



**EVERY DAY DRAMA**  
**(Twelve original plays)**  
**BY**  
**ROSELEEN WALSH**  
**Dedicated to the memory of**  
**Anne McGreevy**

FINAL ENCORE  
NATURE OR NURTURE  
THE CLEANING LADY  
THE MEETING  
A DOFFERS TALE  
ROSENNA'S DAUGHTERS  
JEAN JEAN AND THE REAL JEAN  
THE TWO SONS  
AULD MICK  
BRIEF EXCHANGE  
DEAR NIALL  
LET THERE BE LIGHT

## **FINAL ENCORE**

**CHARACTERS** The cast are between 13 years and 17 years

ANGEL (DENO's younger sister)

BANGERS

CLEO

DENO

GRAHAM

MACKERS

MARSHA

MRS KING

SORELL

**PLOT** The group at the grave have come to say good-bye to their joy-rider friend who was killed while joy-riding. They all have their memories.

The bedroom scene is about an adolescent who has problems with his sexuality and blames himself for his friend's death. The play ends with Sorell and Graham taking their lives.

**SET DESIGN** Stage is set with line drawn down the middle or some sort of fixture to show two different scenes at same time.

Three girls and three boys in the grave yard and one boy aged about 17 in the bedroom scene.

## AUDIO & VISUAL AIDS Audio

Puff Daddy feat Faith Evans, Missing You

Tracy Chapman, Baby can I hold you

Tracy Chapman, Fast Car

Through-out the play two songs are played; Tracy Chapman's 'Fast Car' is played at grave scenes.

Puff Daddy and Faith Evans 'Missing You' is played in bedroom scenes.

At the end of the play Tracy Chapman's version of 'Baby can I hold you' is played and the audience are invited to join the dancers on the stage to express themselves in the dance.

## Visual

Screen linked to a laptop showing typing on a computer

## PROPS Bed

Cider bottles

Computer, desk and chair

Headstone

## ACT ONE

### SCENE ONE

At the grave side are:

SORELL

CLEO

MACKERS

BANGERS

DENO

ANGEL (DENO's younger sister)

Bedroom: GRAHAM

Scene begins in grave-yard around a headstone with 6 young people gathered around, a light is shining on head-stone.

Sorell is standing at back of head-stone with a bottle of cider in her hand. A song begins to play 'You've got a fast car' by Tracy Chapman. After 'but me myself I got nothing to prove' the light expands very suddenly showing the other young people and the rest of the grave.

Still holding the cider, Sorell walks from behind the head-stone and begins to dance and sing along with the song. She expresses lots of emotions as she dances. None of the others look at her – they all seem uninterested. When the song is finished the light remains on.

At the same time another light at the other half of the stage is focused on the computer and expands to teenager seated on chair at computer.

As the 'Missing You' song begins, Graham gets up from the chair and begins to dance. He shakes his head a lot and keeps his eyes closed.

At the end of the song and dance he is on his knees on the floor.

He then gets up of the floor and goes over to his chair and starts typing on the key board. (Large T.V. screen should be over-head so the audience can see what Graham is typing on the computer)

Entire play has both scenes in focus together.

SORELL Mackers you were out of your head last night – did you see that auld fellas' face when you ran off with the coat. I thought he was goin' to jump over the balcony – he knew he'd never catch you on them movin' stairs.

BANGERS Ah that auld doll you near knocked her flyin' – she dropped all her bags and started screaming – silly auld cat! (they all laugh)

MACKERS Yeah we better stay away from there (pause) I think the security pig knew me – you too Sorell, it wasn't fuckin' worth it.

Bagey only gave me five for it – it was the blue or something he wanted. I (drinks from bottle) don't give a fuck – I'm goin' to get pissed and sleep here tonight with my auld mate Dee (drinks more) I fuckin' loved him (drinks more) he was (pause – starts to cry) he was the best – Sorell – you know (wipes his eyes with the hand he's holding the bottle with) how much I loved him.

SORELL Sure – (takes a drink from bottle) I loved him too! (drinks from the bottle then sets the bottle down and takes a cigarette out from her pocket and lights it then passes the cig box around. She starts to dance on her own as the song begins to play – softly at first, then gradually gets louder and stops after about 30 seconds)

I loved you Dee – I love everyone (raises her arms up high and shouts aloud) does anyone love me – anyone – tell me – answer now – or forever hold your peace (laughs) isn't that what you say when you get married. Maybe someday I'll get married with a big white dress.

MACKERS (laughing) Sorell – you in a white dress! A black one you mean!

SORELL I'm no slut – you bastard (stares at Mackers and gives him the one finger)

MACKERS Sorell you're doin' my fuckin' head in – my head's done in enough without you fuckin' wantin' everyone to love ya – you're out a your fuckin' head Sorell.

CLEO You leave her alone Mr Nasty – she's doin' you no harm – look she just loves a good time – what's wrong with wantin' everybody to love ya – so (loudly) what's wrong with that?

(Mackers drinks more then lies back)

BANGERS Yous are all fuckin' mad – you're all as bad as them rakers at the gas works – talkin shit – just fuck up and have a good time my heads done in

MACKERS Hey Deno – what was that yellow sports like? (they all laugh) I mean before you smashed it up.

DENO Fuck my neck and feet are really sore! We were doin' wheelies at 80 (pretends to be turning steering wheel with his hands) it was fan-tas-tic!

Poor Spongy – he got his knees blew off – it's all part of the game. Poor auld bastard. I hope he

remembers me when he gets his compo (laughs) I could be doin' with a couple of weeks on the Costa del crime (shakes his head) ha ha.

MACKERS I heard Jess got £5000 last week

DENO What for this time?

MACKERS 'Member thon time outside Cassidy's he got the glass in his juggler – 'member – he was on the life support. We all thought his Da was goin' to agree to get it turned off – 'member? Bet his da wishes he'd done it now!

DENO Fuck agh – yeah – after he killed that kid – he was glued up that night – he didn't even know until the next day when the provies came lookin', (pause) shit his ma ended up in the looney bin! He owed Dee half that claim – it was Dee who saved him that night! Jessy's too crazy – he fights everywhere he goes. That night (drinks from bottle) he started slabbering about Jay and his mates – Jessy hasn't a clue, he was born brain dead.

SORELL (looking at Deno) You stop slabberin' – Jessy's my mate – (waves her bottle of cider) I remember the time he got his first claim – remember – for his knees – he bought me and Dee drink all day – he bought us our E's as well for the Arena that night – we were out of it for 3 days. I'm not sure where I was – it was good anyway until the cops brought me home.

ANGEL (standing pulling a piece of her hair through her lips slowly – she does this a lot throughout the play) That's right Sorelley you just tell my big bro – tell 'im like it is – go on keep goin' – he needs someone to keep 'im in 'is place.

DENO I told you before Angel – don't you make a cunt out of me in front of my mates.

ANGEL You need to wash your tongue out big brother – (she pulls a piece of her hair through her lips and then holds her elbows into her waist, turns her back to Deno and riggles her bum and laughs)

DENO I knew I shouldn't 'ave let you come with me – I must need my head examined! (takes another drink from cider bottle)

ANGEL (goes over to Deno puts her arm around his shoulder) Only messin' big brother only messin', just think big bro when the twins get older we can all come down here and have a picnic (laughs) and if Mum's a good girl and stays sober we'll bring her too. Eh. What a laugh that would be, eh!

DENO I'm just sorry I let you talk me into bringin' you here  
(Angel pulls the bottle from Deno and runs over to Sorell and hides behind her and takes a drink – Deno runs after her but stumbles and falls on his knees. 'Fast Car' plays and everyone sits down and just stares into space – the song plays for about 30 seconds then the bed-room scene begins)

SCENE TWO

In Bedroom GRAHAM

GRAHAM (Graham is sitting typing when the phone rings. He says to the computer as he stands up)

Excuse me one moment please! (picks up the phone and says)

Hello – Mum – (pause) yes it is me – who else could it be (pause) no – no one else here – just me and ‘Packard’ (pause)

What are we doing – well – nothing much really – we’re just playing a game of chess – yes – ‘Packard’s’ winning as usual. You know me – couldn’t win an argument or fight my way out of a paper bag – as you always say.

(swings the phone round by the lead then holds it up to his ear to speak) How are you anyway?

Yes, yes, yes well I hope this one’s older than the last it’s so embarrassing mother when you bring someone round who might be in my year. O.K. – O.K. (nods head) yes, yes, yes, (shakes head) no, no, no, - O.K. O.K. bye

(he bangs the phone down, folds his arms and stares at the computer for a few minutes until the screen goes black – then says)

I knew you’d blink first – you always do.

(walks over and presses the mouse for the screen to come back) I prefer it when you look at me when we’re talking, ‘Packard’ don’t you?

(pause) I suppose she does care – what do you think? Well – ‘Packard’ I’m waiting (stands at the back of the desk chair and stares at the computer – song, ‘Missing You’ begins to play in back ground – he pulls the chair out and sits down and begins to type. Song is still playing in back ground. Song stops abruptly – he says to computer)

You’re the only friend I’ve got (slowly) since – since he went – since they took him. (very sadly) why wasn’t it me? (cries) He’d everything to live for (pause) his family loved him – Marsha loved him – I loved him – I love him still – even in death – all that love, you would have loved him – yes even you ‘Packard’ you never met – did you! (shakes his head) no – no I don’t use you as a substitute – I don’t – no one can make up for him not even you – don’t talk (shouts) stupid – go on tell me – did the people who made you love you?

Or were you just something that someone put together – something to show off – you came from an idea – not love – you were manufactured – he wasn’t he was made from love and it showed (jumps up)

I need a break (scratches his head) you know ‘Packard’ sometimes I just don’t like you! You imply things and then you shut down – you haven’t the guts to explain – explain – in case you’re wrong – yes you’ve no guts.

You turn me off – you don’t just shut me down – yes you do – like yesterday (moves his shoulders forward) then, for instance, remember – remember – you must remember, O.K. you’re saying you don’t remember – well we’ll see about that then.

Tuesday 25th (presses cursor key to move up on screen) you challenged me about my real – or – true feelings for Sam – there now I've said his name – I didn't think I could ever say his name again without breaking down – (pause) my feelings for him were – are none of your business.

Remember now (lifts his eye-brows) oh yes 'Packard' you can remember when you want – you forget nothing. Will you remember me – 'Packard' – tomorrow – will you? Go on then spell it out (shouts) will you forget about me – will you delete me? Like they deleted Sam?

(Puts his head in his hands as song plays again of about 20 seconds, then scene moves over to the grave and 'Fast Car' is playing for about 20 seconds)

### SCENE THREE

(The gang are sitting around the grave – their heads are all moving as if they can hear the song then when the song stops Bangers staggers to his feet – bottle in hand – he stumbles and after steadying himself up says)

BANGERS Who's game? – Who wants to hit the road – I want wheels and speed – (pause as he tries to talk) that U turn at the top of the road is great for wheelies!

Jantie and Slaner think they're the best – I could do them easy – I'm the best in the west (swings the bottle) that's what I'm good at (laughs) doin wheelies – it's funny – my auld lad says I'm good at nothin' – or maybe it's good for nothin' – same difference any way ain't it! (looks at everyone as if he's waiting on someone to answer him)

Come on everybody lets have fun (falls down) I'll show 'em – Sorell come on there's a yellow sports over by the lights at Finaghy – 'member – where what's her name – nearly lives – your specky mate!

SORELL Zoe – she's not my mate – she's a loser!

BANGERS Shite – fuck – come on Sorell – (holds his hand out for SORELL to help him up of the ground – then draws it back quickly)

SORELL I'm stayin here – I'm all fucked up tonight. I feel kinda strange – I don't care anymore.

(Bangers rolls over and gets up from ground – one knee at a time)

CLEO Sorell – not again!

SORELL Shut it – you don't know how I feel -

CLEO Tell me – Sorell – go on tell me again – I want to hear –

SORELL I don't know - I don't know how I feel – I just feel like shit – I've messed up! I don't know even if I'll be able to find my way out of this dead yard tonight! I just need to belong! (stares at Cleo)

(Angel is standing quietly watching Cleo and Sorell and playing with her hair – although she doesn't speak her facial expression mimic both Cleo and Sorell as they speak)

CLEO Sorell – you do belong – you belong with us – your mates!

SORELL Belong – belong – what is belong – what does belong mean? I want (cries) to belong – I’ve tried – I really have – but I don’t feel like I belong anywhere. (sobs and rubs her eyes)

My ma wants me to belong – she cares – she loves me – but I don’t know – I can’t feel it – I want to feel it – but it just doesn’t happen.

#### SCENE FOUR

(Scene switches to bedroom – light opens on Graham – he’s sitting at desk and has just been typing his feelings into the computer. He reads aloud what he’s put into computer or alternatively he just stares at computer and a voice over reads what he’s typed in)

GRAHAM Yes ‘Packard’ you were right this time or should I say – again – (pause) ‘Packard’ I don’t have anyone to – to talk to or to listen – to me – I breath – I think – I move – I am and – yet – I don’t seem somehow to be – to be any one – (shakes his head) to be some one – and still I know I am someone – (in a whisper) and yet (pause) no one.

That’s how I feel!

Who but you can I tell this to – who? I knew I was alive when I was with ‘him’. I knew (smiles and closes his eyes – then open them) I could feel – it was like outside in the garden (talks seriously) we – me and Mum that is – well after Dad died – I tried to do the things he always did (pauses) he loved the garden – especially when he knew how ill he really was – he was a man who loved irony – you know – his body that was dying was planting seeds that would bring life to a garden – a garden that would never die – (laughs) unless someone built a car park on top of it or something like that – anyway – what was I telling you ‘Packard’ oh yes, the loopins –he loved the loopins – all the beautiful bright colours – he’d sit on the stone wall some times and just gaze at them – there were dozens of them and on a breezy day he’d marvel at how they could sway almost in tune with one another and not break – (pause) any how that’s why I took care of that side of the garden – for Dad – the loopins are beautiful flowers when they bloom.

They’re just down at the bottom of the garden at the far wall beside the shed – (pause) they just look ordinary until the sun comes out and they bloom – they’re always there and yet no one notices them until they flower!

Mauve – pink – yellow – strong and yet delicate – they remind me of something that lasts forever and you think they’ll always be there – in flower I mean.

I don’t know if I’m explaining this properly – I mean it’s not the flowers I telling you about it’s the way Sam made me feel! I don’t even know if I understand it all myself – I only know I loved him. I don’t know now if I understand it at all. I only know I loved him.

Can you understand me ‘Packard’ (pause) but the thing, about the loopins, ‘Packard’ is they need the sun and lots of water – they need them both in order to flower – they’re there to flower and when they flower they need water (pause) if they need water they let you know – they don’t have the words so they just droop down – and if you don’t know anything about loopins you would think they’ve died – but if you understand them you recognise the signs and you know they need water – plenty of water – and then when they’ve got enough it transforms them – all the strength and beauty

comes back – they’re transformed – but you see the beauty and strength was always there – the loopins just needed someone to know that – someone to bring out the best in them to keep them alive (pause)

When we were together (softly) Sam and me that’s what I was like – colourful – transformed and not afraid – to be myself. I could feel – I could sense – I knew we were the same (closes his eyes then opens them smiling)

I knew I couldn’t tell him – it would have frightened Sam – but now – there is no one to bring me back to life – there’s no one here or out there to make me feel – real – and part of anything – I’m like you – I exist – when I turn you on then you exist – I need to be switched on and then understood!

I switch you on, the electricity runs through you and you come to life. Only Sam could do that for me. (stares at the computer intensely)

No – no you’re wrong there ‘Packard’ I didn’t tell Sam how I felt – I couldn’t – O.K. yeah I was thinking about telling him – but I didn’t (puts his head down and cries, then after a few minutes starts to talk to the computer again) yes I know I have to understand the rules – the instruction and if I make a mistake – I just delete – and it wipes out – it doesn’t hurt – but me – I can’t delete – my brain is permanent – the hurts – the rejections – there’s so much there – to be developed – cultivated – nourished – eased out by love and understanding – but no one seems to have read the instruction book that came with me!

#### SCENE FIVE

(Music: ‘Fast Car’ and scene returns to grave)

SORELL Maybe if I die I’ll belong some where!

CLEO Sorell – I don’t understand you – when you go on like that – about being dead – that’s crazy talk (Sorell takes a drink from bottle, Cleo pulls the bottle from her and holds it in her hand before drinking from it, then Sorell pulls it back from Cleo and drinks some)

Please (bends down to look up into Sorell’s eyes)

Sorell – please talk normal – you scare me – when you’re like this.

SORELL I scare myself – (pause) it used to be just the odd time – when something would happen in school – when the teachers would pick on me – (pause) but now it’s all the time – (pause)

Mrs Jones always picked on me when she’d come in – in bad form – she always took it out on me – she’s a bitch – I hate her – I asked my ma or Rose as she likes me to call her - to go up and complain – she thought it must have been my fault – she wouldn’t believe that teachers got on like that – Rose said that Mrs Jones really liked me and saw my potential (laughs) what ever that means, my Rose always uses these big words – I haven’t a clue - most of the time – you know what I’m sayin – we speak the same language but we just don’t understand what each other means – it’s crazy – like if I’m going out and she asks me where I’m going and I say ‘out’ and she says but where and I say just ‘out’ – she can’t understand that, she expect me to give her a runnin’ account of my every movement!

I hope I'm never goin to be like that with any kids I ever have – I'd hate to be like that!

CLEO I wish I had some one to care about where I was. (stares at Sorell) Dee used to say it was the middle child syndrome that was my problem.

SORELL The what? The middle what? (they both laugh together and Cleo dances in circles)

CLEO The middle child syndrome – it's true – our Paul's four years older than me and Sinead's three years younger – so I'm always left out – forgotten about. Well that's how it seems to me most of the time anyway. See – Paul and Sinead are even called after my ma and da –

SORELL Paul's named after your da – but Sinead – that's not your mum's name –

CLEO In Irish it is – my ma's name's Jane – (puts her thumb on her nose and makes a funny face at Sorell) so you've learned something new tonight – Sorell!

I think what happened was they were savin' to buy a holiday home in Donegal when they found out that I was on the way!

Or something like that – would you believe it if I told you that my ma had a bottom drawer since she was 13 and she started to collect her things with a dish cloth! Would you believe it?

SORELL (dances a bit with her arm in the air) I would if I knew what a bottom drawer was – I take it it's a drawer and it's at the bottom of something?

CLEO Years ago – girls began savin things for when they'd get married – you know things like – pilla cases – tea spoons – daft things like that – can you imagine us – (laughing) a bottom drawer – us – a bottom drawer – what would we have in it – (they both double over laughing then they straighten up and Sorell runs her hand through her hair) go on Sorell – what would you have in your bottom drawer – besides a whip and hand-cuffs?

SORELL Nothin – really – nothin like that – like pilla cases or spoons or things like that – the only things I'd want to keep till I got married or was livin with some-one would have to be music – I don't need nothin else – just music – that's all I care about – music.

CLEO You didn't think my ma was like that – did ya – no one thinks she's like that – everybody thinks she's so easy goin – she does think more of her furniture than she thinks of me!

I don't think she ever wanted me – I spoiled her image – when she wants something she just has to have it – it doesn't matter about anyone else – or how they feel! And he's the same – I think they're sorry they ever had me!

SORELL Now who's talkin shit! You know they love you!

CLEO Things aren't always what they seem – (Sorell hands Cleo the bottle and she takes a drink from it) remember all the trouble I was in at school – well they never took any heed of it they just didn't care – but then Benson called our Sinead stupid and they were up like a shot – (pause) they weren't bothered when it was me takin all the hack from Benson and Gibson.

SORELL You know (Cleo falls down in the sitting position) I blame Benson for Jenny – she's due next week isn't she?

CLEO Two weeks – I think.

SORELL Yeah – she got her expelled – the bitch – she picked on her for everything – Jenny was too quiet that’s why Benson singled her out – what’s she goin to do if she gets time?

CLEO I think she’ll get a suspended – they’ll not lock her up with a baby – will they?

SORELL For drugs – yeah! Dream on Cleo! Is it this week she’s up or next week – I bet she’s really nervous.

CLEO I doubt it – the old Jenny from school would be nervous – but not the new Jenny – I’ve just thought what the judge is goin’ to say – listen Sorell, how does this sound – right now are you listenin ‘would the real Jenny Phillips stand up’ (laughs) what do you think Sorell – the real Jenny – which one is the real one – the school one or the drug carrier pregnant one – I suppose it’s anyone’s guess! What do you say? –

SORELL Well I think it was the real Jenny that was caught getting of that plane with one million pounds with the drugs and who was stupid enough to get caught with them in her case.

CLEO I disagree – I think the real Jenny was the school girl Jenny who wasn’t strong enough to stand up to a teacher who was nothin but a bully – poor Jenny she lost herself there not because she couldn’t fight back but because (pause) we all let her down – she was weak but that wasn’t a fault – Jenny’s weakness was in a way her strength – but no one cared enough for Jenny to stand up for her – poor Jenny (pause) who was that for – she was crazy takin a chance like that for £100

SORELL She needed the money –

CLEO Fuck – I need money – too –

SORELL Well – maybe you’re not as desperate as Jenny –

CLEO No – I’m not as stupid as Jenny – she was gettin £100 – that only equals 3 and 1/3 ‘Es’ – ‘the thin boys’ is an out and out ‘B’ he’s only scum – there’s Jenny goin to do time for that ‘B’ he doesn’t give a shit about her – all he cares about is his big car and fancy house – Jenny’s nothin to him – bastard!

SORELL Yeah – but you don’t mind buyin from scum –

CLEO They’re all scum – buyin is one thing – sellin’s another –

SORELL Cleo – you don’t make sense –

CLEO Is that right?

SORELL Yeah – if you didn’t buy there wouldn’t be any dealers – or carriers – like Jenny!

CLEO There is a difference – and a big one –

SORELL No there’s not!

CLEO How – go on tell me – how (puts her left hand on her hip) am I like scum bags like ‘the thin boy’ – go on tell me? (begins to sway with bottle in hand)

ANGEL Has any body got the right time on 'em?

DENO Why you in a hurry to go some where or some thing?

ANGEL No – I'm in no hurry to go any where – flat-feet (laughs)

CLEO It 10 past 12.

ANGEL Right big brother – happy birthday. (They all cheer and shout out happy birthday. No pause, music for bedroom starts to play for about 30 seconds – the telephone rings)

## SCENE SIX

(Graham says to the computer)

GRAHAM Who's this (phone is still ringing) Mum's already gave her daily dose of conscience trips – her one weakness regarding me – her one and only son and sole heir!

(Phone is still ringing) who do I know (puts his index finger horizontal on his lips) that would want to ring me so persistently? 'Packard' who, who, (picks up the phone slowly and as he does the phone stops ringing he then presses 1471) caller withheld their number (puts phone down and phone rings again he quickly picks it up)

Hello – yes it's me Graham. (listens for a second) Oh Marsha –no (looks surprised and covers the mouth piece of the phone with his hand and says to computer) what can she want (then takes his hand from mouth piece and says)

I'm just a little surprised – when? – oh. I don't know –no – I haven't been to the grave yet! I (puts his hand up to his forehead) don't know if I'm ready yet! (pause) how was it? Yes – yes – no – no I'm not alone my friend's here (says quickly) yes well you know Marsha you don't exactly know every single thing about me – nor do you know who all my friends are either!

As a matter of fact we're just talking about Sam! (pause) well he sort of knew him through me – well I don't see why he should have mentioned him to you. (pause) 'Packard' yes I think you would know him he's that type of face! (laughs to himself)

Seriously I don't know – (pause) this afternoon – it's a bit short notice – no – I'm not trying to put you off – I've been meaning to go – no – I – I – just haven't had the time – I'm sort of tied up – yeah – (pause and puts his free hand up to his mouth and bits his forefinger) can't you tell me now – what is it – look Marsha I don't think I'll be able to make it (looks very serious) later – no – no – I'm just too busy. I've a commitment later I just can't get out of. (pause)

That sounds ominous – can't you be more specific! What – what – is it, you mean it's been keeping you awake – look (bites his finger again) I don't know what you have to ask me that's so important (pause) yes – I do remember the day he died – of course I do!

I was with him that morning – remember he called to collect the C.Ds. (pause) he rang you after (takes his finger from his mouth and puts his hand down by his side) he left – no I don't know what it was he had to tell you, we didn't talk about anything – anything so fantastic that he would have needed to communicate it to you immediately.

Look Marsha – I'll give you a call later – I've got to go – bye. (Puts the receiver down and then pulls the plug out of wall he stands up and walks around the room – his hands on his head – he looks very worried and begins to cry out loud)

Please God – help me – (he falls on his knees to the floor and puts his head on the floor) that’s not what did it – (he bangs and bangs the floor with his left hand)

(Music plays without words – track 2 of same C.D. Puff Daddy – lights go out – then back to graveyard as music stops)

ACT 2

SCENE ONE

(They are all sitting down around either side of the head-stone)

CLEO (To Sorell) You and Dee were real close – (shouts) Sorell don’t pretend you can’t hear – come on talk

SORELL Yeah we were close (wipes away a tear) we could talk – he knew every thing about me – my uncle Jim –

CLEO Your uncle Jim – I never knew you had an uncle Jim – where’s he from?

SORELL He (pause) wasn’t very good to me –he wasn’t really an uncle at all – I just used to call him that – he used to call to take my ma out after dad left – (pause) he’s dead now –

CLEO Who – your dad?

SORELL No – Jim – he was killed in London – he went there to work and got into a fight one night in a bar – I just want to forget all that – time – forget it all – (shakes her head slowly)

CLEO Forget what? Did he do something to you – I’m your mate – you can trust me!

SORELL We used to sit down at the river – you know where the big rocks are – (takes another drink from bottle then throws it across to Cleo) we’d sit on our own for hours – one night in the summer we fell asleep – my ma was goin to kill me – I didn’t get home till about 7 or something – I felt good all day – we really talked.

CLEO You and your ma?

SORELL No stupid – me and Dee – we really talked that night – I got a lot of shit out of my system – Dee was great.

CLEO There was something special about Dee – wasn’t there – (pause) I think there is – I mean was.

SORELL Yeah – he always knew when to keep quiet and say nothin – and when to talk – he always knew just the right thing to say – he was really smart. He always got me to tell him what was on my mind.

MUSIC PLAYS FAST CAR. SCENE ENDS THEN LIGHTS ON GRAHAM WHO IS LYING ON BED FACE DOWN HE TURNS TO FACE COMPUTER AND SAYS:

GRAHAM You were asleep (he moves himself up slowly then moves to the end of bed and turns his back to the computer) look ‘Packard’ I just don’t want to talk about what happened O.K. (pause)

I can feel you starring at me – don’t – no we’re not all the same like you – we’re not manufactured we were conceived. Brought into this world through love – or supposed to be.

I thought (sighs, pause) Sam would have understood – but he didn't – he was shocked – I thought if I told him that Saturday – then – he would have told me he felt the same or that at least he would wait a few days until it sank in – you see 'Packard' I'd never been close to anyone before.

(shakes his head slowly) never – I don't know why – but yes I went out with Cathy – and so did every other boy in upper 5th – I couldn't say no when she asked me – I knew it wouldn't look good if I didn't (pause) they all laughed on that Monday morning when I walked into class – all except Sam – she'd told them on the way into class that I was a drip – or something just as disgusting, a freak of some sort because I didn't shag her within the first ten minutes – I respected her – or if I'm really honest 'Packard' she disgusted me – I wasn't like her – I just felt confused in a muddle really – my mind didn't want to be there in that room alone with Cathy – I'm sure if she'd given me time to get to like her I would have and she may even have liked me – but some how it all seemed unreal – you know set-up – programmed if you like! But I didn't like!

All Cathy wanted to talk about was Boy Zone and Steven Gately in particular – and what she'd like to do to him in that front room with 'No matter what they tell us' playing in the background.

(pause) Everyone in school knew about her front room – I must have been the only one who didn't get to see it until then – she probably invited me for a dare – some one put a bet on or something like that.

I know she told them all that I was queer – I wasn't queer (shakes his head) I'm not queer – I'm not – but – with Sam – I came alive (smiles) he woke something inside of me that was too beautiful – too wonderful for words – words were inadequate to explain to – to describe – what it felt like being in Sams' company – everything was fine – but then when he started seeing more and more of Marsha it felt like – like Sam didn't notice I was there – I tried being nasty with her at first – but that didn't make any difference she just wouldn't take the hint – then I told her Sam stopped calling – I knew I had to do something (scratches his head with left hand) so on the Friday at school I told him I had some C.Ds. he liked – he asked me to bring them into school that Monday but I told him my cousin owned them and he wanted them back on Monday night so the only time I could lend them to him was the Saturday – he said he'd call on his way to Marshas' on the Saturday morning – I lay all Friday night thinking what way I could tell him – I wanted him to be as happy as I was – in my stupidity I really believed he would be pleased – happy even – that I really loved him, I knew I had to be careful not to rush it to much at first – I'd make him tea and toast and ask him how he and Marsha were getting on – I was hoping he'd say he didn't want to hurt Marsha – but that she just wouldn't leave him alone – I was in desperation. I didn't sleep all night – my feelings for Sam were too strong – I had to find out if he felt for me the way I felt for him – I just had to. I thought Marsha was only a smoke screen – that he didn't want the class talking about him if he didn't have a girl friend – the way they were talking and laughing about me behind my back (pause) oh 'Packard' what am I going to do? What have I done? (sobs for a few minutes then stands up and goes to the back of the chair and stands with both hands on back of chair)

If I hadn't told him how I felt about him he'd still be alive! He wouldn't have run off like that – those thugs would never have put their filthy hands on him.

### SCENE THREE

(Puts his head down – Puff Daddy sings – then back to grave yard where

they're all lying around the grave sleeping. Mackerers sits up and lifts his bottle and turns it upside down – it's empty but he puts it to his mouth to get the last drop out of it)

MACKERS They don't make these bottles 'f'en' big enough. If I could have one wish come true – it would be to have a bottle of bow that never went empty!

BANGERS What are you rabbitin on about now – you creep –

MACKERS Don't you call me a creep – you 'f'en' moron –

BANGERS (sniggers) Some-day I'm goin to be some-body – you'll see –

CLEO (still lying down) Oh you mean like bein a runner for the thin boy –

BANGERS Well it's better than bein nothin – or no-body (pause) at least I'd be some-body (he puts his head down on his knees with his arms covering them and a voice-over of his father is heard as he remembers his father beating him there is also banging and crashing)

BANGERS Voiceover

You silly bastard (slap) you're worthless – you're nothin – you're only trouble – (crash,bang – and also a child crying out) Please da don't hurt me – da – da- please love me please – I'm sorry – I'm sorry – da – da – don't (bang – noise like a belt being used to beat someone – Bangers begins to rock side wards then music plays 'Fast Car' and scene returns back to bedroom – light goes out on that side of stage)

#### SCENE FOUR

GRAHAM (Sitting down on chair at computer he touches mouse to put screen on) What can I do to make all this go away? Come on 'Packard' you have all the answers – don't you! If I hadn't told him – or maybe if I'd waited a bit longer or to some other time it may have been different, mightn't it, 'Packard' (puts his two hands on sides of screen as if he expects computer to answer him) he pretended not to hear me call after him then I caught hold of his arm as he made for the door and as he turned to open the door the look on his face said it all. He looked disgusted with me – I let go at once and pleaded with him not to go but to stay and listen and to try to understand – he didn't speak – he just pulled open the door and left – I couldn't go after him. I knew not to – I thought he'll calm down – he'll give what I said some real and proper thought. I felt sick – (the screen goes blank and he goes on talking to it) when I first realised how I felt about him – I felt sick – I felt disgusted with myself – I thought for sure it would pass – every adolescent thinks that they're gay at some stage – it's all part of growing up – it passes but this – I was as surprised as Sam was – I knew what he was going through – but when he'd calm down and it sunk in that I loved him – it was love – nothing else – I thought he would come back – to talk – to say he loved me. (pause and sighs as he speaks) Then – at 4pm exactly the phone rang, it was her – Marsha asking if Sam was here – I said he hadn't stayed long – that he was in a hurry and that he even left the C.Ds. behind. She said she knew – that he'd rang her and told her he'd be late that something had come up and he'd tell her later – she said he wouldn't give her an explanation about what had happened – but she said she thought it had something to do with me. (pause and puts his hands on his head) that was that – I waited and waited – I had thought of going out to try and find him – but I didn't know where to start – I had no idea. (pause) It was 11.30 that night when his dad came to the door – he wanted to break

the news to me personally. (put his head down and cries) Sam was dead – the words screamed at me – everything became a blur after that – I just remember bit and pieces – (nods his head) he was found in the river – his head had been beaten with an iron bar – the police recovered it from the river – he'd been in a row with some gang – I was stunned – I couldn't believe what I was hearing. Sam – dead – his dad threw his arms around me – he sobbed and sobbed – and when finally he stopped – he said to me, 'you know Graham, our Sam loved you' – I just stared – I knew what way he meant it – and as he was leaving he said, 'we still don't know why he took that way home instead of going by bus – Sam knew there were always glue sniffers and gang fights down along the river path – he started to cry again – when I closed the door – I felt frightened – responsible – I hadn't even said to Sam's dad that I was sorry or anything – I didn't know if anyone had been arrested or what!

I even wondered if later he would think that it was suspicious – you know – me not asking questions – I supposed he would think it was because I was in shock – and that was partly the truth I was in shock but I was feeling so guilty – why didn't I cry – was it because I felt responsible? I told him that I loved him a few hours earlier – I was nervous – it was the most intense moment of my entire existence – and now I felt nothing – it felt as though I didn't know anyone called Sam and suddenly all I could think about was what his funeral was going to be like – (closes his eyes and silently prays) What am I going to do – (puts his head down on desk and sobs) There is only one thing I can do now – I can't take this – I can't go on. (Song plays Puff Daddy and then back to grave yard)

#### SCENE FIVE

(An ambulance siren is heard and reflection of flashing light is shining on head-stone and then light goes on)

CLEO (walks over to Mackers and says to him while nudging his arm) That noise scares the shit out of me.

MACKERS (nods his head from side to side) Naw nothin scares the shit out of me – nothin – only the thought of goin like Dee went – Sober – (gives a slight laugh)

CLEO Yeah as long as you don't take anyone else with ya, remember – Dee almost took two (Mackers cuts in sharply)

MACKERS They – (slight pause) he didn't know that was goin to happen – if he'd known he wouldn't went out that night – would he?

CLEO That's no comfort to the families – (moves her head from side to side) like sorry – if he'd known – that's shit Mackers and you know it – you were as much to blame as Dee that night.

SORELL (shouting) You don't talk about Dee like that – if you all hadn't egged him on it (voice is slurred) wouldn't have happened – his Paul was killed in a hit and run – he wouldn't have done that but you all egged him on. (silence for a moment)

CLEO What was he sayin to you Sorell just before he got into the car?

SORELL (puts her head down and cries out loud) This was his last time – he said he had to prove to all you he was up to it. (wipes her eyes then speaks lower) he – he – was goin to go to the ‘whiterock’ to get the G.C.S.Es. he needed to go on – he loved animals – (looking at Mackers) he loved animals – he told me – (sobs) I’d no idea – had you?

MACKERS Yeah – I knew he was good with things that couldn’t talk back (sniggers)

CLEO You’re a bastard!

MACKERS Only jokin – I know he loved animals – from the time we were messin at the top of the ‘Rock’ – and this blue volvo was goin about 60 and just there at the lights it banged straight into Pete Grimeses wee jack-russell – the bastard drove on – it could have been a kid for all the bastard knew –

CLEO You’ve a cheek –

MACKERS O.K. Cleo – just shut it – I’m talkin to Sorell – O.K. (Cleo gives him a dirty look) anyway the poor auld dog is moanin in pain – but Dee ran over – he put his new jacket round it – it was shakin and bleedin – the blood was all over the jacket – the jacket was ruined – I’m sure his ma bate him up and down that night when he went in –

CLEO Well go on – did it survive or what?

MACKERS Naw – it died a few minutes later but Dee went and got a spade and dug a grave down at the river – know where yer man Sam some-body was killed – well down there!

SORELL We used to sit down by the river some nights in the summer – down beside where the big rocks are – Dee used to say he thought that there was a place in heaven for animals – well for dogs anyway! (stands up) I don’t know – maybe there is I don’t know – maybe there’s not. Who cares anyway (shrugs her shoulders)

CLEO I care – Sorell (looks straight at Sorell) I believe in heaven – don’t tell me you don’t.

SORELL I don’t know what I believe any more – I (stares up at the sky) believe there’s more to life than this crap – look at us all- (laughs and points finger on left hand to the others – she starts to cry then laughs out loud and then cries)

Oh God – oh God – where are you? Jesus – where the hell are you hidin? (the others just stare at Sorell, pause, then she says in a whisper) Dee where are you – why you Dee –

SCENE SIX

(Music ‘Fast Car’ then back to bedroom when ‘Fast Car’ stops ‘Puff Daddy’ begins and plays for 1 minute – scene begins with phone ringing – mothers voice is heard on answering machine)

Voiceover

Hello I’m not at home at the moment – if you would like to leave a message please do so after the bleeps; bleep – bleep- bleep - (Marsha’s voice then is heard)

MARSHA Hello I’m Marsha, Mrs King, I was a friend of Graham’s – I’m so sorry about what happened – I was too upset to call – I just can’t take it in that Graham would take his own life —the

insertions in the paper said – house private – any way I just wanted to say how sorry I am. Mrs King the reason I’m ringing is about the advert for the computer – I recognised the phone number – could I call to see it? My number is 0812-232323. Thank you – bye.

#### SCENE SEVEN

(Silence and the light goes out – then back to grave yard – no music – Sorell is standing at back of head- stone with her hands on top of the head-stone – Mackers turns empty bottle up side down – then drops it down by his side – he asks)

MACKERS Any more swal –

CLEO I’ve (holds bottle up above her eye level to see how much she’s left in bottle) no – no – just enough for one more top up for me – (she puts bottle to her head holding it with both hands and drinks it – she holds onto bottle with one hand – and puts other hand into coat pocket and takes money out then counts it – it’s mostly small change) 50,20,20,3-5s, - now how much is that?

SORELL One pound and five p.

CLEO 8 – 2p’s that 16 – and another 5 – how much’s that?

MACKERS Not enough – and I’m not walkin round to the off licence – for 1 bottle, I’m not beggin either.

ANGEL Tell me where there’s an off licence opened at this time and I’ll go – I’ll get served – let me go.

DENO You’re goin no where – you get home.

ANGEL Wanta bet – I’m not goin home at this time – if I can’t stay with yous I’m goin down to the river – (Deno makes a grab for Angel and falls flat on his face)

CLEO (Sways a bit from foot to foot) Shit – I only need another – what – look I have 105 plus 16 and 5 – what’s that (voice is slightly slurred) look Mackers how much more do I need – can you lend me £2.

MACKERS Naw – Cle – Cle – (is swaying from side to side – laughs) ha – I near got your name right – didn’t I doll – Cleooo – that’s what you are – a wee doll – (laugh) Cle ee you do my head in – come on doll there’s a party in Rickeys – his ma and da’s in Spain – we’ll get somethin there – Rickey always has plenty of swag – and the music to go with it – O.K. Cleo doll – (she drops the bottle and runs her fingers through her hair – and stands up straight – she walks round to where Mackers is standing – he puts his arm around her shoulders and they kiss –

#### SCENE EIGHT

(Sorell looks at them for a second or two then gives them a dirty look and turns her head away from them – the light goes out around the grave and then the light brightens on the bed-room and ‘Puff Daddy’ song plays for 1 minute – the bed-room light remains on scene goes back to the grave – Sorell is sitting on the ground at side of grave talking to herself the others have left)

SORELL Oh Dee – it’s no one’s fault the way I feel – (in a low voice) the way I am. It was always the same at home – at school – every where – this feelin never – never – leaves me – (pause) it’s

like a longing – I just can't explain – like this big empty spot – a hole even – and no matter what I can't get it filled in – it's like I'm lonely for somethin or some-one and there's nothin there that I know that can make this feelin – this emptiness – this loneliness – go away – (closes her eyes) and leave me alone.

I look at all the others Dee – and they all seem to be normal – they don't seem to be like me – I know – you're askin how do I know – how can I tell – that they're normal and that I'm not – I know – I just know – they're not like me – I just can't communicate – I try – but I can't – I talk shit – I can't even talk normal – I try but I just don't know – that's why I'm here alone – talkin to you Dee – I know you understand – I know you do and it makes me feel so good Dee – but the others Dee if they could see me now talkin like this to you they'd laugh – you know them! You always listened Dee – you always understood – I mean – (she smiles) yes you did – well at least you'd try to understand – if you thought I was crazy you never said so – you always made me feel normal – (smiles and then covers her face with her hands as though she's embarrassed about something) When I was with you I always felt that I was connecting to some-one – that I wasn't crazy – that some-one knew what I meant – what I was about – that's how you made me feel – Dee – good about myself. (pause) Oh Dee (starts to sob) I miss you. I'm not crazy – you know I'm not – Dee – Dee – I look normal – but there's this thing inside my head and it tells me I'm not right – I'm not normal – it tells me more than anything – yeah – all them out there (pulls her knee up under her chin and begins to rock to and fro) they think that I'm normal – but I'm not I'm not – I can't talk to anyone – there is no one – some one help me (cries) some one – any one, please, please, please (Puts her head down on her knees and continues to rock to rock to and fro – the whole stage goes completely black for 30 seconds)

#### SCENE NINE

(The scene opens with a light shinning on Mackers, Bangers, Deno and Cleo standing around the grave with their hand joined as if in prayer)

CLEO I can't believe she did it – I can't believe I didn't know that she was serious.

MACKERS Cleo – there was nothin any of us could have done to stop her – we all listened!

CLEO Yeah – but she didn't know we were listenin!

(Lights go out- there is complete silence for 30 seconds and then in the middle of the stage the light shines small at first and enlarges to show the whole stage as the song 'Baby Can I Hold You' by Tracy Chapman begins to play. Both Graham and Sorell appear and begin to dance. The rest of the cast dance on to the stage and with their arms they call the audience to come on to the stage and dance) END

#### NATURE OR NURTURE

#### CAST CREEPER

DA

ELAINE

JENNY

JO JO (AROUND 9 YEARS OF AGE)

JONES (TEACHER)

MA

MR GREENE

MRS GREENE

MR PRICE (HEAD TEACHER)

PAUL (ELDEST – AROUND 13 YEARS OF AGE)

PJ (AROUND 11 YEARS OF AGE)

RED GREENE

THE BULLY

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

THE SCENE BEGINS IN A SMALL KITCHEN. THERE IS A TABLE WITH A RED AND WHITE CHECK TABLE CLOTH, FOUR CHAIRS, FRIDGE, SINK AND COOKER.

THREE YOUNG BOYS AROUND THE TABLE EATING CEREAL, AGES BETWEEN 9-13 YEARS. THEIR MOTHER IS STANDING AT THE SINK WASHING CUPS, SHE IS WEARING A CHECK HOUSE COAT AND THERE IS A 'STRAINED SILENCE' IN THE ROOM.

THE SCENE BEGINS WITH A TALL LAD IN BLACK AND GRAY SCHOOL UNIFORM WALKING IN. HE GOES OVER TO HIS MOTHER PUTS HIS ARM AROUND HER, KISSES HER ON THE CHEEK AND HANDS HER THE GIRO WHICH HAS JUST BEEN DELIVERED. SHE QUICKLY PUTS IT INTO HER POCKET.

THE YOUNG LAD WALKS OVER TO THE TABLE AND LIFTS A PIECE OF TOAST FROM A PLATE ON THE TABLE AND AS HE PUTS IT INTO HIS MOUTH A LOUD VOICE IS HEARD FROM UPSTAIRS. HAS THAT ....GIRO COME YET?

(THE MOTHER TOUCHES HER POCKET WHERE SHE'S PUT THE GIRO, THEN PJ SAYS)

PJ: I want more cornflakes – where's the cornflakes? (AS HE BANGS THE TABLE WITH A SPOON)

MA: You can't have more – there is no more! I've no money for more – now shut up before he comes down.

PJ: But I want more now. (MOTHER WALKS OVER TO THE TABLE POINTS HER FINGER RIGHT INTO P.J'S. FACE)

MA: I told you – shut it. (JUST THEN THE FATHER WALKS INTO THE KITCHEN – HE'S WEARING JEANS AND IS IN BARE FEET AND NO SHIRT)

DA: Where's the giro – I heard it drop through the letter-box. (HE WALKS OVER TO THE WIFE AND STARES INTO HER EYES)

MA: Here it is (SHE TAKES IT FROM HER POCKET AND HOLDS IT UP – HE GRABS IT AGGRESSIVELY) I'll go with you to cash it – we need food and things.

