us all know that you were upset about something. Oh yes I could see through you. You were so selfish that it never occurred to you what I might be feeling when I came home.

**VERONICA:** What are you talking about?



- MARIE:** I'm talking about five years ago. When I came home from Dublin. When I started going out with Brendan. When you started copying my clothes. All cozy in your notion that you still loved him. You knew nothing about love. You knew nothing about suffering.
- VERONICA:** And I suppose a few years in Dublin and you knew it all did you?
- MARIE:** I knew enough to let Brendan have the time of his life when he would come up for week ends to me. But I obviously didn't know enough to make sure we were using contraceptives. So I got pregnant. Five years ago.
- VERONICA:** Why didn't you tell me this last night?
- MARIE:** Don't worry. I didn't have the child. I went to London one weekend with Brendan's money. Oh he was so helpful with his money. So desperate that I would get everything properly disposed of. In his own unfortunate words, we were going to wipe the slate clean.
- Well we did. I came back home and I had a claim on his attention. And if you weren't the selfish bitch you always were, then you might have seen that. You might have realised that. And you wouldn't have had the neck to think that you still had a claim on him five years later.
- SULLIVAN:** Are you alright Marie?
- MARIE:** Yeah. Why?
- SULLIVAN:** I just thought you were mumbling to yourself.
- MARIE:** No I wasn't.
- VERONICA:** You were saying a wee prayer for me. Weren't you? A gra.
- MARIE:** I was saying a wee prayer for her. That her soul might be at rest.
- MARY KATE:** Oh that is a very good idea. I know there's no religion left in the country nowadays, and I'm not complaining.
- BRENDAN:** Good.

## *Family Snap*

MARY KATE:

LLOYD:

VERONICA:

MARIE:

VERONICA:

BRENDAN:

VERONICA:

BRENDAN:

VERONICA:

BRENDAN:

MARIE:

VERONICA:

MARIE:

BRENDAN:

VERONICA:

BRENDAN:

VERONICA:

MARIE:

VERONICA:

MARIE:

## *Intermission Complete*

But I certainly don't see why we couldn't all say a little prayer for the poor creature.

It's not what we need to do now. Leave your praying till later. We need to sort this mess out.

Why don't you tell them what really happened last night?

I told them.

You told them what I said?  
You never told them anything else.

Marie. Are you ok?

God but he's very considerate to you isn't he? Look at the way he always is looking out for you. In case you'd be upset.

Are you ok Marie?

Are you ok Marie? Will I get you a glass of water Marie?

Will I get you a glass of water Marie?

No. No thanks.

He'll be breathing down your neck for the rest of your life.

Don't talk shite.

I'm not talking shite Marie. Jesus Marie.  
I'm only trying to look out for you.

There's only one thing in my life that matters.  
And that is my little precious cuddles.

There is only one thing in my life that matters. And that is my little precious cuddles.

Jesus did he use that line on you too?

Stop breathing down my neck Brendan. Please. Leave me alone.

Go on. Tell them.

No. No. Go away.

*She stares at Veronica who retreats.*

*Veronica picks another target. This time its Sullivan.*

*She goes behind him. As if to surprise him.*

**VERONICA:** Well me old flower. That was one hell of a dance last night.

*Sullivan is startled and frightened by the voice.*

*He looks around. Now he and only he can see Veronica.*

**SULLIVAN:** Who don't you get back in the bath, where you belong?  
You're dead.

**VERONICA:** That slow dancing. And me with me little buttons all undone.  
And you the slobbery sleazebag with your paws all over me.  
Houdini couldn't get inside a woman's dress and out again as  
fast as you with your hands. And that on the dance hall floor.

*She dances in front of him, imitating the previous night.*

**SULLIVAN:** You gave the encouragement.

**VERONICA:** You needed none.

**SULLIVAN:** Well you're dead now. So you won't be annoying anyone  
again.

**VERONICA:** Oh I will Sullivan. I'll be annoying you all your life.

*She moves and stretches her self in front of him in a seductive and voluptuous manner.*

Come on Sullivan. Dance with the dead woman. Dance and  
kiss the dead woman. Wouldn't you like that? Wouldn't you  
find that attractive?

**SULLIVAN:** No I wouldn't. I wouldn't find that attractive.. You led me on.

**VERONICA:** You plied me with drink.

**SULLIVAN:** I was a decent single boy having a bit of sport.

**VERONICA:** It was you suggested the bath.

**MARY KATE:** You look pale Sullivan.  
Would you want to lie down for a while?

*Veronica moves behind Mary Kate as Mary Kate speaks.*

- SULLIVAN:** You lying bitch.
- MARY KATE:** I beg your pardon.
- SULLIVAN:** When I have a bath, I have one on me own. I don't go suggesting to other people to have baths with me.
- MARY KATE:** I only suggested you lie down. I wasn't thinking of bathing.
- VERONICA:** You suggested it.
- SULLIVAN:** You must have taken me up wrong. You misunderstood me.
- MARY KATE:** Oh maybe I did.
- LLOYD:** Calm down Sullivan.
- VERONICA:** Yeah, calm down Sullivan. They're listening to you.
- SULLIVAN:** What? Oh right. Sorry. Sorry Mary Kate. What was it you were saying?
- MARY KATE:** Never mind.
- VERONICA:** Go on. Tell them about the bath Sullivan. Or you'll have me round your neck for the rest of you life. The dead woman will be waiting in your bedroom for you every night. In your bathroom. You don't want that do you?

*She retreats.*

*Brendan notices her.*

*This time it is Brendan who addresses her first. And she is frightened.*

- BRENDAN:** You started all this.
- VERONICA:** No I didn't.
- BRENDAN:** Yes you did. You think I work behind a bar for five years and don't know what this is all about. Drink. Frigging drink. That's all. You're twenty five and you drank about two frigging litres of bacardi last night. I seen you and so some monster comes out of you. Some self-indulgent monster that starts to exaggerate the past. A fling we had is changed into

some serious romance. You were seventeen and I was twenty one. A couple of rides is all we had.

You don't hold onto that for five years .

And you lied. Because you were a friend to Marie. You couldn't give a fuck about me all those years. You went to Dublin with her. Went shopping with her.

Went on holidays with her. But then when she's getting married you suddenly get jealous of all the excitement. Not me. No. The excitement. The dress and the cake and the hotel and the fuss. And you start thinking you should have had that too.

You start thinking that maybe you loved me all those years. And you come. Oh yes, be the bridesmaid.

But you get yourself scuttered drunk and make a show of yourself, and you have no brakes to stop, nothing in your head that holds you back in your mad self-indulgent self-pity. Until you're dead in the water.

You're a selfish bitch. You're like every young fella I see leaving the bar sometimes with too much drink in their daddy's car that ends up in the ditch the following morning. Three hundred people dead in this country from drunk driving every year.

And your death is no different. You were drunk and selfish and you're dead. Good fucking riddance to you. Only you've spoiled my wedding.

**VERONICA:**

Very good Brendan. Very good. Very well said. The university in Dublin must have done you some good, even if you didn't stay to finish your degree. But it's not quite the entire truth is it.

**BRENDAN:**

It's the truth.

**VERONICA:**

And what about your mother? With her tea bags and her sugar and her cocoa and her cat. Mad as a hatter isn't she. But she's not. And you know she's as cute as they come.

**BRENDAN:**

What are you getting at?

## *Family Snap*

**VERONICA:**

Well she says she came down to Marie for sugar in the middle of the night. Wonder she didn't go feeding her cats then as well.

**BRENDAN:**

What are you saying?

**VERONICA:**

So she goes down to Marie for sugar. And Marie is not here and the door is open. Right. Now there's other doors on the corridor. My door is the next. But your mammy, after calling on one for sugar, and finding Marie is away somewhere, just goes back to her own room.

**BRENDAN:**

You're saying she came into you and Marie?

**VERONICA:**

No. No. I'm saying she must have come as far as my door. And she must have heard us talking. But she didn't come in. Cos she was listening. What she always does. Listening and hearing us arguing and she's putting two and two together. But you should ask her what she did next. Cos she never got her sugar did she.

**BRENDAN:**

You never got your sugar Mammy did you?

**MARY KATE:**

Pardon?

**BRENDAN:**

Did you have your cocoa in the end Mammy?

**MARY KATE:**

Did I have cocoa where?

**BRENDAN:**

When you went looking for the sugar last night. You said Marie wasn't here and the door was open. Why didn't you go to the next door? To Veronica's door. Surely you might have guessed that Marie wasn't gone to Brazil.

**MARY KATE:**

I don't follow you Brendan.

**VERONICA:**

Watch she doesn't start playing the fragile old woman, I would forget me head if it wasn't screwed on stuff with you.

**MARY KATE:**

I'm a bit deaf Brendan you know that. Will you start again? I don't follow what you're asking me?

**BRENDAN:**

I'm asking about your cocoa. Why didn't you go to the next room last night? Why, if your friggig sugar was so important to you? Why did you not pursue the quest? And go to the next room. Where Marie and Veronica were?

## *Intermission Complete*

- MARY KATE:** Well that's a good question. But sure you know me Brendan. You know your mammy would forget her head if it wasn't screwed on. I just forgot what I was looking for. I must have just gone back to bed. And forgot.
- VERONICA:** Fantastic.
- It's a wonder your car boot isn't full of dead cats if she forgets that easily. Maybe you should remind her where her cat is.
- BRENDAN:** So long as you don't forget your cat. Mammy.
- MARY KATE:** What's that son?
- BRENDAN:** Your cat. It's in the boot of the car.
- MARY KATE:** Oh yes that's right son. Thanks for reminding me.
- VERONICA:** Goodness. I'm such a scatterbrain.
- MARY KATE:** Goodness. I'm such a scatterbrain.
- VERONICA:** Mary Kate of the Two Faces they should have called you. With your frigging cats in the boot. Holier than every one else. Nobody is good enough for my sons. You make me sick.

*Mary Kate has not been aware of this abuse.*

*But Lloyd is.*

- LLOYD:** That's my mammy you're talking about.
- VERONICA:** I'm only saying what's true. You know what she did last night. I told you. Came and listened outside the door when I was talking with Marie. And then she comes in and abuses me. A low class hussy she called me. Listening at the door. The cow.
- LLOYD:** She's still my mammy. And I don't like to see my mammy treated with disrespect. You know that.
- VERONICA:** So you're looking for the truth Lloyd. Are you? You want to know what happened? Or at least that's what you want them to think. Go on Lloyd. Tell them. If only I was alive. If only I could really talk to them. And blow the whistle.

## *Family Snap*

**LLOYD:**

Why don't you crawl back into whatever hole you came out of?

**VERONICA:**

A bath Lloyd. I'm not buried yet.

**LLOYD:**

Well one things for sure. You soon will be.  
And it won't be a day too soon.

**VERONICA:**

I'd love to tell them what really happened. That I was upset. First with Sullivan. And being drunk. And then I came up to my room. And I was thinking of Brendan. And the wedding. And how good Marie was to me. And I thought, if she ever finds out that I had anything going with Brendan, then she'll never forgive me. So I told her.

And then when Marie was gone that bitch of a mother of yours comes in. Cut me in ribbons. Made me feel like dirt on her shoe.

And she wasn't out the door until there was another knock. And do you know who it was. Oh yes. Sullivan again. With a tray of pints for himself and a long glass of vodka. Jesus I thought the fucker doesn't give up.

He sat slurping in front of the television watching a dirty movie for an hour and eating crisps. And then he says will we have a bath.

And he goes in and turns on the water. And me saying no.

No. Get out of here ye fucking slime ball.

Oh yes it was one hell of a night for me.

So Lloyd. That's why I called you. That's why I was so upset and frightened, and why I asked you to come down to my room.

**LLOYD:**

And I came down didn't I?

*Light Change. Fade down all people in the room except Lloyd and Veronica.*

*So we are back in Veronica's room the previous night.*

**VERONICA:**

Oh yeah. You came all right.  
And for me it was from the frying pan into the fire.



I'll never forget you coming in the door and closing it and asking - does anyone know I'm here?

**LLOYD:** *Goes to door. Secures it.* Does anyone know I'm here?

**VERONICA:** And the penny dropped. You thought I was still drunk. Thought I was asking you down here for a party.

**LLOYD:** At last you're seeing sense.

**VERONICA:** I beg your pardon?

**LLOYD:** I was wondering when it might dawn on you that I was the one you should have been coming to from the beginning.

**VERONICA:** *Horrified and Frightened.* Lloyd. No. No. No.

**LLOYD:** Come here.

**VERONICA:** No. No Lloyd.

**LLOYD:** Oh yes baby, no body knows we're here. And you phoned me. You want me. You know you want me. You need me.

**VERONICA:** I need help.

**LLOYD:** What ever, come here.

**VERONICA:** Don't touch me.

*They Struggle.*

**VERONICA:** Help! *A Scream.*

**LLOYD:** Shut up you bitch.

*A serious struggle ensues in the room and the result of which is a blow to her head by Lloyd with a metal instrument, which knocks her out.*

*He tries to revive her.*

*It doesn't work.*

*He looks around wondering what to do.*

*He goes into the bathroom.*

## *Family Snap*

*We hear tap water pouring.*

*He comes out.*

*Collects her body.*

*Goes again into the bathroom with it.*

*Light returns to the other players on the stage.*

**BRENDAN:** So what are we going to do?

**MARY KATE:** Where's Lloyd gone to?

**SULLIVAN:** We'll go on with the wedding.

**BRENDAN:** Marie?

**MARIE:** I still love you Brendan.

*Lloyd emerges.*

**LLOYD:** I've asked you all to stay because I wanted to be sure no one was hiding anything. No one was telling lies. I think we've got that all out in the open now. I think people have been hurt but it's clear that the poor girl had an accident.

Is everyone agreed on that?

*They nod.*

Good. So here's what we'll have to do.

I don't know what to do except fix it so that the wedding goes ahead. Don't let her spoil it on us all. We know it was an accident. She was bad. Believe me. She was bad.

Let's get on with the wedding.

What do you say?

Will we do that?

*They all say yes. The music starts. (Wedding Music).*

*They all stand for the ceremony.*

*We hear a voice over.*

## *Intermission Complete*

## *Family Snap*

**VOICE OVER:** Do you Brendan take Marie to be your lawful wedded wife, to have and to hold, for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, till death do us part?

**BRENDAN:** I do.

**VOICE OVER:** Do you Marie.....etc

**MARIE:** I do.

**VOICE OVER:** If there be anyone who sees cause why these two people should not be joined in holy matrimony, let them speak now.

**VERONICA:** Well ain't it just a shame. The dead don't talk. Isn't that right Lloyd? It was just another wedding. And when they were gone on their honeymoon everyone in the town was talking about how there had been an awful accident that morning in the hotel. The bridesmaid fell in the bath. Knocked herself out. Was found by a hotel porter.

Others said there was more too it. That she was depressed for years. That she done away with herself.

But Brendan, and his wife, and his mammy and his brother went on living. A tight, uneasy marriage. Nervous of their neighbours. Afraid of strangers. Unsure of each other. And always looking for double meanings in the most casual of remarks in the bar.

An Irish Family.

Held together by the firm bonds of matrimony.

And the fear of the unknown.

*Wedding music from the organ.*

*As the cast stare out at the audience.*

*Frozen as in a photograph.*

*A camera flash.*

*Black out.*

## *The End*

*Blood and Lime*

Written by Nicholas Kelly

*Commissioned by Macra Na Feirme*

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*The Cast*

**Liam**..... about twenty-one.

**Dee** .....about eighteen.

**Maureen**.....about thirty seven.

**Pete** ..... about forty.

*Set*

The set should be utterly bare apart from the following:

two identical armchairs, downstage, with some distance between them.

In the space between the two chairs there is a table, on which a quite impressive, but not yet completed, train set is resting.

No attempt should be made to make the set 'realistic'.

*Blood and Lime*  
*Scene One*

*Intermission Complete*

*Maureen is sitting in one of the armchairs.*

*Dee is sitting on the floor downstage, her handbag beside her. She is wearing a pair of black sunglasses, which will remain on throughout the play.*

*Liam comes on, and narrates to the audience, while the two other characters remain oblivious.*

**LIAM:** Dee told me everything. She gave me her versions of events, at least, which wasn't exactly too detailed, but it's better than nothing, I suppose. I'm only just home, you see; me being here, it's all been arranged. She (*i.e. Maureen*) asked me back – "we haven't seen you in a while", she said, "why don't you come out?". (*Pause*) I'm not home very often. Bit of a tremble in her voice; I should have guessed.

*Pause. Liam looks at them.*

**LIAM:** As far as I can make out, gradually, over a period of about five days, my father took all the furniture out. Our living room, which as you can see now looks more like Heuston Station. The coffee table went first, the telly. And then – according to Dee, anyhow – he singlehandedly lifted the three seater couch and dumped it out in the hall. Right outside the door, like. I mean, what?.Dee think he's lost it. Gone mad, like. (*to Dee*) Isn't that right?

*Dee remains unmoving..*

**LIAM:** Don't ask me. I can't tell you. Any thoughts, mam?

*Maureen remains unmoving.*

**LIAM:** There you have it. That's what's wrong this family. Nobody talks.

*Lighting changes.*

*Intermission Complete*  
*Scene Two*

*Blood and Lime*

*Saturday night. Heavy rain. Liam and Maureen.*

**MAUREEN:** Una says she's not right in the head. Something happened to her, Una says, something happened to her, years ago, maybe, and she still hasn't got over it. You know her, Liam.

**LIAM:** No.

**MAUREEN:** You know her. They found her, last Friday, sauntering down the terrace in her knickers. Her bra and her knickers, Liam, in the middle of winter. The guards called your man – the husband – down to the station. She didn't even know who he was.

**LIAM:** They arrested her?

**MAUREEN:** What? He took her home. Can you imagine? The husband's an accountant.

**LIAM:** *(laughs)* Dolores?

**MAUREEN:** Dolores MacCarthy in her knickers and bra, can't be good for business, now can it? Would you put your money in the hands of a mental patient?

**LIAM:** His wife.

**MAUREEN:** Yes.

**LIAM:** His wife's a mental patient.

**MAUREEN:** One of these days, she'll be found in the river.

*Silence*

**MAUREEN:** Seen the lads?

**LIAM:** I'm only back, sure.

**MAUREEN:** And you're okay in the college and everything? How was your birthday?

**LIAM:** *(pause, with difficulty)* A few of us from the class, we went out, like.

## *Blood and Lime*

MAUREEN:

That must have been nice. And the flat's okay? (*Liam nods*) Eating properly? Vitamin C, Liam. If you're living on pizza...

LIAM:

I'm fine, mam.

MAUREEN:

I'm only saying.

LIAM:

Yes.

MAUREEN:

You know the way.

*Silence*

MAUREEN:

We got one of those power-showers, you know. It's so much better. The water heats up in no time...

LIAM:

Mam.

MAUREEN:

...and it's cost-effective.

LIAM:

What's going on here, like, Mam? Where's Dad?  
(*re: train station*) And what's this?

MAUREEN:

I can't be expected to understand him. What goes on in the four walls of that head of his, it's a mystery to me.

LIAM:

Where is he?

MAUREEN:

I don't even have *friends* for God's sake. He drove them off. Made them *nervous*. Una and Eddie. We used to be great pals, the four of us. Your father and Eddie and Una and me. A drink at the weekend, the odd hooley here and there. But he terrorised the poor man. Drove him to the distraction. Now they never call in.

*Pause*

MAUREEN:

God love me, he doesn't deserve it, but I worry. He could be lying drunk somewhere. And when he comes back? He won't say a word, Liam, not a thing. He'll collapse there in that chair, and he'll...(*pause*) No, that's it.

LIAM:

That's what?

MAUREEN:

I've had enough, Liam. He's going to have to leave.



- LIAM: What do you mean 'leave'?
- MAUREEN: Leave here.
- LIAM: Leave the house?
- MAUREEN: I think you should know. You're an adult...
- LIAM: You're throwing him out?
- MAUREEN: I'll give him time, love.
- LIAM: You can't throw him out.
- MAUREEN: I have to.
- LIAM: You can't just do that.
- MAUREEN: I will. It's for the best. For Deirdre and me. For him, too.
- LIAM: How will you manage?
- MAUREEN: I'll get a job. Some kind of a job. Anything. *(smiles)*  
We'll be alright, we will, love. *(Pause, to Liam)* What's the matter?
- LIAM: Can't you talk to him...work it out?
- MAUREEN: We're all nervous wrecks, Liam. *(Regarding train set)*  
Look at it.
- LIAM: I know.
- MAUREEN: This is the *lounge*, for God's sake. Have you seen Dee?  
Have you seen the state of her? Look at it at thing.
- LIAM: I can see it. *(Pause)* Let me talk to him.
- MAUREEN: It's ridiculous.
- LIAM: Let me try.
- MAUREEN: He just gets it into head. He just gets it into his head and there's no stopping him. The house is falling apart.
- LIAM: Mam.

## *Blood and Lime*

**MAUREEN:**

If he just he gave a hand round the house. Dinner now and then. In a restaurant. A holiday. I mean, I said it to him once, we could go away, you know, and he said he had to work on the car. That bloody car. And now this.

*Pause*

**MAUREEN:**

I'm sorry.

**LIAM:**

I'll talk to him. I tell him. I don't know what'll I say. But just let me...

**MAUREEN:**

I don't want to worry you. I just thought you should know. You've got your studies. You're working hard, aren't you?

**LIAM:**

Yeah.

**MAUREEN:**

Well, you keep that up.

*Enter PETE, in a heavy coat, carrying an umbrella. He shakes off the umbrella. He doesn't look at Maureen.*

**PETE:**

Liam.

**LIAM:**

Hiya Dad.

**PETE:**

Home for the weekend, then, is it?

**LIAM:**

That's right.

**PETE:** *(beat)*

Well, then. Goodnight.

*Exit Pete.*

*Long Pause.*

**MAUREEN:**

I'll tell him tomorrow.

**LIAM:** *(sighs)*

Okay, mam.

**MAUREEN:**

Let the poor man have his rest.

*Lighting changes.*

*Exit Maureen and Liam.*

*Scene 3*

*Dee narrates to the audience.*

**DEE:** He's a lucky bollocks, he is. Little prick. When they were giving out the brains in the family, he got them all. Which doesn't mean he's not stupid. Seriously. Just because Liam can speak sixteen different languages doesn't make him a genius, if you know what I mean. It's not what you say, right? It's what you do. And all he's ever done is lock himself in his room and read school books. Not that I'm jealous or anything: he wants to go to college and all, and that's his business, but he doesn't have to look down on the rest of us, just because we're not like him.

*Enter Pete, no longer wearing the coat.*

*Pete is not aware of Dee's presence.*

**DEE:** *(pause, looks at Pete)* I really don't know what's going to happen: the pair of them fighting like kids. Up all night, Da was, traipsing around. I heard him; Mam getting up to the loo every five minutes; I mean, I used to hear them having *sex*. I dunno which is worse. It'd give you a pain, it would. *(sighs)* Anyway, I've got my own problems. That's obvious now, isn't it? I had to stop working in the restaurant and everything, I couldn't handle meeting people. *(pause)* I got engaged, you know. This time last year. Niallie McEvitt, you wouldn't know him. I know I'm only eighteen and all, but we'd been going together since we were fourteen years old. I'm older than him, too. A week and three days, but I mean, I'm much more mature. We had it planned for July; it would have been summer and all. We were going to get a deposit together and move into one of those new bungalows on the Davitt Road. It's nice up there, handy; it's only five minutes from Tescos and near enough to the river. But a month ago, he just broke it off with me. Just like that. Then I find out he's been seeing this slapper behind my back for ages and ages and now he's *moving in* with her.

*Pause*

**DEE:** You probably think I'm feeling sorry for myself, don't you? Oh, I know. You're just like them. You all think I'm a child. Well, fuck you.

*She walks off.*

*Lighting changes.*

*Blood and Lime*  
*Scene 4*

*Intermission Complete*

*Sunday morning. About lunchtime.*

*Pete, alone. He is working on the train set, placing various miniature buildings onto the base. He occasionally consults a manual.*

*He sings to himself. It should not be a performance, but a private, intimate, gesture.*

**PETE:** Train a ride, sixteen coaches long,  
Train a ride, sixteen coaches long,  
Well, if I can't get my baby,  
I'll just keep moving on.

*Enter Liam.*

*Pete barely acknowledges his presence.*

**PETE:** Get yourself some breakfast? *(Pause)* What?

**LIAM:** Sorry?

**PETE:** I thought you said something.

*Silence*

**PETE:** Bacon in the fridge, I think, some eggs. You should eat.

**LIAM:** I did.

**PETE:** Most important meal of the day. Crack up an omelette.  
Some beers inside.

**LIAM:** I'm okay.

**PETE:** Some cold beers in the fridge.

*Liam sits down.*

**LIAM:** How you getting on there?

**PETE:** Progress is slow.

*Pete picks up a small component: a steam engine, or whatever.*

## *Intermission Complete*

## *Blood and Lime*

**PETE:** Had to import the stuff, you know. Found it all in a catalogue; shipped from Cologne. It's the workmanship.  
*(Pause)* How's your studies?

**LIAM:** Grand.

**PETE:** You'll be earning the big-bucks soon, huh?  
Any chance of a loan?

*Liam shrugs*

**PETE:** Restaurant's not doing great. Times are hard. Here. Hold this.

*Liam gets up.*

**PETE:** What's the French word for train?

*Liam doesn't answer.*

*Pete gives him a length of track.*

*Pete fiddles with train set.*

**PETE:** Damn.

**LIAM:** What you doing?

**PETE:** *(muted)* Damn. Damn. Damn. Damn.

**LIAM:** Is there a problem?

**PETE:** Manual's all in German. The transformer's...I can't get the power to circulate. *(Satisfied)* There. Now give us that.

*Pete takes the length of track.*

*He slots it back in place.*

**PETE:** Train a ride,  
Thirteen coaches long...

*Liam watches Pete, in confusion.*

**PETE:** Now, with the grace of God...

*Pete throws a switch.*

*Silence.*

**PETE:** Your mother and I, we've been having a bit of a row, as you know.

**LIAM:** Yeah, I do.

**PETE:** You'd think there was something wrong with a man having a hobby. Biggest room in the house, isn't it? Tonnes of space. You don't see me complaining. She paints the house lilac, I say nothing.

**LIAM:** Did you talk to her?

**PETE:** The dishwasher breaks down, I fork out. A new power shower. In bed, is she?

**LIAM:** I think so.

**PETE:** Well, she can stay there. *(Pause)* Some cold beers in the fridge, Liam, you want one?

**LIAM:** I'm alright.

**PETE:** Get us one there, will you?

**LIAM:** Sure.

*Exit Liam.*

*Pete takes a final look at the manual, puts it down, sits.  
He stares into space.*

*Enter Liam, with a beer.*

*Liam hands it to Pete.*

*Pete opens the can, and he drinks.*

*Silence.*

**PETE:** D'you know that actor, John Travolta?

**LIAM:** *(sighs)* Dad.

*Intermission Complete*

*Blood and Lime*

**PETE:** What do you think of him, these days? Have you seen that film...what's it called?

**LIAM:** Dad, for Christ's sake.

*Pete puts the beer down.*

**LIAM:** I'm trying to...

**PETE:** You're trying to what?

**LIAM:** I'm trying to help here.

**PETE:** Help, what?

**LIAM:** She phoned me.

**PETE:** Who did?

**LIAM:** Who D'you think fuckin' phoned me, well? Mam. She wanted me to come out...to see all this for myself.

*Pause*

**PETE:** So you're the UN peacekeeping force now, is that it?

**LIAM:** Come on.

**PETE:** There's no need for language. Do you live here? (*Pause*)  
Do you live here?

**LIAM:** You know I don't live here.

**PETE:** Well, then, you can't understand. What's your point?

**LIAM:** What's my point?

**PETE:** Yes.

**LIAM:** My point is...(sighs) Oh, Christ, I'm going.

*Liam gets up*

**PETE:** What's wrong with you? Are you having some kind of problem?

**LIAM:** Yes, I'm having a problem. Look at this.

*Liam picks up a piece of the train set.*

*Blood and Lime*

- PETE: Careful.
- LIAM: Look at it.
- PETE: It's fragile.
- LIAM: What are you doing, Dad? What's wrong with you? Can you tell me that? What's going on?
- PETE: You could have some respect.
- LIAM: I *do*.
- PETE: Respect comes with age. You earn it, like wisdom. You're still young. When you're married, you...*(pause)* It'll be fine. I wouldn't worry. Some things...you have to stand up for. It's my house. She can paint it all lilac, but it's still in my name.

*Silence*

- PETE: Nobody uses this room anyway. Half the time it's empty. No one ever comes in here.

*Enter Dee, in a foul mood.*

*She notices Pete.*

- DEE: Oh.
- PETE: Deirdre.
- DEE: Yeah. *(Looks around)* Where's my phone?
- PETE: Bloody things.
- DEE: Where's my phone? *(She looks around again)* Shite.

*Exit Dee.*

- PETE: *(with a flourish)* In they come, out they go. It's like McDonalds. *(Almost amused)* Your sister's on Xanax.
- LIAM: Huh?
- PETE: I mean, can you blame me?
- LIAM: What's Xanax?



## *Intermission Complete*

## *Blood and Lime*

- PETE:** It's a thing the doctor gives you if your family's like ours.  
(*Beat*) Know what I think?
- LIAM:** What Dad?
- PETE:** There's too much lime in the water.

*Liam is utterly exasperated, and is about to walk out...*

- LIAM:** Alright, Dad, great.
- PETE:** Liam...
- LIAM:** (*sighs*) What?
- PETE:** (*firmly*) I said I wouldn't worry.
- LIAM:** Alright.
- PETE:** Alright?
- LIAM:** Alright.

*Pause*

- PETE:** When it's all finished, this will look just like a town. There's the estate, there, a few shops. We'll put shrubs in and trees. Little people. (*He opens a box*) Little people and all, Liam, you see. They've been hand-painted. Here's a doctor, a priest. And the kids, too...

*Liam walks off.*

*Lighting changes.*

*Maureen comes on stage.*

## *Scene 5*

*Pete and Maureen sit in the two armchairs. They are not aware of each other's presence.*

- MAUREEN:** Then he brought home this banger. This banger he'd bought in Young's garage. They saw him coming a mile off. He towed it home, the whole street was out watching him, and the exhaust pipe fell off on the road. He brought it back here

and it just sat in the drive. And he already had a car. But no, no, this was a *vintage* – this was about *restoration*. Every Sunday, he'd call over to Una and Eddie's and drag your man across to have a look at it. The poor man would be sitting down for his lunch and he'd ring the bell. Pete had that poor fella terrorised, I swear to you. Every Sunday, Eddie would come over and tinker under the engine, and every two minutes himself would butt in with a helpful comment; "Is it running now, Eddie?", "Is she going"; "Sure, another couple of days and we'll have her out on the road"! (*Sighs*) He had that man pestered, but Eddie, the poor man wouldn't say anything. (*Pause*) Two months later, when Eddie had enough and told him he just couldn't fix the thing, Pete went and sold it for scrap. No, he didn't. No, he didn't, he *paid* someone to tow it away. (*Sighs*) My mother never liked him. Still doesn't. He's a queer fella, she says. Maybe she's right. I wasn't even eighteen. That's twenty years. It seems a long time when say it – "twenty years" – but it's not really. We've got older, that's all. I've watched him change. You don't see it at first with someone, not over the months or days, but you wake up one morning, and things are different. It's a simple thing – no one says anything – you just see it, that's all. A blue Morris minor. A bill left unpaid. Something tiny, that's all. A straight line. A straight line, and afterwards, there's no turning back.

**PETE:**

I'm not even forty. Not quite. Getting on for it, though. Do I look it? Don't know. (*Laughs*) Maybe it's Mabeyelline. You know it? You don't. Doesn't matter. Personally I think it's in the water. That's what my Dad used to say, "It's the lime, Peter". Ever seen what it does to a kettle? You get this build up of...lime scale...and it does weird things to your arteries... The heart, the brain; something like that. We're in a valley. You ask me, they're all mental round here. I mean, there's this one, Dolores. Talk of the town, she is. Long black hair, red fishnets, these big boots. Looks like a right witch, she does. Scare the life out of you. Came into the restaurant last month, pissed as a froot, she was, and it only being the middle of the day. Had the lunch-special; propositioned me. (*Shakes his head*) I don't know. I really don't. Half the lads on the estate have had her. And I mean, I'm in the doghouse right now, I know that. The wife's boiling mad. My daughter's depressed and my son...(*sighs*) God knows. Plenty of men in my situation, they'd take what they could get. Plenty of them, I'll tell you. "What does it matter, well? Nobody finds out, no-one's hurt". But I'd never do that. Never be unfaithful. That'd kill her.

**MAUREEN:**

I think he had an affair. Maybe a few, I don't know. I don't want to. Some people, they'd hire a private detective, but not me. It would be like spying and I'm not a spy. I mean, some of the neighbours have an awful mouth on them, and they're always telling me gossip about this one and that one, but I don't like it really. You never know what goes on behind closed doors, and I think sometimes, you're better off that way. Even your own family. That doesn't mean I don't worry. I worry about all of them. Sometimes, I can't even sleep; I'm up all night fretting about them. Just a little thing and it's all out of whack, just one little thing. Poor Dee. And Liam. *(Beat)* I'm not strong. I wasn't taught to be. *(Pause)* I think he had an affair. I don't know why, I just do. Not recently, before the car and the train set, before his sudden fascination with Manchester United, the movies, before all of that. A year ago, maybe. That's what I think: he was bored out of his brains, he had an affair, a girl in the office probably, it went wrong, and then...and this. I asked him one night. I said to him, "is there someone else?" He just looked at me. Then he got out of bed, and slept on the couch *(she looks around, notices the couch is missing and sighs)* but he's not a bad man. Not really.

**PETE:**

I've no friends. Used to, sure, when I was younger. Used to knock around with the local lads. I'm not from around here. Didn't grow up here, and I've never really felt at home. It's a good place to raise kids, though. There's decent schools, like, lots of wide open spaces. Green fields, loads of rain, it's a valley. But no friends, really. A few lads at the bar. Regulars in the restaurant. There's Una and Eddie, but I don't like them much. Not really. I mean, Eddie's got something against me. A chip on his shoulder. This attitude. Patronising, I mean. Patronising. And I don't need favours from anyone. *(Shrugs)* The lads in the pub, they look at me, too. It's all football with them. Football this, football that, fish and chips with their football. And I nod and I wink, and we give the young ones the eye, but I'm not there really. It's like I'm just sitting there watching; sitting back, like, but you're not taking it in. You get troubled, alright. *(Embarrassed)* Don't ask me. I never thought it would be like this. Do you know what I mean? It gets dark early round here. Awful quiet at night. I never thought I'd be sitting here. With nothing to say for myself.

*Pete gets up.***MAUREEN:** *(numbly)*

He's gone.

## *Blood and Lime*

**PETE:** It's the lime.

*Exit Pete*

**MAUREEN:** He's left me.

*Exit Maureen.*

*Lighting changes.*

## *Intermission Complete*

### *Scene six*

*Sunday afternoon. Heavy rain again.*

*Liam and Dee. Liam is reading a textbook.*

*Dee is punching numbers into a mobile phone.*

*She dials again.*

*In exasperation, she hangs up.*

**DEE:** Fuck's sake..

*Liam looks at her. He returns to his book.*

**DEE:** Fuckin' eedgit.

*Dee gets up and paces around the room.*

**DEE:** I'm gonna get a big box. A big cardboard box with a ribbon and everything. I'm gonna do a big fucking shit, wrap it up, and give it to him as present.

**LIAM:** *(unimpressed)* Really?

**DEE:** Swear to God.

**LIAM:** That's nice, Dee.

**DEE:** No, I'll post it to her. I'll send it by Swift post. *(She picks up the phone, dials again, hangs up)*

**LIAM:** What are you doing?

DEE: What does it look like? (*She dials again*)

LIAM: Why do you keep hanging up?

DEE: I'm not hanging up.

LIAM: You are.

DEE: No, I'm not. (*She hangs up*)

*Pause*

LIAM: The number comes up, you know. Whoever you're calling, they'll know it's you.

DEE: (*shrugs*) Fuck it.

LIAM: What are you wearing those glasses for?

DEE: Because I want to. (*Pause*) It's my business. It's my business, isn't it?

LIAM: (*shrugs*) Yeah.

DEE: I can do what I like. I can walk down the street in the nip. If the mood takes me, I might. I'll get a tattoo on my arse, Liam. I'll do whatever I feel like.

LIAM: Okay, Dee.

DEE: You can't stop me.

LIAM: I wouldn't want to.

DEE: Okay, then.

LIAM: Alright.

*Pause*

*Dee lights a cigarette, and looks at Liam critically.*

*Liam continues reading, and then eventually notices her stare:*

LIAM: What?

DEE: Nothing.

*Blood and Lime*

**LIAM:** No. What?

**DEE:** Forget it.

*Silence*

**LIAM:** I heard you broke up with Niallie.

**DEE:** And?

**LIAM:** And I'm sorry to hear that. Is that who you're calling?

**DEE:** No.

**LIAM:** It isn't?

**DEE:** I said it isn't; what's wrong with you?

*Silence.*

*Dee begins to cry gently. She stifles it.*

*Liam looks up from the book.*

*He takes a piece of tissue paper from his pocket.*

**DEE:** I mean, I've enough problems without the pair of them...

*Liam offers her the tissue. She looks at it in suspicion.*

**LIAM:** It's clean.

*She takes the tissue. Blows her nose.*

**DEE:** I'm just a baby.

**LIAM:** No.

**DEE:** Stupid.

*Enter Maureen. She is carrying a suitcase.*

*She appears rather in shock. No one says anything.*

*They look at her. She remains standing.*

*Long Pause.*

*Intermission Complete*

*Intermission Complete*

*Blood and Lime*

MAUREEN: You shouldn't be smoking, love.

DEE: Yeah, yeah.

*Pause*

MAUREEN: I've left one hundred and fifty-five pounds on top of the microwave. There's plenty of food in the press. The electricity needs paying. *(Beat)* I'm sorry.

DEE: Mam

MAUREEN: I'm going over to Granny's, Deirdre. You can come with me if you want.

DEE: What?

MAUREEN: Pack a bag and come with me.

DEE: I'm not going to granny's! What's going on?

MAUREEN: I have to go away for a while. I'd prefer if you came.

DEE: What's the big deal, like?

MAUREEN: I don't have time to explain. Are you coming or not? You can stay here, it's up to you. But I worry...

*Pause*

DEE: When are you coming back?

MAUREEN: I don't know, Dee. I need...I need time. Will you come with me, please?

*Silence*

MAUREEN: Then look after yourself. Take off the glasses, at least. You look a sight.

DEE: You're *going*?

MAUREEN: You need to get back on your feet now, Deirdre. Get back on track. You can't just mope around the house all day; it's not healthy.

DEE: *(muted)* You only think of yourself, don't you?

*Blood and Lime*

MAUREEN:

Now I had a talk to Una. Her cousin works in Brady's shoe-shop, and I've got her to put in a good word for you. Why don't you call in next week? *(Pause)* Dee?

*Pause*

MAUREEN:

Talk to me darling, please.

*Exit Dee*

MAUREEN:

Dee, I'm sorry. *(Pause)* Dee.

*Pause*

MAUREEN:

Oh, God.

LIAM:

Leave her be.

MAUREEN:

I just can't help thinking...she'll do something awful. She'll do something terrible...to herself, Liam.

LIAM:

Dad said she's on something.

MAUREEN:

Blooming doctor gave her sedatives; I mean, it's not as if she talked much in the first place. She's none left now. I flushed the rest down the loo.

*Silence*

MAUREEN:

It's pouring out there.

LIAM:

Yeah.

MAUREEN:

I'll be drenched.

LIAM:

Did you talk to Dad?

MAUREEN:

I couldn't. *(Pause)* Look, I've tried to explain things. I've done the best I can. I was going to post it...but it doesn't seem right. Will you give it to him? *(A letter)*

LIAM:

Of course.

*Pause.*

*Maureen picks up Brendan's manual.*



## *Intermission Complete*

## *Blood and Lime*

**MAUREEN:** It's all in German. How's he supposed to read the blooming thing, so? That man. What did he say to you, well? (*Liam shrugs*) I know. I understand. He's like a ghost. (*Sighs*) Anyway, I better go before I change my mind. (*Pause*) Can I have a hug?

**LIAM:** Sure.

*They hug. It's awkward.*

**MAUREEN:** You work hard on the studies, you hear me?

**LIAM:** I will.

**MAUREEN:** You promise? Okay. Okay, then. (*She breaks from the embrace*) Alright, here I go. (*She looks around the room*) It's so...it's...(pause) Okay. Okay, goodbye, love.