DA: I know what you need, and if you don't shut it now you'll get it in the face!

PAUL: (STANDING BESIDE MOTHER) DA: don't start – why do you always start.

DA: Start what – you bastard. You shut it too or you'll get it as well.

MA: PAUL: tie JO JO:'s laces and walk him to school. He says Johnnie Smith hit him yesterDA:y.

PAUL: JO JO: – what did I tell you – you get the boot in first – you give the first punch – sMA:sh the bastards face in!

JO JO: I can't fight (HE STARES AT THE DA:;) I don't like fighting.

PJ: I can fight DA: – I (SMILES AND SPEAKS QUICKLY) hit Julie last week on the face and her MA: came up to teacher and she was lookin at me the whole time they were talkin and then when they finished talkin they went outside and when teacher camed in she moved me to the table on my own.

MA: JO JO: you don't let any one walk on you – do you hear me!

DA: Where's the bacon?

MA: Where's the money!

PAUL: (SAYS UNDER HIS BREATH) Down the toilet where it usually ends up – after you've drunk it all.

DA: (WALKS OVER TO PAUL: AND GRABS HIM BY THE TIE) What did you say there – (HE SLAPS HIS FACE TWICE WITH THE BACK OF HIS HAND – PAUL TRIES TO MOVE BACKWARDS AND EVENTUALLY IS BENT BACK OVER THE COOKER)

PAUL: (HE TRIES TO SHIELD HIS HEAD WITH HIS LEFT HAND) I didn't mean anything – (HIS VOICE IS SHAKING) honest DA: I was only jokin – I didn't mean it at all.

DA: (PULLS HIM AWAY FROM THE COOKER AND GRABS HIS RIGHT ARM AND PUTS IT UP HIS BACK) This is your last warning – you sMA:rt bastard. When I was your age I was out earnin. You can't even hold on to a paper round.

PAUL: It wasn't my fault – it wasn't me – it was Pocky who stole the fags – I told you that before – I don't steal – Mr James only thought it was me –

DA: Well how did he not know it was Pocky – why did he give you the sack and not him.

PAUL: (PAUL LOOKS SAD AS HIS DA PUSHES HIM AWAY) I don't know why – MA:ybe it was because I was bigger or something. I asked you to go down and tell him it wasn't me – (SOFTLY) you didn't go – he might have kept me on if you'd told him it wasn't me – he would have believed you!

MA: For 'f's' sake – it's not eight in the morning yet and you're fightin already – I'm 'f'en' sick of the lot of you!

DA: (AS HE WALKS OUT OF THE KITCHEN) Well you know what you can do – don't you.

(THE CHILDREN AT THE TABLE ALL LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER – PAUL WALKS OVER TO THE SINK AND THROWS HIS HALF-EATEN PIECE OF TOAST IN TO THE SINK. HE THEN WALKS OUT OF THE KITCHEN DOOR INTO THE HALL AND SHOUTS BACK TO JO JO)

PAUL: Hurry up kid – I’m away.

JOJO Don’t go yet – wait I’m almost ready – MA, where’s me tie?

MA: Somewhere – probably lyin where you threw it last night when you were getting’ into bed.

JO JO: (SAYS IN A WHINNGING VOICE AS HE STAMPS HIS FEET AGAINST THE TABLE LEG) MA get me my tie – I need it now – if I don’t – if I don’t get it I’m not going to go to school!

MA: You’re just a whinge JO JO – we should have called you Mo Mo – you’re always moanin – you’re just a wee moan – my heads sore! (SHE PUTS HER RIGHT HAND ACROSS HER FOREHEAD)

PJ run upstairs and get me two paracodal – they’re in the top drawer in my room. (JO JO GETS UP FROM TABLE AND LEAVES THE ROOM)

PJ: O.K. (HE’S STARING INTO HIS EMPTY CEREAL BOWL) in a minute.

MA: Now – my heads sore now – not in a minute.

PJ: (JUMPS UP) O.K. O.K. I’m sick of this house – can’t even finish eatin here without havin to do somethin – (THE DA WALKS IN WITH A TOWEL WRAPPED AROUND HIS WAIST)

DA: What’s goin on now!

MA: (BENDING OVER THE SINK) Nothin’s goin on – nothin at all (SHOUTS) PJ hurry up – my head’s throbin! (PJ BANGS HIS FEET AS HE RUNS UP THE STAIRS – A FEW BANGS ARE HEARD AS HE PULLS OPEN THE CABINET DRAWERS)

DA: You should own shares in the paracodol factory – this family must be one of their best customers.

MA: This bloody house – (SHE TURNS AROUND AND STARS AT HER HUSBAND) look I’m fed up here – no money – no respect – from you or them (TURNS BACK AROUND TO THE SINK AND SAYS SOFTLY) I don’t know how much more of this I can take.

DA: (PULLS THE TOWEL FROM HIS WAIST AND WIPES HIS FACE) Well – you know what you can do – but remember – I’m not the one whose movin out this time – you go if you want – I’m stayin put – but if you go take them with you – I’m not lookin after no shower of bastards.

MA: There was a time when you would never have spoke to me like that. Where did we loose it? (SHE TURNS AWAY FROM HIM AND WALKS OVER TO THE TABLE AND LIFTS THE BREAKFAST DISHES AND BRINGS THEM OVER TO THE SINK)

DA: You – you’re always talkin shit – (MOCKINGLY AND SWINGING THE TOWEL AROUND) what ever happened – you happened – you’re the one that changed – not me! (WALKS OVER TO THE DOOR AND LOOKS AROUND BEFORE HE SPEAKS AS IF TO SEE IF ANYONE ELSE IS LISTENING)

You blame me – it wasn't my fault – you were goin to loose it any way – that's what the doctor said. It wasn't my fault (LIFTS HIS FIST AS IF HE'S THREATENING HER AND THEN PULLS IT BACK TO HIS SIDE)

I didn't know you were tellin the truth about the pains – all you did was complain the whole time – if I'd known that night I would have come home early. (SHE JUST FREEZES AT THE SINK – SHE DOESN'T MOVE UNTIL HE WALKS OUT AND PAUL WALKS BACK IN AND PUTS HIS ARMS AROUND HER)

PAUL: Why don't you leave – we'll be all right. I'd take care of JO JO and PJ – Mum – (SHE CRIES INTO HIS ARMS, JUST THEN JO JO AND PJ BOTH WALK INTO THE KITCHEN – JO JO IS HOLDING HIS TIE AND PJ IS HOLDING HIS SCHOOL BAG – JO JO GOES OVER TO MA AND HANDS HER THE TIE AND SAYS)

JOJO Here MA – put it on quick.

MA: For God's sake – you're almost nine and you still can't tie a tie yet (PAUSE AS SHE PUTS THE TIE AROUND HIS NECK AND BEGINS TO ARRANGE IT) did you get me the tablets PJ?

PJ: Couldn't find any – he's probably finished the last sheet of them for his hang-over.

PAUL: Will you hurry up – I've to see someone up the river – hurry up!  
(MA FINISHES FIXING JO JO'S TIE AND AS SHE GOES TO HUG HIM HE PUSHES HER AWAY BUT PAUL AND PJ GO OVER AND PUT THEIR ARMS AROUND HER AND SAY TOGETHER WE'LL SEE YOU LATER – TAKE CARE. MA LEAVES THE KITCHEN AND THE SCENE ENDS)

## SCENE TWO

(SCENE BEGINS WITH 3 BOYS AND 2 GIRLS IN SCHOOL UNIFORM STANDING AT THE SCHOOL GATE – THEY ARE PASSING A LIT CIGARETTE AROUND TO ONE ANOTHER – WHEN IT'S GIVEN TO PAUL HE DOESN'T SMOKE IT BUT PASSES IT ON TO THE GIRL NEXT TO HIM (ELAINE) WEATHER IS DULL AND SOME THUNDER IS HEARD)

CREEPER

ELAINE

JENNY

JONES

PAUL

RED

THE BULLY

BULLY: You should have seen Smithie squirm yesterday – he was on his knees – smelly tout – he was lucky I didn't kick his ----- in – he was cryin in front of JONES – he nearly did a cropper – JONES apologized for accusing me in the wrong – (BULLY TAKES THE CIG OFF ELAINE AND INHALES IT THEN BLOWS THE SMOKE INTO PAULS FACE – PAUL COUGHS AND TURNS AWAY) silly bastard – if I'd been JONES: I would have got the evidence before goin round Makin accusations like that (THEY ALL LAUGH)

JENNY: Holy shit – you get away with murder here – you should bring JONESY to court – accusing you in the wrong like that – (THEY ALL LAUGH)

BULLY: He said this was my last warnin – one more complaint and I’m out – silly bastard.

ELAINE: (PULLS THE CIG BACK OFF BULLY AND INHALES IT AND THEN BLOWS THE SMOKE INTO PAULS FACE) Here’s another doe – doe – specky cow – watch this for a laugh! (RED, A SMALL PLUMP BOY WITH RED HAIR AND FRECKLES WALKS TOWARDS THE GANG WITH HIS HEAD DOWN – HE IS CARRYING A SCHOOL BAG OVER HIS SHOULDER AND A LUNCH BOX IN HIS HAND) Mornin’ Red (SHE SALUTES HIM) not talkin’ are we? Where’s your side kick Smithie – not feelin’ too well this mornin – does he knows he’s goin to get his ..... kicked in – Toe Kneel’s out lookin’ him.

RED: (TRYING TO WALK ON BUT BULLY PULLS HIM BY THE TIE) What (VOICE IS SHAKING) what do you want – I’m going to report you (THEY ALL LAUGH)

BULLY: What – what was that – you little smarmey git – who the ‘f’ do you think you’re talkin to? Eh – that bastard JONES:! -f – you – cunt – (HITS RED WITH HIS FIST IN THE STOMACH – RED BENDS OVER AND IS SICK – THEY ALL JUMP AWAY)

ELAINE: (INHALES SMOKE FROM CIGARETTE AND BLOWS IT INTO REDS’ FACE) We don’t like touts – so for toutin on us we’ll have to think of a punishment to fit the crime. (RED LOOKS UP AT HER) you freckled little f’er.

PAUL: Quick – here’s JONES:y – (PAUL GRABS RED BY THE ARM IN A THREATENING WAY THEN PUSHES HIM AWAY) you open your mouth and you’ll get this (CLOSES HIS FIST) after school – do you understand – scum (SAYS LOUDLY THEN THE GANG ALL HURRY OFF IN TO THE SCHOOL YARD)

JONES: Thomas– who were they? – were they bullying you just now –was that Fitzimons – is he threatening you again – speak up Thomas – you’re not doing yourself any favors showing loyalty to that pack (RED DUSTS HIMSELF DOWN)

RED: No – no sir we were just talking about the game tonight.

JONES: What game would that be?

RED: (STUTTERING) Dow –dow – down by the riv – river sir. We al – always play ‘dra- drag-net down there.

JONES: Dragnet – what’s that? I’ve never heard of that – what is it Thomas – fishing?

RED: Yeah – sort of fishing – we use a line and be – be – bait – and see who ca ca can get the first catch – bu bu – but it’s no no not like other games.

JONES: Oh – what do you mean?

RED We – we – well if you don’t ‘kill’ that’s the word we u – u – use for catch sir – Mr JONES: then you have to for – for – forfeit.

JONES: Forfeit – forfeit what –

RED: Like you have to ke – ke – keep your head under the water for a long time – you have to break the previous record.

JONES: (THE SCHOOL BELL IS RINGING) That doesn't sound like too safe a game – tell me Thomas do you play it voluntary?

RED: I have to go sir! (RUNS OFF QUICKLY WITH HIS HEAD DOWN)

JONES: (SHOUTS AFTER HIM) Thomas – come to my office at break – I'll discuss this with you later!

(JONES WALKS TOWARDS SCHOOL AND SCENE ENDS WITH SOME THUNDER AND LIGHTNING)

### SCENE THREE

(SCENE IS IN PRINCIPALS OFFICE – THE GREENS HAVE COME TO COMPLAIN ABOUT LACK OF PROTECTION FOR THEIR SON FROM BULLIES. MR GREEN SLIGHTLY BOLD AND IS WEARING A SUIT IS STANDING UP WITH HIS HANDS ON THE PRINCIPALS TABLE. THE OTHERS ARE ALL SEATED – THERE IS A FILLING CABINET IN THE CORNER AND ON THE TABLE ARE A FEW FILES AND ALSO A TELEPHONE)

JONES

MR PRICE

MR GREENE

MRS GREENE

MR GREENE: I don't have to tell you that I'm – I mean – we're not happy at all with the way our son is being treated here. He has been bullied verbally and physically and in front of teachers and the culprits have got off scott free – in fact our son even got detention on one occasion when he did try to speak up to one of the bullies. What kind of school is this – are you all afraid of the bullies yourselves or is it the parents of these thugs that you're frightened of?

MR PRICE: Now – now (VERY INDIGNANT) MR GREENE I think you're being unfair – really we have a very high standard of success regarding the stamping out of bullying here at St Andrews. Our staff do everything in their power to deal with the problem.

MR GREENE: Well from listening to a lot of other parents you don't do enough! (TAKES A PACKET OF CIGARS FROM HIS COAT POCKET AND OFFERS THE PRINCIPAL AND JONES ONE)

MR PRICE: (POINTING TO WALL SIGN – NO SMOKING) We're very strict on our no smoking policy here at St Andrews' MR GREENE – if you don't mind! (MR GREENE CLOSSES THE PACK OF CIGARS AND GLANCES AT HIS WIFE BEFORE PUTTING THEM BACK INTO HIS POCKET)

MR GREENE: I am glad to know your strict about enforcing your no smoking policy MR PRICE, that's very reassuring indeed (HE SAYS SARCASTICALLY) MR PRICE – our sons' case isn't unique at all. We've been hearing other horror stories –

JONES: Come now MR GREENE – that’s a bit drastic isn’t it – I mean – horror – come now let’s be realistic –

MR GREENE: Realistic – Mr JONES – have you ever been bullied? Have you ever been so terrified of coming to work that you make up different excuses every day so you don’t have to face anyone – even your friends who aren’t bullying you – well – do you – have (RAISES HIS VOICE) you sat in your room and cried yourself to sleep – because you feel like a coward – because you just can’t cope with being treated as some-ones bit of fun? Well – well (HIS WIFE PULL HIS SLEEVE FOR HIM TO CALM DOWN)

MR PRICE: Please please calm down – MR GREENE I can assure you we’ve had no serious incidence of bullying here – we stamp it out as soon as it is brought to our attention; before it gets to the stage where someone gets hurt; we suspend anyone caught bullying immediately – that’s a fact here at St Andrews MR GREENE – I can give you my word about that and if you have any proof or any thing concrete about Thomas being bullied I give you my word that we’ll act immediately and punish those responsible.

MRS GREENE: (BANGING HER HAND ON THE TABLE) Yes what about Sharon Totten – she’d to get her hair cut after Freddie James lit a match in the assembly hall last month and set her hair on fire!

MR PRICE: Yes – I know that MRS GREENE – but we suspended Freddie immediately –

MRS GREENE: Yes – but he’s back now isn’t he –

MR PRICE: Yes – but MRS GREENE – how can I put this – (LOOKS VERY THOUGHTFUL) Freddie – well he wasn’t really a bully – (MR & MRS GREENE LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER THEN BOTH TURN AWAY FROM THE TABLE)

MR GREENE: You’re telling us that setting some-ones hair alight isn’t bullying – well what in Gods’ name is then – in the opinion of St Andrews!

MR PRICE: In fact MRS GREENE it was never proven that it was Freddie who set Sharon’s’ hair on fire – the truth is no one saw him – not even Sharon – the culprit – who knows – no one ever owned up – even when we threatened to suspend all of lower sixth!

So Mr and MRS GREENE it just isn’t as simple as it may seem to root out the bullies and stop all forms of bullying for ever. You see we’re trying to prevent it – to understand the bully – the child who bullies another is themselves a victim.

MR GREENE: Don’t make me laugh – MR PRICE – with all due respect. You mean no one was brave enough to come forward to say that Freddie did it; because they knew the school wouldn’t stand by them. You all don’t seem to realize that if someone comes forward and says they saw bullies do something to someone then they’re in line for bullying themselves. The kids need to know that the school will protect them. They need to know that if they say they witnessed someone being bullied then what ever teacher they tell it to won’t run to the bully and ASK the bully if they did such and such – naturally – they’ll deny it!

MR PRICE: Look MR GREENE I know and understand your concern but to somehow blame it on our staff is ridiculous – we do everything we can to protect our pupils.

MR GREENE: I don't think so – with all due respect – you know who the bullies are – yes I know it says on the wall that all pupils should report any bullying – but who to – a teacher whose as frightened as they are that someone is going to break his legs or get their mates to shout at him in the street if he as much as suggests that someone's little son or daughter is a bully that he or she suddenly develops a personality change when they leave the house and walk in through the school gates.

And that's not all either – when wee Jack Barrett was being bullied he did report it – to you as a matter of fact – and what did you do about it?

MR PRICE: (GETS UP FROM SEAT AND BENDS TOWARDS THE GREENS ACROSS THE TABLE) Now – just wait a minute – you can't go on here say – you can't accuse me of not doing the right thing in that instance –

MR GREENE: Yes – and was it the right thing for you to ask Gary Fitzimons if he took money from wee Jack – and then (HE LAUGHS SARCASTICALLY) you took Fitzimons's word for it that wee Jack owed him the money – MR PRICE – there is something seriously wrong with your policy on these bullies – Jack Barrett had to leave this school –

MR PRICE: Now – no – that's not correct – Jacks' parents took him out of St Andrews for an entirely different reason –

MR GREENE: Sure – sure – that just shows how really blind you are! (SHAKES HIS HEAD) The truth is that Jacks' parents were frightened he might do something stupid to himself – he became over night (SHOUTS) a recluse – from an out-going happy-go-lucky kid – why do you think he was absent for four weeks – the kid was terrified – he was depressed and withdrawn – his parents couldn't even get him to go to the youth club – do you understand – the fear that was instilled in this child in this school yard – and without one single teacher noticing! (SHAKES HIS HEAD)

Well it's not going to happen to our son! If you won't deal with the problem – I will.

MR PRICE: Now – now MR GREENE – I hope you understand what you're saying?

MR GREENE: Oh yes I do indeed! – I also know that our son is entitled to come to school to be educated in a safe and secure environment. And I also know this isn't the case here – at St Andrews!

JONES: Look Mr and MRS GREENE – (LOOKING FROM ONE TO THE OTHER) We empathise with everything you say – but believe me there is another side to every bully! (JOINS HIS HANDS AS HE SPEAKS)

MR GREENE: That maybe so Mr JONES – but personally I don't give a damn. My only concern is for our son and his wellbeing – mental – physical – emotional and believe me or not – spiritual!

JONES: Look MR GREENE – we understand that but you must understand also that all those concerns of yours are our concerns also – not just about Thomas but about every single pupil here at St Andrews!

And Thomas knows that he can come and talk to me about anything and at any time – I told him that yesterday morning – I watch Thomas, MR GREENE because in a way he reminds me a lot of myself when I was a young lad – I used to be bullied at school myself – although then it wasn't called being bullied – it wasn't actually given a name – no – there were no names then – but the victim was known as a weakling!

I don't know which was worse – being bullied or being thought of as a coward! (JUST STARES AT MR GREENE THEN PUTS HIS HEAD DOWN AS HE LIFTS A PENCIL UP FROM THE TABLE)

MR GREENE: Mr JONES I know you mean well but – (PAUSE) from now on I'm taking care of anyone who causes our son any grief here in this school!

MR PRICE: MR GREENE – I have to warn you of the consequences of that sort of threat (PAUSE – MRS GREENE CROSSES HER LEGS AND STARTS TO FLICK HER FINGERS THROUGH HER HAIR) look we're holding a meeting next Tuesday evening in the assembly hall at 7.30 in the evening – please – please – come and between us all – staff and parents – we can work out some way of preventing this type of behavior here at St Andrews. Will you both come and say all that you've just said!

MR GREENE: And what about the pupils? Are they invited?

MR PRICE: Of course not!

MR GREENE: Well they're what this is all about – do you not think each year should elect at least 3 representatives – to help formulate an anti-bullying regime!

MR PRICE: Of course not – well – I mean that's something we'd be talking about at the meeting!

MR GREENE: Why wait until after the meeting why can't this be sorted at the meeting – they're what this is all about – it's not just about the present bullies – it's about all the potential bullies as well.

JONES: What do you mean – are you trying to say all our boys are potential bullies?

MR GREENE: No you said it when you said there was another side to every bully – didn't you!

JONES: Yes but I didn't mean it like that!

MR GREENE: You may not have meant it like that – but surely it follows – no one just becomes a bully – I mean no one is born a bully – or are they? I mean – I just don't know what I mean!

MR PRICE: Look if the both of you come along on Tuesday next you can have your say –

MR GREENE: Well – why wait to Tuesday –

MR PRICE: We just can't rush into things without full staff approval – (SHRUGS HIS SHOULDERS) we just can't!

MRS GREENE: No – maybe that’s the problem (PAUSE) if you don’t have the insight necessary to avert a tragedy – you’re saying you’ll act quickly if something happens – like some poor kid not being able to take any more!

Then MR PRICE I think that might just be too late. You’ll wait until there’s a disaster and then what – go on tell me what – I just hope it’s not going to be my door you knock to tell me your sorry, that you didn’t think it was all that serious.

(MR AND MRS GREENE GET UP AND WALK OUT THE DOOR BANGING IT BEHIND THEM)

JONES: Disaster! Really – some peoples imagination! I know the situation is bad – but not disastrous!

MR PRICE: At least not yet anyway!

SCENE FOUR

THEY HAVE ALL GATHERED TO PUNISH RED FOR TELLING HIS PARENTS THAT HE WAS BEING BULLIED. ELAINE AND JENNY ARE BOTH WEARING MINI SKIRTS AND JEAN JACKETS AND THEIR FACES ARE PLASTERED WITH TAN MAKE-UP. THEY ARE ALL SMOKING EXCEPT FOR PAUL; THERE ARE TWO BOTTLES OF CIDER BEING PASSED AROUND. THEY ARE ALL SITTING DOWN, PAUL IS FACING JENNY WHO HE KEEP STARING AT BECAUSE HE REALLY LIKES HER AND KNOWS THAT SHE’S NOT LIKE THE OTHERS.

BULLY

ELAINE

JENNY

PAUL

PJ

RED

BULLY: (AFTER TAKING A DRINK FROM THE CIDER BOTTLE HE IS HOLDING) You should have seen my DA last night he nearly knocked the crap out of his auld doll. She finished his last can of harp and he fuckin went berserk – I thought she was goin to choke; then he started on our Tina – she ran out half dressed – all the bastards in the street got an eye full, the auld cow’s afraid to lay a hand on me – he tried it once (SWAYING AND STILL HOLDING ONTO THE BOTTLE) or twice and I kicked the crap out of him.

ELAINE: If my auld lad ever laid a hand on my MA I’d kill him myself! We’re all afraid of him – but he’s never hit any of us – he just threatens us – but we never listen – my MA says he’s low self esteem (LAUGHS) what ever that is – he gambles – and usually looses – my MA has to get his wages paid into her bank account – so he can’t touch it – I suppose he’s not really all that bad – at least compared to your auld lad.

BULLY: Fuck – no one could be as bad as him!

JENNY: But he can’t have always been like that – I mean he can’t have always been bad – or (LAUGHS) was he?

BULLY: Yeah! My auld lad was born bad – his auld lad used to beat the crap out of him every night for nothin – I think he must have been a pervert – (SWINGS THE BOTTLE THEN TAKES ANOTHER DRINK)

You know he got pleasure out of knockin the crap out of him (SWAYING) and then he thinks cause it happened to him that he can do the same to us – ol' bastard.

Sometimes when he'd beat me I could see the hate and pleasure in his eyes (LOOKS DOWN) then I just stopped lookin at his eyes – even now I never look him in the eyes even when I do talk to him – (PAUSE)

I think when he was beatin me it was like he was really beatin his auld lad – his eyes frightened me more than his fists!

JENNY: I thought you said he'd only hit you twice? (MAKING A JOKE OF WHAT BULLY HAS JUST SAID – SHE LOOKS OVER INTO PAUL'S EYES FOR HIM TO BACK HER UP AND WHEN HE DOESN'T SHE GETS EMBARRASSED)

BULLY: (CAUGHT OFF GUARD) Yeah – I'm talkin shit. (PAUL AND PJ JUST STARE AT ONE ANOTHER)

PAUL: (HE NODS FOR JENNY TO COME OVER AND SIT BESIDE HIM – SHE MOVES OVER BESIDE HIM THEN HE SAYS IN A LOW VOICE SO THE OTHERS CAN'T HEAR) I told you before you don't belong here – you're different – don't try to be like them just so they'll accept you – understand?

JENNY: I can handle myself. This is the real me – you just can't see it – and in any case I can say the same about you!

PAUL: Last year – yeah – maybe – but I think I'm wise'n up now – people change –

JENNY: Then what are you doin here now?

PAUL: I thought my kid brother would've been here, I only came to take em home – he's what I was like this time last year!

JENNY: I can take care of myself – don't get on my nerves – I'm not your kid (JUST THEN RED COMES WALKING TOWARDS THEM HE'S CARRYING A BLUE PLASTIC CARRIER BAG – JENNY STANDS UP AND POINTING HER FINGER TO RED WHO'S WALKING TOWARDS THEM AND LAUGHS OUT LOUD) Look who's comin – it's Little Red Riding Hood (THEY ALL LAUGH)

ELAINE: A blue bag – I wonder what's in it?

BULLY: Stupid bitch – it's mine! He's brought it for me.

RED: (HE WALKS UP TO BULLY AND HANDS HIM THE BAG AND SAYS) Can I go now – my DA told me not to be long otherwise he'll be out looking for me!

BULLY: Why you freckled faced little git – is our company not good enough for you? (HE LOOKS INSIDE THE PLASTIC BAG TAKES A SNIFF AND THEN DROPS THE BAG ON THE GRASS)

RED I have to go – (HIS VOICE IS SHAKING) I'm in enough trouble – I have a fiver for you – I stole it on my MA: (TAKES THE MONEY FROM HIS POCKET AND HANDS IT TO BULLY WHO EXAMINES IT THEN PUTS IT INTO HIS POCKET) there - now can I go – please?

BULLY: Not just yet – you little git – (THEY ALL LAUGH) What's this I hear about your MA and DA up seein PRICE and JONES today?

Being cry-baby again (MAKES NOISE AND HE RUNS HIS FINGERS UP AND DOWN HIS LIPS LIKE A BABY) now – baby you're goin ta pay! What do you say girls – what should he forfeit – will we play games (THEY ALL LAUGH)

ELAINE: What about dragnet? You enjoyed it the last time Red didn't you? (SAYS SARCASTICALLY) By the way did Mammy wonder how your trousers got wet or are they always like that – still piss the bed – do we – little shit!

RED: Look (PUTS HIS HANDS INTO HIS TROUSER POCKETS) boys (PLEADING) girls please – look I'm in trouble – please let me go – please- I'll get you more money if that's what you want! Please I'm afraid of the water I once almost drowned (THEY ALL LAUGH PAUL STANDS UP AND MOVES OVER TO THE OTHERS AS ELAINE LIFTS THE PLASTIC BAG AND OPENS IT AND THEN SHOVES IT INTO REDS FACE AND MAKES HIM SNIFF IT – RED TRIES TO PULL AWAY SO THEY ALL GATHER ROUND HIM SHOUTING SNIFF – SNIFF – SNIFF – RED FALLS TO THE GROUND AND THEY ALL FALL ABOUT LAUGHING)

JENNY: I (SWAYING AND GIGGLING BUT ALSO GLANCING AT PAUL TO SEE IF HE'S WATCHING HER) I know Red – why don't you strip off and go for a swim – maybe Pau'll jump in with you – (PAUL STARES AT JENNY UNTIL SHE LOOKS AWAY) it'll cure your fear of the water now – go on Red let's see how brave you really are – go on without JONESY about! (THEY ALL PRETEND TO BE SWIMMING – MAKING MOTIONS WITH THEIR ARMS EXCEPT FOR PAUL)

RED: (GOES DOWN ON HIS KNEES AND JOINS HIS HANDS AND PLEADS WITH THEM ALL NOT TO MAKE HIM UNDRESS) I'll do anything but not that please – (HE'S CRYING) please! (HE STARTS TO SOB)

PAUL: Look that's enough – let's go – I'm fed up here – what's the point of all this anyway! Come on JENNY we're goin.

JENNY: You don't own me – get lost (SHE STARES AT ELAINE FOR HER APPROVAL) go where anyway – to help old ladies cross the road! (SHE LAUGHS) The fun's just about to begin – here and I not missin it for anything!

PAUL: (DIRECTLY AT JENNY) I see enough fun in our house – this isn't fun – if it was your brother would you think it was funny – well – would you?

JENNY: My brother's just a pain in the arse – just like you're beginin to get – PAUL.

PAUL: I'm away – I don't want to be part of this – I can tell this is all goin to get out of order; please JENNY come with me PJ – now – Please.

JENNY: (JENNY LOOKS AROUND AT THE OTHERS, THEY ALL STARE AT HER AND TOGETHER SING – JENNY IS A SISSY JENNY IS A SISSY – SHE LOOKS AT PAUL THEN SAYS) I'm no sissy – now piss off

PAUL: No you're right JENNY – you're not a sissy – you're a fool and you're bein used and you don't want to see it – I used to be a fool – just like you – I was afraid of not bein liked or not bein part of the gang – but now – I don't give a shit – we're alike – you and me – you're standing there where I was this time last year – now I'm movin on – (TURNS AND SHOUTS AT THEM ALL) you're all shit head if you think this is fun – shit heads – bye and fuck off the lot of you – (HE LOOKS AT RED AND SAYS) sorry mate – (SHAKING HIS HEAD) I'm not brave enough to help you – you'll have to do it yourself. (THEN HE WALKS AWAY)

BULLY: Right girls (THE TWO GIRLS AND BULLY PUT THEIR HEADS TOGETHER AND WHISPER — RED IS STILL ON THE GROUND SOBBING. AS JENNY AND ELAINE GO OVER TO RED – BULLY'S LAUGHTER IS GETTING LOUDER AND LOUDER AND A SCREAM IS HEARD COMING FROM RED. THE LIGHTS GO OUT AND THERE IS COMPLETE SILENCE FOR ABOUT 20 SECONDS)

#### SCENE FIVE

WHEN THE LIGHTS GO BACK ON THE SCENE HAS CHANGED TO PAUL'S' KITCHEN – IT'S MORNING AND MA IS AT THE SINK WHILE PAUL AND JO JO ARE AT THE TABLE EATING BREAKFAST. THE SILENCE IS BROKEN WHEN DA ABRUPTLY OPENS THE KITCHEN DOOR AND SAYS;

DA: Guess who was found dead early this morning?

MA: (BLESSES HERSELF) Who?

DA: Thomas Greene – (LOOKING AT PAUL) some wee girl, JENNY somebody, found him this mornin down at the river – he was naked – he must have been sniffin glue – and was out of his mind. Poor bastard. Yer wee girl who found him tried to resuscitate him – she was holdin him – I believe the screeches of her could've be'n heard across the river!

(LIGHTS GO OUT) END

THE CLEANING LADY

CAST JEAN

THE PATIENT

COW BOY

THE MAN

SMYTH

FR SIMPLE

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

JEAN (STANDING AT BUS STOP WAITING FOR BUS AND LOOKING AT HER WATCH SINGING 'NO REGRETS' IN FRENCH BEFOR SPEAKING)

JEAN (SINGING) Non, Rien De Rien, Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien Ni Le Bien Qu' On M' a Fait, Ni Le Mal Tout Ca M' est Bien Ega l Non, Rien De Rien, Mon Je Ne Regrette Rien C'est Pay, Balaye, Oublie, Je Me Fous Du Passe .

CONTINUES TO SPEAK

JEAN How I wish I could get a job that would last – one without any people to bother me and get me into trouble! If this bus doesn't come soon I'm going to be late for this job interview. I'm trying to talk over in my mind just what went wrong with the other jobs.

(JEAN EXITS AND WALKS TO BACK OF STAGE THEN INTO DOOR OF OFFICE WEARING SAILOR SUIT LOOKING AROUND OFFICE AND THEN SAYING OUT LOUD)

CONTINUE:

JEAN Not bad for £4 an hour, but you'd think a psychiatrist would have a tidy place, tidy place tidy mind – or so they say; I've never cleaned for a psychiatrist before –

(PAUSE AS SHE RUNS THE DUSTER OVER THE DESK AND AS SHE MOVES AROUND TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TABLE SHE SITS DOWN ON THE SWIVEL CHAIR AND SWINGS ROUND)

JEAN Well this is a new experience for me any roads – it'll be different from my last two appointments – cleaning for the parish priest and then after that for Ms Jones.

(DOOR KNOCKS SEVERAL TIMES BEFORE THE CLEANING LADY SHOUTS OUT IN AN AUTHORITATIVE VOICE)

CONTINUE:

JEAN Enter.

(IN WALKS A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN WEARING THE SAME OUTFIT AS JEAN ONLY IN RED. JEAN SWINGS ROUND AND THEY BOTH STARE AT ONE ANOTHER FOR A BRIEF MOMENT FOLLOWED BY EACH DOING AN ASIDE)

PATIENT (AN ASIDE)

She doesn't look like a psychiatrist! Except for the glasses!

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

She doesn't look like a psychiatrist! She's not even wearing glasses!

(THEY BOTH EXCHANGE SMILES)

PATIENT (AN ASIDE)

(STILL SMILING AND LOOKING AROUND ROOM)

(SAYS WITH IMPATIENCE)

What do I do now? Tell me Mrs Brain, for goodness sake tell me! In the movies the patient always lies down on the couch.

(STILL SMILING AND LOOKING AROUND SHE ASKS JEAN)

Where may I sit?

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

What's she askin' me for – she can sit where she likes – it's her office – she's the boss. Oh yeah – I get it – she's tryin' to analyse me already and I haven't even begun workin' for her yet! Well I

suppose I'd better play along with her wee game!

(STILL SMILING SHE GOES TO GET UP TO GIVE HER NEW BOSS THE SEAT BUT AS SHE DOES THE DUSTER FALLS TO THE FLOOR AND STILL IN THE CHAIR SHE STOOPS TO PICK IT UP)

PATIENT (AN ASIDE)

Oh very well then play you're little game if you must. This must be what they call an ice breaker or something like that!

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

Gee – she sure is a queer one - I suppose it's dealin' with all the loons on a daily basis – she can't tell the difference now between someone who's normal and a loon.

(SMILING POLITELY SAYS OUT LOUD)

I think it's time for me to begin to do my job!

PATIENT

(AS SHE SITS DOWN THE JEAN MOVES HER LEGS UNDER THE TABLE ACCIDENTALLY HITTING THE LAMP LEAD CAUSING IT TO LIGHT UP – THE SPOT LIGHT SHINES ON PATIENTS FACE – SHE BLINKS A LOT AND THEN TAKES OUT A PAIR OF SUNGLASSES FROM HER HAND BAG SHE PUTS THEM ON AND SAYS)

That's better now – a little less light on the subject! Right!

(QUIETLY LAUGHS)

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

This one's definitely a loon!

(STARES AT PATIENT CURIOSLY)

PATIENT Great – do you think you can help me then? I mean – how good are you at your job? Or is that a silly question?

JEAN No I don't think it's a silly question at all – after all you're payin' me – and from past experience – and believe me I've had a lot of experience in this field – it pays to ask questions – especially on your first day – start as you mean to go on I always say. If you stick to that motto – you'll not go too far wrong!

PATIENT Right – then – shall we begin – start – or whatever the term is – or before we begin – I just want to say how pleased I am at getting you yourself – my husband says you come highly recommended –

JEAN Your husband – I didn't realise you were married – it said in the advert 'Miss' –

PATIENT Advert – what advert?

JEAN The advert in the paper – for help

PATIENT I didn't put an advert in the paper – least of all for help – this is a private and personal matter – why would I advertise that I have a problem – I think not –

(IRRITATED SHE SPEAKS AN ASIDE)

She's a sly one trying to trick me already – she's testing me for paranoia – well I'm not paranoid – Frank has probably told her that behind my back! Well Mrs Brains – we'll see who's paranoid – and it won't be me!

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

Very touchy for a psychiatrist – she'd better change that attitude if she wants to hold on to me – she goes through cleaners like dentists go through teeth. Nobody seems to stay very long with her; I'm beginnin' to understand why Marley calls her the 'quacks quack'! (SMILES) or is the 'quackiest quack'? Ah well - sure no one's perfect!

PATIENT (AN ASIDE)

I wish she'd begin, (LONGISH PAUSE) she's wasting my time; (LOOKS AROUND FOR A WALL CLOCK) no clock – that must be so she can begin and end when she wants – I suppose she ends when she gets fed up – when she's had enough of other people's problems (LOOKS AT HER WATCH) well if she thinks I'm just going to sit here and wait for her to begin, she's got another thing coming!

(THEN SHE SAYS OUT LOUD SMILING)

Well, I suppose you'd like to know why I'm here, (SLIGHT PAUSE) why I need help – you see – it's my husband – really – it's him who needs the help – (SLIGHT LAUGH)

(JEAN LOOKS PUZZLED)

CONTINUES

well – what I mean is – it is him who has the problem – I only need help to cope – or find a way around it – do you know what I'm saying – do you – (LAUGHS) it's nerves – nerves – when I get nervous I laugh –

(NODS HER HEAD) I wasn't laughing at my husband .....

(NOTICES JEAN IS LOOKING AT HER STRANGELY AND COUGHS BEFORE CONTINUING)

CONTINUES

Well I'll start again – (COUGHS PUTTING HER HAND TO HER MOUTH) It sounds a bit ridiculous – but – here goes – and please don't laugh – although it's funny – well – not funny funny – but sort of funny – well it's really not funny at all when I say it out loud – I've never said it out loud before – so I know – or I think it's going to sound (SAYS THE NEXT WORD SLOWLY AND IN A LOW TONE AS SHE NODS HER HEAD REALISING THAT THE CLEANER IS A BIT SURPRISED LOOKING) funny!

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

Jeepest! This crazy lady thinks I'm her shrink – she thinks I'm a head doctor!

(SHE GOES TO STAND UP TO EXPLAIN BUT QUICKLY CHANGES HER MIND AND FALLS BACK INTO HER SEAT – SHE MOVES HER GLASSES UP AND DOWN AND THE PATIENT BEGINS TO PULL FACES – THEN SHE SAYS OUT LOUD AS SHE LIFTS HER SHOULDERS UP AND DOWN TWICE)

CONTINUES

Oh very well – go on – I'm intrigued.

PATIENT (AN ASIDE)

Intrigued (SLIGHT PAUSE)

what a strange thing to say – umm – (BEGINS AND CROSSES HER LEGS)

Well – (TAKES A DEEP BREATH) my husband (SAYS VERY SLOWLY) likes to dress up! He

.....

(SHE'S STIRRING INTENSELY AS SHE SPONTANEOUSLY LIFTS SUN GLASSES UP AND DOWN AS JEAN LIFTS HER GLASSES UP AND STARES BACK AT HER)

JEAN (PUTTING HER TWO ELBOWS ON TABLE AND HANDS BELOW HER CHIN SHE SAYS)

I wouldn't worry about a little thing like that – lots of men like to dress up in their wife's clothes – some even –

PATIENT (CUTTING IN QUICKLY)

Oh no no no (SOFTLY SHOUTS) no - it's not that he likes dressing up in my clothes – no – it's in cowboy clothes, (LOOKS AT CLEANING LADY FOR HER REACTION BEFORE SAYING) and so – the problem is that he expects me to dress up as well – like him – no no not in a cowboy suit – but in an Indian squaw costume.

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

(STILL STARING AT PATIENT, GLASSES FALL DOWN ONTO TABLE AND SHE PICKS THEM UP RIGHT AWAY, PUTTING THEM ON AND MOVING THEM UP AND DOWN AS IF SHE THINKS SHE'S SEEING THINGS)

Jeeps – he sounds a bit too like that loon who went in to Ms Jones'; he was a regular, every Tuesday and Thursday he'd come runnin' up the stairs two at a time lookin' for his squaw – the girls thought he had died when he stopped comin' – no one ever knew who he was – or where he was from – he always talked with a yankee accent!

(CLEARS HER THROAT AND FIXES HER GLASSES AND SAYS OUT LOUD)

What exactly is the problem – with you I mean – don't you like dressin' up – (PATIENT'S FACE IS TWITCHING) it's pretty harmless – isn't it (SLIGHT LAUGH) he does keep the guns (NODDING HER HEAD) in their holsters – doesn't he! (SCREWS HER FACE UP AND ASKS) Is your husband a Yankee by any chance?

PATIENT (AN ASIDE)

She's heard all this before – they all must talk with a Yankee accent when they dress up as cowboys! (SMILES AND LOOKS UP AT THE CEILING AS IF SHE PRAYING TO SOMEONE UP ON IT) thank you – thank you –

JEAN This lady is definitely cuckoo – what's she smiling for? – I was asking her if she was as crazy as he was – and what does she do – she looks up at the ceiling and smiles – and - she's wearing sun-glasses - in doors - and in the winter!

(SHE MOVES HER GLASSES AND SAYS LIFTING A PENCIL IN HER HAND – SHE SEEMS TO BE GETTING CARRIED AWAY WITH THIS NEW FOUND VOCATION AND SHE

ADAPTS AN AIR OF AUTHORITY IN HER VOICE)

CONTINUES

Can I enquire if you ever dressed up when you were a child? –

(PATIENT NODS HER HEAD AS IF SHE'S JUST BEEN ASKED SOMETHING RIDICULOUS)

You know – for example – did you ever play mummies and daddies or nurses and doctors – or even - cowboys and Indians?

PATIENT (STUDIES THEN ANSWERS LIFTING HER GLASSES BRIEFLY AND LOOKING AT THE TABLE SAYS)

We all played nurses and doctors – some of us played cowboys and Indians –

JEAN And mummies and daddies?

PATIENT No – never!

JEAN You never played mummies and daddies?

PATIENT No – I never played mummies and daddies!

JEAN Why – (LIFTING HER GLASSES) did you never play mummies and daddies?

PATIENT I never knew how to – that's why!

JEAN How did you not know how?

PATIENT I don't know the reason – I just never played the game –

JEAN But did you have a mammy and a daddy? Or someone who you thought was your mammy and daddy?

PATIENT Of course I had a mammy and a daddy!

JEAN Oh I thought that maybe you didn't have a – a mammy and a daddy and that was why you didn't play mummies and daddies! Sorry!

PATIENT That's all right! An easy mistake to have made!

JEAN What does that mean – an easy mistake to have made!

PATIENT It just means it was an easy mistake to have made! Right!

JEAN Oh right then right!

(SHE TAKES OFF HER GLASSES AND BEGINS TO CLEAN THEM WITH A DUSTER)

But – now don't be offended – but – if you had a mammy and a daddy – why then didn't you do what all – or most other children do and play mummies and daddies?

(PUTS GLASSES BACK ON)

PATIENT (LOOKS VERY STERNLY AND SEEMS AGITATED BY PERSISTENT QUESTIONING)

I thought I'd made myself clear – I just don't know why – and at this moment – in time – I don't want to know why – O.K.

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

(TAKING A DEEP BREATH)

Look lady don't get your knickers in a twist – I'm only tryin' to help! We've got to get to the bottom of this mammy and daddy thing or else we may never find out what the real problem is here

and worse still – (SMILING) you may never come to know the joy of playin’ cowboys and Indians with that man of yours!

(THEN SAYS OUT LOUD)

Look – there is a problem here – regardless of who owns it – but you’re here to solve it! And – (SAYS WITH A BIG SMILE) I’m going to help you.

PATIENT Wrong – I told you – I don’t have a problem – my husband has the problem! Right! He sent me here to get as he calls it cured – I’m here to find out from you how I can ‘cure him’ – right!

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

For Geronimo’s sake – missus – why didn’t you say that in the first place – you don’t really want help – it’s a cure you’re looking – and it’s your husband you want the cure for – not for yourself – for him! Boy is he goin’ to be disappointed when you get home – I can see him now polishing up that six shooter of his – I better ring the girls and let them know that the Yank is alive and well and will probably be back to his usual Tuesday and Thursdays after this – God help him!

(THEN SPEAKS OUT LOUD AND MOVES HER GLASSES UP AND DOWN)

CONTINUES

Well (SPEAKS PATRONISINGLY) of course you want to cure him – but let’s take this one step at a time – right – nice and easy – (SLIGHT PAUSE AND TAKES HER GLASSES OFF AND PUT THE END OF THE ARM INTO HER MOUTH FOR A MOMENT OR TWO BEFORE PUTTING THEM BACK ON) What about cowboys and Indians? Did you know many of them?

PATIENT Only those I’d seen on T.V.

JEAN And mummies and daddies; did you know any of them?

PATIENT (SHAKING HER HEAD) No

JEAN What about the T.V. didn’t you see any there?

PATIENT Yes and no!

JEAN Yes and no?

PATIENT Yes!

JEAN Yes – but – what about No – what does No mean?

PATIENT It means I’m sorry I came here, (PAUSE) I’m not ready for this! I came here to – to – well I thought I came here to – I don’t know at all now – why I really came – it’s hard to know really – now it’s hard to know – it’s too hard – after all these years! (JEAN JOINS HER HANDS AND RESTS THEM ON TABLE) I’ve never told this to anyone before, I don’t know why now – I thought I’d forgot all that! It was all a long time ago – to long ago to start to bring it all back now.

JEAN You know it’s never too late to get something of your chest – especially if it’s something that’s affected your whole life!

AN ASIDE

Good job I picked up a few tricks at Ms Jones! It wasn’t just a place (SARCASTICALLY) where poor misunderstood men went for a bit of love and excitement – no – it wasn’t just that – indeed – it was a refuge – for all – a place where (SMILING AND TOUCHING HER HEART AS IN A GESTURE OF GREAT PRIDE) the misunderstood were understood – just like here – it was like I suppose a doctor’s surgery of sorts! And they had to pay for it there too! Many’s a marriage was

saved from failure in one of Ms Jones' spotlessly clean bedrooms; and some of the things I learned there (LAUGHS TO HERSELF) well mores the pity you can't get a degree in them – most of Ms Jones' girls were terrific therapists – they were all great listeners! If some of them didn't understand what the clients were sayin' to them at least they all had the good sense to pretend – pretend some people use pretence as a weapon – but Ms Jones' girls used it as a tool – a working tool that was one of their greatest assets! (LAUGHS AGAIN) any way – this lady needs a session at Ms Jones – never mind here – Ms Jones is a lot cheaper – and she pays the cleaner a lot better!

(THEN BACK TO SPEAKING OUT LOUD)

But tell me – don't you talk to your husband about things?

PATIENT Well – (SHRUGS HER SHOULDERS) not really – you know – he just wouldn't understand - I mean – we all start out with good intentions and then the next thing is - life outside your relationship takes over – other things seem to matter more – sometimes it's like we're both in a rowing boat with an oar each – and we just can't get the rhythm going to bring us in the same direction at the same time to the same destination – we're just drifting – we go with the breeze – we enjoy the sun and then – when the rain and the storms come – we withdraw in to our own comfort blankets! Some things we don't share – some things we can't - do you understand? We're at the same table – the same party – the same company – most times in the same bed – but most times – where we are or what we're at doesn't matter – it doesn't matter because we're not connecting – or maybe it's – we can't connect! Do you understand?

JEAN Very deep – too deep for me! You know – maybe that's your real problem! You're too deep – for your husband I mean! Got many girl friends?

PATIENT Who – my husband?

JEAN No – you – have you got any – well friends – that's what I mean.

PATIENT Well – yes – sort of – that is I soon will have – you see I'm starting a new job later today – so I suppose I'll meet friends – people who I can be friends with – Frank says that's part of my problem – no one to talk to – he says – I have nothing to measure my life by – (NERVOUS LAUGH) whatever he means by that.

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

This Lady's got big trouble – she doesn't even have anyone outside of Frank to talk to – no wonder she can't see the funny side to Yankee Frankie.

(SHE COUGHS AND PUT ON A VERY STRAIGHT FACE AND SAYS OUT LOUD)

PATIENT Look you're confusing me – you're making me feel confused

JEAN Confused – what about? Lady – I can tell you what I think you might be confused about – but only from what you tell me - do you want me to tell you or do you just want to keep on talking just for the sake of talking – getting the thirty minutes of your shrink's time that Frank's paid for - and then you'll go off home or go on to your new job thinking you've did well – leaving me to do all the guess work trying to sort you out! That's a bit like getting a cleaner in to do your house work – she just comes and cleans then goes and then comes again – and it's in the same mess that it was in before – you have to learn to keep things tidy – then when the cleaner comes she can concentrate on the big jobs that need done - instead of paying her to just lift things up after you that you should

really be lifting up yourself and keeping tidy – do you understand what I’m telling you – you know you don’t need to see a psychiatrist for everything – understand? (OPENS HER HAND IN A QUESTIONING GESTURE) you can do yourself a big favour and keep a tidy mind – forget what’s gone – what you don’t need to keep remembering – get rid of it – keep things in their right place – like reality – hope – (SLIGHT PAUSE) then past mistakes – hurts – things you can’t change – accept what you can’t change – don’t let things hinder your future - bin them – keep them where they belong in the past!

PATIENT Surely it’s not as simple as that – you can’t always know what’s to be binned or what’s to be kept.

JEAN No – it’s not that simple – but you can learn – learn to let go of what you don’t need – or let go of what burdens instead of liberating you – go for what’s right for you – you’ve nothing to lose! except maybe some pride – but then pride can either be an asset or a burden – the secret is knowing which is which -

PATIENT How so!

JEAN Well You’re a clever lady – and you know it – you want to make things right – not just bearable – right! You want to enjoy – not endure – right?

(AN ASIDE)

I am really pleased with myself here today; I always knew that listening to Ms Jones’ girl’s stories about their clients would come in useful someday.

CONTINUES TO PATIENT

Look lady – you’ve got to figure this out for yourself – what is the problem?

PATIENT (AN ASIDE)

I really didn’t think it was going to be like this – she’s very unorthodox –

(SLIGHT PAUSE AND LIFTING UP HER GLASSES OVER HER EYES SHE STARES WITHOUT BLINKING) and Madame dear – the problem is – as I see it and as I’ve taken great pain in telling you -is - as I’ve said – (STANDS UP, WALKS OVER TO THE AUDIENCE AND SAYS WITH AN AMERICAN ACCENT)

It’s my husband! Gee ain’t it just great to know one’s problem and to just go to a doctor who knows just how to cure it! Bin my Frank! Ain’t I just a lucky gal! Oh boy! Oh boy! My Franks so lucky! Ain’t he just!

(MAKES FUNNY FACE BY SCREWING UP HER LIPS BREATHS INTO PULL HER NORSTRILS IN AT BOTTOM PUTS GLASSES BACK AND SAYS OUT LOUD)

CONTINUES

O.K. then how’s this for a problem? I just don’t want to play his silly little game! I don’t like feeling ridiculous! (TURNS SLIGHTLY IN HER SEAT)

JEAN You don’t like feelin ridiculous!

(AN ASIDE)

Well lady I am feelin’ (BREAKS WORD UP INTO SYLLABLES) ri-dic-ul-ous - and if I don’t get

you out of here before Ms Brains arrives which is probably any time now we're both goin' to look very very ri-dic-ul-ous when she asks who we both are!

CONTINUES TO PATIENT

But none of us do – do you know anyone who enjoys feelin' ridiculous? Or for that matter – lookin' ridiculous? And do you also know by any chance what the difference is – and of course maybe then you can explain to me which is the worse – feeling or looking? - come on – we don't have much time – (OPENS HER HANDS TOGETHER) it's now or never! (THEY BOTH STARE AT ONE ANOTHER FOR A MOMENT THEN JEAN SPEAKS TO AUDIENCE)

(AN ASIDE)

This is ri-dic-ul-ous – I'm getting nowhere with her – and I'm goin' to lose this job very shortly – and (SAYS WITH EXCITEMENT) if she tipples now that I'm not who she thinks I am she'll probably get the cops and have me arrested! Oh God what am I goin' to do? (LONG PAUSE) I've got to get her out of here and fast!

PATIENT (AN ASIDE)

Maybe she's right – if I talk about it to her – she can't repeat it – she can't tell it to anyone else – not even Frank – no one – ever. What am I afraid of? – she doesn't know me – I don't know her – I've never seen her in my life before and I'm sure she's never seen me either – she doesn't know Frank – she doesn't even know what he looks like –

(SLIGHT PAUSE AND TAKES HER SUN-GLASSES BACK OUT OF HER BAG AND PUTS THEM ON)

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

Oh shit what does this mean – I don't like the look of this not one little bit – it looks as though she means business – I've got to stop her – give her another appointment – there is no time – (SOFTLY SCREAMING) Jeeps I'm goin' to get arrested here! and I can just see her Frank with his little smile and blond toupee pullin' out his six shooter and shooting me dead! (LIFTS THE DUSTER AND WIPES HER FOREHEAD WITH IT)

PATIENT (AN ASIDE)

Right here goes – I've got to – I've got to say how I feel – I might never have another opportunity like this (AS SHE GOES TO SPEAK, JEAN JUMPS UP TO TELL HER IT'S TIME TO GO – BUT SHE ALSO JUMPS UP AND RUSHES OVER TO THE TABLE AND RESTS HER TWO HANDS ON EDGE AND LOOKS STRAIGHT AT JEAN AND SAYS)

I want to talk I really want to talk – I need to talk now.

JEAN (JUMPING UP ALSO AND PUTTING HER TO HANDS ON THE EDGE OF HER SIDE OF TABLE) Can you sleep on it and come back next week if I can find an appointment for you – my next patient is about to arrive!

PATIENT No – just like you said – it's now or never! Right! It is now or never – for me – anyway!

(MOVES SLOWLY BACK TO CHAIR SITS DOWN CROSSES HER LEGS FIXES GLASSES)

JEAN (STANDS FOR A MOMENT AND POLISHES TABLE AROUND LAMP WITH DUSTER THEN SHE GOES AND STANDS AT BACK OF HER CHAIR AND SAYS)

Lady one thing –

(PATIENT LIFTS GLASSES UP ABOVE HER EYES AS SHE LOOKS AT JEAN)

Would you take the glasses off!

PATIENT (SAYS ASSERTIVELY)

I prefer to leave them where they are – they give me a false sense of anonymity – feeling anonymous gives me a sense of security – you know – I’m someone no one notices – Oh I don’t want to be notice – never have – wanted to be noticed – (NODS HER HEAD) that’s the truth – honest!

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

Yeah I believe you – millions wouldn’t! You’re a first class exhibitionist if ever I saw one Lady! Those sun-glasses are a dead give-away.

(CONTINUES OUT LOUD)

There now you sound like you’ve got the hang of self-analysis – and I sound like I’ve got the hand of this psychiatrist thing! –

(CONTINUES OUT LOUD)

Look Lady you’ve got exactly five minutes and I’m out – that’s it – O.K.

PATIENT (FIXES GLASSES AND BREATHE IN) Right five minutes – here goes!

(JEAN PUTS HER HEAD DOWN ON TOP OF CHAIR)

Well to answer your question – in short – yes – I do know the difference between looking and feeling ridiculous! The difference is – well - one is obvious and the other isn’t – well isn’t always! We’re talking subjective not objective – right!

JEAN (TURNS FROM THE BACK OF CHAIR AND TAKES A FEW STEPS BEHIND CHAIR AND GIMMICKS TOWARDS THE AUDIENCE – AS IF SHE’S SWEARING)

(AN ASIDE)

What did she come here for if she has all the answers?

PATIENT Sometimes when I might do something that shall we say is ridiculous – but isn’t obvious to Frank – I might feel ridiculous – but then again – if it isn’t obvious then – he doesn’t know – well unless I tell him that is – and I usually do tell him most things – I suppose that’s why I’m here – I really want to tell him how I feel (SLIGHT PAUSE) and off course to cure him. (PUTS HER HEAD DOWN)

JEAN (LOOKING AT HER WATCH) Look Lady we’re talking here about a man who wants you to wear a cowgirl suit – right – you know what – so let’s not get to serious about what he thinks about the definition of what is or isn’t ridiculous – right!

PATIENT No – no doctor – not cowgirl suit – it’s an Indian Squaw outfit – that’s what he wants me to wear – to dress up in –

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

I can understand poor Frank better now, he wants her to be anything but herself – (THEN SAYS OUT LOUD) Sorry – my mind’s wondering – sorry – can we get to the point – now as briefly as you can – time is running out! My next patient will be here shortly! My time’s valuable – I don’t mean – materially – you understand – people depend on me – on my advice – my expertise

Liar – Liar – Cheat

(SHE SMILES FALSELY AND IS OBVIOUSLY GETTING IMPATIENT)

PATIENT Frank says it's not uncommon for husbands and wives – couples – partners – to dress up before you know what – (SHAKING HER HEAD AND MOVING HER GLASSES AND BREATHING IN STRONGLY) I mean we're adults here – we understand each other –

JEAN (GETTING DESPERATE)

Yes yes what ever you say – yes – there really isn't much uncommon behaviour in relationships – if you do something – well you can almost be certain that it's neither unique nor peculiar to yourselves alone! The world's a big place.

PATIENT That makes me feel an awful lot better doctor – knowing that –

JEAN (JEAN CUTS IN)

Well that's your problem sorted – and it didn't take too long at all now – I so happy that you're feeling an awful lot better –

(PATIENT JUMPS UP AND GOES QUICKLY OVER TO JEAN AND FORCES HER BACK TO CHAIR)

PATIENT (JEAN SITS DOWN ON CHAIR AND PATIENT STANDS AT FRONT OF TABLE, TAKES HER SUN-GLASSES OF FOLDS THEM AND BEGINS TO TELL HER STORY)

This session isn't over till I'm ready (JEAN LOOKS SHOCKED)

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

What kind of a crackpot is this – she does need a psychiatrist – a real one.

PATIENT (SLOWLY WALKS OVER TO THE DOOR AND LOCKS IT TAKES THE KEY FROM THE DOOR AND WALKS SLOWLY BACK PUTTING IT ON THE TABLE SAYS)

Now – your next patient will just have to wait – there is something I want to get off my chest before I leave this room – before I bin it – before I start my new job – before I leave Frank – or before I play games with him – and this is it – I can see it clearly now – (OPENING HER ARMS WIDE) see – I'm not even in the defensive position – (LAUGHS SARCASTICALLY) my body language should tell you that I'm ready to open up (THROWS HER ARMS IN AIR) I'm readier now than I've ever been in my entire life – I'm 40 you know – 40 – I've bottled this all up since I was about 4 or 6 or 7 – all those years –

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

She doesn't even know if she was 4 or 6 or 7 boy what is it – it sounds like she's going to make a confession of some sort – it's a priest she needs – what have I let myself in for –

(SUDDENLY THERE IS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR)

PATIENT That must be your next– patient

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

I've two minutes before I'm sacked and arrested –

PATIENT Give me two minutes and I'll be free! Free to live as I choose – as I should! As I always should have. My life has been a series of coincidences - what are the chances of watching your mammy and daddy playing cowboys and Indians – (MOTIONS FOR JEAN TO ANSWER)

JEAN I don't know – you tell me.

PATIENT And you thinking they were serious – and going over to your daddy with a hatchet and

(SCREWS AND TWISTS HER FACE) hitting him somewhere you didn't know exists in a male anatomy at that tender age – and the result being that you would always be 'an only child'.

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

I don't believe I'm hearing this – Frank's a lucky man that she never played cowboys and Indians with him

(MAKES A NOISE WITH HER LIP AS THOUGH SHE FEELS THE PAIN THEN SHE SAYS OUT LOUD)

CONTINUES

But – but it was an accident – you were only a kid –

PATIENT Yes – I was only a kid – my parents didn't hold it against me – but I could never tell it to anyone – how could I – not even Frank – I'd it well hidden – and then the next thing – Frank – wants me to play – cowboys and Indians – he even has a tomahawk – what a coincidence – can you imagine (COVERS HER MOUTH WITH HER HAND)

JEAN Yeah – I know –

(AN ASIDE)

But it's a fake one – Frank's not that foolish – you don't even know that much about poor Frank!

(THEN SHE SAYS OUT LOUD) You know what to do with what you've just told me

(SOMEONE IS HEARD WALKING THROUGH NEXT ROOM AND IS PUTTING KEY IN DOOR)

PATIENT Yes I know what to do – (LAUGHS) where's the nearest bin? (SHE LIFTS HER BAG – WALKS OVER TO JEAN AND KISSES HER ON THE CHEEK) I don't suppose that's the right thing to do – thank you – thank you – Good Luck with your next patient.

AS SHE TURNS FROM JEAN SHE RAISES HER ARMS AND SHOUTS "ALLELUIA ALLELUIA" THEN TAKES A HEAD BAND AND FEATHER FROM HER POCKET, PUTS IN AROUND HER HEAD, OPENS HER COAT AND DROPS IT OVER THE CHAIR.

SHE'S WEARING AN INDIAN SQUAW DRESS, HER HUSBAND FRANK WALKS ON STAGE FROM BEHIND WEARING HIS COWBOY SUIT AND THEY PROCEED TO RUN AROUND CHAIRS FOLLOWED BY JEAN, SINGING TO MUSIC BEING PLAYED OF 'RUNNING BEAR'.

LIGHTS OUT END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO BEGINS AT SAME BUS STOP, JEAN IS LOOKING AT HER WATCH STILL WAITING FOR BUS AND SINGS IN FRENCH 'NO REGRETS'

JEAN Non, Rien De Rien, Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien Ni Le Bien Qu' On M' a Fait, Ni Le Ma L Tout Ca M ' est Bien Egal Non, Rien De Rien, Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien C'est Paye, Balaye, Oub l ie, Je Me Fous Du Passe

(AN ASIDE)

I wish this bloomin' bus would hurry up – I'm goin' to be late, they're expecting me in five minutes, I have to be on time or I'll blow it again! Or on the other hand – this space has given me time to reflect – (NODS HER HEAD) you know I'm one for reflection – at times like this – you know –

when I'm in between jobs that is – maybe it's a change of career that I need – yes – maybe that's it – a change - career-wise! Maybe I am sellin' myself too short, cleanin' like, you know maybe I'm destined for higher things, like, talking to people and helping to help them see things clearly for themselves, well that appeals to me, sort of, well, I've lost every job I've ever had because of people telling me their problems, and maybe now's the time I should be getting paid for it – yeah - you know givin advice for a job. Mmmm (LAUGHS) I wonder if there's any jobs goin' in the Agony Aunt business? Good idea – (NODDING HER HEAD) don't you think? You might have thought that last job was bit of a mix up but wait till you hear about the one before that! You'll never believe it but I used to work in a brothel – yes – you heard right – a brothel – Ms Jones Brothel – just try to imagine for a moment how Ri – dic- ul- ous – working there turned out to be. Of course I was a lot thinner then, (NODS HER HEAD AND LAUGHS) It came to an end rather abruptly – it was the day I spilt oil on my lovely pink over-all and Ms Jones handed me a French Maids outfit and told me to get on with it – she meant the cleanin', but wait till you hear this.....

LIGHT GOES OUT ON BUS STOP: JEAN WALKS INTO BROTHEL IN FRENCH MAIDS OUTFIT AND CARRYING A FEATHER DUSTER, SHE'S DUSTING THE HEAD BOARD OF THE BED, WHEN DOOR KNOCKS THEN IS PUSHED OPEN – A COWBOY STANDS IN THE DOORWAY: MUSIC FROM “THE GOOD THE BAD AND THE UGLY” THEN HE MOVES TO STAGE JOHN WAYNE STYLE

COWBOY (IN A YANKEE ACCENT TIPPING HIS COWBOY HAT AT JEAN)

How-dee-there mam – my names Bill and I've come to do your will!

JEAN (IN A YANKEE ACCENT)

Excuse me Bill or is it Hank – I'm not a yank and I sure ain't in form for a spank!

(SHE RUNS AT HIM WITH THE DUSTER AND SAYS LAUGHING)

This room aint yours for the night – go to number 8 and have your pilly (pillow) fight!

(BRUSHING HIS COWBOY SUIT WITH THE DUSTER, SHE WAVES HIM OFF TO MUSIC AND AS SHE CLOSES THE DOOR SAYS)

Night Night!

(JEAN CONTINUES TO DUST UNDER THE BED THEN SHE MOVES TO THE CABINET DUSTS THE TOP AND LIFTS ONE OF THE BOXES AND OPENS IT – AUDIENCE DON'T GET TO SEE WHAT'S IN BOX BUT JEAN LAUGHS AND QUICKLY CLOSES IT – THEN SHE WALKS OVER TO THE BED AND SITS DOWN ON THE END OF THE BED AND SAYS TO AUDIENCE)

(AN ASIDE)

I wonder if this place's bugged – or if there's a hidden video somewhere

(SHE LOOKS ALL AROUND AND THEN PUTS HER HEAD BACK AND LOOKS UP AT THE CEILING)

Well that's how it's done on the T.V. – there's always something hidden somewhere! The clientele who use this room – well – we're talking big bucks – (SLIGHT PAUSE) it's funny how you're

whole attitude can change – I mean – the way you’ve been brought up – all your moral values – If someone had told me ten years ago that I’d be working in a brothel – me –Jean Winsor – working in a place like this – even though I’m the cleaner – an honest day’s work for my wages (SLIGHT LAUGH) it’s hard work and it’s honest work – like the girls here – we’re all hard workers – I wouldn’t do their job for a thousand dollars a time! When I got the sack from my last job with Fr. Simple in the parish chapel – and he knew I was starting here – he told me not to mention to any one cause – well - they wouldn’t believe me that I only do the cleaning – (PAUSE) I suppose he had to let me go – I was only employed to clean – (LAUGHS) not to hear confessions - ah well – at least poor Tony can’t tell anyone what happened – and I never will - for my John’s sake anyway – though it’s not in my nature to break a confidence anyway – but Tony doesn’t know that! All my life people have told me their problems – I don’t know why – complete strangers sometimes – I must have that sort of face that make people trust me or something – I really don’t know why – I’m always being told that I’m a good listener – that must be my special talent in this life – besides cleaning – because I sure aint good at nothing else – at school I failed at everything – surprise surprise – I learned nothing except about people - Mrs Lowe told me I was good for nothing – but she was wrong – I was always good at listening – but for a teacher she was real stupid – she didn’t even know that about me (PUTS HER HEAD DOWN AND PAUSE) if only I’d been good looking or smart! (GETS UP AND WALKS OVER TO THE MIRROR AND LOOKS AT HERSELF, STICKING HER CHEST OUT AND BENDING DOWN AND LOOKING AT HER REAR END) maybe I look a bit sexy like – well I suppose anybody would look sexy in one of these outfits – straightens up and dusts her shoes with the feather duster  
Monday night at the darts (LAUGHS) – I can see them all staring in disbelief – wondering – does she or would she? I can just hear them all when I go to the loo – Madge in particular – she always believes the worst - (SLIGHT PAUSE) I can imagine how the girls here feel – when people look down their noses at them – I suppose – but then again now days it’s different – these girls are all well off – they’ve plenty of money, Ms Jones is good to them and I hear she’s particular about the kind of clientele she entertains here, they all dress very well – in fact they could be mistaken for accountants or executives or any well to do set – being here I’ve seen another side to life – and it sometimes doesn’t seem that different from the side I’m from!

DOOR KNOCKS

CONTINUES

(SMILING, SHOUTS) Enter!

(IN WALKS A VERY WELL DRESSED MAN MAYBE IN HIS 60’S HE’S CARRYING A BRIEF CASE – AFTER SETTING IT DOWN ON THE FLOOR HER SAYS)

MAN Where’s Pretty Polly tonight? – new girl are we?

(HE WALKS TOWARDS JEAN LOOSENING HIS TIE WITH ONE HAND AND STARTING TO TAKE HIS COAT OF WITH THE OTHER – JEAN DROPS THE DUSTER AND SAYS)

JEAN Oh you’ve got it wrong – I’m not a girl –

MAN No I can see that you’re all woman – or are we a lady?

(HE GOES TO GRAB JEAN BY THE ARM BUT SHE DUCKS AND TURNS HERSELF AROUND)

CONTINUE

Shy are we – first night nerves? A touch of stage fright eh?  
(WALKS OVER TO THE BED AND SITS DOWN)

Come on – set that little bottom down here!

(HE TAPS END OF BED WITH HIS HAND AND SMILES)

JEAN (TURNS SLIGHTLY AND LOOKS IN MIRROR AT HER BOTTOM THEN TO AUDIENCE)

(AN ASIDE)

He's not only insane but he's also blind as well!

(THEN TO MAN)

No – no – you've got it all wrong – you see – (HE'S SMILING IN A COMICAL WAY) you don't understand – (HE CUTS IN)

MAN I don't understand! – now now – I'm the one paying to be understood – not the one who needs to understand –

(PATS THE BED AGAIN FOR JEAN TO GO OVER AND SIT DOWN)

Come on over here to I get a good look at you – it must be stage fright – you look like a little lost duckling!

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

An ugly duckling he means – these men must say anything to the girls to get them started –

(MAN TAKES HIS SHIRT OFF AND DROPS IT ON FLOOR)

CONTINUES

–and he's even good looking – I bet if he met me outside at a party or somewhere socially he wouldn't even give me a second glance – and now he – here – he thinks he's going to pay me – pay me for what? I'm going to get into big trouble – I better explain – or I'm going to lose this job as well!

(SHE WALKS OVER AND SITS DOWN BESIDE HIM TO EXPLAIN THE SITUATION BUT AS SHE SITS HE PUTS HIS ARM AROUND HER AND ON IMPULSE SHE STARTS TO DUST HIM WITH THE FEATHER DUSTER IN ORDER TO KEEP A DISTANCE FROM HIM – BUT MAN INTERPRETS THIS AS HER TICKLING HIM – SHE THROWS HERSELF BACK ON BED TO GET AWAY FROM HIS EMBRACE BUT THIS MAKES THINGS WORSE AS HE TAKES THIS AS A COME ON – FINALLY SHE MANAGES TO PUSH HIM OFF)

MAN You're one spunky lady!

JEAN I'm more than that I'm a – the – the cleaner – I'm only here to clean –

MAN (SMILING) Yeah – (LOOKING AT HER FROM HEAD TO FOOT) Yeah – whatever – is this a politically correct statement? (LAUGHS) Cleaner – (TOUCHES HER LIPS IN GESTURE TO BE QUIET) French Maid and lets have no argument about it – you're sweet – whatever else you're not – you are sweet!

JEAN (STARES INTO HIS EYES)

(AN ASIDE)

Gee – he’s good looking – gorgeous even – could be my type of a man in another time and space. In some other place we maybe could have made it (LAUGHS AND SAYS TO MAN)

You can look all you want – but don’t touch!

MAN (TAKING HER HAND)

That’s just what I’m doing – I’m just looking – (PAUSE) and I like what I see! – Look – here we don’t have too much time – (LAUGHING) I’m off to - above all places – France – (SLIGHT PAUSE AND WAITS FOR JEAN TO LAUGH)

I just need to talk – I need someone to listen –

(TURNS AND PUTS HIS HEAD DOWN AND COVERS HIS FACE WITH HIS HANDS)

JEAN You need someone to talk to – how – I mean why? –

MAN Well – quite simply – because no one listens! They pretend – sometimes – that’s the game – the pretend game – (SMILES) I’m successful – I have most things that any successful person could have – I have a partner – 18 years now – children – all healthy – bright – friends, though they’re all my partner’s friends – not mine – I suppose! – holidays – week-ends – even horses – do you like horses, French Maid? You don’t mind if I call you French Maid do you? Just for now – just here – names can be a source of great disappointment; – I prefer not to indulge in that particular deception that birth names sometimes create, just here just for now – (LIFTS HIS EYE BROWS) fine! (HE LOOKS INTO HER EYES AND SMILES) – outside it’s different – I have to play the game as well! You don’t understand? Do you? (SLIGHT PAUSE) People choose names for a child that they hope will affect other peoples regard for them. Bet you didn’t know that, did you?

JEAN Of course I know that!

(EYE CONTACT AND SMILES)

MAN You’re a smart one, French Maid!

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

If I were that smart I wouldn’t be working here! (SMILING) Silly Billy!

MAN What will we talk about? Names or horses? or both?

JEAN (SHAKES HER HEAD AND SHRUGS HER SHOULDERS) You’re paying!

MAN Horses then. Our first horse ‘Darling’ you would have loved Darling, she was so sensitive – and sweet! we only had her for two weeks and she (LAUGHS SARCASTICALLY) died of a massive heart attack! Didn’t think it was possible for a horse to take a heart attack – or rather I’d never thought about it before - apparently it’s not that uncommon! I’d only signed for her the week before – I hadn’t even got around to insuring her –

(SLIGHT PAUSE – LOOKS UP INTO JEAN’S EYES – SHE SEEMS EMBARRASSED AND LOOKS QUICKLY AWAY)

but I’d known her for about three years – it even sounds strange – but – we bonded – that first time when I walked into the stable and saw her– it was a beautiful experience – she was in Labour – with her first fillie – it was a difficult birth – they both could have died - the vet didn’t get there in time so I was helping Clem- my accountant - with the delivery - I suppose I was like a surrogate mother – that’s how Clem put it afterwards!

JEAN (LOOKING AT HIM AND MAKING DIRECT EYE CONTACT)

Father – you mean –

MAN No – mother – a mother – a father wouldn't – well he just wouldn't have the same sort of compassion or sensitivity at a time like that – she kept lifting her head slowly to see who was rubbing her down – her eyes – it was as if they understood – they seemed to be saying thank you whoever you are – thank you! she seemed almost human – (SLIGHT PAUSE) then afterwards she fell asleep and the strangest and most wonderful thing happened –

JEAN (SMILING – AND LIKE A MOTHER SHE TAKES HIS HANDS)

What – tell me what – what happened?

MAN Well just before she fell asleep – she licked my hand as I was rubbing the sweat from her face – she opened her eyes just a little bit and we made eye contact (JEAN LOOKS AWAY QUICKLY AND SEEMS TO BE EMBARRASSED) and she licked my hand – it was almost like the human equivalent of squeezing someone's hand who had just done for you something very intimate, something private, that was between only you two!

(LOOKS DIRECTLY AT CLEANING LADY)

Do you understand?

JEAN (NODS HER HEAD AND SMILES – THEIR GAZE HOLDS FOR ABOUT 10 SECONDS THEN HE LOOKS AWAY – HE THEN TAKES A PACKET OF CIGARETTES OUT OF HIS BRIEF CASE AND LIGHTS ONE UP AND PUTS THEM AWAY AGAIN )

CONTINUES

Aren't you going to offer me one?

MAN I don't like women who smoke cigarettes!

JEAN But you like women who remind you of horses – yes?

MAN Only if they're sensitive – and sweet, (they both laugh) and they don't smoke either!

JEAN So it's o.k. for you to smoke and not for the woman in your life – that's strange – but then again – in the light of things in this world that are all strange, I suppose really it's not all that strange – men still like to be in control or they like to think they're in control – at least in the bed-room – but then again – from a woman's point of view, – now – a – days, the bed-room is a woman's metaphor for her space – her – shrine? (LAUGHS) you're not a woman so you don't know if that's right or wrong – and I'm not every woman - so the same law applies! Right?

MAN You're a smart lady – how come you work here?

JEAN Are you saying that I have to be dumb to work here – in a (SMILING) joint like this?

MAN Oh – very Americano – Frenchie –

JEAN We get a lot of Americanos passin' through – and them's mostly called Sam! But – back to what we's just been discussin' darlin – (LAUGHS) is I dumb because I am dumb? – or is I dumb 'cuse I work in this joint? – or – to the point – is I working in this joint because I is dumb? Honest question – honest answer.

MAN Now you'd have to pay me to answer a question like that – you sound as though you already know the answer yourself! You tell me – go on frenchie –

JEAN (SMILES) Well I'm not smart – I'm definitely not dumb – but even if I were either or both – what difference would it make – that's not why men come here – to this room - but the one asset I have – that they don't seem to be getting enough of in their real lives – is –

MAN Is what. Go on tell me -

JEAN I'm a good listener – just like the horse – I understand things – I mightn't be able to articulate  
(MAN CUTS IN)

MAN Articulate – AR – TICK – U – LATE – now that's a big word to be uttered here in room number one! I must say I've never heard it spoken here before – but then (LAUGHS)

JEAN AR – TIC – U – LATE – aint such a big word – but I'll go the long way around and just finish what I started to say – I understand people – I know when to speak and when not too! – You can have all the brains in the world and still not know how to talk to people – or for that matter – and most importantly – (LAUGHS) another big word – how not to talk to them!

(AN ASIDE)

This one's big problems – a control freak – I think! I'll have to get to the bottom of this.

MAN Look – don't get me wrong – I'm not here for – well you know – no I'm here to talk – right – so you're paid to listen and to understand – even if you don't – (NODS HIS HEAD) understand?

JEAN (NODS HER HEAD IN AGREEMENT)

O.K. give it to me –

(THEY BOTH SMILE – THOUGH HE SMILES RELUCTANTLY)

MAN Well (AWKWARDLY) I don't want to talk about what I came here in the first place to talk about – you tell me what I want to talk about – go on – tell me – go.

JEAN Well – now let me see – tell me what you meant earlier about names. You know names being deceptive

(PUTS HER HAND UP TO HER MOUTH AND COVERS IT)

Whoops another big word!

MAN Don't be sarcastic

(THEY BOTH STARE AT ONE ANOTHER FOR A FEW SECONDS BEFORE SHE LOOKS AWAY)

Well – people name a child after someone – well usually after someone – right? - the father the mother the grandmother – grandfather – aunt, uncle, cousin etc etc (MOTIONS WITH HIS HANDS) or sometimes they'll name the child a name for some obscure reason known only to themselves – you know some names carry a guarantee of success for the namant

JEAN "NAMANT" – I've never heard that word before – where did you pick that up?

MAN (LAUGHS) I didn't pick it up – I made it up – are you stupid woman? I'm allowed to say what I want in this room even if it's made up or true – it's not up to you to know the difference! Are you really stupid woman?

JEAN Was that a real question ma Lord or is it just a made up one? Or should that have been me Lord?

MAN Very good (SAYS SARCASTICALLY) for a French maid! Any way I don't often talk about myself.....but – you seem to be a cut above the rest –

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

He better not say that to the any of the girls or I'll be out of here before I can say Jack Robinson!

MAN (RELAXES INTO A VERY SOMBER MOOD)

I've never told this to any one before – (SAYS WITH CONVICTION) so you're privileged - really you are! – well here goes – when I was born – my father had just died –

JEAN Oh how awful – !

MAN Don't interrupt when I speak – that's rule number one –

JEAN Oh – and number two?

MAN I said – and I repeat for the second and final time – do – not – interrupt – me – thank you. I'm not sure now if I want to share – share is the wrong word – if I want to tell you this – you're confusing me – french maid – I'm sure you don't have this effect on all your clientele – (PUTS HIS FINGER TO HIS LIP) oh – don't answer that – (HE STANDS UP AND WALKS OVER TO THE DOOR AND BEGINS TO PACE UP AND DOWN PAST THE END OF THE BED CONTINUALLY SWINGING AROUND ON HIS HEEL EACH TIME HE TURNS – HE CLEARS HIS THROAT AND BEGINS AGAIN) I never knew my father because he died before I was born – my mother named me MARMADUKE –

JEAN MARMADUKE (LAUGHS)

MAN (GIVES HER A STERN LOOK)

Well – to continue - my mother had to go away for a while after I was born and so my grandmother took care of me for the first few years of my life; then my mother came back with her new husband and took me to live with them in the next town; but what she didn't know - was - that my grandmother had changed my name – my mother was furious when she found out –

JEAN How did she find out

(WORDS FADE AS SHE REALIZES SHE SHOULDN'T BE SPEAKING)

MAN (IGNORES JEAN'S QUESTION)

She was quite angry when she realized that I didn't answer to the name MARMADUKE – and grandmother then told her I was called Tommy – the name Tommy suited my environment much much better than the name MARMADUKE - she thought! – they had a fierce row about it – my grandmother said people would make a laugh of me being called a name like that – that it was a name only for the rich – but my mother said that that was why she'd called me it in the first place – that with a name like MARMADUKE I would get rich or become a politician or something – the important thing was that I should become something! – or at least someone! I used to think that in that context something and someone meant the same thing – but they don't mean the same thing at all – do they?

JEAN No no I don't suppose they do – do they? (LOOKS PUZZLED)

MAN Well that's what I'm asking you – not what you should be asking me – understand? (SARCASTICALLY AS SHE STANDS UP AND SLIGHTLY LIFTS HER APRON AND CURTSIES)

JEAN Yes sir – sorry sir – won't happen again sir! Come on give me a smile – don't be so serious!

MAN Smiles can be costly – and also misunderstood!

JEAN Come on now – give this here French – Maid a break! You're too too heavy for me – remember – I'm only a cleaner here!

(COVERS HER MOUTH AFTER SAYING CLEANER)

MAN Yes – but you're a French cleaner – and that's the difference! If you were a mere cleaner – then that's what you'd be – not that there is anything wrong with being a cleaner – but you're a French cleaner – or to be precise your title is 'French - Maid' which has lots of differential connotations –

JEAN Now there's a tongue twister – but dear sir, I, in all me unworthiness, to be in a position that your most honourable shadow casts so distinguished a shield from the imminent light from the above light bulb, do understand such strong and yet vague language – should I be impressed with your eloquent use of vocabulary – kind sir?

MAN Now don't tell me that Ms Jones has got the worker to match the boss! That would never do. We men won't pay for that – not in this day and age – We come here to be greeted with subservience – not with a wit equal to our own! You are in the wrong business my dear! (STARES AT JEAN FOR A MOMENT AS IF HE'S TRYING TO THINK WHERE HE KNOWS HER FROM) Who are you really and what are you doing here dressed in that ri – dic – ul – ous outfit?

JEAN (LAUGHS) Ha ha now we're getting somewhere – I bet if you didn't suddenly think that I've actually got brains then you wouldn't think that the outfit was ri – dic – u – lous (HE MOVES HIS HEAD TO THE SIDE AND SMIRKS) Silly outfit for a silly person – right! (WHEN SHE GETS NO IMMEDIATE VERBAL RESPONSE SHE DUSTS HIS HEAD WITH FEATHER DUSTER)

O.K. that sounded good – well said – I just love the way you roll your R's – (ROARING) rrrri – dic – ull – ous!

MAN (SPEAKS LOUDLY ALMOST LIKE A ROAR) R's - R's - me R's – (THEY BOTH LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER AND LAUGH) there is only one R in ri – di - culous ridiculous!

JEAN One R it may be, but when said by thee – it sounds more like three!

(THEY BOTH LAUGH AND STARE AT ONE ANOTHER – THEN TOGETHER THEY BOTH END THE STARE AT THE SAME TIME AND BOTH LOOK IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS EMBARRASSED)

MAN (STANDING UP AND FACING JEAN)

You know I said in the beginning no names – well –I've decided to suspend that rule for just now – for just this once - I want to know your name – your real name – (THEN SERIOUSLY) who are you and what are you doing here? You're no more like a French (SNAPS HIS FINGERS AS IF HE HAS FORGOTTEN THE NEXT WORD) French –

JEAN Roll? – French – Roll! (THEY BOTH LAUGH AND SLIGHT PAUSE) Maid is the word me thinks you are looking for dear sir! And if my name you wish to know – it's only valid in this show!

MAN Well then – dear French – Maid – what letters make up thy name?

JEAN (LAUGHS A LITTLE) Well me thinks the name Renee or

(LIFTS HER EYE-BROWS UP AND DOWN) Re-nay has a nice French ring to it – don't you fancy?

MAN Fancy – (LOUDLY) fancy dear French Maid – we are getting rather flighty are we not! (SLIGHT PAUSE) Renee or Ren-ay yes that has a nice roll your R's about it!

JEAN You like rolling your R's then?

MAN (STARES INTENSELY AT JEAN) I like shaking my R's – turning them over – singing them – dancing on them and sometimes pretending they don't exist! What about your own R's – what do you like doing with yours?

JEAN I don't have any R's – my real name is R-less!

MAN Iris?

JEAN (SPEAKS INTO HIS FACE) R – less!

MAN (SMILING) Explain!

JEAN What's there to explain – I've spelt it out – I can't be any plainer – I said R-less - meaning that there are no R's in my name – O.K. – no Ren – ay. O.K.

(BOTH SITTING ON BED LOOKING STRAIGHT AHEAD AS THE TANGO IS PLAYED – MAN GETS UP AND BEGINS TO DANCE IT ALONE THEN INDICATES FOR JEAN TO JOIN HIM THEY DANCE TO THE END AND EMBRACE AS MAN SAYS IN AN INTIMATE WHISPER THAT RESOUNDS ABOVE THE AUDIENCE)

MAN Let me hold you close so I can feel your heart next to mine, rhyming, dancing, alive – alive – just this once – meeting and parting in the same moment; I to France and you - you to the lonely pleasures of sad men.

LIGHTS GO OUT AS TANGO MUSIC IS PLAYED LOUDLY

BOTH JEAN AND MAN EXIT DANCING

ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

LIGHT GOES ON BUS STOP AS JEAN IS STILL WAITING FOR A BUS. JEAN IS GETTING MORE IMPATIENT LOOKING AT HER WATCH. SHE SINGS 'NO REGRETS' VERY FAST.

JEAN Non, Rien De Rien, Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien Ni Le Bien Qu On M'a Fait, Ni Le Ma L Tout Ca M est Bien Egal Non, Rien De Rien, Non, Je Ne Regrette Rien C'est Paye, Balaye, Oub l Ie, Je Me Fous Du Passe

(AN ASIDE)

This blooming transport – it's hardly worth my while goin for the interview now - if I'm late they'll not see me - and I can't blame them I don't like late comers either! I'll give it another few minutes and then I think I'll take a dander round to the Andytown News and see if they're interested in starting up an agony aunt page (RUBS HER HANDS TOGETHER) well I think I'm qualified for that, anyway wait to you hear about the other job (LAUGHS) the parish job - Fr. Simple and auld Smyth spelt with a y and not an i.

(LIGHTS GO OUT ON JEAN AS SHE EXITS BUS STOP AND RE-ENTERS STAGE VIA DOOR INTO CHURCH CONFSSIONAL. CHURCH MUSIC PLAYS)

SCENE TWO

JEAN IS CLEANING INSIDE OF CONFSSIONAL SHE FINDS A HALF EMPTY BOTTLE OF WHISKEY IN DRAWER PUTS IT BACK. SOMEONE COMES URGENTLY WANTING TO MAKE A CONFESSION

SMYTH Bless me father for I have sinned – again and again and again

(HE PULLS CLOTH HANKY OUT FROM HIS COAT POCKET AND BLOWS HIS NOSE AND THEN WIPES HIS FOREHEAD AND FACE WITH IT)

CONTINUES

Father I just can't help myself –

(JEAN RECOGNIZES MANS VOICE AND FALLS INTO CHAIR- HE THEN PUTS HIS HEAD INTO HIS HANDS AND SITS LIKE THIS AS JEAN SPEAKS TO AUDIENCE)

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

Oh dear God – I don't believe this – Tony Smyth – auld snobby arse Smyth (LOOKS AT AUDIENCE WITH A SARCASTIC LOOK ON HER FACE) Tony Smyth – who chased my kids out of his scraggy garden – who didn't allow his own little terrors – (SMILES) his perfect little angels – to play with my John and Thomas – the same snobby arse who thought his family was better than anyone else's in our street – and who even moved house to prove it – (SLIGHT PAUSE) well well well – Mr. Tony (EMPHASISE SMYTH) Smy - th spelt with an y and not an i - I'm sure this is going to be interesting stuff and I'm almost tempted to listen – but I'm not that kind of person (SMILES) mores the pity!

(LOOKS THROUGH THE GRILL AND STARES AT HIM IN A PITIABLE WAY - SLIGHT PAUSE)

CONTINUES

I used to wonder what went on inside the head of a man who goes to such extremes to put other people's children down – I even made my big John go in and find out what his problem was – he came back and said that was the end of it that they were moving anyway – it hurt my big John – he might have been over six feet tall and had a heart just as big – but - he was a real sensitive man– to think that they were making so little of our boys – I could see how hurt he was that day when he came back from their house – whatever was said (QUESTIONINGLY - SLIGHT PAUSE)

I don't know – but I know he thought about it often – I could tell – I would catch him sometimes just starring into next doors back garden - with a kind of a faraway look in those big brown eyes of his - those big brown eyes of his that soon would stare no more at anything – (WITH A FARAWAY LOOK IN HER OWN EYES) so that was that Mmmmm (SLIGHT PAUSE) she was funny too – she never spoke – well hardly ever - though she was friendly at first when they moved in – but then we just weren't good enough for her either – though I always thought that it was him – he was the real snob! (THEN MAN SLOWLY LIFTS HIS HEAD UP AND BEGINS TO SPEAK AS JEAN CRIES OUT LOUDLY- STILL IN AN ASIDE AND UNHEARD BY HIM) No no wait I don't want to hear this – I don't want to know your business -

(HE'S ALREADY SPEAKING SO CLEANING LADY COVERS HER FACE IN HER HANDS AND ROCKS TO AND FRO IN CHAIR)

SMYTH Oh God – Father – please listen – please – I need to know someone is listening to something I say – nobody ever listens – if somebody had listened I wouldn't be here – I wouldn't have did what I – (CRIES) I – I did – last night –

(HE PULLS HIMSELF TOGETHER AND IS LESS HYSTERICAL – SLIGHT PAUSE BEFORE HE RESTARTS CONFESSION DURING WHICH HE DOESN'T LOOK DIRECTLY AT JEAN BUT KEEPS HIS HEAD DOWN – TAKES DEEP BREATH AND CONTINUES)

CONTINUE

It all started a long time ago – just after we moved into our first house – but - I didn't believe it at first – it was only when I saw it – saw them with my own two eyes that I knew all my suspicions – all the things I'd closed my eyes too – pretended I didn't know about – they were confirmed – in our bed-room – in our bed - (SOBS A LITTLE) Father – you see – I saw my wife – I mean I – I – walked in on my wife and our next door neighbour – (CRIES LOUDLY) they were – were having (SAYS NEXT FEW WORDS AS IF HE'S GOING TO SNEEZE) an - an - an - affair!