*Exit Maureen, without her suitcase.*

*Liam stands on stage, alone, a moment.*

*Maureen re-enters, walking stiffly, carrying an umbrella.*

**MAUREEN:** I forgot my bag.

*Lighting changes.*

*Exit Maureen.*

## *Scene 7*

*Liam narrates to the audience*

*As Pete and Dee come on to the stage.*

**LIAM:** What do you want from me? You want me to grab them, shake them out of it? Offer them words of advice; show the way? I'm no better. I've got French and Italian; they're some use here. I'll have the BA in six months. Brilliant.

LIAM:

I'm not the happiest at the college. Academically, I'm fine, but I'm not, how would you say, somebody you'd confide in. If you came to me with a problem, I really wouldn't know how to give you advice. Or, maybe, I'd give you advice, I'd give you my opinion, and that'd make things ten times worse. Or maybe...maybe, I'd *think* of the right advice, but then not tell you. Or maybe...(shrugs) I dunno. I've still never had a girlfriend. Can you imagine that? Twenty-one years of age and still a...you know. (Shrugs) I tell them (*i.e. Pete*) things are fine, but they're not really I wouldn't want them thinking I'm somehow...deficient. They're proud of me, I think. Whatever the opposite of black sheep is, that's me.

It's funny. The whole time I was doing the Leaving, all I could think was "I want to get out of this hole". Out of this house, the whole place. Leave it all behind me and never come back. That's the only thing that I wanted. I used to lie awake at night, just thinking about it. How it would all happen so easily...how it would all just melt away, do you know what I mean? Everything, all this weight, it'd fall away or...dissolve; it'd click into place and I'd transform into this new person. I'd look in the mirror and there'd be someone else standing there. (Pause, laughs, shrugs) I suppose you must take it with you. Some of it, anyhow. In the blood. (Shrugs) I dunno.

*Lighting changes.*

*Liam joins the scene.*

## *Scene 8*

*Sunday evening. The rain, although still audible, has eased off considerably.*

*Pete is putting the finishing touches to the train set.*

*Dee is applying make-up, preparing to go out for the night.*

*Pete flicks a switch on the train set. Some lights flicker on and then flicker off again.*

## *Intermission Complete*

## *Blood and Lime*

*Dee continues with her make-up.*

*Liam is sitting down, reading a book, occasionally throwing a nervous glance at Pete. It should be a very tense moment.*

*Pete struggles with two halves of a metal bridge, and in exasperation, throws both pieces to the floor.*

**PETE:** Damn. Damn. Damn. Damn.

*Liam and Dee look at him.*

*He picks it up again. He consults the manual.*

**PETE:** It's what it shows in the diagram.

**LIAM:** Sorry?

**PETE:** It's what it shows here. Slot X in Flap Y. It doesn't work. Why doesn't it work?

**DEE:** The plan's wrong.

**PETE:** What?

**DEE:** The plan's wrong, Dad. *(Sighs)*

*Pete looks at the plan, very bewildered.*

*Liam gets up.*

**PETE:** It doesn't fit.

**LIAM:** Show us.

**PETE:** It doesn't fit, right, you see?

*Liam looks at the plan. He then connects the two halves of the bridge together...*

**LIAM:** There you go.

**PETE:** *(embarrassed)* Right.

**LIAM:** You had the thing upside down.

**PETE:** No way.

*Blood and Lime*

*Intermission Complete*

LIAM: Upside down, wrong way round.

PETE: Is that right?

LIAM: There's a knack to it, that's all.

PETE: Bloody Germans.

*Dee laughs, but for the first time, it's good-natured.*

*Pete looks at the plan again, rather embarrassed.*

*Liam remains by his side.*

*Pause.*

PETE: Awful quiet in here, isn't it?

*Pause*

PETE: These dark winter nights. You don't know what to do with yourself.

DEE: We could watch the TV, Dad.

PETE: It's the weather; the water. It's the dark.

DEE: It's people.

PETE: Or ghosts, maybe...

DEE: I hate it here.

PETE: You get troubled.

DEE: ...everyone screws you over

*Pause.*

*Pete appears somewhat embarrassed.*

*He sits down.*

PETE: I've done my best, haven't I? It's best I can do. What do you want? (*Pause*)

You do your best, that's all. You get troubled.

*He takes a letter from his pocket*

Women, huh?

**LIAM:** Sorry?

**DEE:** He's above it.

**PETE:** What?

**DEE:** (*sighs*) Nothing.

*Liam begins to examine the train set.*

**PETE:** Careful, there.

*Liam presses a switch. The train set is illuminated.*

**LIAM:** Lights and all.

**PETE:** That's right.

**LIAM:** Very snazzy.

*Pause.*

*Pete looks at the letter again.*

**PETE:** It's no big deal.

**LIAM:** (*looks up*) Huh?

**PETE:** There's no major crisis. Nothing that can't be solved through discussion...frank discussion. Do you think you could act as a translator?

*He folds the letter, pockets it*

**LIAM:** (*doubtful*) Sure.

**PETE:** Things could be worse.

**DEE:** Yeah, right.

**PETE:** Could have that nutcase Dolores for a mother. Could be like those eegits next door. You could all be on heroin.

**DEE:** (*almost good-natured*) Shut up, Da.

**PETE:** Don't tell your Dad to shut up.

*Blood and Lime*

DEE: (almost joking)

I will so. (Pause) You're mental.

PETE:

Is that right?

DEE: (regarding Liam:)

So is he.

PETE:

Are you mental, Liam?

LIAM:

Oh, yeah.

PETE: (satisfied)

That's grand, so.

LIAM:

It's the water.

PETE:

Exactly.

LIAM:

The lime.

PETE:

A bloody train set in the living room.

LIAM:

That's right.

*Pause*

PETE:

I suppose I'll have to take it all down, won't I? It's a pity, really. But I've made my point. I've stood my ground. And it works, too.

*Pause*

PETE:

Pack it away tonight, so, we will. Give us a hand?

LIAM:

No problem.

PETE:

What about you, Deirdre?

DEE:

I'm going out. (She begins to rummage in her handbag)

PETE:

Stay in, sure.

DEE:

You don't need the three of us to pack it up.

PETE:

We don't bite. Do we bite, Liam?

LIAM:

We don't.

*Intermission Complete*

**PETE:** Stay in, sure.

*Pause*

*Regarding the train set* At least, I finished it. At least I can say I did that. Eddie, he never get round to it in a million years.

*Pause* Give it a test run, huh?

**LIAM:** Might as well.

**PETE:** Wet the baby's head. Have a look, Dee.

**DEE:** I don't want to.

*She spills the entire contents of her handbag to the floor*

**PETE:** Just have a look at it.

**DEE:** I've lost my tablets.

**PETE:** You don't need them, sure. They just make it worse, Dee. Come here.

**DEE:** *(sighs)* Dad...

**PETE:** *(sternly)* Deirdre.

*Dee sighs and gets up. All three of them are now standing around the train set...*

**PETE:** Well?

**DEE:** *(shrugs)* It's okay.

**PETE:** Have a better look.

**DEE:** I can see it.

**PETE:** You can see nothing through those specks, sure, have a look at it. Go on.

*Pause.*

*Dee takes off her glasses and blinks in the light.*

*She looks at the train set.*

*Blood and Lime*

*Intermission Complete*

*The removal of the glasses should transform her into a frightened girl.*

PETE: It's not a bad little place.

DEE: Suppose.

PETE: I've seen worse. Now watch this.

*Pete flicks a switch.*

*A train begins to slowly go around the track.*

*Fade the stage lights down slowly around the table.*

*Silence*

LIAM: *(to the audience)* Moving on.

*They remain watching the train in silence.*

*Lights fade slowly to **blackout**, leaving only the lights from the train set visible in the darkness.*

*The End*

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*Intermission Complete*

*Connected*

Written by Monaghan Macra Arts Group

*With Declan Gorman, Upstate Theatre*

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"CONNECTED" is set in the present in the town of Bellacrowe, County Monaghan, and in the surrounding townlands. Part 1 takes place over a single September day - the day on which the results of the Junior Certificate examinations are distributed to schools across Ireland. Part 2 is set during the following week.

## Cast

Each actor has one primary role and several secondary speaking roles as well as further non-speaking walk-on appearances. There are over 50 speaking characters as well as countless "extras". The cast of the original production is listed below in order of their primary character's appearance. Speaking secondary parts are also listed.

### **Aine Larmer**

**Susan Green** (*a secondary school-goer*)  
Prudence Mc Ginty (a customer in various shops)  
Aisling Lynch (a dole clerk)  
Maura Mc Geogh (a nurse)

### **Sean Mc Caffrey**

**Bob Kane** (*a radio presenter, known as The Big Bopper*)  
Brian Green (Susan's brother)  
Madge Brady (a school-goer)  
Brendan Toal (captain of Bellacrowe Faughs football team)  
Pat Cassidy (an unemployed "hard man")  
Seamus Hughes (a nurse)  
Laurence Mc Greevy (a drinker in Joe's pub)

### **Teresa Mc Donnell**

**Sarah Green** (Susan's mother, a County Councillor)  
Mary Treanor, (a school-goer, Susan's best friend)  
Angela Daly (a customer in the butcher shop)  
Mary Ann Mc Cluskey (day manager of hotel)  
Joan Tynan (a journalist)  
Ricki Noonan (a paramedic)

### **Colin Higgins**

**Big Pat Mc Meel**, (part-time farmer / part-time bouncer)  
Sister Bartholomew (a teacher at St. Dympna's)  
Joe Louis (an unemployed "hard man")  
Sonny Scallon (a hospital orderly)

### **Brendan Clerkin**

**James Mc Meel** (Big Pat's son, a temporary postman)  
Paul Monaghan (a redundant bacon factory worker)  
Benjamin Mc Kenna (a draper)  
Peggy Mohan (a school cleaner)  
Ned Regan (a hospital orderly)  
Stephen Casey (a paramedic)

## *Intermission Complete*

## *Connected*

- Teresa Duffy**      **Alice Reilly** (a teacher at St. Dymphna's)  
Marian Moloney (chair of the Chamber of Commerce)  
Mary Rose Crispin (matron of the hospital)  
Yvonne Farmer (a journalist)  
Laura Curley (producer of "Connected", a live radio show)
- Raymond Connolly**      **Kevin Reilly** (Alice's brother, junior hotel manager)  
Harry Roe (a butcher)  
Sadie Mc Mahon (a school cleaner)  
Bertie Brown (an unpaid helper at the hospital)  
Andy O' Hare (a drinker in Joe's pub)  
Robbie Myles (a journalist)  
Jack Mc Bride (audience member on live radio show)
- Sharon Kelly**      **Philippa Clancy** (staff photographer of Northern Tribune)  
The Reflection  
Breda Wood (a school-goer)  
Janice Fogarty (a dole investigation officer)  
Karen Mc Entee (a football fan, friend of Alice Reilly)  
Philomena Sharkey (audience member on live radio show)
- Hugh Sherlock**      **Barney Murphy** (part-time bouncer)  
Jim Mulligan (Editor of Northern Tribune)  
Rosie Mulholland (a school-goer)  
George Mc Ginty (a customer in various shops)  
Canon Coleman Loughran (a patient at the hospital)  
Joe Brennan (a publican)  
Billy Mc Cabe (Manager of Bellacrowe Faughs)

## *Non-speaking roles*

Men and women about the streets, farmers and workers at a mart, footballers and football supporters, drinkers in a pub, men and women in a dancehall, two paramedics.

## *Set*

There is virtually no set. Just black drapes all around the studio stage. To one side off the front of stage there is an elevated area, which is the D.J.'s box. This has a music console and headphones at it.

A bed on castors is used at the beginning and end of the play. This should be quite a high, generous single bed, of the kind used in hospitals and should have a false undercarriage built into it, hidden by hanging sheets, within which at least two actors or three can be hidden and wheeled on.

## *Connected*

Elsewhere, a very simple, slightly abstract table, which can function as a household table or office desk is used. This should also be on freewheeling castors. Six plain chairs in a similar, slightly abstract design are used at various times, as is a tall, narrow counter on wheels. Adequate wing space to store all this furniture when it is not in use is vital.

## *Intermission Complete*

### *Note on stage directions*

For this final draft, we have generally avoided including detailed directions of who brings on and off furniture. All movement of furniture is done by actors coming on or off in character, creating a constant flow of fluid movement between the scenes. Blackouts are not used, except where indicated. Stagehands do not enter the stage. A highly organized stage management system is required in the wings to dock furniture and assist with the several costume changes.

### *Prelude*

*Susan's dream*

*Complete darkness*

*A haunting and unfamiliar piece of music plays.*

*Green dream lighting fades in and a bed is discovered onstage with Susan Green sleeping on it.*

*Bob Kane is above the action, dimly lit in his D.J's box, looking on.*

*The bed is draped around all sides by low hanging sheets.*

*Susan sits up in the bed and slowly goes through the motions of 'waking up', stretching and rubbing her eyes.*

*Gradually some of the actors emerge from under the bed.*

*Others enter from the wings.*

*All the main characters come on stage and take up grotesque freeze poses.*

*Susan moves among them and releases them.*

*They move in slow motion, jerky actions, like clockwork toys come to life.*

*Susan returns to her bed and the figures begin to assemble around her, uttering short key phrases – "Where's your homework?" "Do you have I.D.?" etc.*

*The scene becomes gradually more oppressive with the figures screaming aggressively at the cowering girl in the bed.*

*Shrill bells ring.*

*Susan begins to shout and then wakes to the sound of a bell ringing.*

*Part 1**Scene 1*

*Susan's Bedroom 7.30 a.m.*

*Susan reaches out for a clock alarm, but cannot find one. Above her, Bob Kane is waving a small hand-held bell in front of his mike. He laughs.*

**BOB:** Wakey, wakey!  
Wakey, wakey!  
Gooooooood Morning Monaghaaan!  
This is D.J. Bob Kane, the Big Bopper here on Northern Songs FM Calling the people of the County From their long slumbers to a day of sunshine, a day to be alive, to be awake, to laugh, to cry, to sing, to dance,....

*Susan gets up in her pajamas and ties on her dressing gown and puts on her slippers as the D.J. continues.*

**BOB:** .....It's 7.30 a.m. and the sun is already up over our fabulous new studios at Bellacrowe Good morning Susan Green of Barnagrane townland just two miles from where I'm sitting. Best wishes come to you from your friend and classmate at St. Dympna's Convent, Mary Treanor. You're both getting your Junior Cert results today, she says, so lets hope the postman brings good news to both of you and to all of the boys and girls getting their exam results today. O.K. Here's a track to get us started. Very suited to yourself, Susan! It's "Can't get out of bed" by The Charlatans!

*Track begins. Susan wheels off the bed.*

**SUSAN:** Ah fuck off! I'm up already.

*Lights out on D.J.*

*As Susan wheels off the bed, Councillor Sarah Green enters from one side carrying a cordless phone extension while Susan's brother, Brian, enters from the other side wheeling on a table with breakfast items on it. Brian and Susan bring chairs to the table as Councillor Green speaks loudly into the phone.*

**CLR GREEN:** Hello? Yes, this is Councillor Sarah Green.

**SUSAN:** Who's Mammy talkin' to?

*Connected**Intermission Complete*

**BRIAN:** *Pouring cornflakes* Dunno. Some man about the launch of the hospital wing today.

**SUSAN:** Where's Daddy?

**BRIAN:** Where do you think? Down the fields.

**SUSAN:** Where he always is! Did you take all the cornflakes, you greedy pig?

**BRIAN:** You're alright, there's a bowl of porridge in the microwave.

**SUSAN:** Frig off! Here give me half of them.

*She grabs his bowl and helps herself*

Did you hear Mary's request for me on the radio?

**BRIAN:** Naw! On the Big Bopper?

**SUSAN:** Aye. He played a song for me and all the ones getting their Junior Cert results.

**BRIAN:** Big deal! That Bob Kane sickens me. He's worse than Gay Byrne.

**SUSAN:** I think he's great.

**CLR GREEN:** Would you two be quiet for a minute.

*On the phone*

Yes indeed, that's a very good idea. ... so the helicopter carrying security personnel will now arrive at the hospital one hour before the scheduled arrival of the European Commissioner and the Minister for Health. ... A hem... Yes, all those arrangements have been confirmed ... Proceedings to open our long awaited new Day Care Unit here in Bellacrowe will have maximum media coverage. I made sure of that! ... So, security will be met at 3p.m. and the minister and commissioner at 4 p.m.. ... That's very kind of you to say. Good bye now!

*She switches off the phone and becomes aware of her children*

**CLR GREEN:** Brian. Will you wash those few dishes before you go to school like a good boy. And go and look for your Daddy and tell him we have to get to the hospital by half three.

- BRIAN:** Is Daddy going with you? Wow! It must be a big occasion!
- CLR GREEN:** It is the biggest occasion in my career and I'm damned if your Daddy is going to be down the fields when I am dining with the Minister for Health and a European Commissioner. Tell him to get up here by one o' clock.

*Brian leaves, carrying the tray of breakfast items*

- CLR GREEN:** Susan, Susan, ach Susan, you never ironed that jacket for me! Speed it up, like a good girl. You know this is my big day.
- SUSAN:** I did! Last night. It's in the kitchen. Your big day??? What about me and my big day?
- CLR GREEN:** Now.  
*Goes to wings and calls from there*

I'll leave a pizza or something, and Brian is staying overnight with Nana. We're bringing these visitors out to dinner and there's a dinner dance tonight. It could be all hours.

- SUSAN:** Can I go out with the girls tonight?  
*Councillor Green returns wearing her jacket*
- CLR GREEN:** Sure. Be back by 10 o' clock though.
- SUSAN:** Mammy, the disco won't even be started by 10 o' clock.
- CLR GREEN:** Who said anything about a disco?
- SUSAN:** Ah Mam! I told you last week. All the girls are going out tonight. You know, to celebrate the Junior Cert results. Remember? Don't tell me you've forgotten that as well!
- CLR GREEN:** Results day? ... Of course not. I'll leave a pizza, and a few pounds. You can go into town. A film or something.
- SUSAN:** But all the girls are going to . . .
- CLR GREEN:** Don't start. There's no disco!
- SUSAN:** Ah Mam! Just this once. Please!
- CLR GREEN:** Susan, forget it! No daughter of mine is hanging around that joint at sweet sixteen. End of story.

## *Connected*

SUSAN:

But ...

CLR GREEN:

No buts. I'm going to be late for my interview on Northern Songs.

*She leaves, carrying a chair*

SUSAN:

Selfish old bat!

*She follows, wheeling off the table*

## *Scene 2*

*Big Pat's Farm 7.45 a.m.*

*"The Jolly Farmer" by Brendan Shine is playing on Bob Kane's programme. Big Pat enters in his wellingtons with a bag of calf nuts, which he proceeds to empty into a tin bucket. He shakes the bucket loudly to call his calves to feed.*

BIG PAT:

Suck, suck, suck!

*The Big Bopper's voice is heard over the speakers.*

BOB:

Good morning to Big Pat Mc Meel out at Tullyfarney. We hope the bastes enjoyed that one, Pat. That was Brendan Shine there with "The Jolly Farmer". Regular listeners will know that Northern Songs is involved in an important agricultural experiment along with Big Pat.

Pat has the *Big Bopper* piped into his byre, and every morning his herd of twelve milking cows and eight sucklers, not to mention six ducks, three hens two roosters and a drake, all listen to the best of chart sounds and oldies on this show. And at the end of three months we're going to see if their milk and egg yield has improved as a result. Mind you. Keep on feeding them the calf nuts, Pat. For a cow cannot live on sounds alone. Right, coming up next, its ...

*Big Pat chuckles to himself as he switches off the radio.*

BIG PAT:

*To himself*

Aw now, Bob Kane, you're a gas man and no mistake. The Big Bopper, eh? The Big Bopper. Right. Time things was getting done about this farm.



## *Intermission Complete*

## *Connected*

*He calls loudly*

James! James! Are you up? Ah Lord God, are you not up yet?

*His son appears almost fully dressed in a postman's outfit*

**JAMES:**

*Panting*

What's wrong with you?

**BIG PAT:**

Tighten up and get ready for work.

**JAMES:**

Can't ye see I'm nearly ready.

*Fixing his tie*

Now. Leave me alone till I'm ready.