(SILENCE FOR A MOMENT –JEAN’S MOUTH FALLS OPEN AND SHE JUST BLINKS HER EYES SEVERAL TIMES AND NODS HER HEAD) We should never have moved – but then I wasn’t to know he was going to drop dead so soon – it would have fizzled out – I know it would have - I just know - it was me – all my fault - I wanted to move – to get away – my wife was having an affair with our next door neighbour –

(JEAN JUMPS UP AS SHE STUFFS THE DUSTER INTO HER MOUTH)

JEAN (AN ASIDE)

Neighbour – neighbour – (SHAKES HER HEAD) we were his neighbour - my big John – my big John’s dead – he took a heart attack – just dropped – died – dead – doctors – they said – his heart was over worked – stressed out – couldn’t do the job – Jesus Mary and Joseph – it’s not true – it can’t be true – he was the only man I ever loved – and I was the only woman he ever loved! Can’t be true – not true – (CRIES OUT) no no no – (PUTS HER HEAD DOWN) my John was only ever in their house to do things for them – for her -

(LIFTS HER HEAD UP AND BANGS HER BREAST WITH HER FIST)

CONTINUES

He was a good painter and decorator (SLIGHT PAUSE) he took his time but he was good – (SLIGHT PAUSE) my big John was a man with a slow hand all right; and once when their bathroom sink was blocked she got him in to fix it – he was always very obliging – my big John would have helped anybody – (SLIGHT PAUSE) and then there were the few times she was on her own when snobby arse was away - and she had a mouse in the bed-room – it took John an hour to catch it – I could hear all the bumping and banging and her laughing and screaming each time John nearly caught the thing – you could hear as plain as anything from our kitchen that day – it was a lovely summers day – the kids were all at school and she was in the house on her own – I would have been no help at all – I’m afraid of mice – (SLIGHT PAUSE) I heard it all - he got it in the end and flushed it down the toilet – (PAUSE) – John described in every detail how he out smarted it – and finally pinned it down as it tried to make it’s ways under the bed – (SHAKES HER HEAD BEFORE AND AFTER NEXT LINE) My John had no affair with his wife – he just wouldn’t have done that to me – he just wouldn’t have – he loved me. We loved each other!

(SMYTH STOPS CONFESSING AS JEAN’S ASIDE ENDS - HE LIFTS HIS HEAD AND AS HE DOES JEAN TURNS HER FACE SIDEWAYS AND PUTS ONE HAND OVER THE SIDE FACING HIM SO HE CAN’T SEE HER. THEN SMYTH TALKS TO AUDIENCE WHILE LOOKING AT JEAN)

SMYTH (AN ASIDE)

Look at him – he knows how disgusting I am – he can’t even bear to look at me – he knows what’s coming next – at least he thinks he does – he thinks he’s heard it all before I bet – (SLIGHTLY LOUDER) I bet – (LOWER AND SAYS SADLY) yes - I bet he hasn’t a clue (SLIGHT PAUSE AND HIS BREATH IS SHIVERING) I’m bad - at this moment – I’m bad and I’m scared - a tormented man even – and a broken man certainly – I - me – Tony Smyth – Smyth – not just any Smyth (CRIES) Smyth with a y and not an i that’s what made me different that stupid i it made me feel important – Oh God how pathetic can I get – I am a poor sinner – as poor a sinner as any man can be! I’m a man in need of forgiveness – that’s for sure (SLIGHT PAUSE –JEAN COUGHS OUT LOUD AND THEN SMYTH COUGHS BACK) I wonder what he feels like when he listens to all

this – day after day – people coming in here (LOOKS ALL AROUND) baring their souls – telling all the things that maybe no one else knows about them – things they don't ever want another human being to find out – telling things they've done in the dark – things they've thought – things they couldn't tell to anyone - things that if they said out loud they'd be classed as a monster or a lunatic! (BANGING ON THE ELBOW REST) What am I – lunatic or monster? (SLIGHT PAUSE THEN BANGS SLOWLY A FEW MORE TIMES THEN STOPS) or am I just bad? I never thought I would have been capable of doing what I've just done – oh Lord – Lord – Lord – forgive me – (CLOSES HIS EYES TIGHTLY) will somebody listen – is (SOBBING WITH HIS MOUTH CLOSED) there anybody there or anywhere – just to listen to me! Please – anybody – somebody - listen. (TAKES HIS HANKIE AND BLOWS HIS NOSE AND WIPES HIS EYES)  
JEAN (OPENS TWO FINGER OF HAND COVERING HER FACE AND LOOKS AT SMYTH AND COUGHS OUT LOUD AGAIN –SMYTH RETURNS COUGH THEN JEAN SPEAKS TO AUDIENCE)

(AN ASIDE WITH AN EXAGGERATED TONE)

For God's sake don't stop now go on tell us what happened – come on get it all of your chest; go on tell it to the priest! Priests aren't allowed to repeat what they hear in the confessional – you know! Come on – just say it – you'll feel better after – honest! Trust me.

SMYTH Father – please give me a few minutes to find a way to tell you this terrible terrible thing I've done –

JEAN (PUTTING ON A MAN'S VOICE) Take your time my son – whenever you're ready –

SMYTH (AN ASIDE) That doesn't sound like Father SIMPLE – he mustn't be well – what will he think of me when I tell him – (CLOSES HIS EYES) when I confess – oh God help me – (WIPES HIS FORE-HEAD AND HANDS WITH HANKIE – THEN SAYS)

CONTINUES

Delly – Delly – my Delia – (CLOSES HIS EYES AND SAYS VERY SORROWFULLY) everybody's Delly –

MUSIC BEGINS 'DELILAH' BY TOM JONES – MAN GETS UP AND BEGINS DANCING AT THE END OF CHORUS SOMEONE THROWS A LARGE PAIR OF BLOOMER UP AND WHEN MUSIC STOPS MAN HOLDS THEM UP SAYING

(AN ASIDE) Even in my dreams nothing works out the way it's supposed to!

THROWS THE BLOOMERS OVER BACK OF CONFESSIONAL

CONTINUES

Her long silk hair (SMILES) if she was embarrassed she'd let it fall across her face like a curtain – she'd push it back when she'd build her confidence again – when we'd make love – (SMILES) love – it was always love – she'd let it fall over her naked breasts –

(LIGHT SHINES ON JEAN FACE TO SHOW HER RAISE HER EYEBROWS AND CLOSE HER EYES – AS JEAN SPEAKS IN AN ASIDE SMYTH STOPS THEN RESUMES WHEN SHE FINISHES)

JEAN (AN ASIDE) I wish to hell he'd hurry up and tell me what it is he's done – I bet he's murdered her – (OPENS HER HANDS LIKE A BOOK) well can you blame him – I can't!

(SLIGHT PAUSE) - oh God – no – then I'll have to tell Fr SIMPLE – I'll have to and then he'll

have to tell the cops – well it's not like he's telling something he's heard in the confessional – it's me that poor Tony's telling it to – if I do hear it that is – well – oh God – how can I explain this to Fr SIMPLE that one of his flock thought that I was him – then he'll ask me why I didn't tell him that I wasn't him – oh God what can I tell him – what can I say – it's too late now – oh no I'm in big trouble – (SLIGHT PAUSE) of course – I'm only in trouble if I tell – I don't have to tell at all (SMILES) that's it I know what I can do – yeah – I'll write a letter to the cops myself – (SMILES IN A SMUG WAY) yes that's what I'll do – I better listen well – he might say where the body is – SMYTH (AN ASIDE CONTINUES FROM WHERE HE LEFT OFF)

Tease my eye-lids and lips and ears and all round my face with the 'silk strands' of her hair; she was like a 'filly' a young innocent 'filly' needing someone to teach her – show her what to do - an elusive magnificent creature – a childlike woman – innocent and yet – wild – needing to be tamed - wanting – willing me to tame her – every time was like – the first time – an adventure – an exploration – never of the body alone – always body and soul – we were always in a sense a spiritual couple when we got together that way – why oh why did I ever think that something so beautiful could only be mine – mine alone? I was not only a fool – but a damned fool!

URNS TO PRIEST IN CONFESSIONAL  
CONTINUES

Father – are you all right? Do you need a glass of water or something!

JEAN (AN ASIDE) A glass of whiskey would be more like it!

(SHE REMEMBERS THE WHISKEY SHE FOUND IN THE DRAWER LIFTS IT AND BEGINS TO KNOCK IT BACK BEFORE DROPPING HER HEAD AND RAISING HER HAND TOWARDS GRILL SAYING TO MAN IN A RUFFLED VOICE)

CONTINUES

Go ahead my son – I'll be fine, something's stuck in my – a – throat – a frog I think – go ahead – go ahead – just continue – (SMYTH CONTINUES OUT LOUD)

SMYTH What was I saying? – (NODS HIS HEAD SLIGHTLY) oh yes – her breasts yes her breasts – that was it – her breasts – yes – her breasts looked like they'd been sculptured – carved into perfection –

JEAN (AN ASIDE) Carved – that's a good description – everyone in the street new she'd got A boob job (LAUGHS)

SMYTH Unbelievable – really you should have seen them Father – you'd

(LOOKS SILLY – PUTS HIS HEAD SLIGHTLY BOWED AND PUT HIS RIGHT INDEX FINGER INTO HIS MOUTH SIDEWAYS)

Sorry Father – (GETS FLUSTERED) Father I know – I mean - you know what I mean – Father don't you – Father – sorry – I know you don't know first-hand about these things – (LOOKS SILLY AGAIN – AND HESITATES BEFORE SAYING) They looked like they were carved - you know – hand carved – carved perfectly – they looked unreal – until they were touched - and then – so warm and soft – and it was impossible to move away from them - almost impossible to let go – to stop puts his hands over his face and cries – (JEAN IS GETTING IMPATIENT AND CUTS IN QUICKLY SAYING WITH MALE ACCENT)

JEAN Yes yes go on don't stop now just say it – (MORE COMPASSIONATELY) what happened last night? – just say it – just spit it all out-

SMYTH (TAKES HIS HANDS FROM FACE AND STARES IN THROUGH GRILL – AND SLOWLY SAYS) I'm glad it's you Father – Father SIMPLE – I don't think Father BLEAK would be as easy to tell it to as you –

JEAN (DOESN'T SPEAK BUT INSTEAD NODS HER HEAD – SIDE-WAYS AND THEN UP AND DOWN – SHE PULLS AT THE DECORATION AROUND HER NECK)

It doesn't matter who you confess to – it won't make a difference in the eyes of The Almighty (THEN COUGHS IN TO HER FIST – BOTH REMAIN SILENT FOR A BRIEF MOMENT THEN THEY BOTH COUGH A FEW TIMES ONE AFTER THE OTHER ALMOST AS IF IN RESPONSE TO EACH OTHER'S COUGH –JEAN SPEAKS FIRST)

Come on now! Nothing's that bad. You know we've heard it all before.

SMYTH Not this Father – not this one – when was the last time you heard someone confess that they – that they'd just – just –

(PUTS HIS HEAD DOWN AND SAYS)

Oh God I can't even say it.

(JEAN GLARES AT HIM AND SAYS AFTER A MOMENT)

JEAN Now son just remember what I told you – we've heard everything – there is nothing that can shock a priest – (NO RESPONSE FROM SMYTH SO JEAN CONTINUES)

Look – let's do it the long way if it's all so hard for you to say out loud – we'll go over the ten commandments (JEAN NODS HEAD AT HER OWN SUGGESTION – THEN SAYS LOUDLY AND IN AN ANNOYED TONE)

O.K. my son – will that do?

SMYTH (HE NODS HIS HEAD AND CONTINUES TO LOOK AT FLOOR AND REPLIES)

Just give me a moment Father – till I get myself together!

JEAN (SMILING AND SARCASTICALLY WITH A DEEP BREATH)

Well then – while you're getting yourself together - I'll just say a prayer that you can make this a good confession – my son!

CONTINUES

(AN ASIDE)

I never for one moment thought that the confessional could be such hard work – Fr SIMPLE must get a lot of surprises in here each time someone he knows comes in to unload themselves; he deserves every penny that's put on the plate on a Sunday! (SLIGHT PAUSE BEFORE CONTINUING – THOUGHTFULLY) this poor snob's suffered as much as me – only I didn't know I was suffering - did I? – (SLIGHT PAUSE) maybe at times I did – maybe – maybe I just ignored things at times – sometimes – maybe – (CLOSES HER EYES) sometimes what you don't know doesn't do you any harm – or – ignorance is bliss – yeah – I prefer that one! (MOOD CHANGES) what happened? what went wrong? – (SLIGHT PAUSE) I didn't listen – or maybe I did listen and didn't want to hear – maybe – maybe – (NODS HER HEAD) maybe not – I was the one who waked and buried him – she didn't come to the funeral – I said to my sister when she asked me if I thought it strange; strange that they didn't even have the decency to come to the funeral – they'd only left the street a short time before – I said yeah it was strange, because it was only a fall out over kids and their stupid garden– I said that but until this moment I've never admitted that in my heart I knew that wasn't true – I knew that wasn't the real reason why they

didn't come to the funeral – (PAUSES) it doesn't matter now – revenge is sweet (SHE LAUGHS TO HERSELF) I'm about to be told just how sweet it is!

(SMYTH STARTS TO COUGH TO LET JEAN KNOW HE'S READY TO BEGIN)

SMYTH Right Father – I'm as near to ready as I'll ever be – (HE LOOKS THROUGH GRILL AT JEAN)

JEAN (IN A MUFFLED VOICE)

Right then – begin –

(THERE IS SILENCE AND JEAN PUTS HER HAND ACROSS HER FACE COVERING HER EYES BUT SEPARATING HER FINGERS SO SHE CAN SEE SMYTH)

SMYTH Father what I've just done is probably the worst thing you've ever heard in this confessional!

(HE CLOSES HIS EYES AND SOFTLY SOBS A LITTLE – THEN PULLS HIMSELF TOGETHER AND COMMENCES)

Father – last night – well –

(PAUSES FOR A MOMENT –JEAN IS GETTING IMPATIENT)

JEAN Yes my son – go on now – go on – (RAISES HER VOICE) I don't have all day you know - What have you done? Did you kill her? Where have you left her body?

FR SIMPLE SLOWLY WALKS ONTO STAGE HOLDING BLOOMERS HE LOOKS INTO CONFESSIONAL AND IS ASTONISHED TO SEE JEAN– WHEN SMYTH REALISES THAT ITS NOT FR. SIMPLE HE'S BEEN CONFESSING TO HE, ALONG WITH FR. SIMPLE GOES TO OTHER SIDE OF CONFESSIONAL AND STARES AT JEAN-

JEAN OPENS HER HANDS AND LAUGHS AS SHE SAYS

I suppose this means I'm now free to look for another cleaning job!

PAUSE FOR A FEW SECONDS THEN MUSIC IS PLAYED LOUDLY (MUSIC RUNNING BEAR) THEN STARTING WITH THE PATIENT, YOUNG JEAN, COWBOY, ALL ACTORS TAKING A BOW AND DANCING AS MUSIC IS PLAYED.

LIGHTS OUT

END

#### STAGE CHARACTERS

JEAN Lost son Tony and mother Vera two years ago

BRIAN Lost wife Eva and son James

DAVE Black and gay, lost his partner Billy

KATE Lost daughter Carol

SHEILA Mother who lost daughter Sharon

TOMMY Lost son Tom

#### VIDEO CHARACTERS

BILLY Dave's partner

CAROL Kate's daughter

EVA Brian's wife – mum to James

SHARON Sheila's daughter

TOM Tommy's son

TONY JEAN's son  
VERA JEAN's mother

PLOT There is a suicide survivor's self-help group, which meets each Sunday at 8pm. The group is usually 4-5 people. This week a new member arrives, so everyone will be telling their full story to encourage him to talk about his experience.

In the room there are a number of grey plastic chairs and also one rocking chair, which is used as the speakers 'comfort zone' or 'the womb'. As each person arrives he/she pick up a chair and place it so the group are in a semi-circle.

Above the semi-circle is a large cinematic screen, this is used as a prop when each person tells their story the person they are speaking about will appear on screen; the video character doesn't speak but their thoughts are done by a voice over.

Sheila is the 'rock' of the group. She started the group up.

#### SET DESIGN

AUDIO & VISUAL AIDS Audio

'The Rose' acoustic

Voiceovers

Visual

Screen

PROPS Rocking chair

Cigarette

Grey chairs

Kettle

Cups

Tray

#### SCENE ONE

Scene takes place in small room

Sheila walks in turns on light and lifts chair and sets it down at far side of rocking chair (to the right) in the background 'The Rose' is being sung by unseen female with no musical accompaniment, she takes off her hat and gloves and coat putting coat over the back of chair, she keeps pink silk scarf (which belonged to her dead daughter) on around her arms and shoulders. She sits down and lights up a cigarette.

Then one by one group arrive picking up their chairs and sit to the left of rocking chair, no all only acknowledge one another through eye contact. When they are all seated a knock on the door is heard.

SHEILA If you're good looking come on in; and if you're not don't bother (Everyone turns and stares at the door)

Only joking; come on in we don't care what anybody looks like in this group, if you're auld Nick himself we don't care!

Come on don't be shy.

TOMMY (Tommy gets up and rushes to door to welcome newcomer, he put out his hand to shake Dave's and brings him in) Welcome (still shaking hands) welcome, whoever you are or from where you come, you are welcome here.

DAVE Thanks mate for that - thanks (puts his head down shyly)

KATE (pointing for him to take a chair and place it where he wants) I'm Tommy and this here is –

KATE I'm Kate (looking at Tommy) Tommy you brought this young fella in and you don't even know if he's in the right place

TOMMY Sorry son, you understand, I should have asked who you were looking for –

DAVE This is the victim - suicide help group - I rang earlier - the girl said –

SHEILA (walks over to Dave puts her arm around his shoulder) Welcome son, we have to ask, to make sure, in case well you know - we have to be careful - we don't want to spill our hearts out and then find that it was the painting class you were looking for!

DAVE (nods and put his hand out to shake with everyone as he's being introduced) Right mate I know what you mean.

TOMMY Your names'?

DAVE Dave - (slight pause as he anticipates Tommy is waiting for him to say where he's from) obviously I'm not from here

TOMMY We don't care where you're from - it's where you're going that matters - (Dave acknowledges Tommy's words by looking him in the eye and then looking quickly away)

KATE You're welcome Dave - (she sits down on her chair)

TOMMY This is Brian (Brian gets up and puts his hand on Dave's shoulder)

BRIAN Hi Dave - you're in the right place - (stares into his eyes in gesture of recognition of his pain again Dave looks away)

JEAN And this is our JEAN (JEAN stands up and hugs Dave for a few seconds)

SHEILA How are you Dave? (slight pause) Dave everyone here has the one terrible thing in common - we've each lost someone we loved to suicide, most of us in fact have suffered suicide more than once, we've become in a sense like a sub-community, a lot of the time if we're really bad it's too hard to bother with people in general - so when we're not here we're usually on the phone to one another - we need one another - (slight pause) everyone's not the same we all have our own way of coping - truth is at times we can't - we can't cope without help - that's why this is called a self-help group. Sit where you want Dave. The old rocker there is for when you feel like sharing - you'll see what I mean shortly. (smiles)

KATE (as she lights up a cigarette) Look folks, if nobody minds I want in the chair first tonight

SHEILA Very good - (puts glasses on and looks directly into Kate's eyes) I take it the conference did do some good after all?

KATE No, don't get me wrong, the people there, if we'd known where they met we could have got in touch with them and invited them here, it would have cost nothing, we all could have mucked in, but the cost of that conference was - I heard 20 grand - when I thought what 20 grand could have done for this community, or any community, it might have paid for time - for someone - then that someone wouldn't - well their families wouldn't be attending a meeting like this - nothing about it made much sense – from my view point anyway – ‘prevention is better than cure’ (nods her head) but at least I got to know how different people cope-

SHEILA Get yourself ready and I'll put the kettle on. (Moves over across to the corner where kettle and cups are on tray on floor - turns kettle on and asks) Anybody remember to bring milk? (No one answers) That's that then no tea.

TOMMY I'll go over the road and get some –

SHEILA Does anybody really want tea; we have a lot to talk about tonight folks - with the conference and all. (Gestures with palms of hands) No, all agreed - fine - then Kate you lead tonight.

(Everyone pulls chairs and marks out their own space, they all light up cigarettes, and as they do so the lights dim; Kate makes herself comfortable in the rocker, though she doesn't look comfortable, a large spot light is on her and the rocker - she sits with her hands joint together and after a moment gently rocks then begins - she is looking straight ahead - facing the audience - the rocking to and fro is constant for most of the time except when she gets upset)

KATE You all know me, (pause) and some of you even know me better than my family or (slight laugh) than myself at times. (deep sigh) At the week-end I met some very honest people, (pause fiddles with her hands) honesty was the one thing we didn't have in common; no; (pause) over these last two years I've been living a lie, I'm not a liar, (closes her eyes tight) I just avoid the truth, and now here in front of you all, in front of Dave who I've never met before in my life, I'm going to try and face the truth, if we all rock together – (firmly put hand on arms of rocker) then maybe our truth will bring healing into our brokenness; maybe hope will bring us healing, so then, let truth be the first step we each take towards that healing. (slight pause looks down at her feet and stops rocking) Carol's story didn't end when she died. My baby's story didn't begin when she was raped. It began a long time before that. (Sits and slowly rocks with her eyes closed as video begins)

VIDEO SCENE begins here: Kate's daughter Carol is in early 20's she has long ginger hair and is sitting on stairs with pen and paper, she is writing to mother before she ends her own life. She puts pages down on her knee and puts the pen in her mouth. All dialogue on video is through a voice over. Carol's voiceover is in Irish. Kate (Carol's mother's voiceover is in English)

CAROL FADE IN:

A Kate, mo mhamaí bhocht – níl an raiteas seo in ainm is bheith do do ghortú – ach ta a fhios agam

go gortóidhm mar rud ar bith a dheirim nó a dhéanaim – ní thuigeann tú é mar is ceart. Nach aisteach an rud é le deich mbliana anuas, gur labhair mé leat i dteanga nach raibh suim agat inti, agus nár bhac tú lena foghlaim, agus anois cluinim ó chara gur thosaigh tú ar ranganna lena foghlaim anois – b’fheidir gur shíl tú go mbeadh páistí agam féin fan am seo, go mbéiféa i do mhamó, bhéiféa i do mhamó den scoith. Sílim anois go raibh na rudaí a tharla domsa in ndán dom. Uair amháin, d’iarr tú orm an ceirnín a athrú – ach ní thig liom

CUT TO: YOUNG GIRL WEARING FIRST COMMUNION DRESS SITTING ON FLOOR AT SIDE OF STAIRS WITH KNEES UP TO CHIN AND ARMS AROUND THEM, THE CHILD HAS JUST BEEN TRAUMATISED.

KATE FADE IN:

Voiceover in English

What are you doing, sitting there like that? You’ll ruin the dress, your First Communion dress. It won’t be white for long if you’re going to sit on floors with it on: get up and into the sitting room, they’re all waiting to get their photo taken with you. Go on, get in there right now, auntie Sue’s there and all your cousins. Why do you always try hard to spoil things for me, why? This is the holiest day of your life, a day you’ll remember for the rest of your life! Go on, get up – and get in!

FADE OUT:

CUT TO: CAROL IN PRESENT TIME ON STAIRS

CAROL Rinne mé iarracht a insint duit ag an am sin – lean tú ar aghaidh fá chruth a’ghúna, “keep the veil straight” – sílim gur sin a dúirt tú – tuilleadh griangrafanna – ní fhaca duine ar bith a riamh na griangrafanna fán rud a tharla dom díreach roimhe sin – ach amháin mé féin – feicimse na griangrafanna sin gach lá de mo shaol – gach lá lófa – mo shaol lófa – is ceamara é m’intinn – rinne mé iarracht na griangrafanna sin a thaispeaint duit – ach bhí tú dall – ní thioctadh leat na pictiúir a fheiceáil – de reir mar a tharla, b’albam ar leith é.

A Mhamaí – b’fheidir go bhfuil mo chuimhne go holc ón lá sin – an séú lá is fiche de mhí Bhealtaine 1987 – b’fheidir gur mo chuid samhlaíochta atá i gceist, b’fheidir nár labhair mé mórán le duine ar bith ar feadh bliana – níl mé iomlán soileir fan bhliain ina dhiaidh. Dar liom I gcónaí gur chaith mé an cuid is mó de I mo leaba – fiú i rith an tsamhraidh – ach níl mé iomlán cinnte fá sin anois – is cosúil gur chuimil m’intinn an bhliain sin amach – ach amháin an t-amhrán – an t-amhrán a bhí ar an ráidíó fán am – “I Think We’re Alone Now”, le Tiffany – dúirt sé liom bheith ag éisteacht leis an cheol is cuir i gcéill nach raibh sé ann.

A Mhamaí, cad chuige nár oscail tú an doras – nár tháinig tú isteach dean cinnte go raibh mé i gceart – thug tusa chun tí é – ba choir go raibh tú ag breathnú ar – ba choir go raibh tú do mo chosaint – sin an rud ba choir de mhamaithe a dhéanamh.

Tá sé beagnach thart – deireadh le pian – deireadh le pictiúir.

FADE IN TO CHILD ON FLOOR AT SIDE OF STAIRS, CLUTCHING A BLANKET  
YOUNG CAROL (CRYING AND BITING BLANKET - SOBBING)

KATE Voiceover

What now? What is it this time? You’re getting too old for this, my girl. You spoil everything.

You're selfish and you're moody – if you want to get on like a spoiled child then go up to your room.

(CHILD STOPS CRYING AND LOOKS UP TO WHERE THE MOTHER'S VOICE IS COMING FROM)

CUT TO STAIRS WITH CAROL AT PRESENT

CAROL Níos mó phictiúir don albam. Ansin ar scoil fuair muid múinteoir úr – Bean Uí Fhlionn – Gráinne – lig sí dom Gráinne a chuir uirthi taobh amuigh den scoil, ar a laghad bhí cara agam ansin, bhí a fhios aici láithreach go raibh rud éigin cearr liom, a Mhamaí, cén dóigh nach raibh a fhios agat, cén dóigh nach bhfaca tú, cén dóigh a raibh cuma ceart go leor orm duitse – más cuimhin leat, chaith mé níos mó is níos mó ama I mo sheomra féin. Níor cheistigh tú a riamh cad chuige nnach raibh mé ag súgradh le cáilíní eile ón tsráid – níor fhiosraigh tú é – mar sin de, ní raibh a fhios agat – mhothaigh mé salach, cáidheach – mhothaigh mé dá mbeadh an scéal ag duine ar bith ag an phointe sin go mbeadh fuath acu orm – níos mó fuath na mar a bhí agam dom féin – ní raibh mé ach i mo pháiste go fóill – ní raibh a fhios agam an dóigh le smaoineadh – bhí tusa de dhith orm chun mé a theagasc – chan stráinséir éigin – cé go raibh grá agam don stráinséir – mo chara Gráinne. Thosaigh muid ag déanamh ár gcomhra ar fad as Gaeilge – bhí sé go hiontach – saol úr dom – bhí sé ar nós féiniúlachta úr dom. Aisteach. Nach raibh sé aisteach? Ba bheag gur inis mé di uair, ach ag an soicind deirineach ní raibh mé abálta – shíl mé go n-amharcfadh sí orm mar dhuine salach. Bhí brionglóidí agam faoi – mise ag insint di agus achan rud ceart go leor ansin – glacadh sí mé le cónaí léi agus bheadh deireadh leis – ní tharlaódh arís é – ach ansin mhusclaíonn ag breacadh ailis, ag mothú trína chéile, ag mothú pian, agus ansin le fail réidh den phian – oíche amháin fuair mé raspa ingne agus thosaigh mé do mo scríobadh féin ar mo ghéag go dtí gur rith an fhuil; bhí an faoiseamh dóchreidte – mhothaigh mé glanta, mhothaigh mé go maith. Chodail mé go sámh an oíche sin agus ansin shiúil mé bóthar nár choir go siúlfadh páiste ar bith a choíche – leo féin. Fá dheireadh mhothaigh mé go raibh cuid smachta agam ar mo shaol féin – níor thuig mé go díreach an rud a bhí ann fá dhochar a dhéanamh dom féin, ach bhí sé ina chuidiú agam – ag mothú smachta éigin – níor chuala mé riamh fá fhéinghortú, ach ag an am cheanna, ní raibh aithne agam ar duine ar bith a tharla drochide gneasach dóibh ach an oiread agus mar sin de ní raibh faill agam comporáid a dhéanamh leo.

FADE OUT:

CUT TO: CHILD AT SIDE OF STAIRS (SHE'S ABOUT TWELVE YEARS OLD)

YOUNG CAROL (IN THE SITTING POSITION WITH HER KNEES UP TO HER CHIN, WITH ARMS AROUND THEM TIGHTLY. SHE'S WEARING KNEE-SOCKS AND IS IN SCHOOL UNIFORM WITH HAIR IN PIGTAILS AND IS SOBBING)

You hurt me – I'm telling my mammy – I'm telling my mammy if you come near me again

CAROL FADE OUT

CUT TO: STAIRS, CAROL

Ba é sin an lá roimh oíche Nollag '93; tuilleadh pictiúir don albam. A Mhamaí, cén dóigh nach raibh a fhios agat fán am sin. Lean mé thú ó sheomra go seomra an oíche Nollag sin, mhothaigh mé

nimhneach, tinn, eaglach. Thiontaigh tú thart sa chistin – tú i do sheasamh ag an doirteál agus ba bheag nar thit tú tharam – mise i mo sheasamh chomh cóngarach sin duitse – d’amharc tú orm agus dúirt tú go raibh mé mar scáth agat, agus nuair a dúirt tú an focal ‘scath’ – is cuimhin liom de fath éigin smaoineamh ar dhiultach ghriangraf – an dóigh a d’oibrigh mé féin amach é I m’intinn páistiúil ná go dtiocfadh leatsa an diultach amháin a fheiceáil agus mise an t-aon duine a thiocfadh leo an fíor pictiúir a fheiceáil – m’intinn féin a ghlac an phictiúir sin agus ní raibh mé in ann an pictiúir a chuir chugatsa sa dóigh is go dtiocfadh leat feiceáil nó tuigbheáil – fóghúna úr s’agam, fóbhriste úra s’agam – níor choir dom iad a gcaitheamh – bhí mé salach – ní raibh rudaí deas, glán, áille tuillte dom.

An gcuimhin leat go raibh ort insint dom folcadán a ghlacadh, stop mé mo fóbhriste a athrú, ba ghnáth liom iad a chaitheamh chomh fada agus is feidir – thug tú faoi deara ansin mé – mé féin mar a bhí mé – a chaoin deora a cinn roimh codladh achan oíche.

FADE OUT: CUT TO: SIDE OF STAIRS TO YOUNG CAROL (CHILD SITTING, SOBBING, IN SCHOOL UNIFORM)

CAROL Voiceover

Thosaigh fuil mhíosta ansin – ní raibh a fhios agat – níor inis mé duit – ní raidh sé de cheart agat eolas chomh pearsanta sin fúm a bheith agat.

(CHILD BEGINS TO ROCK TO AND FRO, SLOWLY)

D’impigh mé ar Dhia cuidiú liom, go gcuirfinn mo lámh I mo bhás féin dá mbéinn ag iompar clainne – cén dóigh eile ba choir páiste dhá bhliana déag d’aois a leithid a láimhseáil – inis domsa – tuigim narbh mise an t-aon duine – ansin nó anois – achan oíche mar an gceanna ó sin amach – ba am luí an t-am a ba mheasa – tromluí gan stad ina raibh mé ag iompar – nuair a bhí tú amuigh, ba gnach liom mé féin a chaitheadh anuas an staighre – thug mé dorn ar mo bholg féin – dá mbeadh rud ar bith ann – beo – ionam – bhí fuath agam air – bhí mé ag iarraidh é a mharú – bhí fuath agam orm féin – b’fheidir go raibh mé ag iompar – mar bhí an chéad fuil mhíosta eile trom agus cnapanach – lán téachtáinfola – ansin stop said go dtí go raibh mé seacht mbliana déag d’aois – mar sin bhí mé sabhailte – sabhailte ó cáide? Tuigim anois gur stop said de thairbhe an ‘anorexia’ – fiú ansin – bhí mé dul é a dhéanamh – mé féin a ghearradh i bpíosaí, nó bás a fháil ón okras – bhí fuath agam orm féin – bhí orm í a scriosadh – mise – an rud – agus tú féin, a Mhamaí, a stór, nífheicfidh tú an baint idir an dá rud mar, mar is gnáth, ní raibh a fhios agat fa rud ar bith fúm – fúith

FADE OUT: CUT TO STAIRS, AND CAROL

CAROL Ansin d’athraigh mé scoileanna agus bhog Gráinne ar shiúil, bhí mé iomlan liom féin, sin nuair a thosaigh mé an Gaeilge a labhairt leat – shíl tú go raibh mé as mo mheabhair – ach níor thuig tú go foill – ní dhearna mé ach amháin nuair a bhí muid linn féin. Bhí mé i m’aisteoir iontach i measc cuideachta eile – in amanna ag dul thar fomhar – tá mé ag déanamh tagairt ar fhadhb bhia s’agam anois a Mhamaí, ba dhóigh eile sin chun í a ghortadh – ise, a raibh fuath agam uirthi – níor thug tú fá deara – an boladh sa seomra folctha i ndiaidh domsa caitheamh anuas, bailiúchan s’agam de mhalaí plaisteacha i mo tharracháin – níor smaoinigh tú a riamh ar an chúis. Bhí beagnach an meid ceanna fuath agam duitse ansin is a bhí agam dom féin – ní thiocfadh liom fiú amharc ort – tá mé buartha (pause) bhí an oiread sin fuath agam duit mar bhí an oiread sin grá agam duit – tá mé buartha, buartha... tá mé buartha. Níor thug tú fa deara an méad meachan a bhí cailte agam – chan

go dtí gur thit mé i laige – chaoin tú nuair a chonaic tú mo chorp nochta – ní raibh mé ag iarraidh go mbeidhfeá ag caoineadh ar an chúis sin – bhí mé ag iarraidh go mbeidhfeá ag caoineadh cionnas nach raibh an fhírinne ar eolas agat roimhe – gur gortaíodh do bhabaí, gur tharla drochside di agus gur theip ortsa sin a fheiceáil – ba choir go raibh tú ansin chun mé a chosaint – chun stad a chuir leis (change of mood) fán am sin, agus mé i mo luí i leaba na hotharlainne – ní raibh mé ag iarraidhan phian sin ar fad a roinnt leat – d’fhulaing mé sin liom féin – ní thioctadh liom a bheith cinnte fiú go gcreidfeá mé – ní raibh fiú aithne agat orm – ach bhí aithne agat air – níorbh stráinséir é – chuir sé i gcéill gur chara é – chaoin tú nuair a fuair sé bás – dúirt tú gur duine uasal é – ní raibh aithne agat air, a Mhamaí, agus níl aithne agat orm. Níl mé fiú dul a insint duit cé a bhí ann – sin díoltas s’agam ort...i do bhrionglóidí, a Mhamaí – lean ar aghaidh – oibrigh amach é agus i ndiaidh sin... an bháis. Nuair a thuigeann tú go raibh do shaol ar fad ina bréag beo. Dála an scéal, a Mhamaí, an chuimhin leat an ionsaí gneasach a rinneadh orm ar mo bhréithlá agus mé ocht mbliana déag d’aois? Ní bhfuair an beithiúnach ach dhá bhlian faoi ghlas mar thoradh – sin le cuir leis an taifead – taifead in áit albam mar níor ghlac mé ghriangraf ar bith an oíche sin – bhí mé ró-ólta ag an am – ach an rud a rinneadh liom...Cad chuige mise? – cad é an rud fúmsa? – caithfidh go bhfaca said rud éigin ionam, nó fúm, agus sin an fáth gur roghnaigh said mise – caithfidh go bhfuil a fhios agat mar is tú mo Mhamaí. Tá grá agam duitse. Tá mé ag imeacht agus na cuimhneacháin atá agam ná chuimhne sona fá am luí, nuair a thaispeann tú domsa an dóigh le paidreacha a rá agus nuair a d’inis tú scéalta am codlata dom. Is mise d’óg go deo.

CAROL Voiceover (English version)

Dear Kate my poor poor mother this letter or statement isn't meant to hurt you, but I know it will because you always take anything I have to say or do up wrong. It's ironic that for the past 10 years I've only communicated to you in a language you weren't interested in and never bothered to learn and now I hear through a friend that you've started taking up classes to learn - maybe you thought I'd have children by now and make you a granny, you would have made a great granny, but something's aren't meant to be, the same as some things are meant to be. I think now that everything that ever happened me was meant. You once told me to change the record, but I can't.

FADE OUT:

CUT TO: YOUNG GIRL WEARING FIRST COMMUNION DRESS SITTING ON FLOOR AT SIDE OF STAIRS WITH KNEES UP TO CHIN AND ARMS AROUND THEM, THE CHILD HAS JUST BEEN TRAUMATISED.

FADE IN:

KATE Voiceover

What are you doing sitting there like that you'll ruin the dress, your first communion dress it won't be white for long if you're going to sit on floors with it on; get up and into the sitting room they're all waiting to get their photo taken with you, go on get in there right now, auntie Sue's there and all your cousins, why do you always try hard to spoil things for me, why? This is the holiest day of your life, a day you'll remember for the rest of your life! Go on, get up - and get in!

FADE OUT: CUT TO: CAROL ON STAIRS

CAROL Voiceover

I tried to tell you then - you went on about the state of the dress, 'keep the veil straight' - I think

that's what you said - more photo's - (pause) no one ever saw the photos of what had happened me just before those photo's - no one except me - I see those photo's every day of my life - every rotten day - my rotten life - my mind's a camera - I tried to show you those photo's - but you were blind - you just couldn't see the pictures I tried to show you (pause) it turned out to be quiet an album.

(Chews on the end of the pen then starts to write again)

Mama - maybe my memory is so bad since that day - 26th May 1987 maybe I just imagined that for the next year I didn't talk much to any one - I'm not entirely clear about that next year. I keep thinking that I spent most of it in bed - even during the summer - but I'm not really sure even about that now - I seemed to have blanked most of that year out - except for the song - the song that was on the radio at the time 'I think we're alone now' by Tiffany - he told me to listen to the music and to pretend he wasn't there –

(She pulls out a paper hankie from her sleeve and is sick into it - when she's finished she pushes back her hair which has fallen over her face)

Mama why didn't you open the door - and come in to see if I was all right - you brought him in to our house - you should have watched him - you should have protected me - that's what mamas' are supposed to do - (Pulls at hair and cries) It's almost over - no more pain - no more pictures.

FADE OUT

FADE IN TO CHILD ON FLOOR AT SIDE OF STAIRS WITH CLUTCHING BLANKET.

YOUNG CAROL (Crying and biting blanket - sobbing)

KATE Voiceover

What now - what is it this time? You're getting too old for this my girl. You spoil everything. You're selfish and you're moody - if you want to get on like a spoiled child then go up to your room.

(Child stops crying and looks up to where the mother's voice is coming from) CUT TO STAIRS WITH CAROL

CAROL More pictures for the album. Then at school we got a new teacher, Mrs Flynn, Graínne - she let me call her by her name if I met her outside of school, at least now I had a friend, she knew right away there was something not right with me, mama how did you not know, how did you not see, I couldn't have seemed all right to you - if you remember I spent more and more of my time in my room. You never asked why - why I didn't play with other girls from the street - you didn't ask; so you didn't know, I felt dirty, filthy, I felt if anybody found out at that stage they would hate me more than I hated myself - I was still only a child - I didn't know how to think - I needed you to teach me - not some stranger - though I loved that stranger - my friend Graínne.

We'd begun to have our conversation in Irish - it was wonderful, a new existence - it was like I'd got this new identity. Strange. Wasn't that strange? I once almost told her, but at the last second I just couldn't - I thought she would see me as dirty - I even used to dream about telling her and everything would be fine, she would take me to live with her, and it would be all over, it would never happen again, but then I'd wake up in a cold sweat with all these feelings of confusion and pain, then to get the pain out - away - one night I got a nail file and I started to scratch my arm with it until I bled; the relief was unbelievable.

It was like I was being cleansed, the pain was released, it made me feel good. I slept well that night, and after that I walked a road that no child should ever feel they have to walk - alone. At last I felt I had some control over my life - I didn't understand what exactly it was about harming myself that made me feel I was in control - I'd never heard of anyone doing anything like this, but then again I didn't know anyone who had been sexually abused either, so I had no one to compare notes with.

FADE OUT: CUT TO: CHILD AT SIDE OF STAIRS (SHE'S ABOUT 12 YEARS OLD)

(In the sitting position with her knees up to her chin with arms around them tightly, she's wearing knee stocks and is in school uniform with hair in pig tails and is sobbing)

YOUNG CAROL You hurt me - I'm telling my mammy - I'm telling my mammy if you come near me again.

FADE OUT: CUT TO: STAIRS, CAROL

CAROL That was the day before Christmas Eve '93; more pictures for the album, mama how did you not know by then. I followed you from room to room that Christmas eve, I was sore, I felt sick, I was frightened.

In the kitchen you turned round - you were standing at the sink and you almost tripped over me - I was standing so close to you - you looked at me and said I was like your shadow, and when you said the word shadow - I remember for some reason thinking of a negative - I reasoned it out in my child's mind - that you could only see the negative and only I could see the real picture - it was my mind that took the photo and I couldn't process that picture to your mind to make you see - or understand - my new petticoat and knickers I shouldn't be wearing those - I was dirty - I didn't deserve anything nice - pretty - clean -

Do you remember you had to tell me to take a bath, I stopped changing my underwear, I used to wear them for as long as I could - that made you notice me - the real me - who cried herself to sleep each night -

FADE OUT: CUT TO: SIDE OF STAIRS TO YOUNG CAROL (CHILD SITTING SOBBING IN SCHOOL UNIFORM)

My periods had started - you didn't know - I didn't tell you - you had no right to know something so intimate about me.

(CHILD BEGINS TO ROCK TO AND FRO SLOWLY)

I asked God to help me - I told him if I was pregnant I'd kill myself - how else does a twelve year old child react - tell me - I know now I wasn't unique - then nor now - every night was the same from then on bed time was the worst - nightmares constant nightmares about being pregnant - when you weren't in I threw myself down the stairs - I beat my stomach - if anything was there - alive - inside me - I hated it - I wanted to kill it - I hated me - I might have been pregnant - because my next period was so heavy and lumpy - all clots - then I didn't have another one until I was 17 - so I was safe - safe from what - (slight pause) but now I know that they stopped because of the anorexia - even then - I was going to do it - end it all - slash myself to bits or starve myself - I hated myself - I had to destroy her - me - thing - and you dear mama won't connect the two because you as usual were unaware of anything to do with me - with her -

FADE OUT: CUT TO STAIRS AND CAROL

Then I changed schools and Graínne moved away, I was even more alone, that was when I used the Irish language to communicate with you - you thought I was mad - but still you never got it - I only did it when I was alone with you - (closes her eyes) anytime I was with you I was always alone - when anyone else was around I became this wonderful actress - maybe at times I over played the part - I'm referring to my eating disorder now mama, it was another way to hurt her - the me I hated - you didn't notice a thing - the smell in the bathroom after I got rid of everything I ate - my collection of plastic bags in my drawer - you never wondered what they were for - I hated you then almost as much as I hated myself - even the sight of you sickened me - Sorry (pause) I hated you so much because I loved you so much - Sorry Sorry Sorry - (pause) you didn't notice the weight I lost - not until I collapsed - when you saw my naked body you cried - I didn't want you to cry because of that - I wanted you to cry because you didn't know the truth before; the truth that you're baby had been hurt - abused - and you didn't see it - you should have been there to protect me - to stop it - (change of mood) by then - when I lay in that hospital bed - I didn't want you to know - I didn't want to share with you all this pain - I'd went through this alone - without you, I couldn't even be sure by then if you would believe me - after all - you didn't even know me; but you knew him - he was no stranger - he warmed his way into our lives - when he died you cried - you said he was a good man - you didn't know him mama and you don't know me - I'm not even going to tell you who he was - that's my revenge to you - dream on mama - dream on - work it out -and then die - when you realise that your whole life was a living lie! Bye the way mama, the rape on my 18th birthday - for which the animal was caged only for 2 years - just for the record - record and not album - I say that because I didn't take any photo's - I was too drunk at the time - but my -point is - (Weeping for about 30 seconds) Why me - what was it about me - they must have seen something in me - about me - that made them pick me - why - you must know why you're my mammy. I love you. I'm leaving with the memories the happy memories of bedtime when you showed me how to pray and told me my bedtime story! Yours forever young. xo.

FADES OUT: RETURNS TO STAGE SETTING KATE IS STILL IN ROCKER:

KATE (Continues rocking to and fro slowly stopping only at key moments)

You all know that my daughter my only child - Carol - was brutally raped on her eighteenth birthday - she was coming out of the Town Bar (pause) she was pulled down the alley way at the side - she was drunk and so couldn't put up much of a struggle; she was beaten and raped - she had bite marks all over her body - but the one thing she managed to do was to pull some of his hair - which was how the police caught him - he was sentenced to two years - (stops rocking for a moment then resumes) if he'd been in a fight and bit another man - not raped - just physically injured he would had been given a longer sentence - the judge - remarked about her short skirt and the amount of drink she's consumed - I've been recording judges remarks in rape cases and do you want to know something I'm beginning to wonder about some of the judges themselves - some are inclined to be very lenient towards rapists! I'm not being sexist but I'm beginning to think that it's only women who understand rape - maybe a man whose daughter suffered it will have that bit of understanding - but I've found that men in general don't see it in the same light as women - maybe I'm wrong but it's the way I feel about it now; anyway, I'm not concerned about that just now, I'm more concerned about my daughter's life and death. Most people think that it was because of that rape that she killed herself - I say that rape - because - there were more than one - (stops rocking -

pauses resumes and closes her eyes) she was sexually abused since she was seven until she was twelve - and then she was raped - sexual abuse is rape in any form - but in the law books it's only when full penetration takes place - it's technical term is neither here nor there to anyone - but the destruction of the victims life - that's what matters, and how it can be put back together again. My daughter's life was never put back together- (stops rocking pauses then resumes) I'm ashamed - and it's part of what I've to live with - the fact that I wasn't there for her - may God forgive me! She felt she had no one to turn to - no one at all. (Pause) She sent me a letter - she wrote it, went out and posted it, then went and killed herself. She planned to do it the year before, she said in the letter, and on the 15th August - my birthday- she met an old woman at the bus stop and whatever happened during their conversation she changed her mind - (pause) - if only she could have talked to me!

(Pauses - stops rocking)

SHEILA (From the darkness Sheila's voice is heard saying gently) Kate - do you want to go on with this - (silence - for a moment) it's your choice.

KATE I have to - I'm at the same point Carol was at when she decided to end her life - only - my decision is to keep going - to live my life and not exist in this state - I'm undead but I'm not alive - I don't live anymore - I'm just undead. That's the only way I can describe how I feel - (pause) Carol didn't know what she was doing - she wouldn't have left us all like this - (Fiddles with her hands and then looks down at her feet then slowly rocks again)

She thought I never loved her - but I did - I always did - (slight pause) I never showed the letter to anyone - I told no one - I kept it from the police - I thought it would complicate things - Carol was dead -I didn't want anyone to know more than they needed to know - (hesitates)

I ask her once - in fact it was the day she made her first holy communion - if anything was wrong with her - she was very quiet and kept going upstairs to the bathroom - she didn't join in the games with her cousins, she said she had a sore head.

Carol was - she was a very lively child - you know if anyone called she'd be on their knee - making herself at home with them - but then she changed - that was in the summer of '87 that's when it all began, that's when my baby's life was destroyed - ruined - if only - if only - (covers her eyes with her hands and cried)

SHEILA Kate you don't have to do this to yourself

TOMMY Kate leaves it to some other time - like Sheila says; don't do this to yourself!

BRIAN We know exactly what it's like Kate - we've all been through it - different words - same meaning - wait till the time's right -

KATE The time is right - it has to be now or I may never have the guts to say all this again - what happened my daughter was my fault - even though I knew nothing about it - she blamed me - I was her mother - I should have protected her - I should have known.

She hated me for not knowing - she interpreted that as my not caring or loving her, she despised me so much - and I've never told this to anyone either before - (speaks very slowly) but she despised

me so much that she would only speak to me when I spoke to her - and she would reply in Irish - because she knew I couldn't understand. She needed me to know how it felt not to be understood; I became her target - she couldn't get at the one who hurt her - so all her hatred for want of a better word was directed at me.

She'd kept all these feelings to herself - I know now she did tell me the only way she could - with words I couldn't understand; I hadn't a clue - but I should have - and - the terrible thing now is - is - maybe I did know - maybe somewhere deep - in my gut - (shakes her head and puts head down - slight pause)

I still didn't get it when she collapsed - she had anorexia - I didn't notice - all that weight loss - why didn't I put two and two together - and come up with the right conclusion - it took a psychiatrist to tell me - some mother - I was!

DAVE (unseen - speaks quickly) Kate, I'm sorry for interrupting - I know I've only arrived here for the first time tonight - but you're wrong - you're really wrong - I'm a psychiatric nurse - I know about these things - you shouldn't -

KATE (stops rocking and speaks assertively) You're right Dave you have only arrived! You're not a mother - I am - I didn't need to be a psychiatrist to become a mother - I'm a human being - understand - (silence for a few seconds) and yes I failed - I failed to do what mothers are supposed to do - argue all you want - tell me all the logical things different people have told me since my daughter killed herself - and I'll tell you - none of it makes the slightest bit of a difference - not to her and not to me! (Fiddles with her hands and calmer now)

What I'm trying to say is (long pause) the way Carol my beautiful daughter - who lived and died in so much pain - the way she saw things - and the way I was oblivious - blind - (emotional) I wasn't in the same pain that she was in - though I was hurting - I had my pain - because - she just didn't love me; that was my pain.

From that first time - when she made her first communion - that day both our lives changed. (sarcastic laugh - very seriously) All the professionals in the world - could neatly package Carol's story and tell it as a warning sign - what to look out for - and if something happens how you can seek help - bullshit - the stories I've heard from people from everywhere at that conference - their stories were all unique to them - and the one thing they all had in common was when they sought help - they were put on a waiting list - (pause)

I feel so bad - everyone here knows and feels the same - we have all different stories to tell - about this pain - our pain that won't go away - maybe I've been holding onto my pain for the wrong reasons - but now I know I have to let go in order to live - not to waste my life any longer - there's been too much waste already. Why? - Why let go now! - I'm not sure - maybe the time's right - I can't really explain it - I don't want this - this - depression - I'm going to try and get weaned of the 'prozac' - (laughs) yes - prozac the non-addictive anti-depressant - that I'm psychologically addicted to - I'm going to go through this pain like a lion goes through the flaming hoop - in the circus - if I get burned - if the heat gets more than I can bare - I'll always have - you - everyone here! Practice makes perfect.

I have to keep trying - and I've made up my mind that I'm going to make friends with God again. I haven't spoken to him since Carol's death. Carol blamed me on what happened - and then I blamed God. (Pause) I'm praying to you all now to keep me sane - to stop me crossing the line - I want to live again - I don't want to die - not now and not like this - I want to feel - and I want to give - just like now - we're all giving - (complete silence for a moment - Kate is still sitting still and Dave walks from the darkness and stands to the side of the rocker and gently rocks Kate until she rocks herself, then she turns and puts her hand on Dave's before saying in Irish) Carol, mo chailín álainn, tá grá ag Mamaí duit. Bhí grá i gcónaí ag do mhamaí duit! (English version: "Carol - my beautiful daughter - mamma loves you - mama always loved you")

(Dave then takes her hand and walks her to her chair - pause for a few seconds and Brian goes over and sits in rocker and begins to rock right away)

BRIAN Thank you Kate for bearing your soul - when someone's as honest as you were just now - it reminds me of something I'd forgot - there is no shame in being honest - sometimes I'm less than honest - but it's to protect the memory of my son - Jamesy - as the world knew him - James to Eva and me.

Sometimes I think that people misunderstand when I defend my son - some people don't realise he was our son - my son and we loved him - we hated what he did but we loved him - if this was happening now today - I've no doubt he'd still be alive - and so would Eva - they'd both have got the help they needed - not from the system that let them down then - it's still doing the same with others - but they'd both have got support and help from the community - we've come along way from just condemning kids to trying to understanding and helping them. In the end Eva killed herself to save him.

It was the wrong thing to do - but then Eva was worn out emotionally and mentally - and I have to add - it wasn't worth it. He was my son - our son - and we loved him - he killed himself as you all know in a stolen car - six weeks after Eva committed suicide - I don't believe it was an accident either - if I wrote a book about what happened - no-one would believe it - no one would believe - that it was the truth. The truth didn't surface until they were both dead - if we'd know then what we know now Eva and James would still be here today - (shakes his head slightly) but who knows that for sure - (turns around and looks at Dave)

Dave - don't be fooled by the light-hearted tone of my voice - I speak very slow and generally people tend to think I'm happy and that nothing much bothers me - but like everything else about me - the truth is very different! (Joins his hands and twiddles with his thumbs as he continues to rock)

Scene switched to video: Eva is sitting in chair in untidy living room smoking with empty glass in hand, bottle of vodka and coke unopened sitting beside her on floor and TV is blaring.

EVA Voiceover

Please God, make him come in early tonight, if he's in a car God please please don't let him hurt anyone. If anyone's going to be hurt let it be him. God - if you make him break his legs maybe that would change him - maybe that would give me and Brian a chance to talk to him - he would have to

listen - I could hide the walking sticks - he wouldn't be able to get out - I could smash his mobile so his mates couldn't contact him - he wouldn't be able to get the dope! God - give us back our son - find a way for us - some way - any way - bring him back - please. (Phone rings for a bit but she just sits as if she can't hear it) (Referring to phone)

Can only be bad news, no one rings anymore with any good news - it has to be bad - no one calls to say they'll be round - they've missed me in the club or at bingo - or even the shops - no one's noticed I'm dead - gone - no one's missed me - two years of hell - I may as well be there - it can't be any worse than being here - in this house - with him - I hate him - I hate what he's done to us - I just can't take any more - (Covers her face with her hands as she silently cries for a moment)

Jesus - why? Why did you die for me on the cross - I wasn't worth it - I just wasn't worth it - I'm not worth it! Nothing's worth anything anymore! Not for me anyway.

Please Jesus send him home to me now - I need to know he's o.k. - I want to see him now - maybe I can change him - somehow - Jesus make him know what he's done on us - make him realise - make him change - change back - go back two years - go back ten years to when he was an altar boy - when he said his prayers every night before he got into bed - they all did - my Peter and Ester and James - they all prayed - said their prayers every night - but not we don't talk to each other never mind talking to you - God - we can't talk without shouting at each other - they want me to throw James out - get rid of him like something you've got your wear out of and that's gone out of fashion - something you're ashamed to be seen wearing in public - (Stubs out cig in ash-tray then lights another)

I can't blame them really, they're ashamed, they're afraid of us getting put out of the district because of him - I don't care - I can't face it - but I don't care anyway - my mind's a mess - it's a complete contradiction - I don't care and yet I do care - there's just a small piece of care or love or something left inside me - just a little piece - like my smile - it will disappear completely - soon - I only realised a few days ago that I haven't smiled in a long time - it's frightening to think like this - if someone stopped someone in the street and ask them when was the last time they smiled - they'd look at them as if they weren't wise - losing your smile it's a bit like a dog that's lost its bark - that's the only way I can explain it - something so natural - like sleep - you don't realise the gifts you were born with - until they're gone!

Sometimes I wish James was dead - but then - I gave him life - he didn't ask to be born - Brian wants him out - he wanted him out a long time ago - the fights here were terrifying - I wouldn't let him throw him out - throw him out to the mercy of the drug dealers - the car thieves - but then he is a car thief - and he was then - there is just these constant contradictions all through our lives.

We were once a happy family - in every way - what happened us? - I don't even know - I just wish we could go back to when James and Peter were on the altar - everything was so good - so happy then - I have to change things - make them better for my children - I have to make James realise what he's done to us - I have to make him see - I have to make him change - (Sits with her head down - the noise of the T.V. is heard blaring again and phone keeps ringing as video scene ends)

FADE OUT: BACK TO STAGE: STILL FOCUSED ON BRIAN IN ROCKER

BRIAN (takes a piece of chewing gum out of pocket opens and puts piece in his mouth and chews - still rocks) I wish I could say that I believe that there's a reason for everything - it might have made it all that bit easier to except - or in some way understand - I wish I could say that I believe in God - but I can't - I never have - I only believe in the here and now - I don't get involved in arguments about it - I don't see the point in that either - people will always believe what they want and nothing will make them change their minds - in my own experience anyhow. (Lights cig and inhales then stumps it on floor - turns his head slightly) sorry Sheila - I'll brush up tonight - just had to get my fix - I'm down to two a day now!

Sheila before I go on - this just seems to be a good moment to ask you to say that we piece you quoted me down the phone last night - the one you learnt at your English class - it's just I've been trying to remember it all day - it's got under my skin - it just took me by surprise - hearing your quote poetry - in fact at first I thought it was a piece from the bible - you know "The life and death of each of us has its influence on others" (14.7-12) Paul to the Romans - I think!

That was one of Eva's (closes his eyes) favourite readings. (lifts his hand to direct Sheila) Sorry Sheila - I'm going off on one!

SHEILA (Laughing - Violin music is slightly louder) "No man is an Island - entire of itself; Every man is a piece of the Continent - a part of the main - If a Clod be washed away by the Sea - Europe is the less - As well as if a promontories were - as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or thine own were; Any man's death diminishes me - Because I am involved in Mankind; And therefore - never send to know - for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee". (Music goes back to before and everyone takes a deep sigh) John Donne - 1572 to 1631.

BRIAN It was James who found Eva - he did a runner - he knew it was because of him - we didn't go out to look for him none of us wanted him anywhere near us - as far as we were all concerned - he was responsible - he went away for a few weeks - then on the Wednesday before he died - I was at the grave and the clay was all smoothed - you know like someone had be lying on top of it - it was him all right - there were a couple of empty bottles of cider - I cursed him - I called all the curses I could think of down on him - and I don't even believe in anything at all like that - but when you're mad you do and say things in vengeance - something takes over - (pause) and looking back - all those years that's exactly what had been happening to James. (Long pause)

Eva had already tried it twice before - no one knew - outside the 5 of us. We didn't want anybody to know - things were bad enough without people talking in the street and round at the shops - about us - (pauses)

James - had tried it after Eva - the first time - Esther moved in with Eva's Ma and Peter stayed in his room - Peter's gay - he has a partner and seems - seems stable enough these days - which takes us to the truth - to what had happened - when James and Peter were 8 and 9 James was the elder - they - well Eva wanted them to become altar boys - she encouraged them - (pauses)

I'd nothing to do with it - Eva knew how I felt about religion - so it was one subject we never talked about -we were a truly happy family then - Eva and myself - we were lovers - we always loved one

another - we were childhood sweethearts - Sonny and Cher 'I've got you babe' that was our song -  
(takes a deep breath)

There was this scout master - he was also the sacristan -(puts his hands up to the sides of his head and closes his eyes) unfortunately he's dead - (silence) James and Peter did guard of honour outside the church where he abused them - the church where he destroyed my children - where he destroyed all our lives - (silence for a moment) when Eva took her own life - committed suicide (long pause)

I call it murder that monster murdered my family - but when she died - I couldn't grieve - we'd been through so much over the years all I could think was 'she's better out of it' - I couldn't get by that sort of feeling of relief - and then I hated James - his name wasn't mentioned again until the door knocked and the police ask when was the last time I'd seen him - when they gave me the news I looked at them - I just asked if he'd killed anyone else - and he hadn't - they told me I'd need to identify his body in the morgue - I said 'no thank you - take his body, incinerate it, and flush it down the nearest toilet' - when I closed the door for some reason I ask God - who I don't believe exists to forgive me - I laughed - I cried - I slid down the wall onto the floor and banged my head again and again and again like a ball right into the wall - I wanted to punish myself - for what exactly at that moment I don't know.

Then Peter he came down and went berserk (silence) he'd suppressed everything from the first time - (silence) James couldn't - suppress it - he couldn't talk about it either - except when he was drunk - then he'd try to bring it up with Peter but Peter would tell him he was crazy that it never happened - (pause) but it did happen - and even now the night-mare still goes on - he - the monster - was Eva's brother - and to this day - all these years later - after losing Eva - James - the misery - everything - to top it all her family are in denial - they won't speak to Peter or Esther - they won't even pick up the phone now when I ring - a few months ago - Christmas - I'd a few to many - I rang each of them to tell them what they were doing to Peter and Esther - each of them in turn just put the phone down. (Slight pause)

So folks - how's that for a true story - 'This is your Life' All I feel now is guilt - guilt at what my son (pause) my two sons went through - They weren't the only two - there were more - he worked there for 20 years - what secrets are other families hiding behind their closed doors - not only the closed doors of their homes but more importantly - the closed door of their minds? (As he stands up to move over into the darkness he rocks the rocker so it will continue rocking until Tommy sits in it - in a low voice as Brian sits) promise Sheila - I'll clean up tonight!

(Tommy walks slowly over to rocker - has a packet of cigs in his hand takes one out and lights up before sitting down - he looks at rocker and says to the others)

TOMMY Look at that - it definitely does its job well - puts you in the mood even before you sit on it! Good job there's no shrink here - he'd have me locked up - (laughs sarcastically) in about 4 years' time if he thought I was bad enough! Kids are dying because they can't wait - but so what eh - that's the attitude - in my experience anyway! (Puts his hand on rocker to still it - then takes out a hankie from pocket, dusts seat before sitting on it and says in muffled tone)

No offence Brian - I'm getting rid of whatever was on this auld rocker that gave you a extra dose of that truth bug tonight - I'm not in great form for talking much (laughs) I know what you're all thinking - 'he never shuts up' - but it's been a bad week - there's been a lot of tears this week - (silence - broken by Tommy shuffling about and crossing his legs) if things hadn't gone the way they did - our Tom would have graduated this week - his friend who he wouldn't tout on - he graduated - (shakes his head) not that we blame him - we might have at first - but then Tom was caught with it in his hand - only a bit of blow - (pause) that's the way we saw it at the time - what harm was done - only a bit of blow - I use to take it myself - so did our other son Jackie - (pause) if we knew then what we know now - 'Da' - he shouted down stairs one night - he was almost seventeen - two weeks short of it - 1st June - first son - magic - (smiles) a chip of the old block - 'Da' he shouted - he just sounded like me - he shouted Da the way I'd have shouted Tom - 'Da any spare skins - ours are covered in a tub of curry - go on Da - cough up - I'd do it for you' - (pause) we were more like mates - than father and son - looking back he was too young to be my mate - I should have stayed at being his Da - anyway - I don't know if things could have ever been any different - I loved him - I wanted to shower him with every good thing and experience that life had to offer!

He was a first class student - GCSE'S 10 straight 'A's' and sports - he was a giant on the Hurley field - he was player of the year twice - and that's some achievement - he loved all sports - swimming - Gaelic - table-tennis - you name it - he could play it - he had this energy - he needed very little sleep - when he was 15 - 16 you could sense a greatness about him you know like as if he was going to make a big difference in the world - somewhere - somehow - he had presence - but it all fell apart the day he was expelled from school - he couldn't handle it - he wouldn't say who gave him the dope - even though he took responsibility for having the stuff - it was only enough for one joint - but still I suppose - the school had to do what the school had to do - but - we expected him to be punished for having it - but it was obvious that it was only for his own use - but we didn't expect him to be expelled for refusing to give the name of the boy who gave it to him - the school insisted that it was sold to him - Tom said it was given - then all the teachers he loved and admired turned on him - and he just couldn't take it.

They had to set a precedence - A summer of discontent - he already had a job in a bar - just lifting the glasses and washing them - an after school job - he enjoyed it while he was at school - then after that he got a job on the door - (Turns slightly round and says flippantly)

Everybody here already knows that we talked and tried to get Tom to put it all behind him - Dave - just in case because I've left pieces out you think we didn't try everything - the rest all know the story - we talked and talked constantly reassuring Tom about the good future that lay ahead - 'put the past where it belongs - behind you' I was saying that in my sleep - my precious sleep - I've even lost that now - (Stops rocking as he says) at that point we didn't realise that the blow was taking its toll - maybe there was other stuff as well - his brain cells were dying - he began having terrible mood swings - shouting and yelling - completely out of character - we foolishly thought it was depression - because of being expelled -we tried to get him counselling - but of course we couldn't - apparently his mental state wasn't that bad he just needed anti-depressants - Prozac - then he

became like a stranger to us - misery misery misery - I don't know why but I always thought he would harm someone else - not himself - (rocks again)

#### SCENE SWITCHES TO VIDEO:

Voiceover begins with first scene in bar - then 2nd scene at round-a-bout in car - 3rd scene down at river - 4th scene in door way of derelict mill: He is at the river when he is thinking back at how he's arrived at this stage where he wants to end his life.

#### NIGHT IN THE PUB:

(Tom is standing at doorway - young crowd are all dancing - he is dealing drugs)

#### TOM Voiceover

How did I get there - it was crazy at first - because I was expelled - they all thought I could supply - their ma's and da's gave me dirty looks in the street - they told their kids not to have anything to do with a scum bag like me - they didn't even know me - well some of them did - that hurt the most - I made a mistake - it wasn't the end of the world - but now it is for me - I should have listened to my da - now I've disgraced him - broke my ma's heart - I even used to laugh when she'd say that - that I'd broke her heart - it wasn't I didn't care - I just wasn't capable of caring - my mind was so messed up - there was nothing wrong with blow - I loved it - still do - but when it's no longer enough - when it changes your whole personality - it's so sleeked - it's like everyone ridiculing you behind your back and you're the last to know - you think everything's 'sweet' but like a gossip - it's pure poison - it destroys everything that's good inside you - it distorts and confuses and makes you paranoid - and the thing is you don't know - you think this is what happened to everyone else - everyone around you - I've put my family through hell - they'll be better off without me - I've shamed them so much!

#### FADE OUT: CUT TO KORAM RING AND CAR: NEXT NIGHT STILL IN VOICEOVER

(Four young people sitting on ring as car pulls up and does a deal)

#### FADE INTO SHOES ON TELEGRAPH LINE OVERHEAD:

Yeah - I enjoyed the cars the power - the admiration in the kids eyes - Christ forgive me -

#### FADE OUT AS CAR DRIVES AWAY: CUT TO RIVER: DAY TIME: STARING INTO RIVER WEARING SUIT AND OPEN NECKED SHIRT:

Paula I can't blame you - I've put you through hell - you'll be off men for life now - in the cold light of day - I can't believe the way I've treated you - I suppose my family will blame you - but they don't know the truth - I terrified you - I bullied and beat you - I loved you - we had something - you deserved better - no one deserved the way I treated you - please forgive me - (slight pause) you believed in guardian angels - I hope mine will deliver this message to yours - maybe then you can forgive me - I need so much forgiveness.

It might be a lot easier if there was no cease-fire - if the provies did me - then the family would have them to blame and not you Paula! I wish they'd got me that time in Newry - looking back they'd have done me a favour - it would have saved all this! (Puts his head down and cries - afterwards he wipes his eyes and lie's down looking up at the sky)

I didn't even wake up when that kid died - I knew it was one of my E's - I even remembered him - it didn't bother me - the luck of the draw Stevie said - nobody forced him to buy - (slight pause) that's how warped my mind became - I actually thought like that - the kids all want them - so what's the problem - I stuck my neck out doing them a favour.

If there's a market - you target - you push and you deal - so what - the kids are happy and I'm laughing all the way to the bank - fast cars - apartment - holidays though usually working holidays - getting the stuff over isn't easy - but there's always some tart willing do the running - if they're caught - so what - they know to keep their mouths shut!

And if you owe the big boys money and you can't deliver - you can always lie on a grass bank beside a river - and watch the clouds float by! I have nowhere to run - no one to turn to - and I don't want to run - anymore - I've been running away from myself for a long time now - one slight set back in my life - and I couldn't see past it - but that was the 'blow' - it had already set it deadly poison through my pea brain - if my da smoked it then it must be alright - that's what I thought - everyone else was doing it too - what's the difference in them and me?

I don't know - maybe it's like an alcoholic taking their first drink - I don't know - blow - 'E's' and now the ultimate - 'the snowman cometh' and I'm on melt down! Nothing is real anymore only pain - my brain's melting!

(Sits up and opens his arms as if trying to feel the wind)

CUT TO FACE AND ARMS: SPEAKS IN A POETIC TONE

Blow wind where thy feel, Stop wind when thy desire, Come, slowly wind, Cause my fire! Take me wind, Show me how, Freedom can be, Out my despairing tower. Open my flesh, Release my mind, Take me wind, I'm yours to find! (Just then a large bird flies by in the sky)

FADE OUT: FADE IN TO DOOR WAY OF DISUSED MILL - EXT: STILL LIGHT:

Mum, Da, Paula, forgive me for the way I messed up - I've no pen to write with - but I believe in angels too - guardian angel tell them all I love them. They're better off without me - the world's better off without me - (Takes a black & white family photo from his inside pocket and squeezes it in his hand and cries)

FADE OUT: CUT TO: STAGE AND TOMMY STILL ROCKING:

TOMMY Then afterwards there were different story's going about - we tried to keep most of them from Bridie - she'll never get over it - in a way she's still very much in denial - she still blames: a) the school and b) Paula, his girlfriend. Paula's been in counselling big time - she'd Tom's paranoia, his drug-dealing - his suicide - to deal with and then all the whispering - the gossip about her driving him to it - rubbish - what they were saying about her was rubbish - I know what she went through; she needed our support and didn't get it - I couldn't go behind Bridie's back - I just said nothing - but I was wrong - I should have defended the girl - but then - I couldn't go there either - I was trying to make things easier for everybody - for Bridie - for so long now I haven't been feeling - human - I feel ripped apart right down the middle - I can't go certain places in my mind; I try to keep myself 'safe' (slight pause) I keep thinking that maybe if he'd died of cancer - or in an accident - or something else - I think we might have been able to come to terms in some way with it

- but losing him the way we did - it's still unreal - I can't go there - I had a son I thought I knew every bone in his body - in the end - I lived with a stranger - I knew absolutely nothing about him (pause) but you don't hurt like this for a stranger - every night I say while I lie awake in bed - Tom - why - why - you were in trouble - but I was your dad - I loved you - look at me now - son - you've destroyed me - you've destroyed all of us!

(Puts his hands in his head and cries - music plays softly in background lights go slowly down)

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE ONE

Scene begins with everyone on stage sitting finishing cup of tea/coffee. Sheila thanks Brian for running next door to buy some milk. It's now JEAN's turn to go to rocker. Everyone leaves cups on floor and lights up cigs.

SHEILA Thanks Brian for getting the milk - this is a heavy session - we all needed the cuppa - (slight laugh) though I think some of us could do with something a bit stronger. (Looking at JEAN) JEAN do you feel up to this -

JEAN (just nods her head - she's really haggard looking) I'm up for it - why not? I mightn't look the part - but we all know what they say about judging a book!

(Sheila helps JEAN by the arm over to the rocker as she is unsteady on her feet - she sits and fixes her hair and brushes her skirt - lights go out on rest of cast and spot light is on JEAN - she turns slightly and says)

JEAN I don't want anyone to rock me - if I want rocked I can do it myself-

(She lights up a cig but never smokes it in her mouth)

I'm on a new anti-depressant and it takes a while for it to kick in - so I'm not myself yet - I had to come off the Prozac - the hallucination - I didn't know what was real and what was imaginary.

(Stares - slight pause) anyway - I don't feel any different than the last time I was here - though - you can all see - this is my first time in the hot seat! I usually just come to sit and listen - but - even that in some way must be helping me - it must - mustn't it?

But I'm still locked in a time warp - I still hate my mummy for what she done - she destroyed my life - and I will never forgive her for that - she thought she knew what was best for me - and she didn't even know me -

Mr. Barry at the hospital says I can't start recovery until I understand why she did it - why she took my son. She left me this note - well it's a letter - I couldn't read it until lately - Mr. Barry read it first then he read it to me - the cops kept it until the inquest was over - it was evidence - it proved that no one else was involved - just her.

I've been back in since the last time I was here - I tried it again - Mr. Barry got me the electric shock treatment - but he'd took me off the prozac when I was admitted - the nurses were really rotten - I was throwing up all over the place - and they just turned me on my side and left me - though they were worse the time before - other patients in for the same all say the same - the nurses just haven't time for you - it's not like years ago - I suppose the way they look at it is if you don't

want to live there's plenty they can help who do want to live - years ago they wouldn't be allowed to treat you the way they treat you now - they don't understand that inner pain anymore!

Nobody wants to know - I've tried it 3 times in the past year - the family don't come near me - they think I just want pity - they think I'm warped - that pity's all I want - (pause) I used to have the radio on first thing every morning - I'd make all their breakfasts - get them up for school for work - I minded Cleo - my Dona's - now she won't even let the child come near me - (pause)

If my mother only knew the effect of what she did - she always was cold towards me - aunt Maisey - well actually she wasn't a real aunt - but she was the only friend my mother ever had -she always said she'd no living relatives - but Maisey told me that she took the baby blues after she had me - that's why my father left her - he couldn't stand her either - so we never bonded - I didn't know that - until afterwards - there were a lot of secrets - that's why I got out at 16 and married the first man I met - if you know what I mean - he was 18 - I was pregnant with Tony - you had to get married in them days - and then you woke up with a bang and a man who resented you because he felt trapped - 4 years later and 4 kids and I woke up one morning and found that I'd become my mother - but I loved all my kids - maybe she did love me - but it never felt like I thought love was supposed to feel like - when I was a kid - 9 maybe 10 I envied all my friends - if their mums brought me in I'd watch how they were treated - kisses on the cheek - hugs - all that stuff - maybe I was unlovable! (Pause) and then this great big act of love - her love for me - this wonderful sacrifice - she commits suicide and murders my son and does it because she thinks she's doing us both a favour!

I think she was always sick and was never treated - I believe she was either a schizophrenic or was boarder-line! But she killed my precious son - she took him from me - she thought I was like her - she wanted to take 'the burden' of him from me - she thought my son was 'my burden' she was mad - insane -

(stumps cig out on floor - and sits with her head bent down)

VIDEO SCENE BEGINS WITH VERA IN GARDEN IN COUNTRY YARDS AWAY AT A GATE IS GRANDSON TONY STANDING TALKING TO A DOG. VERA IS HOLDING A NOTE PAD AND PEN.

FADE INTO: VERA AS SHE WALKS AROUND THE GARDEN

VERA Voiceover

JEAN - I'm trying to find the right words to tell you why - why it has to end this way - (slight pause) Don't think that I'm crazy - God agrees with me it's for your own good - it's better for you and it's better for Tony - he's a lonely boy that's why he always talks to himself - he's not lonely inside - his head is full of friends - good friends - I know because all my best friends are in my head as well - JEAN, I don't want you to worry - I'll be with Tony to the end - you see, it's better if we go together - he won't be afraid then - but it's a surprise - he doesn't know yet - he won't know till we arrive together - in heaven - that's where we're going.

I'll hold his hand - he can hold my hand - something you and I never did do - it wasn't your fault - it was just after you were born - I found it hard to - to - touch you - I mean (painful look on her face) to hold you - I used to see all these women with babies - they were holding them - feeding them - and it made me feel - sick - sick to think that someone could come out from someone - I'd much

preferred that you'd stayed inside me. Then it would have been just the two of us - you would not have been polluted or soiled - by the things of this world.

GOES ACROSS TO PART OF GARDEN WITH STONES AND SITS DOWN.

CONT:

Tony is my special boy - he reminds me so much of my poor brother Anthony - you didn't know I had a brother - my twin in fact - did you JEAN! He died when he was just turned 20 - he went into the woods one day and never came out - they said he took his own life - but I never believed it - he'd friends - just like Tony - he'd talk to them every day - (smiles and nods her head) More you never knew JEAN darling! - We lived in the country - during the war years - there were plenty of other children then - in the country - they had an awful lot of work to do in the fields to earn their keep - my father was killed in the first world war - mother brought us up alone - she didn't like us mixing with other children - she said we had each other and that was enough - she said we took our ways after father - he was so handsome in his picture with his uniform. We were all so happy and Anthony started to socialise in the village - people said such unkind things about him - just like they're saying about Tony now - so anyway mother kept us in the house - and of course we had this big gigantic garden - a field really - anything we needed mother got for us - but Anthony still wanted more - he still wanted to socialise in the village - he went out one night without mother knowing - and then it was 4 days later before they found his body - I hoped he wasn't frightened - if I'd been there I could have held his hand - but that was a long time ago - and now Tony - he's so like Anthony - dark and handsome - I don't want Tony to be afraid - God's expecting us! - don't be angry with him JEAN - the time's right for him to go - he doesn't know it yet that why he hasn't told you - but it would happen sooner or later - I got him to stop taking those dreadful tablet the hospital makes him take - he doesn't need them - they tried to make me take tablets after you were born - they kept me in until you were over one - and then your father left - he left because of Anthony- he said I should have told him about Anthony - he tried to say I had 'problems' he couldn't handle it - we never divorced - not then - they send me a letter saying our marriage was annulled - there were things your father didn't know about me when we got married - they tried to say I was mad (laughs) I can't remember much of what happened next - but your aunt Maisie - she use to come a lot to see me - she would visit you in the 'home' she brought me pictures of you - she was so good - she understood about Antony - she said her father was like Anthony - so she understood - she was the only one - ever- but then when I came home it all felt a bit strange - we - you and I - we had to get to know one another - you were still so little - you cried a lot -but we got through it didn't we? Everything was fine - you left home and married young - younger than I suppose you should have been - but then who was I to tell you not to - Catherine and Sharon and Tine they're all fine girls - you did a good job there - but it's only Tony I worry about - I don't want him to get hurt - hurt by people who don't understand -

FADE OUT:

FADE TO: TONY WITH DOG HE'S HOLDING HIM AND PETTING HIS COAT:

FADE OUT:

FADE INTO VERA'S FACE AS SHE WATCHED TONY:

CONT:

Tony's never been on a boat before - we'll have such fun - on the same boat - in more ways than one - we'll be crossing that 'sea of heartbreak' as the song says - please understand why I'm doing this JEAN - really it's not just for Tony but it's for you and the girls - but for you especially - don't let anyone tell you otherwise!

CLOSE UP:

(SMILES AND STARES OVER AT TONY HE SMILES BACK)

CONT:

We go first thing on Friday so I'll write my intentions down now JEAN - and I'll post the letter as soon as we reach Holyhead

FADE INTO SURROUNDING FIELDS:

SCENE RETURNS BACK TO STAGE AND JEAN:

JEAN How did my mother slip through the net all her life - even after she had me she was in a mental hospital - how was she allowed to take a baby to look after - she wasn't capable of taking care of herself - the health visitors - they all must have known - but Dr Barry thinks she understood she had a serious problem mentally - and she was able to disguise it well - people just thought she was a bit eccentric - there is a proper name for what she had - it's residual schizophrenia - she had a split mind - it looked to the world like a whole mind - but then when Tony was diagnosed as having schizophrenia they couldn't put a tag on the exact type he suffered from but for talk sake they said it was undifferentiated schizophrenia - that means it doesn't neatly fit into any of the 5 main types - (pause) I never told my mother about it - we didn't talk much - about anything - she'd disappear for months and then re-appear - that's the way it was between us - I never sought her out - even when I needed help - (pause) Tony's condition was treatable - he was doing fine - but she couldn't see or understand that - she decided to play God and take my son - Tony was a twin - she didn't even know that - I never told her - I lost the other twin early on - I wish I'd known that she was a twin - I wish I'd known her - somehow - somewhere - only not as my mother.

VERA (Tries to get up from rocker but finds it difficult and calls out to Sheila)

For God's sake Sheila get me out of this dammed rocking chair - it knows too much about everybody!

(Sheila rushes over and helps JEAN back into the darkness there is a silence for a moment - music is heard playing slightly louder then Dave speaks up)

DAVE Well if no one else minds can I go now - oh sorry Sheila - maybe you want to go

SHEILA No Dave I'm glad you're taking the initiative - it goes without saying - we all take as much time as it takes - should it take a year before you feel able - we 'll all support you - and if you want to talk for an hour now we'll all listen -

DAVE You're a very kind lady Sheila - I mean all of you are kind people - just listening - makes me feel so - so - what I mean is I think you are all very courageous - people - special - I know that sounds condescending - you heard me state that I'm a psychiatric nurse but that means nothing when it's your own grief - you can't advise yourself - you can't talk into a tape recorder and then

play it back to hear what your saying - just to know that someone's listening and then tell yourself what to do - even without speaking - to be with other people - especially those in the same kind of pain you're in yourself - nothing can substitute for the human connection - (slight pause)

I came here tonight because I saw your advert in the paper - and the truth is I had nowhere else to go - (takes a deep sigh) in the immediate aftermath of my partners suicide - there was no one - no group to turn to - I'm in desperation I don't think I can go on - I need desperately to talk about Billy - I rang my local gay rights - they told me to call or they'd send someone out to talk it through - but - because our relationship was (stumbles over the word) 'gay' it was no different than any straight relationship - or any relationship - I don't know maybe some of you are thinking that maybe it would be better for me to go to a (puts two fingers up in gesture of inverted commas) 'gay' support group - but I don't think so - and in any case - believe it or not - there are none - fact - for gay men or women - and women especially - it's thought 1 in every 5 females who end their own life is related to their sexual orientation -

SHEILA Dave that sounds a bit too much to take in - but statistics aren't what we're about here - we're a support group not a strategy group - that's entirely different from us -

DAVE (Shaking his head from side to side) There I'm of again - sorry - I hope you understand and I'm sure you do I'm nervous - I'm coming off with these things that I know about - but - talking about my feelings to strangers - well - you all know what I mean - look - I'm so nervous I forgot to rock -

(Puts his hands over his mouth and nose then takes a few deep breaths and gets into a rhyme of rocking - a few gulps and he rubs his legs and starts again)

O.K. Bill - Billy - his family didn't bother with him because he was gay - right - then we met at university - and fell in love - not straight away - pardon the pun - but love took us both by surprise - I was never in a relationship before neither was Bill - he knew he was gay the night he was told not to come back to his local youth club - you know everyone seemed to know before Billy - which isn't surprising - if you knew Billy - My boy Bill - he loved me to say that - I suppose all lovers have little endearments that mean a lot - (puts his head down) Bill was very self-conscious - he had a bad stutter at times - especially when he was nervous! But that didn't detract from his beauty he was so handsome - perfect teeth - piercing blue eyes - (looks up as though he's wondering what to say next) But some people around him tried to destroy that beauty - they tried to belittle it - I could take the cuts; the jokes spoken just that bit louder when we were in ear shot - it was enough for me to have him - but I just mustn't have been enough for him - he was insecure - he needed to feel loved especial by his family - he needed more than anything to feel accepted - to belong - I over and over again reasoned out with him that he was loved - he was accepted and that he did belong - but the way Bill saw it - (pause) he couldn't accept being 'Gay' that's the truth of it - he didn't want to be gay - it wasn't the gay community that he wanted to be accepted by - it was the heterosexual community he longed to be accepted by - it wasn't our mates down at the local he wanted to feel part of - it was his family - though he never said a word against them - and I wouldn't - he needed their approval - for us - and as it turned out - neither in life nor in death would they give it - (puts his head down and joins his hands) they got his body - I had no rights whatsoever - and they got their solicitor to write to me informing me that I would not be welcome at the funeral - they had a

family service in their home and then the final blow was they had his body cremated - they got their son back - I've lost him forever - my only way of getting him back is to join him - I feel mixed up - confused - hurt - vengeful - (silence - closes his eyes and speaks with them closed) I'm here - I think - to find out what people do - that sounds really stupid - but it's a question I have to ask - what are real people supposed to do when the heart has been ripped out of them - I deal with broken minds - broken people - broken hearts everyday - I studied the mind - human nature - all sorts of mental illnesses and yet I haven't read a book that can ease this brokenness that Bill's suicide has brought me! I'm alone - there is no tablet to fix me - to make me better - (pause - opens his eyes) there now I'm off on my pain - what about Bill's - what was it that he felt he had to face alone - he knew he had me - we faced things together - we were a couple 5 years - some marriages don't last that long - what Bill - why - why - why Bill

(STARTS TO ROCK FASTER)

SCENE GOES TO VIDEO:

FADE INTO: INTER OF CHURCH

IS HOLDING A PICTURE OF FAMILY & PICTURE OF DAVE

BILL IS KNEELING: IS WORRIED LOOKING SITS UP BEFORE VOICEOVER BEGINS

BILL Voiceover

Mum dad I'm sorry for all of this - I'm sorry I was ever born then none of this mess would be happening - mess - you feel it's a mess and so I feel it's a mess not because it is a mess but because I need to feel your approval and I'm apart of you both - to be cut off from you like this is devastating I can't help the way I am. It's the way I was made. You both equally loved me when I was a child - though in retrospect - you both knew there was something not right - something different about me - I can't remember anything specific that either of you ever said but I do remember the way you both used to watch me playing with other boys - I used to feel something then - I don't know what - but I knew you were thinking something but I just didn't know what - I used to get these confusing emotional feelings - like the time they ask me to leave the youth club - I still don't know what that was about - but I knew you did - maybe I sounded too feminine I never told you that some of the other boys used to make fun of the way I talked - I'd laugh with them but it really hurt - I didn't want to tell you in case it hurt you - silly really - wasn't it - I mean not telling you - I suppose I was afraid of either of you going round - then none of them might have let me play in any of their games - but it all doesn't matter now - (pause) you both matter more than anything in my life - and Dave - he so strong and he's sure about who he is - he accepts the way he is and he's proud of it -

(puts his head down) but I can't be - I'm not proud of who I am - I can't accept - the way I am -

(raises his head up) I can't tell Dave this - it would hurt him too much - (pause) Mum - some of my colleagues at work can't stand me - that hurts - I can't explain that to Dave - because when they laugh at me behind my back or say things about me - it's like you're being hurt - even though you don't even know - I'm not even sure if the way they treat me - though it's discreetly - is because I'm gay or if it's because I'm me - I just don't know which it is - but that statement says more about me than it does about 'them' Mum - I did try to get help - I've been feeling really bad now for about a year or so - I was waiting on your reply to my letter - I kept up hope that you would write or call - email - or ring - but you didn't - I went deeper into despair - then about 9 months ago -

(closes his eyes and fiddles with his hands - opens his eyes after a few seconds)

I tried to end it all - obviously I survived - but - it was the worst moment of my life when I woke up - when I realised that I was still alive - you know and I suppose it's true what people say - it is a selfish act - but at that moment I really believed that the world would be a better place without me - (laughs as he says) My own false sense of self-importance - I felt I had disgraced you and dad - let you both down - I really felt I was no good - I'd crossed the line - the thin line where the sense of despair embraced my false perception of my reality and it just swallowed me up - I went willingly - it was easier to go than to stay! I begged Dave not to let you know - I blackmailed him by saying I'd do it again if he told you - (pause)

But just before - I did try to get help - I rang a help line - and two very unfortunate things happened - the story of my life - one I suppose was bad timing - it was lunch hour I was in work - no one else was around and the ward was quiet - so I took the chance and rang them - just my luck - an elderly lady answered the phone - maybe she was standing in for someone who was away for their lunch - but - and it was a big but - she was hard at hearing - can you believe it - she kept asking me to speak louder - which of course I couldn't - after a few minutes of pouring my heart out to this woman who couldn't hear me - though at that moment it didn't matter whether she could hear or not - someone came over to the office and I said 'loudly' I'm sorry I have to go now - and just as I was about to put the phone down I heard someone say my name - someone was on the other extension in the staff room and had been listening in - can you imagine how that felt? I had to - like always - put my emotions on hold - later that day I came here - to be alone - I laughed - and cried at myself - I scorned myself - I'm like 'a comedy of errors' that fits my description perfectly! But worse was to come mum - I'm telling you all this because I know you can't hear - I know I'm crazy - but 5 months ago I was wrongfully accused of - of - touching a patient inappropriately - the police were involved - and the whole thing was a nightmare - I was cleared - but mum - I needed you - and dad - and like the youth club - I didn't want you to know - I didn't want to hurt or disgrace you - I was cleared - there were no charges - but - I've been found guilty - by people who wanted to find me guilty - Dave never doubted me for a moment - he's been through hell with me - but he's a survivor - I hope you and dad are kind to Dave - he'll want you to be there at his side - he'll arrange something very simple - with no flowers - he's practical - and suffers from hay-fever (smiles) I'm not leaving any notes - it would only lead to recriminations - and complicate things between you dad and Dave. Bye mum bye dad - I love you.