**BIG PAT:**

It may only be a temporary job, but that doesn't mean you can cow trail in whenever you like.

**JAMES:**

Don't worry, Da. I'll be there on time.

**BIG PAT:**

And don't forget to get your gear ready for the match the night.

**JAMES:**

Aye, aye. I have it ready since yesterday. (*Exploding*) Jaysus, you'd think you'd mind your own business. I'm fit to look after myself.

**BIG PAT:**

You know, you look like a guard in that outfit.

**JAMES:**

What kind of a stupid remark is that?

**BIG PAT:**

Only trying to make conversation.

**JAMES:**

Aye well. Just let me live me own life and you live yours. I'm away.

**BIG PAT:**

You mind your manners, son. You could show a bit of respect.

**JAMES:**

I could, aye. If I had any. I'll see you the night.

*He walks away.*

*Pat is left alone with his bag and bucket of Calf Nuts.*

*He begins to think aloud, speaking absent-mindedly to his calves as he distributes the feed.*

**BIG PAT:**

Here, here, here. Ché, ché, ché. Good girl. Jaysus, thank God that boy has got a few days work, even if it is temporary.

Just to get him out of the house for a few hours. It hasn't been easy for me from Mary passed on. Tryin' to run the farm and rare the boy. Here, here! Suck, suck! All he wants is to lie in bed all day and listen to loud music. I know he's drinking and he's missed training. I know I can't give him all he wants, or even what I'd like to give him. Tryin' to farm 35 wet acres. Ché, ché! I've even got this part-time job now as a doorman at one of the clubs in the town. It's a few pounds. God knows it takes it all to keeps things running. (He puts down the bucket again). If only Mary was still alive. Maybe James would try harder. He really misses her. ... God, I really miss her too.

*He picks up his bag and bucket and walks slowly off*

### *Scene 3*

*Reillys Living Room 8.00 a.m.*

*As Big Pat walks off to one side, Alice Reilly enters with a cordless phone to her ear. The radio plays, "Connected" by the Stereo M.C.'s. The music fades out and she speaks.*

**ALICE:** Hello, can I speak to Mary Treanor please. ... It's Alice Reilly. I'm her English teacher at St. Dympna's. ... Hello, Mary? Mary, it's Alice Reilly here. sorry for ringing so early, but I wanted to get you before you left for school. ... How are you feeling? Looking forward to getting your results? ... I was wondering if you could do me a favour? I was thinking of having my English class in the dining hall today. It will give the girls a chance to relax after the results come out. Could you let the rest of the class know? I will arrange to have tea, coffee and a few cakes bought in.... Yes. That would be great. Thanks. See you after lunch then. And Mary! Good luck today. Bye. ... Bye bye now.

*Her brother Kevin enters*

**KEVIN:** Morning Alice.

**ALICE:** Morning little brother. You're up early!

**KEVIN:** Aye, sure I'm starting this oul' job the night at the Top of the Town.

*Intermission Complete**Connected*

- ALICE:** Yes. That's why I thought you'd be resting. Are you nervous?
- KEVIN:** No. Well a wee bit I suppose. I'm off into Bellacrowe town after breakfast to buy a new suit. Something dressy.
- ALICE:** Make sure it's a dark colour, Kevin. They'll take you more seriously in a dark colour.
- KEVIN:** Oh aye surely. I need for to look well. Who were you spakin' to on the phone?
- ALICE:** I was talking to Mary Treanor. She's one of my students. They're getting their Junior Cert results today.

*Kevin helps himself to tea, only half listening. He saucers the tea*

- KEVIN:** Hmm? Oh aye. God, I remember the day my results came out. I was terrible nervous.
- ALICE:** Me too. But look at us now. Me a teacher and you a hotel manager. So what time are you starting at tonight?
- KEVIN:** I have to meet the other night manager at seven o' clock. I'll be training in under him for the first week.
- ALICE:** I was thinking of going out tonight. So I might call in to see how you're getting on.
- KEVIN:** That'd be great. To see a familiar face.
- ALICE:** I'd better head off now or I'll be late for my first class. Good luck tonight. And I might see you later.

*She leaves. Kevin calls after her.*

- KEVIN:** Thanks Sis. And I hope they all pass their exams so I do.

*He settles in to read the paper. After a moment, he checks his watch and rises and leaves.*

*Connected*  
*Scene 4*

*Intermission Complete*

*The Northern Tribune Office 8.30 a.m.*

*Bob Kane plays "Kodachrome" by Paul Simon. Philippa Reilly enters, carrying her brand new super Nikon camera with zoom lenses and big flash bulbs. She places a sign on the table reading "JIM MULLIGAN. EDITOR" and then walks away from it and lines up a photo of it.*

*She now lines up a shot of some other feature of the stage and shoots again. She does this a few times, becoming more and more comfortable with the camera. She comes to the front of stage and carefully lines up a photograph of the audience, speaking to them as though to an imaginary football team.*

**PHILIPPA:** You there, in the back row. Move in a bit tighter. Smaller men to the front. Right. Hold up the cup. That's it!

*She takes the photo and returns her attention to her camera*

**PHILIPPA:** Oh yes. Lovely, lovely. A fine camera indeed! Worthy equipment for the world's most celebrated photo-journalist. Philippa Clancy of Bellacrowe.

*She begins to duck and dart and spring about the place, as a child might, in a series of daydreams.*

**PHILIPPA:** Philippa Clancy leaps between the flying bullets of Sarajevo to capture a brilliant image of a child queuing for bread in a blizzard ... Philippa Clancy thrusts her zoom lens through the Wembley net and captures Cantona's penalty as it spins away from the keeper's helpless fingers into the top corner. ...

*Climbs on a chair* ...Philippa Clancy here, covering the conquest of Everest. The air is rare up here. She has difficulty breathing. But her photo of the great expanse of the Himalayas makes the front cover of National Geographic. ...

*She lines up a shot, facing towards the audience. Jim Mulligan, editor, enters behind her*

**JIM:** So Philippa, I believe you're starting your assignment at Ballybay Mart, is that so?

*Philippa turns around startled and jumps down*

**PHILIPPA:** Ah yes, Mr. Editor. Eh, yes Jim. Ballybay Mart. Well I've to do the opening of a butcher shop in Ballybay first. I'll kill two cows with the one stone, so to speak.

**JIM:** *Sitting down and putting his feet up on the table*

Have you had a look at that itinerary?

**PHILIPPA:** I have. Very diverse! Explain to me again. What's the general idea?

**JIM:** Well, you know today is the opening of the new day care unit at the County Hospital.

**PHILIPPA:** Aye.

**JIM:** Well. I don't know how she swung it, but Councillor Sarah Green has managed to get the European Health Commissioner, Franz Peter Rosenhosen and the Minister for Health Michael Noonan both to officiate. Remarkable woman that. Three years ago they were going to close that hospital down. She mobilised the community to save that hospital like I have never seen the people of this county mobilised. And look at it now. Anyway. It's a historic day in the life of the county, and the editorial team suggested that you should go out and make a photo documentary of everyday life, social life and special events in the county to mark the day.

**PHILIPPA:** Right. So, there's the butcher shop, the mart. What else? The hospital launch itself, obviously. That's at four o'clock. Then there's the county semi-final later on, Clontibret versus Bellacrowe Faughs. Is that all?

**JIM:** Well that's all that's pre-determined. We thought you might use your own imagination and try to capture some impressions of the life of the community. Use your own discretion. Whatever you take, you can be fairly sure we will publish. You're the best photographer we ever had, Philippa.... Aye and that's the most frightening looking camera that was ever seen in the offices of the Northern Tribune. It's like a fuckin' telescope. Away you go before you miss something.

**PHILIPPA:** Yes sir, Mr. Editor, sir. The secret life of County Monaghan. It's as good as done.

*She exits.*

*The editor leaves, carrying the Editor sign.*

*The table and chair remain on.*

## *Scene 5*

*Susan's Bedroom 8.45*

*Slightly strange lighting. The radio plays "So this is how it feels to be lonely" by the Inspiral Carpets.*

*Susan enters wearing her school uniform and carrying her make-up bag and goes slowly and sits as though facing a dressing table.*

*Another actor, dressed identically, enters and takes a seat facing her and mimics her movements, "becoming" her reflection in a mirror.*

*They do lipstick, eyebrows etc. and then comb their hair.*

*This continues for a few moments during which the music fades out and the combing becomes quite ritualistic in the intense silence.*

*Eventually the reflection speaks.*

**REFLECTION:** You're looking very down in the dumps this morning.

**SUSAN:** Well why wouldn't I be?

**REFLECTION:** So this is how it feels to be lonely, eh?

*The reflection gets up and walks about the stage.*

*Susan stays, staring into the mirror, doing her make-up.*

**SUSAN:** Well how would you feel if you weren't allowed to go out with your friends? And I'm supposed to be meeting a boy tonight.

**REFLECTION:** Oh? a boy? Who?

**SUSAN:** He's called James. Just a boy I met.

- REFLECTION:** Just a boy? Where did you meet him?
- SUSAN:** In Bellacrowe one day. Outside the new shopping centre. We just got talking.
- REFLECTION:** So. Tell us. What's he like?
- SUSAN:** I don't really know. Good looking. A bit ... a bit dark maybe. Like great fun, but he had a deep side. He put the wheel back on my shopping trolley. It fell off.
- REFLECTION:** My God. A handy mechanic and a deep personality. Susan Green you're elected there! So where are you meeting him?
- SUSAN:** In Joe's. Joe's Pub. Ach, what am I saying? I won't be meeting no-one. Life's just not fair!
- REFLECTION:** What's stopping you?
- SUSAN:** What do you mean?
- REFLECTION:** What's stopping you doing whatever you want and going to the disco with your friends and meeting James?
- SUSAN:** I'm not allowed out. That's what.

*The reflection sits down opposite her and mimics her actions again for a moment*

- REFLECTION:** Didn't your mother say she wouldn't be home until late?
- SUSAN:** No. I couldn't do that, could I? Yes I could. Why shouldn't I go out and enjoy myself? Why not?

*She looks at her watch, jumps up and takes her schoolbag and leaves.*

*The Reflection remains for a moment and gives a mischievous little wave after her, when she has gone and then exits to the opposite side.*

*Bob Kane's voice comes over the system.*

*The changeover song is already playing in the background.*

- BOB:** Gooooood Morning Monaghaaaaaan! It's just coming up to nine a.m. This is Bob Kane, the Big Bopper signing off. Don't forget, I'll be back again at half-past-eight tonight with my weekly studio audience and phone-in show, "Connected". Have a nice day' y'all. This is The

Carpenters',  
"Please Mr. Postman" taking us up to the news.

### *Interlude 1*

*The Town Comes to Life 9.00 a.m.*

*This is a pure movement sequence involving the full cast. "Please Mr. Postman" plays happily through it.*

*People are seen going about the business of opening shops, walking to school, wheeling buggies, delivering milk etc.*

*James as postman is observed handing letters to people and greeting people cheerfully as he goes.*

*Philippa takes her first roll of film, just observing the happy comings and goings.*

### *Scene 6*

*Barney Murphy's House 9.30 a.m.*

*The interlude fades away, leaving James alone on stage.*

*He stands centre stage, reading the address on a parcel.*

**JAMES:** Barney Murphy,  
47, Riverside Drive,  
Riverside Estate,  
Bellacrowe,  
County Monaghan

*He looks about*

**JAMES:** Riverside Park, Riverside Crescent, Riverside Avenue. Ah, there it is. Riverside Drive. Aye, but no number forty seven. there's forty six. This must be forty seven.



*Intermission Complete*

*Connected*

*He raises his fist*                      Knock knock.

**BARNEY:** *From behind the curtain*  
Who's there?

**JAMES:**                                  It's the postman. Am I at the right house for number forty seven.

**BARNEY:**                                  You might be.

*Barney peers out very cagily.*

*He is wearing his dressing gown and slippers and is not quite awake.*

**JAMES:**                                  You've no number on your door.

**BARNEY:**                                  So?

**JAMES:**                                  It might be a help to me if you did.

**BARNEY:**                                  Really?

**JAMES:**                                  Aye. Every other house has it.

**BARNEY:** *Rubbing his eye*  
Big deal.

**JAMES:**                                  You're Barney Murphy

**BARNEY:**                                  Could be.

**JAMES:**                                  I've a parcel for you.

**BARNEY:**                                  And?

**JAMES:**                                  It's registered.

*Looking at the stamp*                      It's from Belfast.

**BARNEY:**                                  So?

**JAMES:**                                  Belfast alright. With the queen's picture on the stamp.

**BARNEY:**                                  Aye. She'd have to have her nose stuck in it.

**JAMES:**                                  It's posted three days ago.

*Connected*

**BARNEY:**

Aye. Well, are you going to give it to me or did you just take it out for the walk?

**JAMES:**

Right, right. Here you are. It says fragile.

**BARNEY:**

Really?

**JAMES:**

You could break something.

**BARNEY:**

I could alright.

*Mutters to himself.*

Somebody's bloody neck maybe.

**JAMES:**

Sign here.

*Barney scribbles*

I'll be on my way, so. I say, are you Barney Murphy that works at the Top of the Town at nights?

**BARNEY:**

I might be.

**JAMES:**

I know all about you.

**BARNEY:**

A lot of boys think they know a lot. But they don't know their arse from their elbow, the half of them.

*He vanishes abruptly behind the curtain again*

**JAMES:**

Shut the door in me face would you? I know you 'cos you work with me father, y'unfriendly oul' fucker! That's all I was sayin'.

*Through the letter box*

Go on y'oul hedgehog. Go back into hibernation.

*He walks away aggrieved*

But I do know about the goin's on you're at too. Every young boy in the town knows about you. Mr. KGB man. Mr. Secret Activities. Go and burn another few cars. Have a nice day.

*Scene 7*

*St. Dymphna's School 10.00 a.m.*

*Five actors, two men and three women enter wearing schoolgirl uniforms. They form a front row in front of the audience. They are restless and fidgety, craning over to look out an imaginary window.*

*Sister Bartholomew (played by a man) enters and stands facing the audience.*

**SR. BART:** Settle down girls. Girls, girls, please!  
*Towards the audience*

You, in the back row. could you settle down, please. You're well out of national school. You should be past that kind of fidgeting. Thank you. ...Good morning girls.

**ALL:** Good morning, Sister.

**SR. BART:** I have not taught this class before. You may know me. Sister Bartholomew. I specialise in Physics. Now, I know that you are all expecting the results of your Junior Cert today and that you are all watching that window over there for the postman to come. But it doesn't matter what time he comes at. You will not receive your results until lunchtime. So I would ask you to refocus your attention from the window and re-focus it here!

*The girls are just too restless, however and as she talks on, they continue to crane over trying to see out the window.*

**SR. BART:** Please concentrate. Now, physics is a branch of science concerned with the ultimate laws that govern the structure of the universe.

*Suddenly there is a great commotion. The girls are unable to contain themselves*

**MADGE:** There he is! There he is! It's the postman.

*They leap up from their seats and form a human pyramid gazing out towards the audience. Sister Bartholomew hesitates, then comes over and joins them.*

**BREDA:** God, he's a fine thing!

**SR. BART:** A fine specimen indeed!

## *Connected*

**ROSIE:**

It's not the usual boy! Look at him!

**MADGE / BREDA:**

Here. Give us a look at him.

**MARY:**

God, do you know who it is? It's that boy you met in town, Susan. Look. That's the boy you were supposed to meet tonight.

**SUSAN:**

It's not!

**MARY:**

It is, I'm telling you. James Mc Meel. He's a postman.

**SUSAN:**

A postman? A friggin' postman? He told me he was an airline pilot!

**MADGE:**

Ach, you didn't believe that did you?

**SUSAN:**

Not really. But a postman? He doesn't look like a postman. He looks like a guard.

**BREDA:**

I don't care what he looks like. He looks alright to me. He'd do me.

**SR. BART:**

A fine specimen indeed. But enough of this man watching girls. Results will be distributed at lunchtime. Our concern for now is with Physics. Let us return to our seats and learn about the structure of the universe.

*They leave*

## *Scene 8*

*A Butcher's Shop 10.30 a.m.*

*Harry Roe, a Ballybay butcher, enters wheeling on a counter with various meats and sausages hanging above it and a decorative tape hung gaily across the front of it.*

*Marian Moloney joins him. She is Chairperson of the Chamber of Commerce.*

**MARIAN:**

Jayperdy Harry, you have made a great job of this place. I remember when it was Maisie's sweet shop. A smelly oul' place it was too.

- HARRY:** That's right. That's right. Well it's Harry Roe's prime butcher's now. It's just half ten now, Mrs Moloney. Should I be opening up?
- MARIAN:** Just give it a minute or two, Harry, the Northern Tribune photographer is on her way. And Brendan Toal said he's be a few minutes late. Now. I'll just welcome the customers on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce. Then I'll introduce Brendan. I'll say he is a major sporting hero in the County and ask him to cut the ribbon. Then we will invite the first customers to come forward and you will present them with the free hamper.
- HARRY:** Free? It wasn't free to me. There's twenty pounds worth of poultry and game in that basket alone, never mind eggs and sausages and a bottle of wine.
- MARIAN:** Now Harry. It's all in the interests of public relations. Right. Open up.
- HARRY:** Is there many out there?
- MARIAN:** A smallish crowd. Nine or ten. But I'd say more will wander in. They wouldn't be used to a thing starting on time in Ballybay.

*Harry goes to the side of the stage and calls*

- HARRY:** Yiz can all come in now. We're open!.

*Brendan Toal the footballer enters in his training outfit, followed by three customers, George and Prudence Mc Ginty and Angela Daly.*

*Phillipa arrives in behind them and sets up her camera. She takes a few shots during the speeches.*

- MARIAN:** Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Thank you all for coming. I don't have much to say.
- GEORGE:** Just as well. Just as well.
- MARIAN:** Good man, George Mc Ginty. A man for all occasions. Hasn't missed a shop opening in Ballybay for forty one years. I am just here on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce to extend congratulations to Ballybay's newest entrepreneur, Mr. Harry Roe, formerly of Callaghan's butcher shop in Bellacrowe. Harry, we all wish you the best of luck in your

new business and hope it all goes very well for you.

*Applause*

**HARRY:** Thank you.

**MARIAN:** I now call upon sporting hero, Brendan Toal to do the honours. Brendan, as you know, is captain of the county team now. And he will be leading his local club, Bellacrowe Faughs, into the field against Clontibret for the county semi-final this evening. Ladies and Gentlemen. Brendan Toal.

*Applause*

**BRENDAN:** Well I was asked to keep it short. And my wife told me not to be trying to make jokes for I'm no good at it, so I won't. Or not too many anyway. Well this is a good place to start on the day that Bellacrowe are hoping to bring home the bacon!

**ANGELA:** Hup Bellacrowe! Are you fightin' fit, Brendan?

**BRENDAN:** Oh we are, Missus. It'll be Bellacrowe's day, I reckon. So far as Harry Roe is concerned however, Ballybay's gain is very much Bellacrowe's loss. He was a much respected butcher in Callaghan's and always had a civil word for the customers. I'm sure he will get great support from the people of his native Ballybay.

*He goes to cut the ribbon*

**PHILIPPA:** Hold on Brendan. I'll just line up a shot or two. Here, Harry, come in and join him. And you too Mrs Moloney.

*They pose*

**HARRY:** Is that alright, Miss?

**PHILIPPA:** *Mutters* Well, it's not exactly going to win Press Photograph of the Year, but eh (*aloud*) Aye, it'll do.

**HARRY:** Have you the sign behind in, with the wee painting of the pig? Thirty pound I paid an artist to paint that. And a child come in and asked me if it was a rabbit.

**PHILIPPA:** *She flashes.* I have it.

## *Intermission Complete*

## *Connected*

**BRENDAN:** I now declare Harry Roe's prime butcher shop officially open.

*He tries to cut, but the scissors is too blunt*

Eh, you wouldn't have a better scissors, Harry, would you?

*Harry comes over with a butcher's knife*

**HARRY:** Here, I'll get it.

*He slices the tape*

**MRS MOLONEY:** Right. Who were the first two customers over the threshold?

**PRUDENCE:** We were. Me and George.

**MRS MOLONEY:** George and Prudence Mc Ginty. Regular supporters of events like this. Please come forward for a presentation.

**ANGELA:** *Mutters to the audience*

Aye. Always first in the queue. Pushed me out of the way, they did. Pushing and shoving in the queue. That's your style, Prudence Mc Ginty.