FADE OUT:

BACK TO STAGE WHERE DAVE IS FIDGETING ABOUT ON ROCKER - STILL ROCKING.

DAVE Where do I go from here? He didn't even leave me a note - a letter - I think I deserved that much - I've nothing now - nothing! I don't even have a place to go to talk to him - I've even bought new bed clothes - I haven't washed the one's he slept on the night before - that's really all I have of him - his sweat - two loose hairs on his pillow - nothing else - and this pain - this awful pain - this unbearable ache - and the unanswerable question 'WHY' Bill 'WHY'

(TURNS SLIGHTLY ROUND AND SAYS TO THE OTHERS)

Kate, Tommy, Brian, JEAN and you Sheila - you must have asked WHY a million times - maybe sometimes we think we know - but can we ever be certain? Ever! (Pause) Thank-you - for listening. (GETS UP AND SLOWLY WALKS OVER TO DARKNESS AND SITS DOWN HE IS HEARD SAYING)

The only difference in any one of us here at this moment - is - 'I'm the only one who doesn't smoke (slight pause) YET!

(IN BACKGROUND SHEILA IS HEARD SAYING)

SHEILA Come on give us a big hug son!

JEAN You're a brave man - Dave - all the best

SCENE BEGINS AS SHEILA WALKS OVER TO ROCKER VERY CONFIDENTLY HOLDING SCARF AROUND HER SHOULDERS:

(Taking the scarf off she carefully puts it around the back of the rocker then sits down she makes sure the scarf stays in place and rocks steadily)

SHEILA Right I'm ready now - just to touch on what Dave said a moment ago - WHY - yeah - we all ask WHY - but really none of us can with certainty answer that - at the conference at the weekend a man in the group I was in said something that stuck in my mind - he said - we ask ourselves WHY - but those who do take their own lives are really saying 'WHY NOT' in other words what alternative do we offer - young and old - we all get depressed at some time in our lives - every suicide is different - we here all know that - but at the conference two things that kept coming up was 1. sexual abuse and 2. drugs & drink.

We still don't know the real suicide statistics no more than we know the REAL causes - but we do know out there there's an epidemic of suicide - that's why we're all here - I just thought I'd tell you that before I talk about Sharon - It's her birthday today. She would have been 24 and guess what I done - you'll all say I'm crazy - but you know about this thing I have about butterflies - well for your benefit Dave - I'll explain - out my back garden I have a butterfly tree - that is - it's a tree that I've dedicated to Sharon and I have all these butterflies tied or stuck on some even pined on - Sharon was like a beautiful butterfly - anyway - more about how my garden's coming on later - so - for the last few days I've been searching everywhere for butterflies - I'd seen some last week with the good weather in - so I managed to catch a lovely white one and got it in a jam jar with holes pierced on the lip - I put some flower heads in and brought it down today to her grave - I released the butterfly very gently - and it didn't fly away immediately - it fluttered about a bit - I suppose it was disorientated - then it took off and sat for a second or two on top of her head-stone - and I told my baby that was her birthday present! Dave - I'm not mad and that's not silly to me! (smiles)

(Pulls the scarf from the rocker and puts it round her shoulders and from time to time rubs her chin on it when she's not speaking)

Like everybody else here for the first year - after Sharon died - I relived every day - every date - I'd lie in bed and think what she'd be doing that last year - though strangely I never once thought or wondered what she'd be doing at that present time if she hadn't died - I was bad for that whole year

- I felt I had to relive what she'd been put through - all the pain my baby endured - the brutal beatings –

(STARES STRAIGHT INTO AUDIENCE)

I beat myself up every single day - I went to counselling - but at that point I wasn't ready - you need to wait until you're ready - I felt counselling was useless - but I thank God - as you can all see now - I was wrong - none of my children have gone yet to be counselled - but I know in time they'll need it - eventually when I reluctantly went to the counsellor - it was either that or the doctor was going to get me sectioned - I was suicidal - I didn't talk to my girls and it was my decision - at that time - I didn't want to hurt them anymore than they were hurting - maybe they even knew more about the things that had happened Sharon than I did - I don't know - I don't know exactly what they knew - and they don't know exactly what I know -

(TAKES A DEEP SIGH)

Although Sharon's father - my husband and father of all my children - left us - I'll not go into that - only because he is the father of my children - Sharon loved him - she needed him to love her back - but - that's another story - I can only say our marriage was a very violent one - (pause - puts her head down) so this beautiful summer's evening this fella walked up my path and knocked the front door - and believe it or not I shuttered - I got this real foreboding about him - and I wasn't wrong - Sharon had just met him the night before - when she brought him in and introduced him to me - we made eye-contact - and I knew - I knew then that he was 'evil' I can't put it any other way - and I believe he knew that I could see through him - and some of you here know who I'm speaking about - and I don't care - he's the reason my child's dead - I knew there was something rotten about him - at that first meeting - he destroyed everything he touched - he destroyed my daughter - I can still hear the doctor say as she lay in the hospital bed - her lovely face unrecognizable - her jaws wired up - she couldn't see her eyes were swollen so much - the drip in her arm - I didn't weep because of the miscarriage - no - I wept for my daughter - and it was like a dream when that doctor said - his exact words are engraved in my soul - he held Sharon's hand and said very softly like a father – "Sharon - I usually identify young girls like you in the morgue - I'm pleading with you now - get out of that relationship - because - believe me - that is where it will end - in the morgue" She squeezed his hand - I stood there watching as if I was just a bystander who stumbled across this scene - it wasn't real - but then it was real - that was my daughter - a chill still runs down my spine when I think of that - then I got her away for months across to my sister in England - he was in another relationship and we thought it was safe for Sharon to come home - we all missed her so much - he came round to my house as soon as he heard she was back - he tried to get her to go back with him - when she refused he threatened to kill me and all my girls - Sharon went into hiding and into deep depression! She had begun self-harming -when she was with him before - that was another thing I was spared - though I wish to God I had known -

(PUTS HER HANDS ON SCARF AND FEELS IT AS IF TO CARESS IT)

SCENE MOVES TO VIDEO:

FADE INTO SHARRON SITTING ON BED WITH BACK TO THE WALL

SHE'S LISTENING TO A PORTABLE C.D. PLAYER THEN TAKES HEAD PHONES OFF

MUSIC IS PLAYING LOUD MASSENET'S MEDITATION FOR A MOMENT OR TWO THEN STOPS COMPLETELY AND INTO VOICEOVER

SHARON He means it he means he means it - he's going to kill all my family - I've did this I brought him into my family - there's only one way out - I have to save my mum - my sisters - I can't let him do this he will I know he will -

(covers her eyes as music plays loudly - then it stops abruptly)

CLOSE UP OF FACE:

CONT:

I wish I was a child again - I wish we could all go back and start over - you always told me to trust my instincts - I knew but - I thought I loved him - in my heart I knew he was no good - but I loved him - I wanted him to love me - the more I tried to get him to love me the more wicked he became - thank God mum you never knew the half of it - I would be ashamed if anyone knew - the way he treated me -

Male voiceover is shouting and Sharon puts her hands up to defend herself

MALE Stupid how stupid are you - just like your ma and the rest of them -

(Screaming)

I'm going to kill them all - burn them in hell!

Banging and screaming as Sharon is being beaten:

SCREAMING FADES:

FADE BACK TO SHARON

SHARON Everything's tidied - I've arranged everything the way I want it - I'm not leaving you a note or any dirty washing mum - we don't need a note - I know you - you'll work it out - I'm not very good at putting pen to paper anyway - not like you - all your stories about granny and the Murph - I wish I was more like you - strong - so strong - you've endured so much mum and I don't want you to worry any more - I wish my life had been like a story you'd written - then you could have made it have a happy ending! It's almost time for me to go - please forgive me

MOVES OF THE BED AND KNEELS ON THE FLOOR, BLESSES HERSELF AND PRAYS.

FADES OUT: SCENE BACK TO STAGE AND SHEILA:

SHEILA When the phone rang - I got the strangest feeling - I knew there was something wrong - but what happened next I don't want to share just now -

(TAKES A VERY DEEP BREATH)

But back to the counselling - as I said I was reluctant to try it a second time - but it was Dobson's choice - and then after a few times well 6 or 7 I actually found that I was getting ready to go and I was looking forward to talking to Alice - that was my counsellors name - it was hard at first but when the penny dropped and I found that I could tell Alice anything about the way I was feeling - it really helped - I've already said that there were things that I couldn't say to my other girls because I didn't want to frighten or upset them - so talking to Alice became a kind of release valve - if I hadn't had her I know it would be a different story today - but again - I went or was forced to go at the right time - counselling isn't for everyone - but I recommend to everyone. We all need someone

to share our darkest moments with - in a confidential environment. It saved me from going over the edge - (slight pause) so the oddest thing happened - after the counselling had finished - I was standing in my kitchen and was staring out to my back garden and suddenly I saw it - I actually saw my garden for what it was - a massive big dump. I thought for a while and looked again and saw it this time for what it could be. That garden represented me. And by God - from that instant I changed the whole landscape - I've dug parts of the garden with my bare hands - with spoons with forks - it's been transformed - I tend to its needs everyday - my soul's in that garden - and Sharon's tree, that's the most precious living thing in it. Birds take shelter in it and sing their love songs from it; it shades me when the sun's too hot as I sit and read or just think.

With my bare hands I've dug all the badness out of the clay - I've nourished the soil and from it springs beautiful living flowers and plants - it a place now where I feel close to Sharon - my other children and my grandchildren - at last I feel life slowly coming back to me - I feel alive - I also feel sad and depressed and I'm at the stage now where despair is a place I dare not go - I'm afraid in case I can't get out - for some it's a place of no return - my Sharon crossed over the line - she really believed she was saving my life - her sisters lives from that monster - she's crossed over - the reality of what she did - didn't give us life - it gave us a death sentence - though she couldn't have known that - her thinking was confused - she couldn't think straight- she began to die the first day she met that monster. And as Dave said the only difference in any of us here is that he's the only one who doesn't smoke - yet!

(Sheila rocks for a few moments, stands up and leaves the scarf on the rocker and rocks it before she walks of - lights out - then lights on.

END

ROSENNA'S DAUGHTERS

CAST

CHARACTER SPIRIT NAME

ANGEL (Male/Female) ARCHIE

ROSENNA (Mother) MACADONA

Daughters:

CASSIE BOAH

SARAH WOHANNA

MARY-JANE YESALETTA

GRACE (Black skinned) UMGOOSHALUA

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

THERE ARE 3 SINGLE SEATS (ALL GREY) SCATTERED AND FACING 1 SINGLE GREY SEAT WHERE ROSENNA SITS.

Scene: A waiting room somewhere in the sphere of heaven. LIGHT shining on door. Door opens.

Enter: ANGEL walks to podium and reads name out loud.

ANGEL: ROSENNA O NEILL.....(then to herself) I've known ROSENNA since before she was born.... this should be interesting.

ROSENNA SHYLY ENTERS LOOKING AROUND ROOM

ANGEL: MACADONA, would you like to sit just here.

ROSENNA: MACADONA?

(she looks around to see if anyone else is in the room)

CONTINUE:

Who's MACADONA? I'm not called MACADONA, my name's ROSENNA!

ANGEL: (smiling) You were always MACADONA and when you leave this room you still will be MACADONA.

ROSENNA: I don't understand, what is this all about, where am I? Where have I been? I thought I died (she looks waiting for him to answer) Are you the devil?

ANGEL: I'm your guardian ANGEL, I've been watching out for you since you were born! I know this is strange for you, I can't say where you've been because it's not up to me, I'm just the messenger.

ROSENNA: Why can't I remember where I've been? Are you sure you've got the right person mister.....you know I never heard anyone call me MACADONA .....before now!

ANGEL: ROSENNA (moving quietly to face her) ROSENNA this is what we call THE FAMILY ROOM. It's a very difficult place to come out from and one sure thing is that no one comes out the same as they were when they entered! You're here not to be condemned but to face up to things that were never put right while you were alive, and as you're about to experience, everyone gets a fair chance and everyone will have their say.

After this room you'll remember everything you need to remember and you'll let go of everything you need to let go off. That's a promise I've been in this room before with lots of .....

MOTIONS WITH HIS/HER HANDS

CONTINUE:

of.....souled people

ROSENNA: You sure don't seem too sure what you .....or who you.....were in this room with before! Souled people - never heard the likes of it in my life!

ANGEL: But MACADONA you're not in your life - that's gone - completely - now you're as you were - before you had a life.

ROSENNA: Talk sense mister and don't call me that name again and in case you hadn't noticed

SHE OPENS HER MOUTH WIDE AND TRIES TO BREATHE OUT

CONTINUE

How can I not breathe? I seem to be alive and well.....my memory doesn't seem to be workin' either!.....anyway what's your name?

ANGEL: (SMILING) You can call me ARCHIE. I'm actually an arch ANGEL. But that's fine, it's ROSENNA then, if it makes you feel at ease, after all it's my job to get you through this!

ROSENNA: Whatever you say mister! But tell me, where have I been - what year is it - where am I now and why's everything here grey? Grey walls, grey floor, grey seats, what's all this grey about?

ANGEL: For the duration of what's about to happen I can tell you where you are but I can't tell you where you've been. The year in your time is two thousand and three and the grey translates into 'the grey area' as we call it! That just means when a souled being is neither in one place or the other! You're in-between..destinations..realms..eternities.

ROSENNA: Two thousand and three, what's two thousand? I don't understand!

ANGEL: Two thousand and three is the earth year.....it's time itself - a measurement of each human being's personal journey to the end of their life - their given time .....their time allocated..... the count began from the day of the world's redemption.

ROSENNA SITS DOWN ON CHAIR

ROSENNA: When I was a wee girl, about 5 years old, my daddy told me stories about up in the sky, he called it the outer space.....he said there was a man in the moon and some day people would go to the moon, 'When' I would ask him, 'in the year 1999' he'd answer or maybe the 12th of never he'd joke, but I believed him, I loved my daddy so much - I used to believe in daddy Christmas until my daddy died - mammy said he went to heaven - and then I never believed in anything again .....ever!

ANGEL: You did believe ROSENNA - you just can't remember!

ROSENNA: No.....I didn't believe a thing after daddy went - I couldn't believe a word she said!

ANGEL: Who said.....ROSENNA

ROSENNA: Mammy.....she told me all these lies about daddy being happy.....about God wanting him and him being happy up there with God.....how could he have been happy without us.....she had to pawn everything.....once when-

ANGEL: (Cuts in sharply) ROSENNA what would you say if I told you that you can see your mammy and daddy again?

ROSENNA: A bit late.....I needed them a long time ago and they weren't there.....I hope he doesn't show up.....that would be a good'en!

ANGEL: Who and what would be a (coughs) good'en, ROSENNA?

ROSENNA: Him (spells word) h-i-m

ANGEL: Who's him?

ROSENNA: The drunken sailor - the kids in our street used to sing it when he'd come staggering down from Brown's with his two bottles of porter, one for him that he'd always drink with his supper..... she'd put it on the table when she'd hear him from Leeson street fighting with

the dogs..... and the other bottle would be for her.....(takes deep breath) for in the bed room.

ANGEL MOVES SLOWLY ACROSS TO BEHIND ROSENNA'S SEAT AND SINGS INTO HER EAR SOFTLY EVOKING MEMORIES FROM THE PAST:

ANGEL: What shall we do with the drunken sailor what shall we do with the drunken sailor what shall we do with the drunken sailor early in the morning. Put him on the deck and toss him over put him on the deck and toss him over put him on the deck and toss him over, early in the morning. I - I and up he rises I - I and up he rises I - I and up he rises early in the morning.

ROSENNA: I used to pray - I still prayed at that age - that some-one would take him and tie him up and throw him over the side of the ship that he used to go away on, so he'd

CONTINUE:

never come back and we'd never have to see him again, we'd be happy again and maybe God would send daddy back down home to us where he belonged.

ANGEL: ROSENNA, it wasn't easy for your mammy when your daddy was called to be with God.

ROSENNA: Don't talk like that, my daddy didn't wasn't called anywhere or to anyone, all he wanted was us. It was an accident, his sleeve caught in the machine in the mill and his arm got cut clean off and he bled to death; (softly) no one called him, (softer still) it was an accident!

ANGEL: ROSENNA

ROSENNA: What (sharply)

ANGEL: You have a visitor.

ROSENNA: Where am I?.....tell me now.....Where is this place?.....Why can't I go home?

ANGEL: (As door opens) ROSENNA .....this is your home!

ROSENNA'S DAUGHTER SARAH WALKS IN ACKNOWLEDGES ANGEL. HE DIRECTS HER TO SEAT FACING ROSENNA THEY BOTH STARE AT EACH OTHER. SARAH KNOWS WHO ROSENNA IS BUT ROSENNA DOESN'T RECOGNISE SARAH AT FIRST. SARAH'S HEAVEN NAME IS WO-HANNA.

ANGEL: It's WOHANNA!

SARAH: It's me ma - our SARAH -

ROSENNA: Our SARAH our lovely SARAH who I loved with all my heart -

ANGEL: SINGS:

MY TEARS HAVE WASHED I LOVE YOU FROM THE BLACKBOARD  
OF MY HEART IT'S TOO LATE TO CLEAN THE SLATE AND MAKE ANOTHER  
START I'M SATISFIED THE WAY THEY ARE ALTHOUGH WE'RE FAR APART MY TEARS  
HAVE WASHED I LOVE YOU FROM THE BLACKBOARD OF MY HEAR- ETC.

ROSENNA: Remember our song baby? You'd sit on my knee and I'd pet your head and sing it to you, even when you were too big to sit on your mammy's knee. (Jokingly) Where do they get these names from? WOHANNA - who ever heard the likes of it –

SARAH: In here earth names are a tool from the past ma - just for now in all this greyness I'll use those names that you're familiar with until you join us - you know ma - language is also something we don't need beyond that door!

ROSENNA: Forget all that for now our SARAH - my baby - just tell me how you've been - just for a moment - my love for you didn't die - I still feel it so strong - (moves her hands out in front of her body - ) don't you feel the same - baby? Tell me what happened after I died - how did things go? - (dramatically) did you miss me?

SARAH: Well - how much do you know ma? - (waits for reply) when a mother goes early she's allowed to watch over those she loved - she can't change anything but she can pray - I've often wondered where you were - and I even prayed for you that you weren't too far away - and that eventually I could watch you enter into His presence! So tell me ma - what all do you know - I mean - do you know what happened?

ROSENNA: I don't know anything - I have no recollection of where I've been - since I died that is - I knew I had died - I felt it happen I felt - I felt my spirit - I think that's what it was - I felt it leave me - go out of my body and there were all these small men all wearing grey suits - different shades of grey and they were all very small men and I couldn't make out any of their faces - there was like a mist covering just their faces - and I could hear myself saying 'who are you - what do you want with me' and I thought I was shouting for them to leave me alone - but I think I must have gone with

CONTINUE:

them - and that's all I know - until ARCHIE there opened a door and I followed him - I still don't understand!

SARAH: Ma don't worry! - you're here - you've been saved –

ROSENNA: Saved from what? Saved from who? Come over here beside me and put your head on my lap and let me stroke your beautiful face like I used to; I haven't touched anyone in a life time baby, help me feel alive.....please. (meekly) I'm afraid here - but I don't know what it is I'm afraid of!

SARAH MOVES OVER TO ROSENNA AND SITS ON THE FLOOR WITH HER HEAD ON ROSENNA'S LAP - ROSENNA STROKES HER GENTLY

SARAH: Ma there's no such thing as being afraid here - fear is a thing of the past - I can't explain it to you but when you go beyond that door (pointing to door) and you're in His presence - everything makes sense and there is nothing more - we don't measure things by earth standards - and we understand His greatness - it's beyond your wildest dreams -trust me ma - trust me!

ROSENNA: Yes I will I trust you baby - I always did - no matter what anyone said about you I believed you - isn't that so?

SARAH LIFTS HER HEAD AND THEY BOTH LOOK INTO ONE ANOTHERS EYES FOR A BRIEF MOMENT - THEN SARAH RETURNS TO LAP

SARAH: Yes - I know - (pause) there was something you didn't know ma - and that's why I'm here - to try and put it right - (stands up) after you died I tried to put thing right with CASSIE - our CASSIE - you never called her our - not once- but that's between you and CASSIE - your CASSIE - (smiling) His CASSIE

ROSENNA: Where is she? Is she in there with you? What about MARY-JANE? I don't even need to ask about her, she'd be with all the saints, bet she's there openin and closin the gates with St Peter!

SARAH: You'll find out soon enough ma. (Sombrely) Ma do you remember when Denis left CASSIE?

ROSENNA: Yes - who could blame him - CASSIE was always childish - always wanting attention - she was an attention seeker - a bit like your da's sister CASSIE - I never liked her either - (stumbles on the word either) I don't mean I didn't like your sister CASSIE - she was my daughter after all - I just meant - oh that was a slip of the tongue! - I loved you all SARAH -you know I did –

SARAH: Yes - I'm sure you did ma - deep down!

ROSENNA: You don't sound too sure - anyway - I know my baby so well - and you've got something you want to tell your auld ma - isn't that right? Maybe I can still take care of you up here - would you like that?

SARAH STANDS UP FACING AUDIENCE AND PREPARES TO CONFESS

SARAH: You're not getting this ma - I've been waiting for you to be ready to come here - because I have something to say - to tell you - I've already put things right with CASSIE - before I died I told her the truth and she forgave me - our CASSIE forgave me - she forgave me for treating her the same way you did - you took everything from her and I copied you - I thought it was smart - and to keep your love I did the things I saw you do - to CASSIE - I took everything from her - you drove her friends away - and I took them away - and then cast them aside - it was always a game - what ever CASSIE had I wanted and then she got Denis - and for the first time in her life she seemed happy - and then -I - it was me - I took him away –

ROSENNA: How did you, sure he left, he walked out on her - like everyone else!

SARAH: No - not true - not true - and I did it deliberately - I went round anytime I knew he'd be alone in the house - and I lured him away from her - and I didn't even enjoy it - it started that time you sent me round with the soup when he was sick in bed and CASSIE was working in the mill - remember - (turns and stares briefly at ROSENNA) at first he pushed me away - so I knew then I had to have him - but he was just a man - typical - I knew he didn't love me - but I wanted him to - I wanted him to love me and not CASSIE - ma it was like you put me up to it - you knew he was in

bed and CASSIE was at work - tell me that wasn't deliberate - go on tell me! I don't know - I'm sorry ma if I've judged you wrong - however I judged you in the past doesn't matter because only the truth matters here - the real truth, I mean. You can't leave here until you honour the truth..... by telling it.

ROSENNA: How could any mother do that to her own daughter! How could you ever think that I would do that to your sister - (thoughtfully) how did it end - did she find out - I mean before you put it right with her?

SARAH: She walked in on us - in her bedroom - there was murder - she didn't touch me but she broke the mirror on the dressing table and threw all the bed clothes out the back window, he tried to reason with her, he told her it was me who led him on but she didn't listen, he left that night and got a lift with the paper van all the way to Dublin. That's why she went to Dublin that time - to look for him and take him back - but he wasn't there he'd already joined the Free State army - (Long pause) he did come back - when he knew he was dying - and our CASSIE nursed him and buried him - she never let me in to see him - not even when she waked him - she never let me cross her door - ever again! He came back just after you died - he died in '63 - the year after you ma! In fact he died at exactly the same time as President KENNEDY!

ROSENNA: Well now wasn't that something to be proud off - dying the same time as President KENNEDY. I wonder did they meet on their way up together?

SARAH: Only you could see things in that way ma - you don't understand that in here there are no favourites - everyone's the same - everyone - there are no exceptions - titles don't mean a thing here - and by the way did you know that you died the same day as MARILYN MONROE? Did you see her by any chance?

ROSENNA: Now there's a surprise! Me and MARILYN at the same time. Ohooooo.

SARAH: Maybe if you'd waited a few months you could have died the same day as ELEANOR ROOSEVELT!

ROSENNA: Why all these Americans? You're easily impressed SARAH. What's wrong with our own people?

SARAH: Ma, you always took a great interest in America - you seemed obsessed about it - you read everything in the papers that mentioned America! Remember and you just idolised the KENNEDY'S.

ROSENNA: Forget all that - I have to get this straight about CASSIE - why did she not tell me? - why didn't you?

SARAH: She begged me not to say - I thought that a bit strange because if it had been the other way round - I definitely would have told you and da - I would have wanted to shame her. That was the a turning point in my life - I realised how bad I'd been - to CASSIE our poor CASSIE - I'd driven her away - I'd destroyed her life - and then when I began to think about how badly I had treated her all my life - I suppose it was then I found my conscience - I never knew I had one or even what one was - I remembered the teacher at school telling us about our conscience - but I couldn't have cared

any less! Ma - you never told us anything like that -Why? And then ma there was the drink- I only realised that you drank when –

ANGEL CUTS IN SHARPLY

ANGEL: SARAH - remember why you're here - don't go off the track - keep focused!

ROSENNA: Keep focused - keep focused on what - what is he (pointing to ANGEL) talkin about?

LONG SILENCE

SARAH: Mama - speak to me - please –

ROSENNA: I'm still not getting this - am I on trial - am I?

SARAH: Are you sure you didn't get to see anything down there? Did you get to watch out for us or anything?

ROSENNA: Anything like what?

SARAH: Like how it all ended - how we all ended up before we died

ROSENNA: All I know now is that I can't remember anything since I died!

ANGEL: Pardon me! (laughs) Oh pardon the pun ladies - but if I could just point out to yourself

ROSENNA- because you don't remember anything at this

particular moment in this room it doesn't mean that you weren't aware of your family and their situation when you were in the other place!

ROSENNA: This is what I'm talkin about - I don't know where that other place was - why can't you tell me what's the big secret?

SARAH: That's all I want to know - just listen ma - for once listen!

ROSENNA: Go on - I'm listening

SARAH SITS ON SEAT THEN SEEMS UNEASY AND STANDS UP MOVING TO FRONT OF STAGE TURNS TO GLANCE AT ROSENNA AND SAYS:

SARAH: Well (sighing deeply)

LOOKING AWAY, SHE COVERS HER FACE WITH HANDS AND SAYS QUICKLY:

CONTINUES:

I was expecting DENIS'S baby.

AS SARAH WAITS FOR A REACTION ROSENNA'S MOUTH FALLS OPEN IN SHOCK HORROR BUT SAYS NOTHING

CONTINUE:

and when CASSIE left there seemed no point in having it - so I went to auld AGGIE in Gibson Street (deep sigh) she told me to call the next night and to bring some money; when I got there she had the big bath tub in front of the fire and she gave me an oil mixture to drink first and then I waited until I felt the pains - she left me in the bath and I watched the fire roar and the sparks

splashing out on the hearth and before I knew it I'd changed my mind - I didn't know exactly what I would do with a baby - but - as I stood up everything came away and I stood screaming until auld AGGIE ran in from the back and hit me hard across the face - she grabbed me and said - and I remembered till the day I died the way she said it - she said 'what did you expect?' (pause) I cleaned myself up and went round home and straight up to bed - I put old newspapers on top of the bottom sheet so as not to soil the sheets - and you never knew ma -

ROSENNA: (Compassionately and detached) That's sad daughter - that you never told me - and you must have needed me and I was beside you and I didn't know - (in a sombre voice) what about auld AGGIE? (pause - no response) She was a money lender as well - women used to go to her when they got pregnant with too many children - she'd fix them - and she did well out of it all. She'd always a big fire on and plenty of food on the table - I suppose there will always be plenty of AGGIES everywhere -

SARAH: Not now days ma - there's no need of AGGIES - it's all legal - everything changed in the 60's - there was the Beatles and free love they called it - you heard the Beatles didn't you?

ROSENNA: The Beatles - can't say I ever did - I used to listen to the wireless for LONNIE DONEGAN he played in a skiffle group - with a washboard and he sang 'Putting on the agony' remember?

SINGS: PUTTIN ON THE AGONY PUTTIN ON THE STYLE THAT'S WHAT ALL THE YOUNG FOLKS ARE DOING ALL THE WHILE AND AS I LOOK AROUND ME I SOMETIMES HAVE TO SMILE SEEING ALL THE YOUNG FOLKS PUTTING ON THE STYLE!

You'd dance with a brush and I'd laugh (thoughtful) I remember!

SARAH: Yes I remember - you'd sit and knit at the table and you always looked content -

ROSENNA: SARAH my SARAH what is it I've to do or say now to make this all right? (thoughtfully) Can we not go back and make it all right?

SARAH: Ma, we can't - our time on earth is spent - it's over. Now it's you - just acknowledge the wrong you did to CASSIE and that's it! (Moves back to her chair and sits down)

ROSENNA: I know I treated CASSIE badly - but I honestly couldn't help it! She always reminded me of - of not being loved - I resented CASSIE and I know it was never her fault - never ever - it's too late I can't undo it - (deep sigh and nods her head at same time) we're all dead aren't we?

SARAH: Being dead is only a term for letting go and moving on - it's the transition from a physical embodiment to the spiritual freedom that exists beyond our wildest dreams! We don't only cast off our skin ma: but every layer of hate, deceit, hurt, resentment - we shed it all - every ounce of everything that corrupted our perfection and the only thing that remains ma is - Love!

ANGEL: Well done WO-HANNA! I can see if ever I retire or need a few earth weeks away that I don't have far to look for a replacement!

SARAH: (Stretching out her right hand) Ma it's never too late - remember ma you're in a different place now - you can't make it better for CASSIE and CASSIE doesn't need you to try to make it better for her - this is for you - we all want you to share in the LIGHT of His Love - just acknowledge the wrong you did to CASSIE ma and then leave everything from the past behind - that's all - and forgive yourself - forgive yourself because your life was also a gift ma and then just feel what happens!

ROSENNA: I can't believe this was all happening and I didn't notice - I've no grand children then - I've left nothing - no mark?

SARAH: (Smiling) Oh but you have grandchildren ma - ANTHONY and ROSENNA - twins. I married TONY GREG - KITTY GREG'S son - Theodore Street - remember her eldest he used to help Mr CLARKE our milk man - ANTHONY and ROSENNA after you ma - they're both so like us - The O'NEILLS - there's not an ounce of the GREG'S in them - they both teach and guess what ma - you're a great granny - twins again - GRACE and CASSIE - though she gets CATHERINE out in the street.

ROSENNA: (Big smile and sigh) GRACE ...where did you get GRACE from?

SARAH: She just looked like a GRACE -

ROSENNA: Have you any pictures - so I get a look at them?

SARAH: All in good time ma -

ROSENNA: (Looking at ANGEL- ROSENNA has brightened up a bit) Hey ARCHIE Mr ANGEL is this the part where you twitch your nose or take out your magic wand and wave it about a bit and everything's all right -

ANGEL: Don't be absurd ROSENNA - you're confusing me with the fairies - we don't do wands here - (and moves his head from side to side) and we don't do noses either!

ROSENNA: Well what about a photo - do you do photo's?

ANGEL: Sorry ROSENNA we don't do photo's!

ROSENNA: Sorry ARCH - didn't mean to ruffle your feathers -

ANGEL: It's ARCHIE - ROSENNA not ARCH!

SARAH: Ma why are you behaving like this?

ROSENNA: Behaving like what - like I'm not a fool or not human (snapping) or what?

SARAH: There you go ma - spoiling things for yourself -

ROSENNA: Look I'm here - I'm not where you are - so that means I'm still - still - tell me what am I still? - Am I human.....or what?

SARAH: (deep frustrated sigh) Ma - please trust us - especially ARCHIE - we're all here to help you -

ROSENNA: (frustrated) I still don't get this!

SARAH: Look ma on earth you wore glasses - right - and they were to help you read - you didn't need them all the time - just for reading - so up here - in this room - look on ARCHIE as your reading glasses - he'll help you read the situation as it is - he's here to help you understand - to translate for you how

best to go from this room into the next - from darkness into the LIGHT - it's kinda like - turning over pages when you're reading a book ma, and when your at the last page in the final chapter - and you're thinking that it could have a few different endings - you don't know till you read the very last paragraph what the ending is - you can guess what might happen or you can hope that it ends the way you would have wanted it to end - if you'd written it ma - there's no cover or review so you read it without any preconception of what's inside -

ROSENNA: (Looks amused) You always loved to hear yourself talk SARAH - does the big man in the next room never tell you to shut it - now here's a bit of the truth daughter - I've a sore head - a shot of whiskey wouldn't do me one bit of harm this moment - all this greyness - it's depressin me! Sorry baby, go on, I am listening - honest!

SARAH: O.K (mimics I love you) it takes you on a unique journey to somewhere you've never been before and as you read each page the words you read all disappear - it can't be reread - nor rewritten - there are twists and turns and always the unexpected - you have to read each page in the order they are given. A single page opened at random and read can't give you a sense of the whole story - you just have to wait until the last page but then maybe it ends to soon - or it drags on a bit - you think that the pages sometimes contain meaningless words all thrown together in confusion - only the author knows the full story and sometimes he can be persuaded to change it a little - but always he wants the characters to live on after the book is read - they are what makes the book interesting - they are all redeemable - and because he created the characters he knows better than any of the readers their true worth! (Big sigh)

ROSENNA: Thank you for that daughter but I'm none the wiser now than when I entered this place! I can't say what-ever it is you expect me to say - I can only tell you that I want to be with you all and that I love you all still. I'm sorry for anything in the past that left you all wanting for love - maybe my love just wasn't enough for any of you!

ANGEL: WO-HANNA (put finger to lips) sorry SARAH - I suggest we break for now to give ROSENNA a bit of time to let all this sink in - OK!

ROSENNA: What does this mean now - are we breakin for a bite to eat?

ANGEL: Not just yet ROSENNA, not just yet!

ANGEL INDICATES FOR SARAH TO EXIT. SARAH EXIT LEFT. (STANDING AT DOOR)  
Someone else to see you ROSENNA

ROSENNA: Who is it now - someone else with a daft name!

ANGEL: It's YESALETTA - ROSENNA your youngest MARY-JANE

M-J: Mama - you look lovely - just the way I remember you!

MJ WALKS OVER TO ROSENNA AND SITS AT HER FEET WITH HEAD ON ROSENNA'S LAP. ROSENNA STROKES M.J'S HEAD

ROSENNA: My sweet sweet child - you never gave me an ounce of trouble - you cleaned the house from top to bottom everyday and prayed on your knees - first thing in the morning and last thing at night - and to have a nun in the family - oh that was so middle class - it made people respect me - the mother of a nun - it was your good upbringing they all said - I suppose you had the best funeral of all -eh - (winking her eye) better than mine? You tell your mammy it all MARY-JANE!

M-J: You did bring me up well mama - and you let me go - you raised the £50 to send me to into the Sisters - not everyone who entered at that time would have had that amount of money - I know you did without for me!

ANGEL LOOKS VERY PLEASED WITH ROSENNA

ROSENNA: Well on hind sight daughter - we don't always know the right way of things do we? I mean I borrowed that £50 of auld AGGIE the money lender from Gibson Street and if I knew then what I know now I wouldn't have bothered my arse –

M-J: (Laughing) You just sound the same mama as you always did! (pause) We were all broken hearted when you died - it was so sudden and our poor CASSIE she took it worse than me and SARAH did - I mean we took it bad but CASSIE poor CASSIE –

ROSENNA: One question baby - my grave - where am I buried? - Did I get many wreaths? What did you put on my head stone? Something nice I bet! - Oh and my wake - was it sad? All the neighbours in?

ROSENNA STOPS STROKING M J'S HEAD AS M J LOOKS UP INTO ROSENNA'S FACE

M-J: You had a lovely wake ma - all the neighbours were in - except the Peels of course - but you wouldn't have wanted them in anyway - would you?

ROSENNA: No - people like them who write letters to parish priests about their neighbours are the sort who write letters to the cops and the dole as well - hypocrites and if you let them across your door step, sure they'd bring nothing but bad luck about you - have you seen any of them in there?

M-J: No not yet - but that doesn't mean they won't arrive sometime!

M J PUTS HER HEAD BACK ON ROSENNA'S LAP

ROSENNA: And my grave - (enquiringly) white marble (looks at M-J waiting for confirmation) plenty of marble stones? - I hate to see a skimpy grave - it shows how little the poor critter in it was thought of by their family!

MJ LIFTS HER HEAD AGAIN

M-J: Ma - mama - we hadn't the money to bury you in Milltown so - so we - well there was room for one more on top of..... aunt CASSIE up in Hannastown –

ROSENNA: (like a wind blowing) W H A T - I don't believe you - how could you - you mean I've been lyin' on top of that auld witch all these years!

ANGEL CUTS IN QUICKLY AND M J GETS UP AND RUSHES ACROSS TO SIT IN CHAIR

ANGEL: Ladies - could I make a suggestion - we're running to a schedule here - I know that may surprise you all - you're maybe thinking what's ARCHIE talking about he's in no hurry - well ladies - I want to tie things up here shortly - there's another two more to come - one is due in about 30 earth minutes give or take a few seconds and then I'll be leaving you all forever - I've a new charge arriving in Bangladesh shortly and you can appreciate that I have to be there for her arrival - this little soul is destined to bring peace to the world - I need to be there for her because it's not everyone who wants peace so she's in trouble from day one!

ROSENNA: Oh it's O.K. when you're in a hurry - what about me and if things aren't settled soon what's going to happen - are my girls going to leave me here all alone or will I be sent back to the other place where I can't remember being?

ANGEL: ROSENNA things are looking good -

ROSENNA: Tell that to your boss or are you the top man here?

ANGEL: ROSENNA haven't you learned anything in this last hour -

ROSENNA: Last hour - is this really my last hour?

M-J: ARCHIE - who's the two?

ANGEL PUTS HIS FINGER ON HIS LIP AND NODDS HIS HEAD TO SARAH

CONTINUE:

Mama - I loved you - and what I'm going to tell you about myself isn't so much about me as it is about CASSIE - CASSIE loved you so much mama she didn't want anyone to hurt you - I had a secret mama and only our CASSIE knew about it and this is it - do you remember mama when I began working for Dr KEMP?

ROSENNA: Of course I remember it was me who got you the job - isn't that right?

M-J: That's right mama - well to go back and forward in order to explain this properly mama - you recall before I entered the Poor Clares that you had that talk with me about maybe wanting to get married and have children some-day.

ROSENNA: Yes of course I remember and you said you didn't think you could ever love anyone enough to marry them - and sure there was nothing wrong with that now - was there?

M-J: No - except it wasn't exactly the truth - you see I had met someone and we were so in love - our love was so deep and so wonderful mama - we shared our love our dreams - our hopes - but we could never share them with anyone else mama - (smiling) we knew how the other felt about everything - we could almost read one another's mind - I knew I could never feel that way about anyone else - I could never share myself so completely like that again - but it just could never be - you would have died if you'd known - you would have beat me and disowned me - but it wasn't for

that reason that it ended - too many people would have been hurt - destroyed for ever - and the love of my life would never have been able to face anyone again - not even family - their reputation would have been in ruins and they would have lost their job as well - but for myself I didn't care that much - if only we could have lived somewhere else - anywhere else but Belfast!

ROSENNA: You don't need to tell me - you don't have to explain - he was a married man - then?

M-J: No mama - a married woman - Dr KEMP! HAZEL - we were lovers - (ROSENNA is looking shocked) and before you start preaching there's no point!

ROSENNA: (pause with her mouth open) What - how - I'm not hearing this right - (pause) you - my daughter fancied a woman - A WOMAN - you're crazy - I'd heard of things like that but I thought it was all made up - we called girls who wanted to behave like boys - tom boys - girls who always wore trousers - who played cow boys and hid up trees - they didn't fancy women - they just liked the rough and tumble of doing as the boys did - but you - you never even wore a pair of trousers MARY JANE you were never like that - never ever - and don't sit there and disgust me - that's disgusting - you and a WOMAN - oh oh what have I reared?

ANGEL: YESALETTA would you like me to - (M-JANE nods her head) are you sure?

M-J: Quite - thank you ARCHIE I'm quite sure! (stares at ROSENNA before speaking) Mama - one question -

ROSENNA: (sharply) What?

M-J: Did you have any tender moments with my daddy?

ROSENNA: What's that to do with all this that you've just unloaded - how I ever felt or never felt - what's that to do with anything any more?

M-J: Just say it - tell me - it won't leave this room - mama - did you ever love da did you ever love anyone - ever?

ROSENNA: I never loved a woman! (pause) I never loved your da and he never loved me - O.K. don't you get it I had a miserable life - I didn't want to live - I only wanted ever to (shouts) die! (softly) die! There was no love! No one can live without love!

M-J: I know ma - I always did know you were never really happy with anything - you just couldn't help it - but we all loved you - our love just wasn't enough - was it? Is that why you drank so much - you were the only woman in the street who drank - 6 pence worth of porter - then over to auld MAGGIES to borrow thrupence until you got to the pawn - (pause) CASSIE used to hide her clothes everywhere so you couldn't pawn them - remember the time she hid her new high heels - black patent they were - she had to hide them before she went to work behind the Sacred Heart picture in the bed room - remember - it tilted forward at the top - she was sure you'd never look there - but she was wrong - she raced up the stairs that Friday night when she got home - put her hand behind the Sacred Heart and instead of her new black patent shoes she pulled out a bundle of sticks! You must have searched the house every time we went out for things to pawn (shakes her head in disapproval) she couldn't go to The Jig in Coates street that night and after working hard all

week - oh ma - the things you did on us - looking back we laughed - but at the time it was awful - in fact that time you borrowed Mrs KELLY'S pan pretending that you needed it to do a fry for da - remember - when you sent CASSIE over for it Mrs Kelly told her to have it back by four o'clock that day and poor CASSIE swore to her she would make sure it was back in time for Mr Kelly's dinner.

ROSENNA: I always got a loan of their pan when ours was in the pawn! Mrs KELLY was a good auld critter!

M-J: Yes - she was - always had a clean step - a half moon step if I remember correctly - anyway ma that day - four o'clock came and went and Mrs Kelly came over herself for the pan and our poor CASSIE answered the door and ..... go on ma say it you know what happened.....instead of handing her the pan she handed her the pawn ticket for it - (breaks up into syllables and says loudly) RE-MEM-BER?

ROSENNA: (Laughs holding her stomach) I thought she was going to drag CASSIE out into the street (still laughing)

M-J: Yes and we were all afraid hiding behind the door with you! The house reeked of porter that day! You did some bad strokes ma - but I know you just couldn't help yourself - could you - ma? - sorry I'm not putting you down or anything - I know you did your best -

ROSENNA: Yes MARY-JANE I did do my best but if you can't see that - then a million sorrys can't put it right - but don't forget that's the way things were then for a lot of people - times were hard - and now you tell me this that you were in love with a woman - and you a nun! You were only young when you worked for the KEMPTS - (softly) did she take advantage of you baby?

M-J: No - no ma - I didn't know you could love a woman not like that anyway - it started - I suppose with a silly infatuation - I was so young and she was a married woman with two handicapped children - I just loved so much to be around her - I loved watching her as she dealt with people - the way she moved - I tried to copy her in my mind - it felt so strange and I'd find myself being embarrassed when we looked at one another - you know into one another's eyes! I thought she could read my thoughts (pause) I found such comfort - in her eyes - everything else just disappeared - I could see no further than those blue eyes looking into my soul and making me feel whole - like a real person -

ROSENNA: What about MATT BRENNAN? You were going out with him at the time -

M-J: Yeah - MATT was sweet - he fancied me like mad - but - I tried so hard to fancy him back but I just couldn't - he was like the brother I never had - he cared a lot for me and even though I broke his heart - he still cared - he was happy in the end though - he married SALLY O HARE from Sevastopol Street -

ROSENNA: You never knew that he came crying to me - he said he felt like killing himself - he wanted to know what was wrong with him and I told him simply that you wanted to marry God - (laughs) and I was right - wasn't I? And at least God's a man!

M-J: Ma God is neither male nor female! Sorry to disillusion you at this stage but -

ROSENNA: (cuts in) Well your sister has been referring to Him as a Him - so how can she have got it so wrong?

M-J: No ma SARAH didn't get it wrong she's only saying it in a way to help you understand - remember you're still thinking like you did on earth - you haven't been in the LIGHT yet!

ROSENNA: The LIGHT - what's the LIGHT got to do with anything - are you saying that if I didn't believe in God that I've no chance of getting into heaven or the LIGHT or whatever it is you're talking about? What about the MAGGIE MAGEES and the JONNIE MC SHANES who never put a foot in chapel but never passed a stranger in need? Heaven can't be all that if people like them can't get in!

M-J: (laughs) Ma - don't be daft! Maybe if the likes of PETESY PEECOCK from The Pound Loney or JEAN NESBITE from where ever was in charge of opening and closing the 'Gates' we all might be judged differently - and by the way I haven't seen either of them floating around! Ma - (stares into her eyes) when you're touched by the LIGHT - you're changed forever - but that's to come ma - I hope - and for now I'm just telling you my story. The thing is ma once you move on into the LIGHT - all this is forgotten - none of it is relevant -

ROSENNA: Relevant to what? - Then why are we here? - I keep asking what am I doing here and I don't even know where this place is - (looks at everyone and says to herself) maybe this is a dream maybe I'm not dead - just dreaming - the worst night mare any mother could face - being told by your children what kind of mother you were - according to their gospel -

M-J: Ma - I had a good childhood despite - everything - I mean CASSIE really reared me - young and all as she was she made a good surrogate mother!

ROSENNA: Surrogate - surrogate mother - what the hell is surrogate mother -

M-J: A word that was used after you went - it only means like someone taking on the role of the mother in her absence!

ROSENNA: But I was never away - I never went anywhere -

M-J: That's right ma you never did go anywhere physically - but - emotionally - you were never really there - with us I mean - (speaks quickly) but I don't mean that as a criticism - as you say that's the way it was then in those days - I don't think women - mothers understood much about emotional abuse - there were an awful lot like us or even worse off than us!

ROSENNA: (shouts) Abuse - Abuse - what are you talking about girl -

M-J: Sorry ma - I don't mean to drop all this on you now - I'm sure it's too much for you to - (says awkwardly) can we just forget this part of the family thing - and go back to me and HAZEL -

ROSENNA: Yeah you and HAZEL - go ahead - I suppose HAZEL never abused you emotionally - did she!

M-J: Ma - HAZEL wasn't my mother - you were - and I loved you always - we all did - maybe you didn't think we did but we really did! Anyway ma - I have to tell you that we never did anything - I

wouldn't have known what to do anyway - but we talked - we shared everything every word every thought - we embraced and - kissed - once and that was the end of our relationship - we had to stop before we couldn't! The only person I could confide in was CASSIE and I know that she didn't break my trust - we talked and talked every night when the lights went out. We'd sit up and rake the fire until it was all ashes - the tiny coals burning like my heart and finally seeing no other way to survive but to go to go away - it wasn't for the love of God .....but .....for the love of HAZEL.

ROSENNA: And tell me this daughter - for all your praying on your knees - do you think you ever did anybody any good? Yourself included!

M-J: It's hard to know but if you believe that you're doing the best you can do then is that not good enough?

ROSENNA: Personally I always thought that praying was a waste of time!

M-J: Personally I never had time better spent mama than when I was on my knees!

ROSENNA: (aggravated) Yeah - yeah - okay okay you have me brought all this way to fight the piece out with me - and me your mother! You are a disgrace to any mother! And now I just feel like putting my head down and crying - crying - I've such bad children - is every mother confronted like this up here - what about MAGGIE DONNELLY OR JEAN BLOOMER they both spent their days standing outside the bookies waiting on auld lads to give them something for nothin! What about them - their kids all worshipped them - they'd never have spoken to them the way you and our SARAH have spoken to me now!

PUTS HER HEAD DOWN AND CRIES

ANGEL: Ladies ladies - this is getting out of hand - this is not what this is supposed to be about - right - brighten up girls - its almost time!

ANGEL MOVES AROUND INBETWEEN THE TWO SEATS AND SCENE FREEZES. MUSIC.

END OF ACT ONE. 15 MINUTE BREAK:

ACT TWO

SCENE 1

ROSENNA IS IN SAME CHAIR LOOKING AROUND. ANGEL PULLS CURTAIN BACK AT DOOR AS CASSIE ENTERS.

ANGEL: Now ROSENNA are you ready for another visitor?

ROSENNA: Another one, who is it this time?

ANGEL: (To CASSIE) BO-AH this is your mother ROSENNA

CASSIE STARES LONG AND HARD BEFORE MOVING TOWARDS ROSENNA

CASSIE: This isn't how I remember you

ROSENNA: BO-AH what?...I'd no daughter called that.....though you do look familiar

CASSIE: You called me CASSIE after father's sister. Remember, you used to say I reminded you of her and you both never got on, remember?

ROSENNA: I don't understand any of this, am I dreaming? Is he (pointing to the ANGEL) the devil.....auld NICK, is that who he is?

ANGEL: ROSENNA, you and BO-AH have much to talk about.

ROSENNA: I don't know a BO-AH! I would remember if I did!

ANGEL: ROSENNA, there are a rules here, in this room, and one is.....(ROSENNA interrupts)

ROSENNA: Look mister ARCHIE ANGEL, I don't follow rules and in any case where I come from we have this saying that rules are made or is it meant... to be broken!

ANGEL: Not here ROSENNA not here. You break any rules here and you go straight back to where you've been!

ROSENNA: This is what's annoying me ARCHIE, why won't you just spit it out and tell me where I've been!

CASSIE: You don't recognise me, your own daughter, I knew you better than our SARAH or MARY JANE ever did!

ROSENNA: You can't be my daughter CASSIE, my CASSIE was scarred for life when she was only 3 - she pulled a scalding pot of water of the ring and.....

CASSIE CUTS IN:

CASSIE: Yes mother, you remember that don't you, I was stood beside you pulling at your apron and you were yelling at the top of your voice at daddy, as the door slammed you swung round and knocked the pot over me.....

ROSENNA: (agitated) No no I never, you pulled it down on yourself

CASSIE: I don't mean you did it deliberately, I know that now (flippantly) I always did know that, it was an accident.....I knew.....I don't cry here, there are no tears here, no one needs them here.....(smiling) isn't that good mamma?

ROSENNA: Where's your scar then....show me!

CASSIE: There are no scars here either, mamma. (smiling) I'm here for you not for me, I'm already happy and you will be as well..... soon. I've already forgiven you..... for everything!

ROSENNA: Everything.....everything.....what's everything (silence) what about your da, have you seen him yet? Is he where you are?

CASSIE: It's not like that here

ROSENNA: (frustrated-sighs) What's not like that? I don't know what you're talking about, you and him (pointing to the ANGEL) .....what does that mean - and stop calling me mamma, if you were a child of mine you'd know my CASSIE always called me ma plain ma nothing fancy

CASSIE: (smiling) Words can't explain what it's going to be like for you when you leave this room, when you are brought by the LIGHT into His presence, ma you can't go any further until you acknowledge.....things; for starters, you have to forgive anyone who has ever hurt you in any

way, we all had to do it, but once you've experienced His presence, you know you are home where you belong, truly belong. This is a new world mamma sorry ma! There are no families here, just Him. Him and I.

ROSENNA: What about your sisters then, can you not see them?

CASSIE: They're here I know, but, (smiling) we're not sisters, we're part of His love, His Love ma..... there is nothing on earth that I can compare His Love His Presence with to explain this to you. He wants you and so it's almost time for you to enter!

ROSENNA: I'm dreaming, this is a dream! It has to be!

CASSIE: Ma, why I'm here is to ask you why you never loved me. The scar I carried on my face and down my arm was nothing - nothing compared to the scar that never feeling loved by you - left on my heart, even my soul felt afflicted, my whole being - my life was never what it could have been had I been loved by you. My every thought until you died was influenced by the weight of never feeling that love - not even once - and then afterwards - I was free. I'd been like a caged bird all my sad and lonely life and suddenly the door opened and I began to be me - me CASSIE O NEILL the real CASSIE O NEILL. I could even talk about you in work and pretend about all the good times we had and how much you loved me and how much I missed you. Lies, all lies, made up stories.....(sadly) about being loved.

ROSENNA: Rubbish! Rubbish! I loved all my children, loved each of you, equally, all the same!

CASSIE: Ma, that's not how it was at all! The pot of water.....everything!

ROSENNA: (Stunned) It was an accident! (grateful) You knew? You never said (silence) even when I was being rotten to you, you never said! Why?

CASSIE: Because I loved you, ma! I never wanted anyone to think badly about you. I was so proud of you, I never told anyone how I felt inside. All that pain, the constant knots in my stomach, the lumps in my throat, they only went away when you died! I was relieved when you went. That doesn't sound like I loved you at all, but, I always loved you, always, and I needed you to love me, I don't mean love me back, I just mean I needed you to love me for who I was. But you never did!

ROSENNA: Look daughter, where are you getting all this fantasy stuff from, I loved all my children, always. Remember auld JONES, I fought with her because of you, 'member?

CASSIE: Yes, I remember! You always stuck up for me that was one thing about you ma, you never let anyone say a bad word against any of us. That time I was caught red handed stealing the Easter eggs I was about 8 (laughs)7 or 8

ROSENNA: MERVYN BROWN he was from Sandy Row he got the cops for you that day after all my pleading with him to take pity on you and his wife she was even worse she pulled you by the arm and I was going to hit her good and hard but then.....(silence - far away look in her eyes)

CASSIE: The cop let me go, for all your pleading, he felt sorry for me - but when you got me home ma you nearly murdered me, beat me with the poker, I learned my lesson well that day. (softly) Ma,

you never asked - but the egg was for you. You beat me so hard it made my heart hard that day and because of that I never told you - why - why I stole the egg (pause) you see..... I just wanted you to love me! (excitedly) By the way MERVYN'S here and so is CHARLIE CLARKE our milk man! I know you're wondering who's here and who's not!

ROSENNA: CHARLIE CLARKE, sure he didn't believe in anything, he was an atheist, how did he get in there?

CASSIE: He got in the same way we all got in!

ROSENNA: Well I was better than any of them ever were, so how come I'm not there (pointing her finger at door) yet; I suppose they were welcomed with open arms and they were still alive when I died - where's the fairness in that?

CASSIE: Ma, please don't start (looking round at ANGEL) Tell her - please - she hasn't got it yet!

ANGEL: ROSENNA just let go of all that way of thinking, the way you saw things down below – (ROSENNA cuts in sharply)

ROSENNA: I was never down below, I was a good woman (thumps her chest)

ANGEL: ROSENNA (sympathetically) I'm referring to earth, when you were there, the souled believe that heaven is above earth, that's all I'm saying, you think the other place is below but it isn't either!

ROSENNA: Look mister, ANGEL –

ANGEL: ROSENNA I told you - you can call me ARCHIE - mister is too earthy too matter of fact for me - so it's ARCHIE till you leave here, right!

ROSENNA: So I am leaving here - this isn't going to be my permanent abode or anything - is it?

ANGEL: ROSENNA - CASSIE'S question needs answered - and the truth will make all the difference. The truth, as they say, really does set you free!

ROSENNA: Any body here smoke? I'd love a feg!

CASSIE: Ma you ask the silliest of questions!

ROSENNA: I use to think that heaven was a place where they grew 'Woodbine' and the workers could smoke as many fegs as they wanted without having to pay for them!

CASSIE: (laughing) Ma, did you really never wonder what heaven would be like? There's no addictions here, no smoking, no drinking no gambling.

ROSENNA: Do you not get bored acting good all day?

CASSIE: There's no acting, everything is as it seems. The instant you know you're here in His Presence, nothing else matters, He loves you ma and wants you to come in but you can't come until you leave here - metaphorically a free woman! (Silence) All I want to know ma - is - why you never loved me - that's it - that's all!

ROSENNA: I did love you - you just didn't realise it - (deep in thought) you're making a big deal out of this like you always made a big deal out of everything when (sighs and smiles) when you were a child!

CASSIE: Ma, I only knew you didn't love me when I saw the way you loved SARAH - I didn't know what love was - you even looked at her in a different way than you looked at me - it made me feel like I was an empty vessel - blood guts and no heart - no feelings - unworthy of human recognition - (Silence) I know you didn't mean to make me feel that way - but I need to know - I need to hear you explain - why -

ROSENNA: Why what?

CASSIE: You see ma there you go again - you always twisted things to your own advantage!

ROSENNA: (deep sighs) You never grew up CASSIE you stayed a baby - thought like a baby and behaved like one that's why Denis left you - wasn't it!

CASSIE: You don't get it - not being loved affected my whole life - if you were never capable of love then - that's o.k. but it wasn't like that - you had love and plenty of it -

ROSENNA: What does that mean - plenty of it?

CASSIE: It means you had love for me and you held it back - it was there inside you and you never shared it with me - why did you punish me - it was daddy you meant to punish - only daddy wasn't my daddy - was he?

ROSENNA: (Startled) How did you know that? (in a softer voice) how did you know that!

CASSIE: There was so much of you in me - but even more of my real father it turned out to be - after Denis - if you remember - I moved away to Dublin -

ROSENNA: Yes - you got a job as chamber maid in a hotel - the Gresham - the big one in O Connell street -

CASSIE: (nodding her head) That wasn't all I got - mamma, I got one of the paying customers - he was white - all I really remembered was afterwards - he didn't even look at me - he told me to go and to clear up later - he'd things to do - (silence) all these feelings came running back to me of when I was a child - you know like the time I stood on a brooch on the bedroom floor and I hopped into you screaming for you to take it out and you just looked at me as if I didn't matter - you took your time before you pulled it out and you didn't say a word - (silence) anyway - nine months later - out pops a little black boy - he only lived a few hours - but I got to hold him - I kissed his cheek and his tiny fingers and I loved him - I named him James after the doctor who delivered him - I loved that little baby and he was the first thing in my life that was ever truly mine - no one could ever change that or take him from me - I know death took him but that's not the same as someone else taking something from you that you cherished - I loved him more than you could have ever known mamma - but where did he come from - that's what they ask me - and then I remembered my tight curls, my brown eyes, my lips and your indifference towards me - it was your indifference that spelt it out loud and clear - (loudly) my daddy was a black man. Isn't that the way it was mamma?

ROSENNA: (pauses before answering) It doesn't matter now - not any more - is this why I'm here - to confess to you?

CASSIE: No - no ma - no one wants you to confess anything - but help me understand - tell me mama tell me now - because we can't go back. Your indifference - your lack of love towards me - I need to help you understand what it did to me - (hand on chest) me your flesh and blood - I forgave you ma - and now I need for you to forgive yourself - ma no one here knows or cares about anyone else's sins - we're all equal within His love - none of us behave like the sister or brother of The Prodigal Son! I want you to come into His Love - I want you to be touched - like I am - with His Love - talk to me mamma - talk!

ANGEL MOVES TO BACK OF ROSENNA'S CHAIR AND SINGS SOFTLY

ANGEL: MY AUNT JANE SHE CALLED ME IN SHE GAVE ME BISCUITS OUT OF HER WEE TIN - HALF A BAP WITH SUGAR ON THE TOP - 3 WE LUMPS OUT OF HER WEE SHOP SHE CALLED ME BACK BUT I WOULDN'T GO - SHE SHUT THE DOOR ON MY BIG TOE:

QUIETNESS AS THE MOOD CHANGES WITH ROSENNA'S VULNERABILITY SHE STANDS AND THEN HERSELF AND CASSIE CHANGE SEATS:

ROSENNA: I was only 17 - I was selling sticks round the doors and the McARDLES brought me in to warm my feet - I'd no shoes on - they bought 2 bunches of the sticks because da McARDLE was back from the boats and they'd enough money for a fire - anyway - there he sat - straight back - head held high as the glow from the flames gave him a majestic - a regal look about him - when the light was turned on he was as black as the coal in the bucket at his feet. His name was MACHARIA - and he was a prince - he told me his father was an African King and that he had been kidnapped by pirates and sold as a slave to the white men who sailed the ocean on ships with cargoes of tea and sugar - he was a great story teller and spoke good English - he said he hadn't seen day LIGHT for 3 years until he escaped from the slave ship in Liverpool. I loved him - really loved him - but it never felt right - I didn't want anyone to see us together I think I felt ashamed - he was the first black man I'd ever seen in my life - he wanted me to go back to Africa with him and I wanted to go to be with him among his own

CONTINUE:

people - we arranged to meet at the docks on a Thursday night in December the week before Christmas - there were scores of sailors with girls - kissing and other things in corners everywhere - it was like being in the centre of the world - men with all different colours of skin - my world was from Divis mountain to Castles street - we'd only done it the once - in the alleyway behind Slates street school - it really wasn't much to remember - I felt we were doing something wrong - and now among this crowd and the boat bigger than any I'd ever seen before - I suddenly felt lost - alone - there was no sign of him -

CASSIE: He didn't come - then!

ROSENNA: Oh he did - he was up on deck looking down as the boat pulled out - I didn't understand - everything ran through my head - maybe he thought that I hadn't turned up - I made all

the excuses I could dream up in my head after all he told me he loved me and wanted me to be his princess - I believed him and he lied - he lied!

CASSIE: Then da came along and what happened?

ROSENNA: Well - I was in desperation - three weeks later and I started feeling sick - I went back to McARDLES to see if they had heard from him - and they were all sitting around a dead fire and drinking porter - MICKEY was singing when I went in and he was very drunk - anyway - he walked me back up the road and - and - I let him do it - he was years older than me so I figured that it wouldn't look too good for him if I dropped the bombshell in a few weeks time and he denied it - the following week when I went back to McARDLES - I got his address and went round and told him - I told him I was pregnant and that he was the father - I was crying - I was in desperation - and he was angry - really angry -

CASSIE: Did he know - that I wasn't his? Did he find out? How?

ROSENNA: He knew when you were born - you were sort of dark looking!

CASSIE: And what - what did he say - did he beat you? -

ROSENNA: He never laid a hand on me - not once - but he did beat me - with his coldness - we never had a happy bed - and that's all you need to know - but - I did love you in a sort of a way but not the way it was supposed to be - (pause) really it was always myself that I hated! (Silence) I'm sorry daughter - bye the way - is he here - where you are?

CASSIE: (smiling nods her head) Yes - he's here!

ROSENNA: (looking at ANGEL) And please don't tell me my auld man's about to walk in looking for me to say sorry to him as well! Do I get a longer sentence? For attempted deception - or have I already served my time without remission?

ANGEL: (looking pleased) I think I've handled this one well - would you both agree?

CASSIE: ARCHIE - you're my favourite ANGEL in all of heaven -

ROSENNA: ARCHIE, can we just go over a few things before I move forwards or backwards I'm still sort of not getting all this -

THE LIGHTS FLICKER AS A SMILING ANGEL MOVES AROUND INBETWEEN SEATS  
SCENE IS FROZEN ROSENNA RETURNS TO HER OWN CHAIR ANGEL AND CASSIE EXIT  
(ANGEL CHANGES COSTUME FOR FINAL SCENE)

MUSIC: OH WHAT A BEAUTIFUL CITY IS PLAYED IN FULL.

SARAH, MARY-JANE AND CASSIE ARE SITTING ON STOOL ROUND WALLS.

ACT TWO

SCENE TWO

ANGEL: ROSENNA one last visitor and the scene is complete -

ROSENNA: (startled) I don't see any body in years and suddenly they all drop in - who is it this time?

THUNDER IS HEARD AND THE DOOR/CURTAIN BLOWS OPEN:

ANGEL: (Says loudly) Bang on time - ROSENNA - guess who's here - she's just arrived and right on schedule!

ENTERS GRACE - CASSIE'S TWIN WHO WAS ADOPTED AT BIRTH

ROSENNA: What - (looks shocked and then smiles) You must be GRACE? - my poor black child!

ALL 3 SISTERS TOGETHER: What - who - your what!

GRACE:

And you must be my white mama - (turning to ANGEL asks) You in charge here mister - where is this place? Where am I at?

ROSENNA: Well at least I'm not the only one here who's lost!

GRACE: Oh white mama - you were lost a long time ago - I'm only enquiring where I'm at - (looking at her hands and arms) and I sure am a lot younger than I remember being the last time I saw myself!

ANGEL: UMGOOSHALUA (staring at GRACE)

GRACE: UM GOOSH AL UA that sounds like something from the jungle mister - who thought that up?

ANGEL: Well - it's not a common name but no name here is - common I mean - names are like earth finger prints - no two are the same - but your name is something personal between you and the boss - it was given to you before you were even born - (puts his hand up) don't ask now all will be revealed later!

GRACE: Good Lord am I in heaven (looking around) wow - well if I am it sure aint like anything I imagined it to be -

ANGEL: GRACE - this is sort of an annex - if you understand - you were brought here first - oh you do know that you're dead - don't you?

GRACE: I sort of thought ages ago that I had died - but I kept hearing people yelling at me not to die - and it kind of scared me back into my skin - one of the times I was almost out the door and the screeching frightened me so much I thought I was running for cover and I landed back into the body - my poor body was so tired and weary I just wanted to be freed of it - I just wanted to go - to follow that beautiful LIGHT that was hovering above me - but what can you do when they cry you back!

ANGEL: Well very briefly GRACE - I like that name - your three sisters who you'll leave this room with shortly - you're all here to get your mother - ROSENNA to the other side of the door - up to now she's had a little trouble making it alone - get my drift - now before you start young lady - I'm running a tight ship here - and I've to be in Bangladesh very shortly -

GRACE: Where you've to be young man is of no concern of mine - anyway I sure must be a lot older than you - (examining the skin on her arms) my skin seems to have suddenly got younger –

ANGEL: UMGOOSHALUA - GRACE - when you reach here you sort of go to your prime - just for visuals - just for convenience

GRACE: Whose convenience? I never was a convenient kind of female - mister - ask white mama there!

ROSENNA: GRACE - they kept your name - GRACE - it was the nurse at the hospital that named you!

GRACE: Well that's no surprise - you didn't even give me a name –

ROSENNA: If I could have turned the clock back - I could only keep one - two was too many - MICKEY thought one was bad enough - but a black child into the bargain - he couldn't take that! I had to get rid of you.

GRACE: My own daddy didn't want me either!

ROSENNA: He wasn't your daddy - your daddy was a sailor - he left me high and dry and carrying his twins –

GRACE: So what did you do white mama - draw lots!

ANGEL: (coughs) Sorry - GRACE - no sarcasm permitted –

GRACE: Well can I just say something that I've always wanted you to know - white mama (turns to sisters) and this is no offence to my three sisters there - but you did me a great favour by giving me away - you see I've had just the most wonderful life imaginable - JOHN and DOROTHEA OBAMA wanted me - and they brought me back to America to live - a place called Montgomery Alabama in fact - and I was part of history in the making –

ROSENNA: I'm glad really glad you had a good life daughter!

GRACE: Don't you dare call me that - only DOROTHEA had that right - I didn't want to know you either - (pause) when I was 18 I discovered - well I needed to know - who I was - and when DOROTHEA told me you were white that was it - I just didn't care - my natural curiosity - vanished - concerning where I came from - any way -

ROSENNA: I am sorry you felt that way - but I suppose what else can I expect - I didn't think that I was abandoning you as much as I was freeing you from a life - that - because of your colour - would have been so hard for you - for any child - there were no black kids around Belfast - and who would have wanted me as well - (pause) your daddy was a black prince from Africa - MACHARIA - that's what he was called and his father was the king of their village and your daddy was kidnapped by sea pirates - he was a wonderful story teller –

GRACE: Well I inherited something from him - I wrote 27 books - and most of them best sellers - but I couldn't have made this one up - that's for sure! - look (sad tone) I'm sorry

- after all these years - well I accept maybe it was hard for you but you were given a choice and you have had to live with the consequences of that choice - I am sorry for being so brutal!

ROSENNA: I made the choice based on a need to survive - my own survival that is! I had a husband I'd conned into marrying me - then when you came out - well all hell broke loose that night when he came over to the hospital - it was either you or else me and CASSIE - CASSIE looked white my poor CASSIE who I have treated so badly - and God forgive me - I showed her no love at all - I blamed her for all my unhappiness - you weren't around so I couldn't blame you - (looking at CASSIE) and my feeble efforts to love you and give you some warmth at times - all failed miserably - so miserably - do you forgive me CASSIE my lovely CASSIE?

CASSIE: Ma don't ask - it passed over me like a storm at sea and I survived - but now to meet my twin who I didn't know existed - is over whelming me - you know I always knew there was something missing and now I understand - I was never whole - always lonely - lonely for something I didn't have but I never knew what it was - always feeling like there was a part of me missing (stretches her arms towards GRACE and they both smile) I wish I'd have known you or at least known about you - because I'm certain I'd have tried to find you - somehow - my sweet beautiful soul sister!

GRACE: ROSENNA if I may call you by your name - I had the most wonderful childhood ever - every day was so good - even on a bad day it was still so good - my father JOHN was a doctor and a friend of MARTIN LUTHER KING - you've all heard of him - I'm sure! And ROSA PARKS - you all have heard of ROSA - the lady who refused to get up off her seat on a bus in Montgomery for a white man - well (laughs) believe it or not but I did the same the day before and you know what - the bus driver dragged me up out of the seat - and I was booed by the other white passengers and kicked out on to the middle of the road.....(looking far away) I was with them all - the best of them - we stood as one - and were led by the greatest - Doctor KING - we were the greatest and humblest of all God's children - for that next 12 months - we walked to work - tired - cold and in winter soaking wet - but we sure won in the end - hallelujah. Do you know what Dr KING told to me once - he told me that "if someone told him that the world was going to end tomorrow, that he'd still plant a tree today" (smiles) JOHN and DOROTHEA and myself we even canvassed for BOBBY KENNEDY - we were standing not 20 feet from him when he was gunned down..... I've so many kindred spirits I'm longing to see up here!

ANGEL: Someone needs to give you a pep talk GRACE - you were rushed straight in here to clear matters up with (lifts his eye brow) 'the family' and I think everyone has done a great job! (opens his/her right hand with palm upwards and directs ROSENNA to stand up) ROSENNA, the stage is set and now with the cast complete, it's over to you. The floor, as they say, is all yours.

ROSENNA MOVES ACROSS TO SARAH AS SHE SPEAKS HOLDS HER HAND

ROSENNA: SARAH, would any mother have loved you differently than I did? My love led you astray, it allowed you to believe that you were the most important person in the world and it made you treat your sister badly. Maybe it was myself I wanted to love and make important, because, I

didn't hear you when you needed me most; I was beside you, yet, I wasn't there at all. Do you forgive me, daughter?

SARAH SMILES AND NODS THEN ROSENNA GOES TO MARY-JANE

CONTINUE:

What can I say to you my innocent child, my MARY-JANE. My only claim to fame to status in the street; a nun in the family! You had every right to a life of fulfilment, spiritual and (whispers) sexual (pulls on a face after saying the word sexual and touches MARY-JANE'S cheek) I didn't even ask if HAZEL'S in there with you, I hope she is. (MJ NODS IN AGREEMENT) Love you!

THEY HOLD HANDS FOR A BRIEF MOMENT AND DON'T LET GO UNTIL ROSENNA IS WITH GRACE.

CONTINUE:

Maybe I was only thinking of myself, maybe besides everything else I was a coward, hey baby, even cowards have rights, you should know that. I don't have remorse GRACE for giving you up, I knew you went to a black couple, and I didn't think about you ever, can't tell lies in this room! I'm sorry if..... sorry - please forgive me.

SHE KISSES HER FINGER AND PLACES IT ON GRACE'S LIPS BEFORE MOVING OVER TO CASSIE. CASSIE TURNS HER BACK ON ROSENNA AND FOLDS HER ARMS:

CONTINUE:

I regret every second of indifference, every stroke of the clock that passed between us without my giving my love for you - to you. You were right CASSIE, I had love in my heart, and I didn't share it with you. I withheld it until it became a weapon, I withheld it for so long it became a habit - that time with the brooch, I was paralysed with bitterness and resentment. I never forgot doing that and the boiling water..... I never was sure about that. MICKEY never loved me and you were always there to remind me of why. Will God forgive me - will you?

CASSIE SLOWLY TURNS THEN NODS HER HEAD TO SAY YES AND MIMES WITH HER LIPS I LOVE YOU SEE YOU LATER.

TUBULAR BELLS ARE RINGING

ANGEL: This is my cue - I have to go now - to my new assignment in Bangladesh - it's exciting to be given a soul so different than what I've been used to - (looking upwards as though he sees someone, throws his arms up and shouts) PETER - they're all yours - (turning to ROSENNA) ROSENNA I've been with you for ever - and now I have to go to someone else - I'll keep in touch -

ANGEL AND DAUGHTERS ALL LINE UP AT EXIT AND WAIT FOR ROSENNA TO LEAVE.

ROSENNA: (looking at all 4 daughters says) One last thing daughters, you'll all remember this: (Starts Singing) Show me the way to go home, I'm tired and I want to go to bed, I had a little drink about an hour ago and it's gone right to head.....(daughters all gaze sadly at their mother as one by one they leave. ROSENNA is alone and says to audience) I still don't get it - I don't know

where I was or where I am or where I'm going to - I hope I'm not going back to where I was - where ever that was -

LIGHTS DIM (NOT COMPLETELY) ROSENNA WALKS SLOWLY TO EXIT..... BELLS ARE RINGING. EXITS.

LIGHTS OUT AND HANDEL'S HALLELUJAH IS PLAYED SOFTLY AT FIRST AND GRADUALLY GETTING LOUDER FOR ABOUT 10 SECONDS

ROSENNA (shouts) Oh my God.....

LIGHTS OUT

A DOFFER'S TALE

CAST BILLY.....FOREMAN

BIDDY.....MILL WORKER

THE JINGLE OF HEAVY KEYS IS HEARD, BILLY WHISTLES 'YOU MIGHT EASY KNOW A DOFFER'

ENTERS SWINGING KEYS

ALSO ENTERS BIDDY

BILLY: What's wrong with your bake BIDDY? Mill's closed and I'm away to FUSCO'S for a fish supper and tub of ice cream.

BIDDY: You still getting' your ma her fish supper and ice cream every Friday? Bet she's standin' watchin' out from behind the big green vase with the big feathers in her front window; you should tell her BILLY that all the neighbours know she watches everything that goes on in Dunville street and the park, from behind them big feathers!

BILLY: There's nothin' wrong with bein' interested in what's goin' on around you; some would say that's a healthy state of mind to be in!

BIDDY: Yeah and others would say that some people should mind their own business and not other peoples! In fact BILLY, some people from further down the road might think that a person who secretly watches the park at night from behind a vase and feathers, might have another motive that isn't so healthy at all!

BILLY: What are you implyin'?

BIDDY: I aint implyin' anything BILLY, it's just some people might think that they're bein' watched, say if for example, the R.I.C. arrested them and mention something that they were doin' in the park one night the previous week, and say maybe, someone had told the person who was arrested that someone from Dunville street is always watching everything that goes on in the park; like I mean, men marching and doin' drill, you know what kinda things I'm talkin' about BILLY.

BILLY: That's dangerous talk for a doffer to be comin' off with, especially if she's sayin' that she knows what she's talking about!

BIDDY: (PANICKY) Ah no Billy don't be getting me wrong, I'm not sayin' this, it weren't me who said it, I only over heard it as I was passin' the top of Leeson's Street the other night! Get the picture, Billy?

BILLY: No, not sure if I do; but you can let me know if you hear anyone mention who they think is watchin' them drillin' in the park or whatever! Or better still, you should let the R.I.C. know! Springfield barracks would be interested to hear any names you might come across in the course of conversations you might over hear concernin' anyone watching anyone whose doin' something they shouldn't be doin'! And if you hear my ma's name used in vain, you let me know right away!

BIDDY: I'm sure no one thinks anything bad about your ma BILLY, she's an old woman who just lives for her only son and spends time watchin' and waitin' for him to come home from his work each evenin; (CHANGES TONE) it's a kind son who'll go all the way to the Grovenor Road to get his ma a fish supper and a tub of Italian ice cream on a Friday night!

BILLY: SADIE looks forward to her Friday treat, naught wrong with that! Them Italians are getting' in everywhere with their ice cream parlours and chip shops; well as long as they stick to food! There was talk of them coming up here to Conway Street and settin' up a stall with tea and buttered baps, BARNEY HUGHES baps at that - there now what do you think of that?

BIDDY: Makes no difference to me, too many mouths to feed at home; would be handy for you lot, the management people, your ma wouldn't need to get up and make you a piece every mornin' then; some days us mill girls don't have a piece, a boiled patato and a bit of lard when we get home, if we're lucky!

BILLY: (IGNORING WHAT SHE'S JUST SAID HE LOOKS HER UP AND DOWN) Where'd you get them boots from? Never seen you wearing anything on your feet before!

BIDDY: Miss KELLY from next door to us died, there's only her brother DAN, he wants to go off to fight for REDMOND, he's no need for them, wouldn't fit him anyway! I washed her corpse and helped lay her out on top of the bed ; she was so cold and stiff and her eyes wouldn't close and mouth wouldn't shut and without her teeth in, it was a gaping big hole; had to put two pennies on her eye lids to keep them closed and tied a piece of a linen round her head and chin to keep the mice from running in and out; he gave me her boots in gratitude, though he took the laces out first, needed them himself he said, but he gave me what was left over from the wake: a packet of tea, Lyon's and a cup of sugar, two big wheaten bannocks with enough margarine to do us for days!

BILLY: That's not why you're here to tell me of your good fortune, now is it? What is it you want here - spit it out - come on and hurry it up!

BIDDY: No (THOUGHTFULLY) no this would be the last place I'd come with news of good fortune!

BILLY: (GRINNING) What's wrong BIDDY, you in the family way again?

BIDDY: Not since my JOHNNY got the mumps I haven't been in the family way, and I'm not complainin', God bless them mumps, for He knows we've enough mouths to feed!

BILLY: Is he still followin' that Connolly boyo around? I was readin' that his mate LARKIN was in jail once; and if your JOHNNY doesn't mind the company he's keepin' he's liable to end up the same; 'course, he doesn't feed all them wee mouths anyway, he leaves that to you, that right BIDDY?

BIDDY: My JOHNNY'S tryin' to better himself, he's learnin' to read and write! Sister Vincent from St Vincent's is learnin' him two days a week and he can go into the Falls library and sit and read the papers so he knows what's happenin' in England and everywhere; you'll not tell my JOHNNY anything he don't already know!

BILLY: The Falls library, you don't even know its proper name, it's the CARNEGIE library!

BIDDY: It's a CARNEGIE library BILLY not the CARNEGIE library (SARCASTICALLY) seein' as you think you know so much!

BILLY: I sometimes wonder about you BIDDY you don't even know what you're talkin' about half the time. Now hurry yourself up or you can see me tomorrow; wait behind and tell me what it is that's on your mind.

BIDDY: No BILLY, I'll not be waitin' behind tomorrow or any other day. I see wee Jeanie with the hump on her back waitin' a lot; she must be the only one you don't have to blackmail into doin' what you want after everyone else goes!

BILLY: I'll remember that BIDDY when the overtime comes round! You'll never get a better job with better workin' conditions than here in the Falls Flax Spinning Company, there's a war loomin' and we're goin' to be one of the top providers for the linen. Your next door neighbour might well be bandaged in linen made here in Conway Street, his uniform may have begun its journey right in this very mill and in fact BIDDY dear, your hand may have been the hand that tied the broken yarn with the help of that wee picker of yours! From Belfast to Belgium. (SARCASTICALLY) So not only DAN from next door should be grateful to you but so also should Mr ASQUITH our beloved prime minister and yours!

BIDDY: You really do think you know everything BILLY but all you really know is how to bully women and wee girls; you'll not bully the men in case you run into them up Leeson's Street!

BILLY: I see you've been takin' lessons in cheek, now clear off and don't bother comin' in tomorrow!

BIDDY: I'm sorry BILLY, don't know what came over me there, I don't know what I'm sayin' anymore! It's my SADIE that I'm worried about!

BILLY: She got a start didn't she!.....See how I always look after my own girls. There's nobody that can say any different, that right BIDDY?

BIDDY: REACHES OUT HER HAND TO BILLY (HE IGNORES THE GESTURE) THEN PULLS IT BACK. BILLY I know you really are a good boss and I know you'll help me out with this. You see, my SADIE'S not eight yet and I need her to get the start here, but, Mr ROBINSON first he says she's got a start and then he says she has to bring in her lines first, the unions and them

education people are sayin' child labour aint right, so I need someone to change the year on her lines with ink, otherwise she'll not get a start here 'cause she isn't the age yet!

BILLY: Sure she can get a start somewhere else!

BIDDY: But BILLY I need her here so I can keep an eye on her, you know what I mean, so no foreman or boss can take advantage of her, she's only a child!

BILLY: What are you sayin'?

BIDDY: You know what I'm sayin'.

BILLY: Forget about the lines, I'm not alterin' anything for you or anyone, got it BIDDY!

BIDDY: Got it 8 years ago BILLY!

BILLY: Got what you little.....

BIDDY: Got the baby BILLY

BILLY: What baby?

BIDDY: Your baby BILLY! (WHISPERS SOFTLY SEARCHING HIS EYES FOR A RESPONSE)  
Our baby! Why do you think I called her SADIE?

AS HE GOES TO WALK AWAY BIDDY PULLS HIM BY THE ARM:

BILLY: You're a liar! JOHNNY know about your lies?

BIDDY: You forced me and you've forced plenty of others.

BILLY: You're a mad woman BIDDY, (LAUGHS) No one will believe you no one!

BIDDY STANDS WITH FOLDED ARMS AND LOOKS BILLY STRAIGHT IN THE EYE

BIDDY: You want to tell my JOHNNY? Go ahead, but we can stop in Dunville Street first, let your ma know that she's has a grandchild and that she's called SADIE after her, with her ginger curly hair and the exact same turned in left eye! Come on, we'll bring her fish supper and tub of ice cream and the good news about her granddaughter; Poverty is a terrible thing, but so is the love a mother has for her children; it's not only terrible but frightening the lengths a mother will go to to protect her child! I may have been powerless against you BILLY because of poverty, but, for my children with all my weakness, I'd move mountains for them; (WHISPERS SOFTLY) or at least I'd try!

BILLY: If I ever hear this mentioned again, you can look for somewhere else to live; remember BIDDY that house you live in is property of this here mill; you're only a doffer and nothing else! Bring the lines in tomorrow!

BILLY WALKS QUICKLY OUT OF SIGHT TO LEFT AND BIDDY STANDS SMILING AND SINGS 'YOU'D EASY KNOW A DOFFER'

BIDDY: You'd easy know a doffer  
when she comes into town

with her long yellow hair  
and her pickers hanging down  
with her rubber tied before her  
and her scraper in her hand  
you might easy know a doffer  
for she'll always get a man!  
PAUSES BEFORE SAYING MENACINGLY  
Always!  
THE END

LET THERE BE LIGHT

A Short Appreciation to the Kindness of Andrew Carnegie

“The man who dies rich - dies in disgrace” are the words of Andrew Carnegie the richest man in the world. His impoverished family emigrated to America from Dunfermline Scotland in 1848. He did die a rich man on 11th August 1919 and was buried in Sleepy Hollow cemetery in Tarrytown New York.

During his lifetime he gave away 350 million dollars to medical institutions, universities, churches and libraries.

Another quote from Carnegie is worth pondering upon “Pity the poor millionaires, for the way of the philanthropist is hard”.

The short scene takes place between two Carnegie libraries; one on the Falls Road Belfast and the other in Pennsylvania.

CAST MISS BURNS

NANDI

MAIRE

(Performed in the Falls Road Carnegie Library)

SCENE IS SET IN TWO LIBRARIES WHERE TWO FEMALE IMMIGRANTS ARE WRITING LETTERS HOME TO THEIR FAMILIES. MAIRE O'NEILL IS WRITING FROM PENNSYLVANIA (early 1900's) NANDI IS WRITING FROM BELFAST (2011) THE STORY IS CONDUCTED BY A LIBRARIAN FROM SCOTLAND (1900's)

SIDE BY SIDE ARE TWO WRITING DESKS WITH PAPER AND PENS ON TOP. GIRLS ARE WRITING LETTERS HOME AND READING THEM ALOUD IN TURN. MISS BURNS WALKS UP AND DOWN THE AISLE RELATING STORY OF HOW CARNEGIE LIBRARIES CAME INTO BEING. DARKNESS, THEN LIGHTS ON AS MISS BURNS STANDS IN BETWEEN DESKS BEFORE WALKING UP AND DOWN AISLE.

BURNS: Well quite simply Andrew Carnegie never forgot where he came from. How could he have, when as a young lad, he had experienced the extremities of poverty? No work meant no food – and no food meant - hunger. Andrew Carnegie knew only too well the hunger for the heat of a blazing fire in a cold house, for a bed that was a longing instead of a dread; food in your belly

instead of that sickness that constant hunger brings. He knew all that and he understood how it felt to be poor and disadvantaged. His wealth came about by much hard work and also the fact that he was given the chance to educate himself through reading books loaned to him and other young working boys by their boss, Colonel James Anderson.

Andrew Carnegie wanted to share in a way that would eventually profit those he was trying to help. He wanted people to help themselves, and he laid down that first foundation stone; he wanted to be a light in the darkness. And so he decided that above all his libraries there would be a light and engraved over every doorway to the entrance would be the quote "Let there be light" and another thing was, leading to each doorway of a Carnegie Library are a number of steps which symbolise the elevation of one's mind when entering.

I got my love for books in his first Library built in Dunfermline in 1883 and I was so proud that my mother's father John Joe Campbell was a bricklayer working on the building of the library and more than that my other grandfather, Jonnie Burns, worked in the local quarry that made the very Sandstone bricks they used. (LOOKS VERY PLEASED)

Now, (RAISES HER FINGER) I want you all to think about how wonderful it was for people to access or browse the shelves of a library as opposed to having to ask the clerk to find you a book; a book that didn't know existed; you see, you had to have the title for the clerk to go and fetch you the book because members or customers weren't allowed to inspect the shelves; that was one of the revolutionary updates Carnegie brought in to his libraries. Look up there (POINTS TO FEMALES WRITING) don't just listen to their stories, but understand that it was and is because of the generosity of Andrew Carnegie that they can sit comfortably surrounded by millions of words on shelves and what they write is their choice!

MAIRE: (READING HER LETTER BEFORE SIGNING IT) My Dearest Mother, I hope all is well at home in Ireland or as well as can be expected, I just wish you and our KATHLEEN and MAUREEN and wee JINNY and SARAH and TOMMY and GERRY and ALBERT and GEORGE and TONY and CYRILL and KEVIN and DAVY and of course wee MAISEY had been able to afford the money to come over after us. Although daddy and MICHAEL didn't make the full journey, mother dear, maybe it was better than dying a worse death at home fighting the Sassenach; where you would have watched with a greater sadness than you have now. May God grant them both eternal rest. As you can see mother, (IF FR BLACK WILL READ THIS TO YOU) both my spelling and writing have improved greatly. I'm here in a library called after the Scots man, ANDREW CARNEGIE, who came over here to America and made more money than I could ever count. The library is in Munhall, Pennsylvania, and it overlooks the now closed Homestead Steel Works that belonged to the Scots man and would you believe that 16 men died during a Labour Strike or as some might say a Lock Out by the bosses in 1892. (SITS PENSIVELY)

NANDI: My dearest sweetest mama, how your daughter wishes you were here or rather she were there with you. I wish I could lay my head on your lap and you could caress my poor troubled mind at this moment. Mama, I'm suffering from a broken heart, caused by a man who tricked me into his bed with such promises of marriage and eternal love. Mama, I'm with child and this scoundrel of a man doesn't want to know me now. What can I do, tell me mama, what can I do? My only refuge is

here in the Falls library, I come here daily and am learning fast to read much better than before. As you told me mama there is a lamp outside the steps and leading to the front door engraved is a sign that says 'Let there be light'. It is indeed one of the Carnegie libraries you loved so much when you were a young girl growing up in Africa.

BURNS: Everyone has a story! Sometimes the telling of it begins in a library! (TO THE AUDIENCE) don't you agree? Books are the hungry man's food. And woman's. Every story has a beginning, a middle and an end. If only these walls could talk. Wouldn't you like to know how each story ended (WAITS FOR AUDIENCE TO ACKNOWLEDGE) Well I think that maybe the telling of them ended in letters written out somewhere in a Carnegie library not unlike here!

MAIRE: My Dearest Mother, such wonderful news for you. I'm bursting to get telling you, that, you'll not only have a new son in law but in eight months' time I'll be nursing your first grandchild. If it's a boy we will call it JAMES after daddy, no other boy's name will do, and of course mother dear if it's a girl, it will be called MARY after yourself. I'm so happy and content dear mother and my wonderful husband PATRICK DONNELLY from our own Falls Road in Belfast is such a hard worker and is doing well as a stable boy. PATRICK is hopeful of promotion any day now as Mr JEFFERS, the stable manager, seems to favour him above the other stable boys.