**PRUDENCE:** *Quietly to her*

Sour grapes, Angela Daly. Jealousy 'll get you nowhere.

**GEORGE:** C'mon dear, don't be fightin'. Don't be drawin' attention to yourself.

*They shuffle forward* Lovely shop all the same. Very clean.

**PRUDENCE:** I don't think much of it. It's far too small and pokey. Galligans is much better. Probably oul' BSE in the beef too.

**GEORGE:** Whist woman.

**HARRY:** Here's a free hamper on behalf of the shop.

*He hands over a closed basket. George and Prudence accept it and shuffle off, muttering.*

**PRUDENCE:** Probably a few strings of oul' sausages is all that's in it.

**GEORGE:** Naw. There's a bottle of wine. I can hear it bangin' around.

**PRUDENCE:** Probably oul' cheap wine.

*They exit and everyone else disperses. Harry wheels off the butcher counter and the meats and ribbons.*

*Connected*  
*Scene 9*

*Intermission Complete*

*The School 11.00 a.m. Alice Reilly enters. There is a knock.*

ALICE: Come in.  
*Mary Treanor enters in her school uniform*

MARY: You wanted to see me, Miss Reilly?

ALICE: Ah Mary. Just in relation to our phone conversation this morning. This coffee afternoon . . .

MARY: Yes Miss. I told everyone.

ALICE: It's just, I've arranged the tea, coffee and pastries and some soft drinks. But the canteen staff can't stay on after lunch. The ladies will clean up before we come in. But I might need some help to set up. I was wondering if you might give me a hand.

MARY: I suppose I can. Will it take long? Only, I'd like to talk to the girls about the results too.

ALICE: About ten minutes. Maybe you could get someone else to help. And I'll be there to lend a hand.

MARY: Right. I'll ask someone.

ALICE: I expect you'll be going out tonight to celebrate your results.

MARY: Yes Miss. We're all going out together.

ALICE: Well, enjoy yourselves.

MARY: Yes, Miss. Thanks. What time do you want me in the dining room at?

ALICE: About a quarter to two. Who are you going to get to help you?

MARY: I don't know Miss. Maybe Susan Green.

ALICE: Oh yes, Susan Green. Are you very great with her, Mary?

MARY: Miss, we're in the same classes and we spend time together. Why Miss?



- ALICE:** Between ourselves, I am a bit worried about her.
- MARY:** Why Miss?
- ALICE:** She seems to have lost interest in her work.
- MARY:** I hadn't noticed.
- ALICE:** Is she going out with you all tonight?
- MARY:** I don't know, Miss. She asked her mother if she could go out and I think she said no. Susan said she'd ask again.
- ALICE:** Does she not get on with her mother? Might explain a lot.
- MARY:** I don't know, Miss.
- ALICE:** Does she talk about her mother and father to you?
- MARY:** No, Miss. Why should she?
- ALICE:** I thought she might confide in you.
- MARY:** No, Miss.
- ALICE:** Has she a boyfriend?
- MARY:** I don't know. She hasn't told me if she has.
- ALICE:** O.K., Mary.

*Looking at her watch*

I have to get back to class now. First year Maths, God help me! I'll see you at lunchtime. And thanks for your help.

*She leaves.*

**MARY:** O.K., Miss. Don't mention it. See you later.

*She follows.*

*Connected*  
*Scene 10*

*Intermission Complete*

*Bellacrowe Employment Office 11.30 a.m.*

*A counter is wheeled on with a sign above it reading Hatch 6. Aisling Lynch, a dole office clerk is behind it.*

*Four men are queuing in front: Pat Cassidy, "Joe Louis", Paul Monaghan and Bertie Brown.*

*Pat and Joe show their cards and receive their payment without any conversation. They step over to one side to watch the comings and goings. Paul steps forward.*

**AISLING:** Is this your first time signing on?

**PAUL:** Damn right it is. First time in fifteen years of working.

**AISLING:** Were you in the bacon factory?

**PAUL:** Damn right I was.

**AISLING:** You'll have to go to Hatch One. New claims.

*He exits Bertie Brown steps forward*

**AISLING:** Bertie Brown! How's Bertie this week?

**BERTIE:** Rightly, Miss Lynch, so please you. Big day at the hospital the day.

**AISLING:** Big day, surely. I suppose you'll be above helping out?

**BERTIE:** Voluntary, Miss Lynch. Voluntary so please you.

**AISLING:** Sure everything you do is voluntary, Bertie. That hospital must save a fortune all the voluntary work you do for them! Will you be there to greet the minister himself?

**BERTIE:** I doubt not. The Matron has barred me.

**AISLING:** Ach go 'way, Bertie. Why?

**BERTIE:** Cos I threw out drugs in the bin and some dogs got at them and went mad in the town. Not supposed to put drugs in the bin.

**AISLING:** Aw now, Bertie, you're an awful man.

*She takes Bertie's card and goes through the motions of paying him. Barney Murphy enters. "Joe Louis" and Pat speak loud enough for Barney to hear. Barney ignores their comments.*

**JOE:** Here's the town sheriff, bejaysus. The Lone Vigilante. Barney Provo. Guardian of Riverside.

**PAT:** Jamity I don't believe it. I'm surprised to see you today, Barney Boy. You're never seen during the day. Isn't that right, Barney?

**JOE:** Well Barney? How would you like a box on the mouth, eh?

**PAT:** And two black eyes on top of it, ye big waster.

**JOE:** What are ye doin' here? Fuck away off and get a job and do something useful instead of sneakin' around our neighborhood at all hours of the night.

**PAT:** Hey Barney! don't choke yerself makin' an answer! Like don't say too much at once. It's bad for ye!

**BERTIE:** Thank you very much, Miss.

*Bertie leaves, counting his money.*

**AISLING:** Next please.

*Barney moves forward to the hatch.*

**AISLING:** Bernard Murphy. Sorry. You're to go to Hatch Four. Social Welfare Inspector is here today doing random spot checks.

**BARNEY:** I see.  
*The counter becomes Hatch Four. Janice Fogarty takes over from Aisling.*

**JOE:** *To everyone in the dole office*

Hey boys! I see Barney Provo's under investigation. You must be gettin' a few pound for your special activities are ye Barney?

**PAT:** We'll come and visit you in jail, Barney!

*Joe and Pat leave, sniggering.*

*Connected*

JANICE:

Bernard Murphy

BARNEY:

That's right.

JANICE:

I'm led to believe that you are claiming unemployment benefit under false pretences.

BARNEY:

I'm not.

JANICE:

According to my records, you are claiming benefit for the six days per week, yet I'm also aware that you have a part-time job as steward at a local night club.

BARNEY:

I know that. Is there something wrong with trying to make a living?

JANICE:

Provided that you are not claiming under false pretences. You are working there now a number of weeks. As I understand it, you didn't sign off or inform this office about that job.

BARNEY:

I did. Last week I worked two nights and if you had done some research you'd see I only signed for four days.

JANICE:

I am not aware of that.

BARNEY:

Well you should check it out then. When I work, I don't claim benefit.

JANICE:

I see. So there is still a few honest people about. This is most unusual. Well, we'll have to follow this up. Maybe there's been some

BARNEY:

Listen. Don't call me a liar.

JANICE:

Pardon me if I am. I'm only doing my job.

BARNEY:

Yeah. You're lucky. Ye have a job. But you don't show much consideration for those that haven't. What do you know about unemployment? You could hardly spell the word.

JANICE:

Look it. I'm sorry for trying to . . .

BARNEY:

Ye should be! Yer not right out of yer nappy and yer tryin' to tell me what I should do. Humiliatin' me in front of the whole employment exchange over nothin'. Go ye back to where ye came from. Go on strike the whole damn lot of ye and let honest people make an honest living.

*Intermission Complete*

*He tears up his signing on paper and leaves in great anger. Janice whisks the counter off.*

## *Interlude 2*

*At Ballybay Mart 12.00 noon*

*The entire cast acts out a mart scene without dialogue, to the song called "The Auctioneer". D.J Bob Kane 'becomes' the auctioneer, singing out the bidding chant through the p.a.. A bored Philippa Clancy records the occasion.*

## *Scene 11*

*A Draper's Shop 12.30 p.m.*

*Kevin Reilly walks on from one side and Benjamin Mc Kenna, a draper enters from the other with the counter laden with folded clothing. Benjamin has a measuring tape around his neck.*

- BENJAMIN:** How can I help you, Sir?
- KEVIN:** I'd like to buy a suit.
- BENJAMIN:** May I ask what the occasion is?
- KEVIN:** I'm startin' a big job so I am.
- BENJAMIN:** A big job! What is it?
- KEVIN:** Night manager in the Top of the Town.
- BENJAMIN:** I have the perfect suit of clothes for you. Only it's not a suit at all. It's a matching jacket and trousers.
- KEVIN:** Isn't that what a suit is? A matchin' jacket and trousers?
- BENJAMIN:** Yes, sir. But this is a separate jacket and trousers! Very much the fashion nowadays with the young executive. Now, the trousers. What size are you?
- KEVIN:** Five foot eleven.

*Connected***BENJAMIN:**

I meant what size do you take in a trousers?

**KEVIN:**

I don't rightly know. Medium I'd guess. Medium rare is it?

**BENJAMIN:**

Here.

*He measures him up and down with the tape*

Try this pair, sir.

**KEVIN:**

They look the best. Do rightly for the job. Sure, do ye know, I mightn't stay at it five minutes. Here, gimme them, I'll try them on.

**BENJAMIN:***Kevin steps behind a curtain*

Changing rooms are just over there.

**KEVIN: (Calling out)**

Holy Jays. Jamey them trousers are a wee bit long of themselves.

**BENJAMIN:**

Pull them up over your waist man.

**KEVIN: He steps out .**

Ah, right, right. They fit me now.

**BENJAMIN:**

Aaah, do you know, you'd think they were made for you.

*Prudence Mc Ginty enters. She folds her arms and surveys the scene.***PRUDENCE:**

Excuse me! Excuse me, Mister. Them slacks doesn't suit you at all, at all. One leg's longer than the other. I say, one leg's longer than the other.

**KEVIN:**

Is that right, is it?

**BENJAMIN:**

Not at all, sir, they look great. Excuse me Mrs. I'll be with you in a tick, after I have sorted out this gentleman.

**PRUDENCE:**

O.K, O.K, O.K..

**KEVIN:**

Could you give me a bit of a coat that might blend in with these trousers. Nothing too pricey now. See. That one there. The one that says "Bargain". I like the look of that one.

**BENJAMIN:**

Go ahead, sir. Aaah. That looks terrific, wonderful.

**PRUDENCE:**

Mister, that oul' rag of a coat does nothin' for you. It makes you look too much like a gangster.

*Intermission Complete**Connected*

- BENJAMIN:** I beg your pardon, Madam. Do you mind?
- PRUDENCE:** Only tryin' to help.
- KEVIN:** Gangster? Mr. Tailor, are you tryin' to make a work of me or what?
- BENJAMIN:** No, no, sir. I'm genuine. Listen to me. It looks fantastic. You really look important in that outfit.
- KEVIN:** Important? Do I? Do I?  
*He struts about before the mirror.*  
You're not messin' with me, are you?
- BENJAMIN:** Not in the slightest. You look positively imposing. A man of character.

*Prudence starts digging the draper in the back.*

- PRUDENCE:** Hie, hie! I'm lookin' for a man's cap.
- BENJAMIN:** I shall attend to you in a second, Madam. Walk about a bit in it, Sir. Satisfy yourself. Very much the young man in authority. Now Madam. Did you say a cap?
- PRUDENCE:** Aye, a black cap for me husband, George. He's complainin' of the wind around he's ears.
- BENJAMIN:** I'm not surprised, Madam.

*Hastily covering his indiscretion.*

Em, I mean breezy weather at the moment. Very windy. Hats and caps are in the back part of the shop. Mr. Edwards will see you inside.

*As she leaves, Kevin calls to her.*

- KEVIN:** And thanks for your advice, Missus.
- PRUDENCE:** Oh, any time.
- BENJAMIN:** I'm sure your always generous with your advice, Madam. Good day.

*She exits.*

## *Connected*

**KEVIN:**

I'll take this combination even if it doesn't suit me. How much do I owe you?

**BENJAMIN:**

Ninety nine pounds and ninety nine pence, Sir.

**KEVIN:**

Fifty and fifty is a hundred.

*He hands over two fifty pound notes.*

Not at all, keep the change.

*Kevin leaves.*

**BENJAMIN:** *Calling after him.*

All the best, Sir! Up straight! The look of authority! God protect us (*to himself*) from the young men of today.

*He wheels his counter off.*

## *Scene 12*

*School 1.00 p.m. / 2.00 p.m.*

*A clock strikes one and then the school bell rings. Mary Treanor, and Breda Wood run onto the stage waving brown envelopes. They stand and open them.*

**MARY:**

Yes! Yes! Yes! Three honours. And I passed Irish. I don't believe it!

**BREDA:**

I don't care if I don't get any honours. As long as I don't fail anything. Wow! I got three honours. Biology, French and Home Economics! And nothing failed. I am gonna go soooo mad the night!!!!

**MARY:**

Where's Susan?

*She shouts to the wings - gesturing madly across the schoolyard.*

Susan! Susan! Three honours! Both of us! She got three, I got three.

*Susan enters quietly, almost embarrassed.*



- MARY:** Well, brainbox? Tell us? Five honours? six? A couple of A's?
- SUSAN:** Five A's and two B's. And a B in pass maths. Seven honours and I didn't fail Maths. I'm dizzy.
- MARY:** *Grabbing Susan's certificate.*  
Oh that is brilliant! That is brilliant! You got an honour in Home Economics and you never even took the subject. You make me sick! Oh well done girl, well done! Your mother will go mad. She'll be thrilled.
- SUSAN:** She will. If she remembers to ask how I got on.
- BREDA:** Ah stop being such an oul' moan. She'll ask. She'll be thrilled. My Daddy is gonna be so proud. He's gonna start teachin' me to drive and when I'm seventeen he's gonna let me have the jeep at weekends. He said if I passed everything, I could have the four wheel drive. Oh boys of Bellacrowe, watch out. This babe is gonna be on four wheels now! Yahoo!!!
- MARY:** And my Mammy is letting me go to me sister in London at Halloween to celebrate. Look. The whole schoolyard is gone mad. Everyone must have passed! Let's get over there! ... shite, I forgot. We have to help to set up the dining hall for this feckin' coffee afternoon.
- SUSAN:** Do you mind if I don't? I'm not feeling great.
- BREDA:** No problem. I'll help you.
- MARY:** Are you alright?
- SUSAN:** Grand. Just want a few minutes on me own.

*They stand up and Mary and Breda leave the stage. Susan remains alone. She calls to the empty space where the girls have just exited.*

- SUSAN:** Four wheel drive is it? London? My father hardly knows what age I am, never mind what exams I passed. He's too busy down the fields. And Mammy? . . . huh ...

*She stares intently at her shoes, nodding. A silence is held for a few moments. The clock strikes two and the bell rings again.*

*There is a lighting change. All the stage lights and the house lights come on.*

## *Connected*

## *Intermission Complete*

*Two cleaning ladies, Peggy Mohan and Sadie Mc Mahon, (played by men), go down among the audience with mops and buckets, cleaning up. Susan remains near the back of the stage throughout.*

**SADIE:** *To audience members*

Here girls. Youse'll have to clear out. We have to clane this place up for the Junior Cert girls.

*She cleans in under somebody's seat.*

**PEGGY:** *To an audience member*

Hey you! Did you stick chewing gum under this chair. Well, if it wasn't you who was it? You don't cod Peggy Mohan, naw. I checked that chair yesterday and there was no chewing gum under it. Filthy habit.

**SADIE:**

Peggy, did you ever do your Junior Cert?

**PEGGY:**

I did, Sadie. In 1972, the Inter Cert it was called then. And I passed all the subjects.

**SADIE:**

Go way, did you?

**PEGGY:**

Aye. And six months later I married Robbie Mohan and damn the good the Inter Cert was to me then. I had six childer and the education didn't help me much with that I can tell you. I mind doin' Biology and learnin' about the matin' habits of the frog. Wasn't much use to me when I married Robbie the Rat. But I reckon I know more about life than some of these educated ones. What about yourself?

**SADIE:**

Naw. I was goin' on for the Primary Cert when my mother died. Before your time. So I went home and rared nine boys and a girl. I was thirteen. Between you and me, Peggy, I couldn't read or write when I left school. But I went back after and done adult literacy classes. And now I'm doin' the Group Cert by night above at the Tech.

**PEGGY:**

Fair play to you Sadie. What are you goin' on for?

**SADIE:**

I don't know. An astronaut maybe or I might go for Mary Robinson's job. I just like learnin'.

*The cleaners leave. Alice enters with Susan, Mary and Breda. Susan remains alone at the back of the stage. Alice and the other two girls have trays of soft drinks.*

**ALICE:** Here. Pass these minerals out among the rest of the class. Hi girls! Well done. Isn't it wonderful. Everyone in the school passed. The staff are delighted.

*The three actors hand plastic containers of soft drinks to members of the audience. Alice speaks directly to individuals in the audience, but does not wait for their answers.*

**ALICE:** Hi Sharon! Five honours. Including English - my subject - well done! ... Hi Bernie, sorry you missed out on the Maths, but it was a great achievement overall ... Well Maggie, you'll be hitting the disco tonight, I suppose... Susan? Did anyone see Susan Green?

*She looks behind her and sees Susan standing hunched up, as though crying, at the back of the stage. Lights close in on Susan and the other girls exit quietly. Alice approaches her.*

**ALICE:** Susan? Susan, is everything alright?

*Susan keeps her head down and appears to be fighting back emotion.*

**ALICE:** Susan. What's the matter? Do you want to talk?

*Susan turns defiantly, any emotion she was feeling now fully repressed.*

**SUSAN:** Nothing wrong with me, Miss. I'm just tired.

**ALICE:** Oh right. The stress of waiting I suppose. But you have such brilliant results, Susan! You must be excited. What will your parents think?

**SUSAN:** *Looking at her shoes.*  
Parents? My parents? They'll be very pleased Miss, thank you.

**ALICE:** *Kindly probing.* Susan?

*Susan remains very tense.*

**SUSAN:** Yes, Miss. Thank you for the party. Yes. I'm very pleased about my results. I have to go now, Miss. I have French.

*She hastens off.*

*Alice looks deeply troubled.*

*Around her, in the gloom, the bar and stools for the next scene are wheeled on.*

*Connected*  
*Scene 13*

*Intermission Complete*

*Joe's pub 3.00 p.m.*

*The clock strikes three and continues to tick-tock monotonously.*

*It is very gloomy.*

*Lights up a little on three men seated at the bar.*

*No-one is talking to anyone.*

*Joe Brennan is silently polishing glasses.*

*James enters and takes off his postman's cap.*

*He goes to the bar.*

**JAMES:** Well, Joe. A double Paddy, Joe.

*Joe looks at him intently for a second.*

*Then hands him the drink.*

*James pays him in coin.*

*The transaction is completely silent.*

*James goes to one side and sits on a chair.*

*He sips at the drink for a few moments.*

*Then he gulps it back.*

*He rises and goes to the bar again.*

**JAMES:** Same again, Joe.

*Again, Joe stares at him without emotion, but very intently, before handing him the drink.*

*Again, the payment is made in silence.*

*Joe returns to his chair.*

*He drinks this one slowly but steadily.*

## *Intermission Complete*

## *Connected*

*The lights fade very slowly on the silent scene and the actors leave, bringing the furniture with them, in a slow, ritual manner.*

*A dim light is held on the empty stage for a sustained moment.*

## *Scene 14*

*The County Hospital 4.00 p.m.*

*A blue flashing light is seen from the wings.*

*Over the sound system comes the sound of a helicopter landing and voices of security staff over walkie talkies.*

*Very bright white lights come on suddenly.*

*Two orderlies, Ned Regan and Sonny Scallon, wheel on a bed with a sleeping male patient on it.*

**NED:** Aisy now, aisy now, mind that mop and bucket.

*They manoeuvre the bed around an imaginary bucket.*

**SONNY:** Jaysus I never saw this hospital so clean. I swear to God, you can see your reflection on the floor tiles.

**NED:** *To the sleeping patient.*

Right Canon Loughran, There'll be a two nurses along in a minute to change the bedsheets. *(He shakes the Canon gently)* You should wake up in about two hours when the anaesthetic wears off.

*They go to leave. Just before they leave the stage, they look back.*

**NED:** Very sad about poor Canon Loughran. They're sayin' there's no hope for him.

**SONNY:** And I hear his family have asked for him not to be told. He might as well enjoy his last few days on this earth, I suppose. He's for heavenanyway.

**NED:** Aye. A lovely man.

*They exit.*

*As they leave on one side, two nurses, Seamus Hughes and Maura Mc Geogh enter from the other with bedsheets.*

*They briskly change the sheets, gossiping as they do.*

*All through their conversation they manoeuvre the unconscious patient like a dead puppet.*

**SEAMUS:** Here, up Canon Loughran.

**MAURA:** So who's coming to this big do?

**SEAMUS:** Every VIP in the county. It's a historic day.

**MAURA:** I hear Matron has barred poor Bertie.

**SEAMUS:** Bertie Brown, so please you? Sure you couldn't have poor Bertie running round on a day like today. I say, did you hear the gossip. Apparently that Amanda Kennedy one is pregnant again.

**MAURA:** Go way, that one? Again? So who's the father this time?

**SEAMUS:** Don't tell anyone. Some priest out about Barnagrane.

**MAURA:** What?

**CANON:** *Sitting up suddenly*

Aye. I heard that too! Father Anthony Redmond. Sure they say that man has a child in every parish in Ulster. You wouldn't know what to believe. I say you wouldn't know what to believe.

*There is a shocked silence. Then he conks out again.*

*Maura and Seamus hasten off to one side.*

**MAURA:** Do you think did he hear any of that?

**SEAMUS:** Ach not at all. That anaesthetic is terrible strong. He won't remember anything. Very sad about poor old Canon Loughran all the same. And I hear he's not to be told.

**MAURA:** Naw. Strictly no word is to be said. Y'know, I think it's not fair.

**SEAMUS:** About the canon?

**MAURA:** Naw. About poor Bertie. Bertie is in great demand when there's bins to be emptied or messages to run. He's a good man, God help him.

*They exit.*

*Bertie Brown creeps out from under the Canon's bed.*

**BERTIE:** I'm a good man alright. A good man so please you. You don't get rid of poor Bertie that aisy. Matron thinks I'm below in the morgue cleaning up a dead man. Matron might be wrong.

*He stands and surveys the Canon.*

Poor oul' Canon Loughran. You were very good to me, Father. Not like some people round here, so please you.

*The Canon wakes up.*

**CANON:** What, what, what? Where am I? What's goin' on? Who's that?

**BERTIE:** Canon Loughran. It's me! Bertie Brown, so please you. You're in the hospital. You've had your operation.

**CANON:** What operation?

**BERTIE:** The operation for your cancer, Father.

**CANON:** Oh God, aye. How did it go Bertie?

**BERTIE:** Well you're not supposed to be told. But I hear it didn't go so well. I hear you'll be below in Heaven in about a fortnight, Father.

*The Canon faints.*

*Matron enters.*

**MATRON:** Bertie Brown! You little vagrant. Did I not send you out to the morgue.

**BERTIE:** *Ducks away from her as she chases him around the bed.*

## *Connected*

## *Intermission Complete*

I'm not dead yet, Matron. I'll be in that morgue soon enough. And I'll be in Laturcan graveyard long enough! Like you and all the rest of them, so please you. Catch me if you can!

**MATRON:** Bertie. I'm puttin' you out of the hospital until these important visitors are gone. That's all.

**BERTIE:** Too late Matron. The Eagle has landed. There, they're coming in the door behind you. (*An orderly removes the bed hastily*) But I promise I'll be good... So please you!

*He slips over to one side.*

*From the rear, the entourage of VIPs along with Philippa Clancy enters.*

**MATRON:** Ah! come in, come in. You're all very welcome.

*A formal silence falls.*

*Phillipa takes a group shot.*

*Matron begins the speeches*

**MATRON:** Ladies and gentlemen. Three years ago this hospital faced the very real threat of closure. Today, we have turned the corner and are delighted to welcome our distinguished guests to the opening of our new day care unit. May I introduce the woman without whose dedication, none of us would be here today. Please welcome Councillor Sarah Green.

*Councillor Green goes to the podium.*

**CLR GREEN:** Thank you for those kind words, Matron. Commissioner, Minister, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. It is a great privilege for me to come before you today to speak as we celebrate the fruits of our labour over the past few years. Three years ago our hospital's future was doomed. Cutbacks and closures were the order of the day and this much-needed community facility was in danger of being killed off. But the people of County Monaghan have shown again that they have what it takes to determine their own future, a lot of hard work, courage, patience and perseverance, not to mention an endless supply of energy and enthusiasm.

*There is a murmur of 'Hear, Hear' and a round of applause.*



I would like to thank the wonderful people of County Monaghan for their support for my campaigns over recent years. I would also like to thank the dedicated staff of the hospital here, who go above and beyond the call of duty and who enjoy a sense of pride in their workplace.

**BERTIE:** *shouts*

Hear, hear!!

*All look disapprovingly at him.*

**CLR GREEN:**

I am sure they will continue to meet the needs of our people with the highest of standards and the most caring of attitudes. I would now like to call upon the European Commissioner, Franz Peter Rosenhosen to say a few words.

## *Scene 15*

*Susan's House 4.30 p.m.*

*Susan arrives home.*

*There is a note for her.*

*She picks it up and reads it silently.*

*Her mother's voice is heard reading the contents.*

**CLR GREEN:** *(voiceover)*

Susan! Daddy and I won't be back till late. I left a pizza in the fridge to microwave. There's £20 on the drinks bar if you decide to go into town. Bring in the washing from the line and don't forget to tape the six o' clock news. Mum. P.S. Leave a copy of your results on the table.

*She crumples up the note and sticks into the pocket of her coat.*

*She walks off.*

*Connected*  
*Scene 16*

*Intermission Complete*

*The Dressing Room at Clontibret 6.00 p.m.*

*James enters alone.*

*He drops his kit bag on the ground and sits down.*

*He is a bit unsteady from the drink he has had.*

*He takes off his postman's jacket and folds it and puts it into the bag.*

*He takes out his tracksuit top and pulls this on, to keep warm.*

*Now he removes his jersey and togs reverently and lays them down on the bench.*

*Then he takes out his football boots and begins to unlace them.*

*Billy Mc Cabe, the team manager enters.*

**JAMES:** *slightly slurring his speech.*

Ah Billy. Hows it going?

**BILLY:**

Well James, are you ready for this match?

**JAMES:**

Aye, near enough it.

**BILLY:**

Have you been drinkin'?

**JAMES:**

I had a quick one.

**BILLY:**

A quick bucketful more like.

**JAMES:**

I'm alright but.

**BILLY:**

I can't let you play in that condition. You wouldn't be hitting the ball. More like it would be hitting you.

**JAMES:**

Ah for Jaysus sake, I only had one!

**BILLY:**

Go on home to frig. You're a walking disaster. Go on! You were on your last warning anyway. Think you can turn up and train when the notion takes you. Go on, out of me sight.

**JAMES:**

I will. I didn't want to be part of a losing team anyway.

## *Intermission Complete*

## *Connected*

**BILLY:** You watch your mouth. You were a nice fellow to you turned into a drunkard.

*James picks up his gear and walks away.*

**JAMES:** Manager me ass. You couldn't manage a henhouse.

## *Scene 17*

*The Top of the Town Hotel 7.00 p.m.*

*Mary Ann Mc Cluskey enters Hoovering.  
Kevin enters and tries to get her attention.*

**KEVIN:** Excuse me! Excuse me!

*She switches off the Hoover, just as Kevin roars out.* Excuse me!!!

**MARY ANN:** No need to shout!

**KEVIN:** Sorry! Kevin Reilly's my name. I'm supposed to be starting here as the new night manager. I was to report to Mr. Crowe for training in.

**MARY ANN:** Kevin is it? Mary-Ann Mc Cluskey, restaurant manager. I'm afraid you're in at the deep end on your own, Kevin. Ned Crowe was to have worked with you to show you the ropes, but he got called away. His wife has been rushed in a month early to have a baby. I was just filling in till you came. I'll basically tell you what you will be doing and I'll show you round. You'll have to rely on your own initiative after that.

**KEVIN:** Fine. What do I do first?

**MC CLUSKEY:** Right, well first things first. Put in that shirt tail and straighten that dicky bow.

**KEVIN:** Sorry. Sorry. Th'oul man was in the bathroom half the evenin' and I was late gettin' ready. I'm really sorry so I am.

**MARY-ANN:** Now, what do you do? Number one, the lobby has to be hoovered. Number two, the resident's bar has to be opened. Number three, keep an eye on the lounge. There's two bad

## *Connected*

- pups in it. They're reaching behind the bar and helping themselves from the pint taps.
- KEVIN: No problem. No problem at all, at all.
- MARY-ANN: Now Kevin. Clip this on your belt and if anybody is giving you hassle around the hotel, security will be able to get to you.
- KEVIN: Mrs Mc Cluskey. Why have I to clip a calculator to me belt?
- MARY-ANN: That's a walkie talkie, son.
- KEVIN: I never seen one! Is that what they look like? Is that all I have to look out for?
- MARY-ANN: You might have a wee bit to learn, Kevin. Do you think you'll be able to manage?
- KEVIN: I'd say I will.
- MARY-ANN: And, you should go out about half-ten and make yourself known to the doormen. They know their own routine. Just leave them to it. Right, good luck.
- KEVIN: *Calls to her as she leaves.*  
Thanks Mrs Mc Cluskey.  
*To himself.* I wonder how this hoover works.  
*He tries and fails. He carries it off, calling.*  
Mrs Mc Cluskey! Mrs Mc Cluskey! ...

## *Intermission Complete*

## *Interlude 3*

*The Big Match at Clontibret GAA Grounds 7.30*

*A ball is thrown over and back across the empty stage from one wing to the other, accompanied by a chorus of cheers.*

*The match is played out in a humorous mime, with Philippa taking photos.*

*There are scenes of players limbering up and spitting, a determined attack by Bellacrowe, a Bellacrowe goal and an invasion of the pitch by a fan.*

*Each moment is introduced by a referee's whistle.*

*The fan is left alone on stage dancing and roaring.*

*He suddenly finds himself alone and says to the audience, "Bejays, there'll be quare crack in Bellacrowe the 'night."*

*Then he runs off.*

## *Scene 18*

*Susan's House 8.30 p.m.*

*Susan and her Reflection enter.*

*They wheel on the family drinks bar and leave it to one side.*

*They are all dolled up, ready to go out.*

*They face each other standing, as though at a hall mirror.*

*Susan makes final adjustments to her hair, mirrored by the Reflection.*

**SUSAN:** Very good of Mammy to leave me £20 for anything I might need. I know exactly what I need.

*The Reflection stays, combing her hair.  
Susan walks over to the bar.*

**SUSAN:** And - just in case I haven't enough in the twenty. . .

*She takes a bottle of vodka from behind the bar.*

Yes. This is exactly what I need to enjoy myself tonight. Nobody will notice it gone. They'll think Dad took it.

*She glances at herself one more time in the mirror before she leaves. Then she goes.*

**REFLECTION:** *waves goodbye after Susan is gone.*

Good night, little Susan. Enjoy your night. Enjoy your few drinks. They will be your last for a very long time.

*She combs her hair for another few moments and then leaves.*

*Connected*  
*Scene 19*

*Intermission Complete*

*Joe's Pub in Bellacrowe 9.00 p.m.*

*James enters, staggering drunkenly.*

*Joe is behind the bar, polishing glasses.*

*He raises one eyebrow.*

*Two lads, Laurence Mc Greevy and Andy O' Hare, are at a table drinking.*

**JAMES:** *Slurring.*

How's Joe. A double Paddy there, Joe, please.

**JOE:** Have you not had enough, James?

**JAMES:** I'll tell you when I've had enough.

**JOE:** There's no call to lose the head. Will a mineral not do you?

**JAMES:** Are you goin' to give me a drink or not?

**JOE:** I think you've had enough.

*James stumbles away from the bar.*

**LAURENCE:** Were you not supposed to be playin' the night, James?

**JAMES:** Billy Mc Cabe reckoned I'd had one too many.

**ANDY:** That's a pity. You will be missed in the forwards.

**JAMES:** I don't give a shite.

*Swings around again.*

Joe, where's me drink?

**JOE:** *Moving out to prepare for ejecting James.*

I can't give you one, James.

**JAMES:** Ach shite. This is only a hole of a pub anyway. I wouldn't drink your whiskey anyway. It's probably diluted.

*He departs.*

*Joe says nothing but returns behind the bar.*

*Susan and Mary enter from the opposite side to James exit.*

*They stand to one side.*

**MARY:** Right, where's the sexy postman you're supposed to be meeting. Or was it an airline pilot? Or an astronaut?

**SUSAN:** Oh, shut up. Quit slagging. He said he'd be here at nine o' clock. No sign of him yet. he'll probably not show up. See if I care. Plenty more fish in the sea. Go on up you. See if we can get served.

**MARY:** Why me? Why don't you go up?

**SUSAN:** Because if I go up, they will recognise me from my mother being a councillor and all. That's why. Now, go on.

*Mary walks up to the bar.*

**MARY:** Two woodies, please.

**JOE:** Sorry. Youse are under-age. You won't get served here.

**MARY:** What do you mean under-age. We're both twenty one. It's her twenty first birthday. That's why we're out!

**JOE:** Well, there's better places in the town for such important occasions you'll get no drink here unless you have I.D.

**MARY:** I never heard the like.

**JOE:** Well, there's a first time for everything. No more about it. Youse'll have to leave.

*Mary returns to Susan.*

**MARY:** No go.

**SUSAN:** It's OK. I brought a bottle of vodka, just in case.

**MARY :** Yeah. Come on. We'll go to the park. And after, I know a pub where we can get served.

*The Bouncers Get Ready: 10.00 p.m.*

*"Ballroom Blitz" by The Sweet plays.*

*Big Pat and Barney are seen in separate parts of the stage dressing up in the monkey suits, warming up physically, shadow boxing, Kung-Fu-ing, etc. and then they leave to go to their positions as guardians of the peace at the disco door.*

## *Scene 20*

*A Park Bench 10.30 p.m.*

*Mary and Susan enter singing merrily.*

**MARY/ SUSAN:** "So this is how it feels to be lonely,  
This is how it feels to be small,  
This is how it feels when your world is nothing at all..."

**SUSAN:** There's a park bench over there. Come on we'll sit on it.

*They sit down.*

*Mary continues to sing.*

*Susan gets the vodka bottle out of her bag.*

**SUSAN:** Did you bring the coke?

**MARY:** Oh no. I forgot!

**SUSAN:** Oh well, we'll have to drink it neat, so.

*She takes a long draught from the bottle and passes it to Mary.*

*Mary attempts to do the same but chokes, and sips instead.*

*Susan takes another draught.*

**SUSAN:** This is better than coffee afternoons.



**MARY:** Aye. *(She drinks and giggles)* Tea with teacher!

*They both laugh.*

*Susan drinks again.*

*There is a pause.*

**MARY:** Alice Reilly was asking about you today.

**SUSAN:** What was she saying?

**MARY:** Nothing much. She was just worried about you. She thought you had lost interest in things.

**SUSAN:** What would she know? anyway, we're not here to talk about people like her.

**MARY:** She's only worried about you Susan.

**SUSAN:** Whose side are you on? Hers or mine?

**MARY:** Yours of course. But she might have a point, Susan.

**SUSAN:** Thanks a lot, Mary. I thought you were my friend. Well, with friends like you who needs enemies? If you're going to hassle me, leave, 'cos I don't need it. I can go to the disco on my own. I don't need you or anybody.

*Susan turns her head and ignores Mary.*

**MARY:** Susan. Don't be like that.... *(Susan ignores her)*

Come on we'll go to the Cavern.... *(Susan does not respond.)*

Alright! Be like that so! I'm off!

*Mary leaves.*

*Susan raises the bottle and drinks from it as though it were a soft drink.*

*During the next scene, Susan remains unobtrusively and dimly lit in the background.*

*Connected*  
*Scene 21*

*Intermission Complete*

*Joe's Pub 11.00 p.m.*

*Back in Joe's, Laurence and Andy are sitting chatting at a table at front of stage.*

*Susan is visible on her park bench in the background.*

*The men are joined by Alice Reilly and her friend Karen Mc Entee, who come over with their drinks in hand.*

*Alice and Karen are wearing Bellacrowe supporters' hats.*

**LAURENCE:** Alice Reilly! Jaysus Alice how's it goin'? Here, come on and join us.

**ALICE:** Well Laurence, hello Andy. Yiz know Karen.

**ANDY:** We do aye. Sit down. Some game, wasn't it?

**KAREN:** Some game alright. Jaysus that Clontibret is one dirty team.

**ALICE:** They should have all been set off. Who was the ref?

**LAURENCE:** I don't know. Some boy from out about Clontibret I'd say. He was

**ANDY:** Still and all there was no need for Billy Mc Cabe to run out and box him in the lug. That sort of thing from a manager is very poor example.

**LAURENCE:** How about a song, Alice? A victory song. A Monaghan song.

**ALICE:** I don't know any Monaghan songs. Is there one?

**KAREN:** What about th'awn Patrick Kavanagh poem you used to sing?

**ALICE:** Well, it's more of a Dublin song, but a Monaghan writer. Alright so. On Raglan Road.

*Lights focus in on Alice. She sings the first and final verses of "On Raglan Road".*

*Gradually the lighting cross fades to Susan on her bench.*

*As the first verse approaches its conclusion, Susan is seen draining off the last dregs of the bottle of vodka.*

## *Intermission Complete*

## *Connected*

*During the final verse, she is seen rising from her park bench and falling. She tries to stand up and falls again. Eventually she rises and steadies herself and staggers off.*

*Alice concludes the song and her friends applaud.*

*Lighting returns to their group and then fades out slowly.*

## *Scene 22*

*At the disco door 11.30 p.m.*

*Barney and Big Pat are at their station.*

*During the following sequence, they 'vett' various patrons (none of whom we actually see), admitting some, refusing others.*

- BIG PAT:** That's a cold night, begod!
- BARNEY:** A bit
- BIG PAT:** There's a draft of low pressure on the wireless. It could rain.
- BARNEY:** Could rain.
- Pause*
- BIG PAT:** I hear there's a new manager.
- BARNEY:** Aye. A new manager.
- BIG PAT:** Was there a wedding here yesterday?
- BARNEY:** Aye. Wedding here yesterday.
- BIG PAT:** Was there a big crowd?
- BARNEY:** A few.
- BIG PAT:** Was there much drink taken?
- BARNEY:** A sup.

*Connected*

**BIG PAT:** Did it go on for long?

**BARNEY:** A while.

*Pause*

**BIG PAT:** With these exam results out, it could be a busy night.

**BARNEY:** Might be.

**BIG PAT:** *To a patron.* Well gentlemen. Are yiz bravely? Go on ahead.  
*To Barney.* Doesn't he live out beside you? What's his name?

**BARNEY:** Dunno.

**BIG PAT:** Over beside the football field. Your house backs onto the football field doesn't it? You walk home across it.

**BARNEY:** That's true.

**BIG PAT:** Isn't he not Treanor? Or is it Taylor? Begod you must know him. Isn't he?

**BARNEY:** Dunno a shite. *(To some patrons)* Have yiz I.D. girls? Go on ahead.

**BIG PAT:** Not much to the skirts they make nowadays. I remember when skirts were skirts. They were five times as deep as that. What do you say?

**BARNEY:** Deep surely.

*They stand in silence. Kevin Reilly comes out of the hotel.*

**KEVIN:** Good evening, gentlemen. Wasn't that a glorious day?

**BARNEY:** Hello.

**KEVIN:** I take it youse are part of the night staff?

**BIG PAT:** Well we don't be out here in the mornin's. You're the new manager, are you?

**KEVIN:** I am. Kevin Reilly. I started the night.

*Awkwardly offering his hand.* I'm pleased to make your acquaintance.

*Intermission Complete*

*The bouncers don't take up the offer.* So, eh, who's who, boys?

**BIG PAT:** I'm Patrick Mc Meel.

**KEVIN:** Pleased to meet you Patrick.

*No move from Barney.*

**BIG PAT:** And this is Barney Murphy.

**KEVIN:** Barney Murphy. Barney Murphy. My God. Do you know what it is? That name rings a bell! Are you...? Are you ...?

*He receives a cold look from Barney.*

Or eh maybe I'm wrong. Good evening Barney.

**BARNEY:** Hello.

**KEVIN:** Well, gentlemen. I hope we can all enjoy a good working relationship and that this business will go from strength to strength.

*Silence. He looks at his watch.*

Well, I have to get back inside. I've important business to attend to. I'll be only too glad to drop back later, when I have more time, and find out more about yiz! So long for now!

*He goes to leave.*

**BARNEY / PAT:** *Simultaneously.* Night! / Good'luck!

**KEVIN:** *Turning back.* If you need any assistance, don't hesitate to call me!

**BIG PAT:** *Drily* I'd say we'll be alright.

**KEVIN:** *Holding up his walkie talkie.*

I'll be on call all evening. I'm connected. On this wireless.

**BIG PAT:** You're connected. That's good to know.

*Kevin leaves.*

**BIG PAT:** Well, he seems a nice, talkative sort of a fellow.

**BARNEY:** A bag of wind if you ask me.

## *Connected*

**BIG PAT:** *To some patrons.*

Sorry gents. Regulars only tonight.

*The two men close ranks.*

**BARNEY:** *Quietly and very firmly.*

Regulars only.

*They remain tense for a moment, then they relax as the potential trouble moves on.*

**BIG PAT:** Not gettin' any warmer.

**BARNEY:** Naw.

**BIG PAT:** So I wonder will this new manager be any better than the last?

**BARNEY:** He might be.

**BIG PAT:** He mightn't last a month. What do you think?

**BARNEY:** Dunno.

**BIG PAT:** I wonder will there be any action the night?

**BARNEY:** Dunno.

**BIG PAT:** Ah well. We'll just have to wait and see. I suppose. We'll just have to wait and see.

## *Interlude 5*

*Inside the disco 11.55pm*

*Dark, flashing disco lighting.*

*The Big Bopper is spinning the discs.*

**BOB:** One time. Bob Kane, here, The Big Bopper, spinning the discs here at the Spellbound club in the Top of the Town Hotel. This one is for all the boys and girls celebrating their Junior Cert results tonight.

*The entire cast enters from the wings and dances to a current club dance number.*

*The bouncers dance with one another as though they were just ordinary patrons of the club.*

*Then they go on indoor patrol around the dancers.*

*This is sustained for about one minute.*

*As the music starts to fade all except the bouncers dance off.*

## *Scene 23*

*At the disco door 12.00 midnight*

*The bouncers are at their peacekeeping post.*

*All is quiet as they survey the horizons.*

**BIG PAT:** Fair crowd in already.

**BARNEY:** Aye.

**BIG PAT:** Still, I'd have thought there'd be more. With the exams and all. And Bellacrowe after winning the semi-final.

**BARNEY:** Aye.

*Phillipa Clancy walks onstage and sees the bouncers.*

*She seems to have an idea.*

*Very discreetly, she positions herself where she can take photos without them seeing her.*

**BIG PAT:** I suppose it's the middle of the week.

**BARNEY:** I suppose it is.

*There is a silence.*

*Phillipa takes a photo without flash.*

*The bouncers freeze for a moment and she moves to a better position.*

*She takes a second shot and they unfreeze.*

*Connected*

**BIG PAT:**

It was a bad year for silage, I'm just thinkin'.

**BARNEY:**

Was it?

**BIG PAT:**

Fierce. Rotten silage is all there was. Who's this comin'?  
Some girl. Jaysus look at the cut of her!

*Susan staggers on singing very drunkenly.*

**SUSAN:**

So this is how it feels to be lonely.  
This is how it feels to be small.

*Philippa takes her picture.*

*All freeze for a moment.*

*She takes a second picture and they unfreeze.*

**SUSAN:** *sings.*

I'm gonna get myself connected. Gonna get myself  
connected.

*She goes to walk between the bouncers.*

**BIG PAT:**

Here, here, here. Hould on girl. Where do you think you're  
going?

**SUSAN:**

Inside. To me friends.

**BARNEY:**

You're goin' nowhere Miss. You're in no fit condition to go  
anywhere.

**SUSAN:**

What do you mean?

**BIG PAT:**

It's regulars only. You're under-age.

**SUSAN:**

Me friends are all in there. Same age as me.

**BIG PAT:**

Do you have I.D.? Show us your I.D.

**SUSAN:**

Here. Let me in.

*She tries to push between the bouncers.*

*Philippa takes a photo.*

*All freeze.*

*Intermission Complete*



*She takes a second picture and they unfreeze.*

**BARNEY:**

*Gently blocking her way.*

Miss. You're out of order.

**BIG PAT:**

Get on home with you.

**SUSAN:** *Getting difficult.*

Get outa me road yiz big bullies. Let me in. Let me in.

*She starts to flay about with her hands and fists.*

*The bouncers restrain her.*

*Philippa takes a photo.*

*All freeze.*

*During the freeze, Alice Reilly and Laurence Mc Greevy enter singing "On Raglan Road".*

*They see the melee and abruptly stop singing.*

**ALICE:**

Lord, what's going on here? Some trouble be the look of it. My God, isn't that Susan Green?

*Philippa takes a second picture and the scene unfreezes.*

**BARNEY:**

Look girl. You're not gettin' in and that's all there is to it. Now get along with you before we call the guards.

**ALICE:**

How dare you manhandle that girl! What's going on? Barney Murphy, is this how you go about your work?

**BARNEY:**

Miss Reilly. Don't jump to any conclusions. Is this girl a student of yours?

**ALICE:**

She is certainly.

**BIG PAT:**

Well look at her. She's blind drunk.

**SUSAN:** *Slurred.*

I'm not drunk.

**ALICE:**

Susan? What have you been drinking?

**SUSAN:**

You mind your own business. I'm not drunk.

*Kevin Reilly comes out of the hotel.*

*Connected*

**KEVIN:**

Is there some trouble, gents? Alice? What's goin' on?

**BIG PAT:**

This girl here is trying to get in to the disco, but she's underage and she's intoxicated.

**ALICE:**

Well maybe you should let her into a room somewhere and get her a cup of coffee.

**BARNEY:**

Sorry Miss. That's not house policy. We can't let her in.

**KEVIN:**

Mind you, maybe we should give her a cup of tay. Look at the cut of her.

**BARNEY:**

With due respect Mr. Reilly, it isn't house policy for the manager to overturn the doorman's decision either.

*Susan takes a sudden run between the bouncers.*

**BIG PAT:**

Here, here, here.

*He reaches out to restrain her.*

*Philippa takes a photo.*

*All freeze.*

*She takes a second picture and they unfreeze.*

*Susan collapses onto the floor.*

**LAURENCE:**

Jesus Christ, what have you done?

**BIG PAT:**

I never touched her. Here stand back, stand back.

*They all gather round Susan's body which is quivering.*

*Big Pat kneels over her.*

**BIG PAT:**

She's in a bad way. Call an ambulance, quick.

*Kevin re-enters the hotel.*

*Philippa emerges from her hiding place and openly takes a photo of Susan on the ground.*

*The action continues without a freeze.*

**BARNEY:**

Who are you?

*Intermission Complete*

**PHILIPPA:** Just a woman with a camera.

*She exits.*

*A blue flashing ambulance light is seen from the wings.*

*Two paramedics, Ricky Noonan and Stephen Casey enter with a stretcher.*

*Kevin returns.*

*The lights fade very slowly as they lift her and carry her off.*

*The remaining lines are spoken in a ritualistic way, like a distant memory, as the opening dream music floats in again.*

**RICKY:** Is there someone who can travel in the ambulance with her?

**ALICE:** Yes. I can.

**RICKY:** Lift her gently.

**STEPHEN:** She'll need oxygen.

**BIG PAT:** I never laid a finger on her.

**BARNEY:** She has a lot of drink taken. She may have taken ecstasy for all we know.

**LAURENCE:** I hope you didn't hit her, Barney Murphy. People in this town have had enough of your kind of law and order.

**BARNEY:** What do you mean? You don't know what you're talkin' about. I never touched her.

**BIG PAT:** She collapsed from drink and maybe drugs.

**KEVIN:** Poor wee girl. I better call the owner, Mrs Mc Cluskey. Who is she?

**BARNEY:** No idea.

**LAURENCE:** She's Sarah Green's daughter. There'll be some scandal.

**ALICE:** Please God, she'll be alright.

*Various voices whisper, echoing this line:*

*Connected*

*Please God, she'll be alright.*

*Please God, she'll be alright.*

*Please God, she'll be alright.*

*Blackout. Interval.*

*Intermission Complete*

## *Part 2*

### *Scene 24*

*St. Dympna's Next Morning*

*The music of the opening dream is playing.*

*The full house lights are on.*

*As the audience is settling back into place, Alice Reilly stands at the front of the stage and addresses them as though speaking to a school assembly.*

*Mary Treanor and Breda Wood are in the audience, but not in school uniform.*

*The men who played Madge and Rosie earlier are there too, but not dressed as girls.*

*The lights focus in on Alice as she speaks.*

**ALICE:** Good morning. Good morning girls. Girls, could I have your full attention, please? Thank you. Last night - as some of you will have heard by now - last night, a dreadful incident occurred outside the top of the Town hotel. I happened to be there and was a witness to the whole thing. A pupil of this school, Susan Green, is seriously ill in hospital as a result of this incident. I have just come from the hospital. Susan is still unconscious and has been for nine hours now. She is fighting for her life.

*The music stops.*

*She is silent for a moment.*      Yes?

**BREDA:** What exactly happened Miss?

**ALICE:** Well what have you heard?

**BREDA:** Well, some people said she took drugs. She took Ecstasy.

*There is a silence. Mary Treanor speaks out.*

**MARY:** Miss, she didn't take drugs. She never took Ecstasy. What happened, Miss?

ALICE:

Nobody knows for sure what happened. Even those of us that were there. And there will be a lot of rumour and speculation. This is a small community and it seems that rumours have been heard already. It is important not to jump to conclusions. All we know for certain is that the bouncers would not let Susan into the disco because it seems she had been drinking, and in the argument that followed, Susan appears to have collapsed.

MADGE:

Is she going to be alright, Miss?

ALICE:

We don't know. The doctors don't know. She is getting the best medical attention available. We will have to wait and see. Girls, whatever the full story, I would like to say a few words to you. One or two of you know, I work as a voluntary counsellor for Aware, an organisation for people who suffer from depression. Now, if any of you were ever in any difficulty, I'd like to think you might come and talk to me. Or if you were embarrassed to talk to a teacher, there are other counsellors in the town and the surrounding towns.

*She hands a bunch of leaflets to an audience member at each side to pass around.*

I have a couple of leaflets with information here that I will give out and I've left more out in the lobby.

*Very directly to audience.*

I'd ask everyone here to take one home as you're leaving - even if you yourself don't need help, you might be able to direct someone who does.

ROSIE:

Miss, was Susan depressed?

ALICE:

I'm not saying for a moment that Susan was depressed, although I did think she was down of herself. And I am not jumping to any conclusions. Just making some general points. If you are feeling down, one thing is for certain. Drink is not going to cure your problems. And again I would say, if you, or any young person you know, has difficulties that are specifically related to alcohol, there are help lines and services - Alcoholics Anonymous in particular are very good with young people whose lives are affected by alcohol. Remember, as the saying goes, a problem shared is a problem halved.

We don't have to suffer in silence. Has anyone any further questions?

Silence

I think we should say a short prayer for Susan's recovery. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen . . .

## **Blackout**

*The dream music fades in again and holds until the journalists are in place for the next scene.*

## *Scene 25*

*Office of the Northern Tribune. Later that day*

*Jim Mulligan, editor of the Northern Tribune enters with a chair.*

*He sits down and looks impatiently at his watch.*

*After a few moments, three journalists, Joan Tynan, Yvonne Farmer and Robbie Myles, along with Phillipa Clancy enter, carrying chairs.*

*They arrange themselves in a semi-circle.*

**JIM:** Can I just begin by saying: I agreed to these weekly editorial meetings at your request, in order to involve journalists more in the paper's content. The least you might do is turn up on time.

*The journalists apologise meekly.*

Right, what's on the agenda?

**JOAN:** Just the two items, Jim. Just the main story and Phillipa's photographic special.

**JIM:** Well, the main story is straightforward enough. The opening of the hospital wing. Maybe we should start with the photos. Excellent work, Phillipa. As usual. You got good use out of your telescope.

**PHILIPPA:**

Thanks Jim.

**JIM:**

The shots from the mart are brilliant. Took me right back. I started out reporting from the marts.

*The photos are passed around.***ROBBIE:**

Did you ever see anything like it? Who's th'awn boy with the cigar?

**JIM:**

That's Bartley Rooney. He's a donkey dealer from out about Bragan. A rare character. Some of the football images are very strong too. A dirty game, by the look of it. That's a great shot of Billy Mc Cabe boxing the ref. And the butcher shop. Most humorous.

*The two women journalists are becoming uneasy.**The editor, however, is enjoying the photos thoroughly*

George and Prudence Mc Ginty! That pair turn up at every opening or event going. Have done for forty years. Their house must be full of free gifts and spot prizes. She's the sourest oul' cow God ever put on this earth. I'd say between the lot, you'll easily fill the page. A great document of life in County Monaghan!

*Short silence.***JOAN:**

Jim. Are you not going to speak about the pictures outside the Top of the Town?

**JIM:***Losing his good humour.*

What is there to say? I believe there's a girl in a coma above in the County Hospital. Some family in private distress. Hardly the kind of thing we are going to put into a celebration of life in the community.

**YVONNE:**

It's hardly just any family in distress, Jim, is it?

**JIM:**

How do you mean?

**JOAN:**

Are you trying to tell us you don't know who the girl is?

**JIM:**

Do you'se know?

**JOAN:**

Do you know, Jim? Well, do you?



- JIM:** I have heard some rumours, aye, nothing concrete.
- YVONNE:** Well it's confirmed. She was prayed for at the school this morning. It's Sarah Green's daughter.
- JIM:**  
*Defensively* So? It's still a private affair for the family. Not our style, girls. Not our style.
- YVONNE:** I don't see any girls here, Jim. Nobody has said anything about running the story yet. Not that I heard anyway. But how about a debate?
- JOAN:** Councillor Green isn't behind the door when it comes to criticizing young people from the town for teenage drinking and ecstasy. And we've backed her up all the way. Here's her own daughter, the daughter of a middling well-off farmer in a coma from drink and suddenly it's not news?
- ROBBIE:** Ah houl' on a minute. You're not talking about publishing them photos are youse?
- YVONNE:** We're not talking about anything. We're asking when is drug abuse a news item and when is it not.
- JIM:** Listen here. Firstly, nobody knows yet what's wrong with her. This talk about ecstasy is pure speculation. Looking at these photos, you'd be forgiven for thinking the bouncers knocked her out. Is anyone here thinking of that? Are we going to suggest that a man like Big Pat Mc Meel could have struck a child?
- YVONNE:** Whatever about Big Pat, I wouldn't put it past that Barney Murphy. He's a shady sort of a man.
- JIM:** Can we get back to the point? Who is saying we should publish this story and these photographs? Philippa, what do you think?
- PHILIPPA:** Well thanks for asking! I think they should be published. Are we going to print a P.R. job for the county with funny men at cattle marts or are we going to give a balanced picture of the real world. Kids do drugs in this county. Kids fall down drunk in this town. Surely the paper should be reporting that.

## *Connected*

**JIM:**

We do report it. Every fuckin' week we have court reports about drunkenness and vandalism. You'd think it was New York we were reporting from. But at least we're reporting about solid convictions. We'll publish this kind of speculation over my dead body.

**JOAN:**

Jim. If it was a young skinhead lad from Riverside, would you be as shy about it? Sarah Green said in the Council chamber only last week that the parents in Riverside should be held responsible for their teenagers' behaviour. So why are you protecting her?

**JIM:**

*Very angry now*

I am not protecting Sarah Green. I am not protecting her farmer husband. I am applying a code of decency and honour that has served this newspaper well for one hundred and more years.

**PHILIPPA:**

Aye. And its advertisers too. Don't rock the boat Jim.

**ROBBIE:**

You're only young, Philippa. The hardest thing a journalist has to learn is when not to run with a sensational story. Who benefits? You do. Will the community?

**YVONNE:**

They just might. They just might wake up and start asking questions about themselves, if they see a respectable young girl falling down drunk. Where are the youngsters getting the drink? When are we going to do an investigation into the pubs that serve underage drinkers?

**JIM:**

Look. These are valid issues. And I propose that we return to them at our next policy review meeting. But I will not stand over using hurtful photographs, taken in sneaky circumstances, of a girl that might die before the paper gets printed, in order to prove a point about teenage drinking!

**PHILLIPA:**

Taken in sneaky circumstances??? I resent that. What am I supposed to do? Get permission for every photo? If a car bomb goes off will I ask the bomber's permission? Will you hold back my picture of Bartley the Donkey Dealer till we get his permission. I resent that remark.

**JIM:**

Look. I'm not running with them photos and I'm not running with that story and that's that. This meeting is now over.

*He rises and leaves.*

## *Intermission Complete*

*The other journalists leave after him, leaving Philippa alone on stage with three chairs.*

*She is very angry.*

*She carries the chairs off one by one, shoving them into the wings.*

*She returns and takes out her mobile phone.*

*She dials a number.*

**PHILIPPA:**

Hello. Can you put me through to the pictures editor please? ... Sunday Independent ... Yes, Sunday. ... It's Philippa Clancy. From the Northern Tribune. ... Hello John? John, it's Philippa Clancy here, Bellacrowe. The Northern Tribune. We met at the Awards last year. I was runner up in the regional ... Why, thank you. ... Yes. I have been taking a few interesting ones since you ask. You know Sarah Green, the independent councillor - she campaigned for Bellacrowe hospital. She's talking of seeking a Dail seat next time out? Well I have some photos that might interest you . . .

*Music comes in loudly. "Gonna get myself connected" by the Stereo M.C.s.*

*We hear snatches of her words above the music.*

**PHILIPPA:**

Her daughter.

That's right.

Outside a disco.

Meet you tomorrow.

Temple Bar Hotel.

Good.

*She dances off to the beat of the music.*

*Connected*  
*Scene 26*

*Intermission Complete*

*Big Pat's House One week later the kitchen in Big Pat's house.*

*James is sitting, staring at nothing, doing nothing.*

*Big Pat enters going about his business.*

*He is carrying a tin bucket. He puts it down with a clatter.*

*Then he moves it to another place, again making a loud noise.*

*James looks very tense. Pat moves the bucket a third time and James explodes.*

**JAMES:** Would you quit foosterin' and give me a bit of peace.

*Big Pat's patience is exhausted. He rises to James.*

**BIG PAT:** Me foosterin' is it? Five years you're sitting there on your arse since you left school and you do nothing but mope and whinge . . . God if you didn't get a day or two a month at the post office work you'd never leave the house except to drink your dole. And now you've lost your place on the football team. It's out looking for a job you should be.

**JAMES:** Like your job? Be a bouncer? Hit a wee girl at a disco door?

**BIG PAT:** You know -I never touched that girl. She had too much to drink.

**JAMES:** That's not what the paper says. Look for yourself. Not a bit of wonder I go nowhere. Everyone pointing at me. I hear them talking.

**BIG PAT:** Rubbish. You wouldn't want to believe all you read. It's out looking for a job you should be. Not sitting on your arse reading newspapers.

**JAMES:** That's not true. I've tried everywhere.

**BIG PAT:** Tried? Who'd give you a job? Look at the set of you! You stink of drink and fags. When last did you shave?

**JAMES:** That's right. Pick on me. Ever since Mother died, you pick on me. Nothing I do is right. Even when I played football - "You could do better" or "You could score more". I wish I was dead. Fuck you, you bastard.

*James rushes out and leaves Big Pat deeply upset.*

**BIG PAT:** I never meant to pick on you. I only wanted the best for you. Where did I go wrong? Damnit. It's a tarra ... it's a tarra ...

*Lights fade out.*

## *Scene 27*

*The Hospital. Same day.*

*Bertie Brown enters with a broom.*

**BERTIE:**

*To the audience.*

Have to keep the hospital clean. Matron's away in Dublin the day. Have to make sure the place is clean when she gets back the night.

*He sweeps a bit.*

They're all away the day - all the nurses - except a few emergency staff. Up in Dublin at a meetin' to go on strike. They spend three years campaignin' to keep the hospital open and now they want to go on strike. Makes no sense. Nothin' makes sense.

*He sweeps.*

Poor oul' Canon Loughran was buried durin' the week. Big funeral. I sold a whole box of flowers. I get them from the wards here when the patients be's asleep. And the night the canon died, the hotel manager's wife had twins. Just down the hall there. She was expectin' one and she got a bonus prize. The husband cried the whole night, whatever come over him. I don't know if he was terrible happy or if he was terrible upset. I suppose two when you were expectin' the one would make you cry alright. That was the night they took in that wee girl, the county councillor's daughter, She's in a coma ever since. A full week. She might never come out of it. Might be brain damaged. The paper said her mother never gave the girl any attention and yet the woman has hardly left

## *Connected*

## *Intermission Complete*

her bedside since she come in. It's pitiful to watch her. Nice lady. Everyone's very nice about this hospital. 'Specially the wee men in the kitchen.

*He takes a sandwich out of a tin foil wrapper in his pocket.*

Nice girl down there, Molly Mc Crudden. Gonna marry me, she said. ... Soon as her own husband dies. I'll look forward to that.

*He eats contentedly or a few moments.*

I must go and get me wireless for Bob Kane. I like that boy's programme. I might ring him some night. Tell him all that goes on in the hospital.

*He leaves.*

## *Scene 28*

*Northern Sound Studio Later that evening*

*Bob Kane, Big Pat and Jim Mulligan, Editor, enter and arrange their chairs in an arc at centre stage.*

*The lighting is tightly focussed on their area.*

*Laura Curley, radio producer is on the raised area usually used by Bob.*

*She is wearing headphones.*

**LAURA:** Stand by studio. Right. Everybody in the audience. When the theme music ends, I will do this with my hands.

*She demonstrates a gesture.*

And youse will all applaud. Like the Late Late Show. O.K. Let's try it. Counting down to theme music. four, three, two, one.

*The song "Connected" plays for about twenty seconds.*

Laura gestures for applause.

Two actors who are now hidden in the audience, playing Jack Mc Bride and Philomena Sharkey will lead the applause.

If the audience fails to follow, Laura will encourage them to try again, including getting the sound lined up again.

**BOB:** Hello, good evening and welcome. You're tuned to "Connected", the Bob Kane Talkshow. As usual this show is going out live on Northern Songs FM. We have a studio audience with us and the phone lines are now open on 081-6622 88. Our guests this week are Jim Mulligan, Editor of the Northern Tribune and Patrick ~Mc Meel, better known as Big Pat, a part-time employee of the Tops of the Town Hotel here in Bellacrowe. Firstly, if we could turn to you Jim Mulligan.

*The following few minutes have been left deliberately unscripted.*

*Bob Kane will have a set of prepared questions ready each night for each of his two guests, relating to the Susan Green affair.*

*These may vary slightly from night to night, and the actors will respond as appropriate.*

*After a number of issues have been addressed by both panelists, the producer comes over on the P.A.*

**LAURA:** Bob. Can you take a call. Line One. It's a Prudence Mc Ginty from Ballybay.

**BOB:** Caller on Line One. What is your name please?

*Prudence steps into a spotlight to one side, with a cordless extension at her ear.*

**PRUDENCE:** I just said it to that girl. It's Prudence Mc Ginty of Ballybay.

**BOB:** And what do you want to say to us, Prudence?

**PRUDENCE:** I blame the parents. It's the parents I blame. For young people. I see them below at the shopping centre in Bellacrowe of a Saturday when I go over to shop. Slips of girls out looking at boys and using bad language. Is it any wonder the country's the way it is? It's all drugs nowadays, Bob. Agony is the cause of it!

**BOB:** Agony?

*Connected**Intermission Complete***PRUDENCE:**

Aye. Them tablets.

**BOB:**

You mean Ecstasy. Well thank you very much for those comments caller. Line two?

*Mary Treanor steps into a spotlight with a phone.***MARY:**

Hello Bob?

**BOB:**

Hello caller. You are Connected. Can you tell us your name?

**MARY:**

Mary Treanor is my name. I'm a friend of Susan Green.

**BOB:**

What do you want to say to us, Mary?

**MARY:**

Well firstly, I'm very angry at that lady that was just on. What does she know? Most of the young people I know are not causing trouble. The reason we hang about the shopping centre is cos' there's nowhere else to go. You have to drive to Enniskillen to play a game of bowls. The other thing I want to say once and for all is that Susan Green did not take Ecstasy.

**BOB:**

Well, in fairness now, Mary, nobody said she did.

**MARY:**

No, but they're all as good as saying it. And that Sunday Independent article was full of lies and nonsense. It said Susan was in a coma because of suspected Ecstasy abuse.

**BOB:**

But surely it is possible that Ecstasy might have contributed to the coma. Surely a few drinks would hardly have had such an effect.

**JIM:**

Sorry, Bob, if I could respond to that. You're wrong about that. According to the Alcohol Treatment Unit of the hospital, excessive consumption of alcohol in certain circumstances can bring on a collapse such as this one in question.

**BOB:**

But, is there an Ecstasy scene in Bellacrowe, Mary?

**MARY:**

Well, Bob, I don't do Ecstasy and I can't comment for other people. But I can tell you this. I know more people that have died from drink than from Ecstasy. And they wouldn't be young people. Everyone is getting worked up about Ecstasy because it's a young people's drug.



## *Intermission Complete*

## *Connected*

**BOB:** Twenty people have died from Ecstasy abuse in Ireland, Mary. Are you saying you approve of the drug?

**MARY:** I didn't say that. But I see men of every age urinating on the pavement, rotten with drink. I have a very good friend whose father hits her when he has drink taken. I don't approve of that.

**BOB:** Point taken. Thank you for your call, Mary. Our best wishes to you and your classmates. This is a difficult time for you.

*He disconnects.*

Right, anyone in our audience?

*Two actors have positioned themselves among the audience.*

**JACK:** Bob?

**BOB:** Gentleman over there.

**JACK:** Jack Mc Bride here from Seloo. I'd like to put a question to Big Pat.

**BIG PAT:** Fire away.

*Jack will ask a different unscripted question at each performance.*

*Big Pat responds as appropriate.*

**BOB:** Lady down here at the front.

**PHILOMENA:** My name is Philomena Sharkey. . . .

*Likewise, unscripted questions will be put.*

*After a while, Bob speaks.*

**BOB:** Anyone else in the audience want to get in on this?

*And if indeed anyone in the audience gets into the spirit of the improvisation and throws a question, Big Pat or Jim or Bob will field it.*

*After a while, Laura comes over on the P.A.*

**LAURA:** One more call before the news, Bob. Doesn't want to give his name.

*James steps into a spotlight.*

*Connected*

*Intermission Complete*

**BOB:** Hello. Line one. (*There is a silence*) Hello, caller.

*After a moment James speaks.*

*He sounds very distressed and confused.*

*Some of what he says does not seem to make sense.*

*Big Pat begins to listen very intently, suspecting he knows the voice.*

**JAMES:** Hello Bob. It's all wrong. It's all wrong.

**BOB:** What do you mean, caller? What's all wrong?

**JAMES:** About that girl. This programme. The Sunday Independent. Nobody is asking.

**BOB:** Nobody is asking what, caller?

**JAMES:** Everybody has made up their mind. Nobody has asked the girl. The girl can't speak for herself. Everybody thinks they know you but maybe you might be in trouble and nobody knew ... like ...

*There is a painful silence.*

*Big Pat sits forward as though about to speak.*

**BOB:** Can you give us your name caller?

**JAMES:** I'd rather not. Tonight it could be me. Tomorrow someone else ... That oul' woman in Ballybay. . . . It's very hard nowadays Missus. You can have a lot and still be very isolated all the same. Like a foreigner in your own home. Do you understand what I'm saying, Bob? Are you listening there, Mr. Editor?

*Pause* Are you listening Pat?

**BIG PAT:** James?

**BOB:** Caller. Are you in some kind of trouble? Caller, please give your name to the producer and she will provide you with a helpline number to call. Caller? Hello, caller?

**BIG PAT:** James. Jamesy boy?

*James hangs up.*

*He remains motionless in the spotlight.*

**BOB:** We'll take a commercial break and we'll have the news now. Stay with us. I understand that Councillor Sarah Green has agreed to take a call from us after the news. Listeners, please note. A number of helpline numbers for people with alcohol or drug related problems and for people suffering from depression will be given out immediately after this break.

*Big Pat hastens off in distress.*

*Bob stays a moment and gestures to the producer signaling his stress.*

*The dream music plays.*

## *Scene 29*

*Big Pat's House Moments later.*

*James is alone on stage.*

*The dream music is playing.*

*Above him, the actor playing Laura Curley returns to her role as Alice Reilly.*

*James writes a note.*

*The music fades out.*

*Alice reads it into the mike.*

**ALICE:** Dear Da. This is not a letter that you may have been expecting. It is with great relief that I am able to convey this message to you, so as that you might understand why this is so. Will you please not blame anybody or anything for my departure from this world. I do not blame those I leave behind me. Please do not blame me. I had to do this. I am sorry I could not do better. I have chosen Riverside football field as the place, since it is where I was once on the right road. Love from James.

*Connected*  
*Scene 30*

*Intermission Complete*

*Northern Sound Studio Moments later.*

*"Connected" by the Stereo M.C.'s plays again for a few moments.*

*Bob Kane is alone on stage, working now from his usual box which has been vacated by the producer.*

*Councillor Green steps into a spotlight.*

**BOB:** Welcome back. Councillor Sarah Green is on the line from the County Hospital where we understand Susan remains in a critical condition. Councillor, thank you very much for agreeing to talk to us.

*As with the earlier scene, Bob will put a few random questions to Councillor Green and she will answer appropriately.*

*The spotlight goes out and Councillor Green leaves the stage.*

**BOB:** Thank you very much, Councillor. Well that ends our studio show. I'm told the phone lines have been chock-a-block since the programme started. Clearly this is a case which has deeply affected the community. So we're goin' to keep the lines open for another hour and a half. An answering machine will be in operation. If you have any comment you wish to make in relation to tonight's programme, just phone in before 10.30. Speak your comment briefly to the answering machine. Our producer Laura Curley will edit the statements together for transmission tonight at our midnight round-up.

*The dream music returns.*

*On the main stage, James begins to fashion a noose.*

**BOB:** Don't forget, if you are out there and you are suffering from depression or loneliness, there is help available. It is never too late to ask for help. Telephone numbers for Aware, Alcoholics Anonymous and the Samaritans will be given out immediately following this programme. A problem shared is a problem halved. This is Bob Kane, and you're Connected.

*Intermission Complete*  
*Scene 31*

*Connected*

*Football field at Riverside Park Ten minutes later.*

*The stage is very dark.*

*The dream music is playing.*

*James rests his rope on the ground.*

*He bounces the ball and solos for a moment.*

*Then he fists it deliberately wide of an imagined goalposts and watches it roll to the side of the stage.*

**JAMES:** And it's gone wide. James Mc Meel concludes his promising career early with another wide. No floodlights. No crowd. Just me and a lonely goalpost.

*The music fades away.*

*He uncoils his rope and attempts twice to throw the end of it over the imaginary bar.*

*On his third attempt, Barney enters, humming to himself.*

**BARNEY:** Low lie the Fields of Athenry  
Where once we watched the small bluebird fly.

*He senses James' presence in the dark.*

**BARNEY:** Holy God, who is it?

**JAMES:** Stand back. Stay well away. Back!

**BARNEY:** Who's there?

**JAMES:** Leave me be! Stay back. Don't stop me. You'll regret it. I never done anything right yet, but begod I'll do this right. Stay back!

**BARNEY:** Is it young Mc Meel. James, James. What are you at? Get that rope out of your hand. Get away from them goals.

**JAMES:** No. No way. I'm goin' to do it. There is only one way out for James Mc Meel. Born a failure, lived a failure, gonna die a failure.

## *Connected*

**BARNEY:**

Jesus Christ James. Christ Man! Cop yourself on. There's no need to go this far! Can ye look at it from the other side?

**JAMES:**

What other side is there? I've no real job. I'm an alco. I can't play football. I've no girlfriend. I've nothin' only this.

**BARNEY:**

This is crazy.

**JAMES:**

I know that. I can't help it. I'm finished.

**BARNEY:**

You can help it. It's just the drink, James. You can help it. Why not try again. This is no way out. Give yerself some credit. You've no job because of drink. No football. No girlfriend. No respect. Because of drink. But everybody likes ye. They know ye. You've friends. Buck up. You're doing yourself no credit. Nor your father. Nor indeed your late mother. She wouldn't want you doing this. Come with me and I'll do all I can to put you on the right track.

**JAMES:**

Oh, God. Oh God. Jesus, I'm crazy. What am I doing? And who are you? How do you know me?

**BARNEY:**

I work with your Da at the hotel. I know your Da. Me and him will see you back on the right road again. Don't be frightened, James. I was exactly where you are once. Just exactly where you are. But I got over it. There's help you can get. There's a very good woman works up at the school, Miss Reilly. There's always hope, James.

**JAMES:**

Barney Murphy? I never thought . . .

**BARNEY:**

Nobody ever thinks, James.

**JAMES:**

Christ Barney, I can't believe I tried this. My head's spinning. It's been spinning all day. Why did I do this? When my neighbours find out about this, I'll ... I'm a nutter.

**BARNEY:**

Listen. No-one is going to know.

**JAMES:**

You'll tell them.

**BARNEY:**

No I'll not.

*Barney Murphy says nothing and keeps saying it.*

Come on.

## *Intermission Complete*

*James is suddenly overcome. He weeps.*

**JAMES:** Oh Jesus. Oh Jesus.

*Big Pat runs breathless onto the side of the stage, calling in the dark.*

**BIG PAT:** James? James? Son?

*He sees the scene before him. He sees the rope. He is overcome.*

Hoh James, James, James!

**BARNEY:** It's alright Pat. It's alright.

*He grips both men by their wrists.*

It's alright, men. We'll all be alright. We'll all be alright.

## *Scene 32*

*Northern Sound Studio.*

*"Hungry for your love" by Van Morrison plays over the system.*

*Bob Kane is alone at his console.*

**BOB:** It's approaching closedown on NSFM. Earlier this evening when our live studio show ended I went up to the top of our new hillside studio building at Bellacrowe to take some fresh air. The evening sky over County Monaghan was the deepest red I ever saw. Deep September red. And I imagined we could see into every town and townland in the county -  
Monaghan Town, 'Blayney,  
Clones, Ballybay,  
Carrick, Tydavnet,  
Corduff, Corcaghan,  
Broomfield, Smithboro',  
Barnadonagh, Donaghmoynne,  
Iniskeen ...

We got a record number of after-show phone calls tonight from every part of the county, including a very unusual one from Iniskeen. Everyone wants to get "Connected". Sit back now and listen to an edited selection of just some of the statements that were phoned-in.

## *Connected*

## *Intermission Complete*

*He switches on the edited statements. These are pre-recorded and are played on the sound system.*

*The rear curtains are drawn open during the first statement to reveal a deep red light on the white wall behind.*

*Susan is wheeled on in a hospital bed.*

*She is left alone for a moment or two the bed silhouetted against the red background.*

*As the statements continue, a tableau of figures in silhouette forms in front of the red wall.*

*Each person is carrying a cordless telephone extension or a mobile phone.*

*The edited statements are punctuated by the live voices from the stage.*

*These are the people who cannot get through.*

*They repeat phrases in a quiet chorus, such as "Hello, I'm holding for Bob Kane." "I can't seem to get through", "Hello, I can't get connected."*

### **VOICE 1:**

Hello Bob. Here's a poem from sixty years ago that says it all. It's be a man called Kavanagh. You might have heard of him

Around me everywhere  
People are saying  
The hard-edged words of reality  
They are praying  
To a solid god whose kick is no illusion  
And whose house  
Is not a poet's corner of confusion

They arrive  
By the stone stairway step a day,  
While the winged children strive  
Against hysteric winds to stay  
Flapping vaguely in the tear-wet air  
Calling on the spirit of Prophecy to witness their  
despair.

### **VOICE 2:**

Hello Bob. My name is Dr. Imelda Gregory, consultant psychiatrist. The young man who called earlier was right. Too many young people feel like foreigners in their own land. It has become harder and harder for young people to socialise. Not just because of lack of amenities. But because of changes in society.



## *Intermission Complete*

## *Connected*

**VOICE 3:** Hello, Bob. My name is Terry O' Hanrahan and this is my statement. I'm sixty four years old and when I was young there was none of this self-pitying. Men were men and women were women you knew where you stood.

**VOICE 4:** Children now, for the first time in the history of civilization, are sold games to

*People now begin to repeat their phrases more loudly and with increasing frustration.*

*This rises gradually into a crescendo of aggressive shouting, competing with the taped voices.*

*Bob raises his hand and slowly brings it down.*

*As he does so, "Ich bin Ein Auslaender" (I am a foreigner) by Pop Will Eat Itself comes in very loud and grating, eventually drowning out the voices.*

**VOICE 5:** Mr. Kane. I am sick and tired of listening to young people whinging. Put them all in the army for two years. Soon knock a few spots off them.

**VOICE 6:** Programmes like this only make things worse.

**VOICE 7:** It's all drugs. Young people have rejected God, that's the problem.

## *Reprise*

*Susan's Dream*

*As the music rises to unbearable volume levels, the actors gather around the bed still shouting, in a repeat of Susan's opening nightmare.*

*They rotate the bed violently on its castors.*

*Suddenly the music and shouting stops.*

*Susan sits bolt upright.*

*The figures around her bed vanish into the wings.*

*In the complete silence that follows she turns and sits sideways out of the bed.*

## *Connected*

*She rises slowly and walks to the front of the stage as though not aware who or where she is.*

*She looks to the audience as though asking them for an answer.*

*Then she relaxes and smiles - signifying the end of the play.*

## *Intermission Complete*

## *Epilogue (Optional)*

*The lights brighten to a warm amber.*

*Each of the other actors enters and takes up a position behind the actor playing Susan.*

*The actor playing Susan speaks (as herself).*

*Each of the other actors speaks in turn.*

*The actors are listed here, 1 to 9 in order of their appearance in the cast list.*

- ACTOR 1:** Susan Green came out of her coma exactly one week after she fell into it. She suffered mild brain damage, but recovered gradually over a period of months. She has now returned to St. Dymphna's school and is reconciled with her mother. She does not see her father.
- ACTOR 2:** Councillor Sarah Green spent twelve months nursing Susan back to health. She and her husband separated. She eventually resumed a low key role in politics.
- ACTOR 3:** Brian Green stayed with his father after the split between his parents and went on to be a wealthy farmer.
- ACTOR 4:** James Mc Meel attended Alcoholics Anonymous for a few sessions and also went back to football. He went on to play for the county. He met a nice girl from Clontibret and is now doing a steady line.
- ACTOR 5:** Big Pat went on to help James with his drink problem and later remarried.
- ACTOR 6:** Alice Reilly is still a teacher and voluntary counsellor with Aware. She had a short relationship with Laurence Mc Greevy but it ended. She is now married and expecting her

first child.

**ACTOR 7:** Kevin Reilly has now left the Top of the Town hotel and is heading for the bright lights of New York.

**ACTOR 8:** Philippa Clancy resigned from the Northern Tribune and took up a job with the Sunday Independent. Tragically, she was killed during riots in Portadown soon after.

**ACTOR 9:** This is Barney Murphy's story. He was an ordinary working man who had come to Bellacrowe after losing his family in a house fire in Belfast. He suffered acute depression from time to time. He never talked to anyone about his background and an unfounded myth grew up that he was involved in undercover activities. Two weeks after the Susan Green incident he was badly beaten up, leaving the hotel. It was only then that his true story emerged. He became a very popular man in Bellacrowe.

*During the next round of statements the actors leave one by one.*

**ACTOR 1:** Prudence Mc Ginty won a holiday for two to India, but poor George couldn't go because of an unfortunate incident at Dunnes Stores.

**ACTOR 9:** Aye. Poor George fell down a stairs and fractured his two arms at the opening of Dunnes Stores. He celebrates his 78th birthday in August.

**BOB:** This is Bob Kane and you're "Connected"

## **Blackout.**

## **The End**

\* *Opening music - For the original production a chant sung by Mari Boine Persen A Lapland singer is used.*

\* *Means 'I am a foreigner' or 'I am an outsider' - lyrics are in English.*

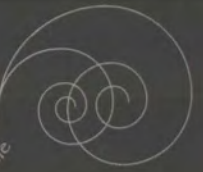
**A video of the original production of Connected is available on request**

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Macra na Feirme