I'm so happy mother dear, knowing that when this letter leaves me. that you will bring it, on receiving it, to the Falls Carnegie Library to read it, with the help of Miss HAFFERON who works there. Isn't life so wonderful, mother dear. Your loving daughter, Maire xoxoxoxoxo

NANDI: Dear mama, I have great news for you. I am here in the Falls Library with my wonderful husband SEAMUS MCSHANE. We met in this very library room six months ago and we were married two weeks last Wednesday. SEAMUS knows about the baby but he loves me so much that it doesn't matter, mama, isn't that just wonderful. SEAMUS owns his own funeral undertaking business, his father and mother (who washed all the dead bodies) have both retired as they are too old to be getting up all hours through the night. It's so wonderful mama, I'm taking over from SEAMUS' mother, and I won't be minding getting up through the night to wash dead bodies, that's for sure. If the baby is a boy mama, we will call him SEAMUS and if it's a girl, we will call her ANGELA after SEAMUS' dead twin sister. Isn't life wonderful mama. Your loving daughter  
NANDI

BURNS: Who ever said that nothing ever happens in a library?  
END

I chose to write my tribute to Joe Sheehy through a short drama because Joe was a playwright/screen writer and so much more. I know Joe will appreciate this piece about the Last Supper and my perspective on the two main characters, Jesus and his betrayer Judas. Judas's mother isn't mentioned anywhere in the bible and there is no mention of Our Blessed Mother, Mary, being at the last supper, so I have used poetic license to tell that part of the story without altering the essence of 'The Last Supper'.

What I hope to achieve through this short drama about The Last Supper is to open up to anyone

who might not normally think about the staggering importance of that night in history when the Son of God declared our redemption through His imminent death on the cross.

The room, full of ordinary people, many not unlike ourselves were called physically by Christ, and they followed Him, we are also called, but for us, sometimes it is not so easy to hear the call or to believe that we are called by Christ to do something special for Him; the disciples perhaps felt the same at the beginning also.

I am referencing mainly from the gospel of John up until and then after ‘The Institution of the Eucharist’ (because John does not mention it, so I’m taking that specifically from Matthew 26:29) but not entirely, as I need to dramatise the scene from my own imagination (which I have an overwhelming sense that The Holy Spirit directs me to do) I want to bring in, for ex-ample, the mother of Judas Iscariot, I want her there as the mother who does not give up on her flawed son.

I will hopefully keep to all the important historical facts regarding the Institution of the Eucharist, otherwise this drama will be useless and will aid no one in their spiritual thinking; nor would it give glory to Almighty God, as is my intention.

CAST JESUS..... BARTHOLOMEW  
PETER .....MATTHEW  
ANDREW..... THOMAS  
JAMES .....JAMES (son of Alphaeus)  
JOHN .....SIMON (also called Zealot)  
JUDAS (son of James) .....JUDAS ISCARIOT  
MARY MOTHER OF JESUS  
JUDAS ISCARIOT’S MOTHER

THE SCENE TAKES PLACE IN THE UPPER ROOM PREPARED FOR THE PASSOVER FEAST. THE TABLE IS SET WITH FOOD AND WINE, AND THE WOMEN ARE BUSY DELIVERING THE FOOD TO THE TABLE. THE SCENE BEGINS WITH JESUS WASHING THE FEET OF PETER (HE HAS ALREADY WASHED THE OTHERS) THERE ARE 12 SMALL STOOLS IN FRONT OF THE LONG TABLE. JESUS TAKES OFF HIS OUTER GARMENT AND WRAPS A TOWEL AROUND HIS WAIST AND IS ABOUT TO WASH PETER’S FEET.

PETER: Lord, are you going to wash my feet?

JESUS: At the moment you do not know what I am doing, but later you will understand.

PETER: Never, you shall never wash my feet

JESUS: If I do not wash you, you can have nothing in common with me

PETER: Then, Lord, not only my feet, but my hands and my head as well

JESUS: No one who has taken a bath needs washing, he is clean all over. You too are clean, (LOOKING AROUND AT THE OTHERS) though not all of you are.

AFTER DRYING PETER’S FEET, JESUS DRESSES AND THEY BOTH RETURN TO THE TABLE, EVERYONE LISTENS INTENSIVELY AS JESUS SPEAKS TO THEM.

JESUS: Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and rightly; so I am. If I, then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each others' feet. I have given you example so that you may copy what I have done to you. I tell you most solemnly, no servant is greater than his master, no messenger is greater than the man who sent him. Now that you know this, happiness will be yours if you behave accordingly. I am not speaking about all of you: I know the ones I have chosen; but what scripture says must be fulfilled: Someone who shares my table rebels against me.

(LOOKS DIRECTLY AT JUDAS ISCARIOT) I tell you this now, before it happens, so that when it does happen you may believe that I am He. I tell you most solemnly, whoever welcomes the one I send welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.'

JESUS IS SEATED AT THE MIDDLE OF THE TABLE, NEXT TO HIM IS JOHN AND AT HIS OTHER SIDE IS PETER, JUDAS ISCARIOT IS FURTHEST AWAY AT THE FAR END OF THE TABLE. MARY THE MOTHER OF JESUS WALKS TOWARDS THE TABLE WITH A PLATE OF BREAD AND THE MOTHER OF JUDAS ISCARIOT WALKS TO THE TABLE ALSO WITH A JUG OF WINE COMING FROM THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION, THEY HALT AS THEY ALMOST BUMP INTO ONE ANOTHER.

MARY: (SMILING) I am so sorry, all this rushing around in this tiny room for so many big men is confusing is it not?

MOTHER OF JUDAS: (SPEAKS QUICKLY AND SEEMS A NOSEY SORT OF PERSON) It certainly is. Aren't you, MARY, the daughter of JOACHIN and ANNE? They were friendly with both my parents and of course your aunt ELIZABETH, she was a lovely lady and JOHN, my son JUDAS, (POINTS TO HIM) just there at the end of the table, he adored him. We were heart broken when he left JOHN to follow your boy JESUS, well, I mean we didn't know anything about him except he's from good stock and JUDAS, adores him as much as he did JOHN. Oh MARY, it's so hard being a mother now days, isn't it? (LOOKS INTO MARY'S EYES WAITING FOR AN ANSWER) A carpenter, isn't that what he did before all this? And his father Joseph, he too was a carpenter I'm told, I didn't know your husband but I heard he was a good carpenter; I suppose, JESUS, followed in his father's footsteps?

MARY: Yes, JESUS, is His Father's son!

MOTHER OF JUDAS: JUDAS always worked with money, he's a good head on him, though I can't say that in the past we weren't worried about him, you know, he was always victim to being lied about, people would wrongfully accuse him of one thing or another, but, all that changed since he followed JESUS. Oh, he loved the BAPTIST, JOHN, but when he heard JESUS, that was it, he was totally converted. And now he's telling me and his father that JESUS is planning to change things for the better; he's hoping that perhaps he'll be over the treasury in this new government that your JESUS is creating, a new empire, JUDAS says, where all men will be free and can walk in the light instead of underground in the darkness like slaves. He tells me that PETER, SIMON as we know him, brother of JOHN there who sits next to your boy, he says that he heard JESUS tell him that he would be in charge, he's even getting him the key to His kingdom; (MOCKINGLY) my, aren't those two brothers doing well for themselves!

MARY SMILES THEN PUTS THE PLATE OF BREAD ON TABLE IN FRONT OF JESUS.  
JUDAS'S MOTHER SETS JUG IN FRONT OF JESUS SMILES AND SAYS TO HIM,  
POINTING:

MOTHER OF JUDAS: That's my son there at the end of the table, my JUDAS. We're so proud of him and so grateful that you've taken him as one of your own. The rest of your catch are all Galileans; but my JUDAS is on his own, in a sense, being from Judea; Kerioth to be exact. (SMILING AND DUSTING CRUMBS OFF THE TABLE) You're a good son, JESUS, your mother's proud of you, I'm sure, and who could blame her. (WHISPERS) Don't let him drink too much of the wine; we were there in Cana, at the wedding, you were there with your mother; it was the best wine we ever tasted.

CONCERNED, JUDAS GETS UP AND TAKES HIS MOTHER BY THE ARM OVER TO THE SIDE AWAY FROM THE TABLE AND TALKS TO HER.

PETER: Lord, you look troubled, are you all right?

JESUS: (LOOKING STRAIGHT AT JUDAS) I tell you most solemnly, one of you will betray me  
PETER NODS TO JOHN AND MOUTHS FOR HIM TO ASK, WHO IT IS.

JOHN: Who is it, Lord?

JESUS: It is the one to whom I give the piece of bread that I shall dip in the dish

JESUS TAKES A PIECE OF BREAD AND DIPS IT INTO A DISH IN FRONT OF HIM

LOOKING THE WHOLE TIME AT JUDAS WHO IN TURN WALKS OVER TO JESUS

LEAVING HIS MOTHER AND TAKES THE BREAD. THEY STARE KNOWINGLY AT ONE ANOTH-ER.

JESUS: What you are going to do, do quickly'

JUDAS RUSHES TO THE DOOR AND EXITS. THOMAS, SHOUTS TO PETER

THOMAS: Did you see the haste with which ISCAROIT ran to the door.

PETER: I believe he's gone to buy food for the poor so they can also enjoy the Passover. Did you not witness him the other evening in Bethany at LAZARUS'S house, about the expensive ointment that MARY anointed JESUS' feet with, that the three hundred denarii, which it cost should have been given to the poor instead. Well then, that must be where he's gone, to feed the poor.

THOMAS: I did witness that indeed, and I heard the reply that JESUS gave, correct me if I'm wrong; He said, 'Leave her alone; she had to keep this scent for the day of my burial. You have the poor with you always, you will not always have me.' A strange thing, I thought, for a young and healthy man such as, JESUS, to have said, don't you agree; or maybe you dis-agree!

PETER: He says many strange things and then tells us that we will understand everything He has taught us after He has gone.

THOMAS: But, gone where, where is He going to, that's what I would like to know! Believe nothing until you see it with your own two eyes, that's my motto!

PETER: Motto? What's a motto, THOMAS?

THOMAS: I don't exactly know, a word I think that hasn't been invented yet.....but then again, maybe it's a word that may never be in-vented.....(LAUGHS) but I like the sound of it.

JOHN: You'll never change, THOMAS, always doubting even what your own mind tells you!

THOMAS I don't doubt everything.....no not all things.

JOHN Had you not seen with your own eyes, JESUS, walk on the wa-ter, would you have believed us?

THOMAS: No, I only believed because I saw it with my own eyes; but, even then, I found it hard to understand how He did that, after all, He is flesh and blood like ourselves, is He not?

JOHN: Is PETER not also flesh and blood like us; yet, PETER tried and then failed; remember when, JESUS, said to PETER, when PETER cried out, 'Lord! Save me!' as he sank in the water, 'Man of little faith, why did you doubt?' Is the difference between, JESUS, and us, not in our flesh and blood but in our faith, or lack of it?

THOMAS: I just don't understand all these things that have been happening, like LAZARUS, who but YAHWEH can raise someone from the dead? And then that time in Capernaum, remember that man who was lowered from the roof-top, remember him, he had palsy, and JESUS firstly told him that his sins were forgiven, now, who but YAHWEH, can forgive sins I ask, but, then He told the man to take up his bed and walk and the man did, and so I'm still confused, I just don't know what to believe, the point is this, when I am with JESUS, I believe, but, when I'm not with him I start to doubt. I am indeed, a man of little faith, just like PETER.

AT THIS POINT JESUS STANDS UP AND SAYS A BLESSING OVER THE PLATE OF BREAD ON THE TABLE.

JESUS: (RAISING HIS ARMS OVER THE BREAD AND IN A WHISPER SAYS)

FATHER in heaven, bless this bread which your holy spirit has brought life to.

THE ROOM IS COMPLETELY SILENT. THEN LIFTING THE BREAD HE BREAKS IT INTO SMALL PIECES, HE GIVES EACH OF THE APOSTLES A PIECE IN THIER HAND, AND RAISES ONE PIECE WITH BOTH HANDS HIS ARMS OUTSTRETCHED IN FRONT OF HIM AND SAYS:

Take it and eat; this is my body

JESUS KEEPS HIS HEAD ERECT LOOKING UPWARDS AND STANDING STILL FOR A MOMENT THEN THEY ALL EAT AT THE SAME TIME. WHEN THEY FINISH, JESUS, STILL STANDING, FILLS A CUP WITH WINE FROM THE JUG AND PASSES THE JUG ALONG FOR EVERYONE TO POUR A CUP, THEN HE RAISES HIS CUP AND WHISPERS A BLESSING THAT ISN'T COHERENT BE-FORE SAYING OUT LOUD:

Drink all of you from this, for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. From now on, i tell you, i shall not drink wine until the day i drink the new wine with you in the kingdom of my father.

THEY ALL DRINK IN UNISON. AFTERWARDS THEY ALL LOOK UPWARDS AS THOUGH THEY ARE HEARING SOMETHING AND SEEING SOMETHING FOR THE FIRST TIME. AFTER A MOMENT JESUS SITS DOWN AND SINGS PSALMS: (116:3-4, 8-9, 12-13) IN THE BACKGROUND THE APOSTLES ARE HUMMING.

JESUS (SINGING) The snares of death encompassed me, the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish. Then I called on the name of the LORD "O LORD, I beg you, save my life!"...For you de-livered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling; I walk before the LORD, what shall I render to the LORD for all his bounty to me? I will lift up the

cup of salvation and name of the LORD...O LORD, I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your handmaid, you have loosed my bonds. I will offer you the sacrifice of thanksgiving....

AS SINGING ENDS JESUS STANDS TO SAY:

Before we leave this room to cross the Kedron valley to pray in the gar-den, I have some things I want to tell you and it is this: 'I shall not be with you much longer. You will look for me, and, as I told the Jews, where I am going, you cannot come. I give you a new commandment: love one another; just as I have loved you, you also must love one an-other. By this love you have for one another, everyone will know that you are my disciples.'

PETER: Lord, where are you going?

JESUS: Where I am going you cannot follow me now; you will follow me later

PETER: Why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.

JESUS: Lay down your life for me? I tell you most solemnly, before the cock crows you will have disowned me three times. (SOFTLY) Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house; if there were not, I should have told you. I am going now to prepare a place for you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you with me; so that where I am you may be too. You know the way to the place where I am going

THOMAS: Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?

JESUS: I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through me. If you know me, you know my Father too. From this moment you know him and have seen him.

JOHN: Master, what is this you are telling us?

JESUS: This is my commandment: love one another, as I have loved you. A man can have no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends'.

THEY ALL STAND AND HOLDING HANDS SING THREE TIMES, ALLELUIA; JESUS IS THE FIRST TO MOVE FOLLOWED BY THE REST OF THE APOSTLES OUT THE DOOR. MARY AND JUDAS'S MOTHER REMAIN CLEARING THE TABLE.

MOTHER OF JUDAS: (TO MARY) See, my boy JUDAS, he'd no time for eating or drinking, he went ahead of the others to prepare things for JESUS, isn't he a good boy, MARY, my son JUDAS. THE TWO MOTHERS LOOK INTO ONE ANOTHER'S EYES

END

LIGHTS OUT

THE EXCHANGE

AMELIA walks on to microphone, look at all of audience as if looking for a friend who is in audience.

CAST:

AMELIA (black girl)

MAIRE (white girl)

AMELIA Hello: (stand smiling) I am a breeze, a drop of rain that can quench the thirst of a sparrow!

And you my friend, you are the embrace that can fill the loneliness of the uprooted soul!

Let us change places for one moment in the sphere of our 'could have been other existence' just now, just for this moment.

DRUMS BEAT AND AMELIA DANCES TRIBAL DANCE (for about 1 minute)

CONTINUES:

Will someone come up here and join me?

Girl comes up from audience. Both face audience then hold hands. After about 10 seconds let go.

AMELIA Do you like the rain?

MAIRE Not when it's raining!

AMELIA Do you like the Sun?

MAIRE Always when it's shining!

AMELIA Do you like your water clean?

MAIRE I only like my water- clean, clear and cool!

AMELIA How do you like your food?

MAIRE I like my food fresh and on a clean dish with salt and pepper!

AMELIA How do you like your food prepared?

MAIRE I like my food prepared in a clean kitchen, with clean pots and pans and table washed down beforehand!

AMELIA And your bed, how do you like your bed?

MAIRE With clean sheets, soft mattress and a duvet that matches the curtains!

AMELIA And your family, your parents sisters and brothers, how do you like them to live?

MAIRE Like me, in a nice house with nice things!

AMELIA But, how do they live? Do they get everything they need?

MAIRE No not always, what you want isn't always what's good for you, is it?

AMELIA TAKES MARIE'S HAND IN BOTH HER HANDS AND ASKS:

AMELIA Would you mind just for a moment swapping places with me?

MAIRE What do you mean, swap places with you?

AMELIA I don't mean permanently; just for now, just for this instant!

BOTH CHANGE PLACES:

AMELIA Now you ask me those same questions and I'll tell you the story of my life, the story of my people!

MAIRE But that wasn't my story, nor the story of my people, it would take me a longer time than that to tell you or anyone how we live!

AMELIA We will see, then, begin.

MAIRE Do you like the rain?

AMELIA I love the rain, except when it doesn't arrive when we need it, I love the rain so much, except when it washes the homes that we've built with our bare hands, with mud and dried pieces of dead trees, away, and we've lost everything! That's the only times I don't love the rain! (pause) Oh yes, the other time I don't love the rain is when our people die of thirst because the rain didn't come.

MAIRE Oh, I'm sorry, really sorry, I shouldn't have ask you that.

AMELIA Don't be sorry, there are no benefits for a people dying of thirst in the word sorry.  
Continue!

MAIRE Do you like the Sun, then?

AMELIA I love the Sun, it has been good to us; except when it dries our crops, our wells, our whole land, then what is so good to us is also bad to us. You see, when your land and water supply is dried up eventually, something inside of you dries up as well, I don't just mean your bones or your guts, that's bad, but when your eyes dry out and then your mind, it dries up and you no longer can think, you just don't know how to any longer, that's when I don't like the Sun the most. When it dries up your brain and you just can't think. You can die a long time before your dead!

MAIRE Do I have to go on?

AMELIA To understand, you do!

MAIRE Do you like clean water?

AMELIA That wasn't the question. Only a fool would say no to that one. The question wasn't whether or not I like clean water, the question was do I like my water clean. The answer to that is, yes, when I can get it. I don't mind if it's warm or if it's not too clear, as long as it's clean enough to keep me alive! We can't always drink because we're thirsty, we drink water to stay alive. When the children see the water they just drink.....and then they die.

MAIRE Your food, how do you like it; I mean, how do you like your food?

AMELIA When it's in my mouth! That's the only time I'm certain of my food..... when its' in my mouth.

MAIRE How do you like your food prepared?

AMELIA Where ever; pride has no place in a hungry mouth!

MAIRE And your bed, how do you like your bed?

AMELIA Anywhere that's under cover, anywhere that has a roof mud, stone, or cloth.

MAIRE And your family, your parents sisters and brothers, how do you like them to live?

AMELIA I'm happy if they can go to school, come home and stay alive.

MAIRE But, how do they live? Do they get everything they need?

AMELIA If they have some food and clean water, then, that's most of what they need, to keep them alive in any one day.

MAIRE And what about what they want, do they get that?

AMELIA When they can have the Sun and the rain in equal measures then I guess that's what they really want!

MAIRE How, oh how do you survive?

AMELIA You want to know something, well, I want to ask you that same question, with a straight face!

DRUMS PLAY AND AMELIA DANCES.

END.

BY

Roseleen Walsh Sep. 2012

Written for literary evening in St Anne's Parish Hall

JEAN, JEAN AND THE REAL JEAN

## CAST

JEAN 1 JEAN (Wearing only a sheet)

JEAN 2 JEAN'S Conscience (male or female)

JEAN 3 JEAN'S Truth (male or female)

## ACT 1

Scene is set in bathroom. (Peggy Lee singing Feelin' Good) JEAN1 enters wearing black flowing dress with hair and make up to perfection. She dramatically moves to music before stepping into bath at right of stage and filled with shredded paper; to the left of bath is a full length mirror.

Across from right of bath is JEAN2 (JEAN'S Conscience) is sitting in wheel chair facing audience through glassless mirror putting on make-up. Between both, in the background is JEAN3 (JEAN'S Truth) is sitting on toilet.

SITTING IN BATH TUB SHE POINTS TO THE TRUTH SITTING IN BACKGROUND TO THE LEFT OF JEAN2:

JEAN1: (Picking up photo album) I suppose he (points to Truth) wants me to reflect on my past.....The cheek of him.....thinking that I should have any regrets.....(loudly) me regrets! (pause looks in mirror at side of bath) maybe one or a few.....(smiling) that time in Paris with the handsome photographer SIMON.....he was young.....so was I. His first and last assignment, May 1968 the student riots .....we were both scared shit! I had the headlines in my head 'They were the best of times, they were the worst of times' Charlie D wrote the lines before me but that doesn't mean that I wouldn't have thought them up anyway..... I don't remember if it was I who fell into his arms or he into mine.....oh yes now I remember.....I had the veal with creamy sauce and he had (laughs) besides me for afters.....coq au vin..... a tiny piece of sauce was on the side of my lip, and (thinks) that's right he wiped it away with his finger.....such an intimate gesture, and I recognised it for what it was.....an intimacy between two almost complete strangers.....two soon to be lovers! One crying out for love.....for affection, and the other for conquests.....nothing more, nothing other than an opportunity! Then he spoilt the moment by stuffing a large piece of chicken into his adorable mouth and choking (speaks slowly as if exaggerating) it was so uncouth! I just sat there with my mouth wide open and luckily for him the waiter jumped to his aid banging him on the back and then putting his arms around his stomach and pressing it violently and the moment of moments.....the damned chicken.....a direct hit.....over my brand new reefer jacket.....it could have been worse, I dread to think!.....after all my mouth was wide open..... .yes.....that was how I managed to get into his bed.....room..... there was no beating about the bush in the 60's.....I remember helping him up to the room..... it was The Beat Hotel quite bohemian mainly artists and writers resided there; everywhere else was booked out but SIMON knew a friend of a friend.....under different circumstances I would have soaked the whole atmosphere up, but I just didn't have the time, thought I had..... but I hadn't. Years later I went back to do a story on JACK S HOLLOW, he lived out his final years there as a recluse, genius of a man (pauses) where was I?.....yes..... I offered to help (says loudly) yes help him undress.....and as I pulled the bedclothes back for him to lie down he sort of pulled me down with him. (thoughtful) What can I

say.....ten out of ten.....full marks for the little man.....and I stress the word little.....  
from Narrow Water.....yes that place back home though it sounds more like somewhere in the  
Rockies. Well at least he died happy.....I mean.....I imagine he would have been  
thinking about our exchange that next morning.....maybe that's why he tripped and fell into the  
path of that oncoming car.....they said he never knew what hit him. Poor SIMON. But that's life!  
So why should I have regretted that? I don't! I regret nothing. (change of tone) I'm not  
political.....I have no politics.....I've worked hard, told the stories, and off course I  
tried to tell the truth.....whatever 'the truth' or 'truth' really is. I tried to be honest.....but  
honesty isn't necessarily telling the truth, I know that now. Speaking of 'TRUTH' do you know  
what else he ask me, he ask 'Why have you no water in the bath' he ask me that freakishly with a  
straight face. I knew if he had to ask the question, he just wouldn't understand the answer. (Looks to  
audience) Will anyone understand? Will anyone? Will they figure it out? Do I have to explain  
myself to everyone? (exasperated) I've always had to explain everything, every motive for anything  
I've ever done in my life.....and now I've to explain why I'm bathing in shredded pieces of  
paper.....I can't do explanations any more.....I can't take this anymore.

JEAN1 SLIDES SLOWLY DOWN INTO BATH

JEAN2: You don't fool anyone.....no one's fooled any more by anything you say.....or write!  
That poor SIMON, someone told me it was you who tied his laces that morning.....

JEAN1: SLOWLY RESURFACES

You bitch.....you rotten liar! Who do you think I am.....MARY MAGDALINE? I never tied a  
man's laces in my life! You bitch!

JEAN2: Did you or did you not dress him that morning?

JEAN1: Not his shoes.....he wore dirty socks that morning he'd no clean socks in his suitcase,  
he pulled all his clothes out looking for a huggy bear but.....

JEAN2: A huggy bear.....you've your own name for everything, why can't you call things by  
their proper name.....like everybody else. A huggy bear.....if you mean a condom why not  
just call a condom a condom?

JEAN1: Was that a question or an answer? You're getting too fast for me, you think you know it  
all..... don't you don't you? Everyone has their own name for things they keep hidden.....it's  
only you I'm talking to, no one outside of me is listening.....why do you criticise everything I  
say or do?.....I just can't be myself with you around. Now clear off.....do you hear me just  
clear off!

JEAN2: (Combing her hair) He did ask you to tie his lace because it kept opening on him the day  
before.....part of the lace broke off and he couldn't get a grip to tie it properly. And what did you  
say?

JEAN1: (Shouts) I..... don't..... remember.....what was that question again?

BOTH JEANS STARE AT ONE ANOTHER

JEAN2: That's right it's a question only a question not an accusation!

JEAN1: I think I may have said something flippant like.....I don't do knots or something.....smart.

JEAN2: Smart yeah that sounds like you.....smart.

JEAN1: I don't like what you are inferring, it happened, I liked him, we had great fun that night. It was fun.....at least I made him happy.....a bit happy anyway.....or maybe it was escapism with all what had been happening outside earlier.

JEAN2: And then he was brought home in a box.....was it a nice 60's hippy box? What did his wife say when you told her what happened?

JEAN1: SINKS UNDER PAPERS FOR A MOMENT THEN QUICKLY RESURFACES

I didn't get to meet his wife, I'd to stay on in Paris and finish the assignment.....that was what I was being paid for. I didn't even know him we'd only met the week before..... he was just a part of the team..... neither of us were seasoned players we were just beginning our careers.....so there was no need for me to come back for his funeral, it wasn't as though he'd been killed by the police or a brick thrown by the students or anything related to the riots, there was no story in his death, he only got a small quarter of a column.....(pause) that's all his death warranted.....eight lines though it was on the front page with his picture. (Trying to convince) I didn't know he was married. He didn't say, so how was I to know?

JEAN2: Oh, I see, he wasn't wearing a wedding ring then, had he taken it off getting on to the plane? Did he think 'oh here's a girl with a conscience can't let her know I'm married, promised to love honour and obey CARLA forever and ever Amen! Was that it, was that really it?

JEAN1: Damn you.....we were in Paris, gay Paree and sex was everywhere and it was free it was about freedom.....the bloody riots in part were about sexual freedom.....don't you know anything! Damn you damn you.

JEAN2: You did know that she.....CARLA.....was pregnant.....didn't you? Bye the way that was a question!

JEAN1: Yes, I heard about it she gave birth to a little boy three months later.

JEAN2: Name, what name did she call him? Was it SIMON?

JEAN1: You know dam well what she called him.....now who's pretending? What does it matter what she called him!

JEAN2: Who said it mattered, not I. I didn't say it mattered at all. Why would I? It doesn't matter to me what she called him. Perhaps she called him after herself.....KARL. Isn't that the masculine for CARLA?

JEAN3 WALKS TO SIDE OF BATH FOLDS HIS ARMS AND STARES KNOWINGLY AT JEAN1 THEN RETURNS TO POSITION.

JEAN1: There he goes again bullying me what is it he wants me to say?

JEAN2: Who? I can't see anyone else here. Oh maybe it's The TRUTH waiting for an opportunity to show its self or maybe it's a ghost from the past. TRUTH is something that comes from within. The TRUTH always was and always will be. TRUTH IS.....TRUTH lives!

JEAN1: Can you not see him.....he never leaves me alone! (ranting) He follows me everywhere I try to hide. I can have no peace because of him. Ever since that day.....(pause) if I put my head on the pillow he's there whispering in my ear, I turn my music up so I can't hear him, but above the music, in the music.....he's still there wanting me expecting me to say something..... he want me to say it out loud for the world to hear (pause) and yet it's of no consequences to anyone except her. She's better off not knowing the truth! I only wish I didn't know it.

JEAN2: Oh, very dramatic, you're one hell of an actress sweetheart. (brushes her hair)

JEAN1: (says hesitatingly) I.....(closes her eyes) I don't like you.....I don't like me and I can't stand you.....I like no one.....not even who I pretend to be! I'm the prisoner of my own lies or is it the truth that imprisons me?

JEAN2: The TRUTH will make you free. (puts brush down) Will it not?

JEAN1: I'm the one who has been to hell, not you so how would you know, you're only here because I allow you to be here. I need you because.....there is no one else! The TRUTH imprisons me it haunts me and it hurts. If I speak it I go back to hell.....if I don't speak it out loud I stay in this hell my poor mind has created.....through no fault of my own.

JEAN2: If it's not your fault then you should speak it say it out loud to someone.

JEAN1: You know it all..... I don't have to tell it to you.

JEAN2: Yeah, but I don't count, do I? I only count when you want me to. (Looking upward) I sometimes think you have created another me.....a false conscience I believe it's called. If you were still a Catholic you could go tell it to a priest and he would be duty bound not to repeat it and I believe they don't judge either; (slight pause) outwardly at least..... though as you and I know, inwardly it is so very different!

JEAN1: Yes, as you say, we both know about inward things! You are my inward thing aren't you? I just can't be bothered being Catholic.....it's too much bother.....it took too much out of me.....I used to feel guilty all the time about the most trivial of matters.....

JEAN2: Example example.....go on give me your old excuses (laughs) I mean examples go on JEANIE.....spill it out girl.....do it for the sisters!

JEAN1: Look this is when I can't stand you.....think what I want you to think or shut up.....I need you to talk nice to me ask me why.....why I do the things I do..... help me to understand.....tell me who I am! I don't need to hear the rubbish just the truth!

JEAN2: I can't tell the truth anymore.....because.....you destroyed me.....you only hear what you want to hear... the truth you shut out.....then it all comes crashing down and I'm the first casualty.....you can't dictate to your conscience..... it has to be allowed to grow and to be free. Off course you can over develop it and it becomes scruples.....a lid on your

freedom of choice..... it restricts your inner life and distorts all your thinking.....instead of being the beautiful gift that the mind is it becomes a mine field. You can't walk you can't run you're just trapped. You won't grow you begin to vegetate and then you change and years later wonder where it all went wrong!

JEAN1: (JEAN lifts up shredded paper with cupped hands and then lets it fall like she's sieving it) It all slipped away. Like baking a cake.....all the ingredients were there I had it all and let it slip away like flour being put through a sieve! I tried to make something, something good, something that would last but it just all got messed up. Why?

JEAN2: Were you not the mistress of your own misfortune?

JEAN1: To the world there was no misfortune.....but inside me there were so many thunderstorms and I must say I weathered them all well (pause) except for the last one.....which I just didn't see coming. I don't want to talk.....I want to forget.....I had forgotten and then she had to come and remind me and destroyed it all.

JEAN2: Destroyed what all JEAN what was it that you had that she could possibly destroy.....she didn't even know you.....

(SILENCE FOR A FEW SECONDS)

JEAN1: My peace my peace of mind! Why do you persist?

JEAN2: Because I want you to get back your peace JEAN. I know you like to be called by your name it means a lot to you JEAN doesn't it.....there's a tenderness when someone speaks your name to you, you're conscious of it aren't you JEAN.....it's been such a long time since anyone called you by your name in that way but..... don't stop just say what you're feeling JEAN go on keep going you know you don't really want to stop you'll find a way to say all the things you need to say JEAN and it is such a beautiful name for a beautiful person.....really you are beautiful JEAN and even I can start to like you again if you let me help you over this! Just talk JEAN be yourself. JEAN

JEAN1: (LIFTS THE SHREDDED PAPER AND WASHES HERSELF ALL OVER WITH IT BEFORE SAYING) Do you know what I'd love to talk about?

JEAN2: The river!

JEAN1: How did you guess (smiles)

JEAN2: You always like to talk about the river when you're trying to work things out in your mind; it's where your life began, isn't it!

JEAN1: It's where my first memory began. I can't remember anything before the river. The river was my home. It was where I belonged. It became like a mothers heart to me, I told it everything. I'd lie on the grass beside it and watch and listen in the quietness as it gushed and tumbled effortlessly, endlessly, like a heart beating; there was no end to it. It just flowed on and on. I went to it seeking comfort last week but it was gone, covered over with flats, bloody flats growing on top of

it. I cried. I turned away I couldn't bear to see such ugliness that was preferred to such loveliness that gave so much pleasure to rotten miserable lives like mine for life times.

JEAN2: You didn't mention.....

JEAN1: We haven't talked.....have we.....?

MAKES SWIMMING MOVES WITH SHREDDED PAPER IN BATH

JEAN2: Will we talk river then?.....now that it's no longer there.....out of the equation

JEAN1: Look.....what are the chances of the past catching up with you.....

JEAN2: With me? You, you mean!

JEAN1: Yeah, you just think the mistakes.....I make them!

JEAN2: Do you believe what goes round.....

JEAN1: Never.....until now. Isn't time and experience a strange thing.....hind sight isn't that supposed to be a wonderful thing. (Slight pause as she plays with shredded paper) it was inevitable I suppose at least ninety per cent inevitable that something from the past would eventually catch up and come back to haunt and claim revenge. Never for a good deed though..... always for what you wish you'd never done or said! (Thoughtful looking towards JEAN2 who's putting on make-up) You know I've had a good life, never had to pay for any mistakes..... before now! I should have saved all my depression up for this one and maybe it wouldn't feel so bad..... so sad.....so entirely my own fault.....my wrong choices.....(Deep Sigh)

JEAN2: You never mentioned this one to me.....did you even try?

JEAN1: (Sighs) It was buried well and good, into a past that I never admitted to even to myself.....and just look at me now.....look at you you can still paint your face oblivious to the crime I committed.....you were part of me and you didn't even know about it. The mind can play tricks on itself. It's like when you're an alcoholic until you admit it first to yourself you can't do a thing about it, you remain in denial and you fool yourself into thinking that you don't have a problem.... you coax yourself to take that glass of wine and convince yourself that you're in control. Everyone who knows you know you've a drink problem except for you. But when you admit it to yourself that's when you can change things, you begin from the inside and work your way out. You cleanse yourself.....physically and spiritually and then in time you become yourself again or the self you want to be.....the real self.

JEAN2: You know, there are times when you behave like you really don't need me, in fact, sometimes I feel you use me as a convenience.....is this how everyone else treats their conscience? (Speaks in a rhyming tone) Pull me out and throw me back dismiss me contradict me hide me manipulate me undermine me give me no credit for keeping you on the right path in life. I wasn't given to you to be abused but to be used and cherished like the precious jewel that I am! I belong to you JEAN MACINTOSH and you were supposed to develop me to keep us both healthy in mind and in body...and would you say that you've done that thus far? That is a question!

JEAN1: You weren't much of a conscience if truth be told! You were lazy and unwilling.

JEAN2: Lazy and unwilling.....you kept me sedated for most of your life! I actually thought I was dead.....you only resurrected me that time in Bosnia because you thought you were going to die and you needed help.

JEAN1: I couldn't go back to doing what I loved doing after Bosnia.....too old anyway to witness all that suffering.....all those (Shakes her head) people who didn't stand a chance. I thought the Iran-Iraq war couldn't be outdone by man's inhumanity to man..... but it was, I saw it all in Bosnia and I had to go home and get all that killing for pleasure out of my head.  
(Pause)

I really believed that I wrote about the truth..... that in some way I was making a difference to the people whose story I told.....but now, I don't even know what the truth is about myself..... never mind about anyone else. (Change of tone) But now that we're on the truth.....my two marriages they were based on lies and lucky for Tim.....he died before it killed him! Poor Tim.....I think he did love me... a bit. But Josh.....what a sham.....Mr WHITE and Mr BLACK oh my God what the hack; neither husband much good in the sack! (Lifts shredded paper and throws into the air)

JEAN2: (Speaks in compassionate tone) I wasn't involved in your life then, so this is all new to me JEAN. Even though it's all in the past just tell me the truth the real truth the whole truth JEAN..... you mightn't feel it's important now because it's all past tense but it still helps me understand who you are today, JEAN, and that's important for any conscience, you've unearthed me again so I must mean something to you.....honour me with the truth and it might stop you from hurting.....JEAN.

JEAN1: (Looks in mirror then takes deep breathe ) MARGARET THATCHER had just been elected the first female British Prime Minister and the year was 1979. I'd been covering the whole election campaign from the beginning and so after the victory speech I rushed home to tell JOSH I'd actually shook her hand and congratulated her.....(Laughs) sisters together.....what a laugh the thought of it.....THATCHER in a sisterhood! And there he was on top of our kitchen table starkers.....completely starkers (Speaks very deliberately) with that.....(Then calmly measured breathing) I don't like the word whore so I'll refrain from using it as I feel it demeans all women regardless so I'll just refer to her as a naked over sized female who was strategically positioned on top of him and I observed that she had the biggest bum I'd ever seen in my life! It was like I was watching a film and it paused for a moment, and at that moment all I could see was this enormous bum; it was surreal; imagine, a frozen moment that would change my life, the frozen image of a bum!..... They didn't move, at first they both froze, and I had the presence of mind to pull the fire extinguisher from the wall and proceeded to squirt it round them! (Lifts up handfuls of shredded paper and throws it in the air) How's that for extinguishing a smouldering fire! (Puts on voice similar to MAGGIE THATCHER measured and in tone) Carrying on behind my back, I soon showed them how I deal with disloyalty. I watched them crumble.....and I enjoyed it. I loved THATCHER.....I aspired to be like her putting all those weak crumbling excuses for manhood into their proper place with their knees up to their chins sitting in a corner waiting on her instruction

what to do and when to do it.....she knew how to use that fire extinguisher.....no one could dampen a fire like MAGGIE. They only got rid of her in the end because they couldn't take the shame of allowing a female to bully them.....in public.

JEAN2: I love it when you talk butch.....

JEAN1: Butch.....if you think I'm talking butch then it's no wonder I'm in despair..... can't you grasp anything I'm trying to say?

JEAN2: Yeah but its history.....it don't matter anymore! It's not only your history, it's someone else's history..... it's not relevant to you sitting in a bath of shredded paper pretending to wash yourself.....or is it.

JEAN1: When God gave me a conscience why did it have to be you .....no wonder I'm trying to wash myself clean with every word I've ever written.....at least then my words will have been good for something and at least I understand that.....I understand me.....you don't?

JEAN2: (Puts hands up to cover her face and makes noises) Whaaaa whaaaaaa whaa this is worse than I thought it was.....get a grip!

JEAN1: Get a grip of what.....? Reality.....I'm here because of reality.....my annus horribilis reality! If anyone's entitled to use that phrase that term to articulate their reality..... it's me.....and I am a royalist by the way! I love them all! But.....I'm as entitled as they are to have my issues expressed; and I can express them in my own bath at anytime as she does at Christmas in the box or as they say (Pronounces slowly) One does!

JEAN2: We have to get some sort of order into how this is all going (Without looking at JEAN1 she puts on red lipstick) Now, slowly, what happened after the table incident?

JEAN1: The what incident.....!

JEAN2: The table incident.....JOSH and the lady with the large behind.

JEAN1: Oh I see.... well I went and lived in Boston for two years well really I commuted between there and everywhere just to anywhere I got an assignment.....I had a fabulous time it was an exciting time for women and feminism, women were slowly moving into positions of authority in all sorts of ways in all sorts of fields.....in banking for instance.....the seat of power..... and you know something it was THATCHER.....our MAGGIE that started that ball rolling.

JEAN2: Yeah, I was heavily sedated during that time, you either didn't need me or you were afraid of me convincing you that you were worshipping a false god. The god of course being capitalism. Am I wrong or am I right? And yes that is a question.

JEAN1: I didn't need you then at all.....because.....I believed I was portraying the truth as it was, in every article I wrote. I may not have had the popularity that others in my profession enjoyed but I did believe in telling the truth..... as I saw it. When the miners' strike happened I concentrated on the bullying at the picket lines and the miners who didn't want to picket.....I still admired MAGGIE at that stage.....I couldn't say a bad word about her.....I just

couldn't. I couldn't say that somewhere along the line this wonderful woman of principle had changed.....I couldn't say that..... because..... because....it wasn't the truth.....she hadn't changed at all.....she was always against what she saw as opposition to capitalism. It didn't matter about the individual worlds that the mine closures would bring to the miners and their families and their towns and villages and a whole way of life.....there was this wider picture and MARGARET either didn't see or didn't care enough to see. That whole thing disturbed something deep inside me.....it seemed to come from nowhere this sense of losing one's faith.....faith that I didn't know I had.....faith in mankind.....in humanity.

JEAN2: And what? What happened next?

JEAN1: My long over-due break-down.....(Shrugs her shoulders and cries) It was a silent break-down.....no one knew.....I didn't tell a soul.....does that surprise you any? That's a question.....really. Now give me your answer I promise I'll listen. I'm beginning to realise that I should have listened to you before, I should have talked things over with you.....I wonder now is that what people mean when they say they talk to themselves, that really they're talking to their conscience.....I always just thought they were mad! It sounds like I'm the mad one for not talking to you from time to time.

JEAN2: If you really want to talk JEAN then talk, there is so much to be talked over, or, is it just one particular time you want to talk about, for instance, what has lead you here into this particular room of your mind? Don't answer now we'll get reacquainted, firstly because it's hard to be brought into something at the very end so let's talk about other things first we can do a question and answer session. Well?

JEAN1: Don't make me feel stupid because I lie in a bath that may soon become my coffin and this shredded paper my weapon of choice (thoughtfully) a dry drowning.....doesn't mean you can laugh at me.....you're a part of me so try to understand me for once.

JEAN2: O.K. accept that I'm taking you seriously.....I'm closer to you than blood can ever be.....I'm a part of you.....like your soul, your mind, your heart that holds all the love you own, your freedom and even your inner prisons I'm as much a part of you as these.....(Both look at one another for a few seconds) Let's talk.....music. I seem to remember ELVIS and Wooden Heart you used to sing it in the bathroom, what a coincidence you're in a bathroom now, any chance of a few cords?

JEAN1: (Smiling takes a deep breath before singing) Can't you see I love you please don't break my heart in two, that's not hard to do 'cause I don't have a wooden heart. There's no strings upon this love of mine, it was always you from the start, treat me nice treat me good treat me like you really should I'm not made of wood and I don't have a wooden heart. (Puts knees up to her chin) You know that night in Paris in The Beat Hotel..... in bed (smiles) after the first session with SIMON he lit two cigarettes.....menthol.....they were already on the cabinet beside the lamp.....normally I didn't smoke but it seemed like an extension....of intimacy .....we left our meal without getting desert so I equated the cigarette with desert to finish off.....wonderful

sex.....I didn't guess then that we'd continue all night and that it would feel so different somehow.....after all we didn't know one another.....in a sense I wished we were complete strangers no knowing the others name or anything about.....the other.....(Change of tone) anyway the song Wooden Heart.....he turned on the radio just before lighting the cigarettes and it was tuned into radio Luxemburg and that's what was playing.....ELVIS singing Wooden Heart.....(laughs) and it came so unexpectedly.....he began singing the German part and we looked into one another's eyes and suddenly there was this recognition.....of something.....I don't know what..... pain or pleasure.....I didn't know.....he took the cigarette from me and the next moment all this magic happened (Turns and looks straight at JEAN2) and.....oh my God.....the earth moved.....(Sighs) I (hesitates for a split second) felt the earth move.....my God what joy what ecstasy.....and then too soon it was day break.....one minute it was total darkness and the next it was light.....reality had returned.

JEAN2: Wow..... (smiling) had he a conscience?.....I'd love to have made music with it.....but you'd locked me away.....only you knew where the key was! I'm dead without you.....I'm only here now sharing this with you because you've resurrected me from oblivion. I'm beginning to see clearly now that I've missed almost all of your development  
JEAN.....dear JEAN. (JEAN 1 isn't listening)

JEAN1: (Thinking before speaking) It was like the river, my river, the energy just came from nowhere, it just happened and it went on happening there was no end to it it was pure unadulterated joy.....(Lifts shredded papers tight in her hands and throws them up in air, raises her face so papers can fall on it like snow using her tongue to blow them in a sensuous gesture)

JEAN2: I think you loved him. I think you fell in love with a man called SIMON and the following day when you saw him lying dead on the pavement the love you felt for this stranger was immediately locked in cold storage in a place where guilty secrets are hidden forever.....but JEAN I need to know what happened that made you open where that guilty secret was hidden, and forced you to bring it out into the light of day. (They both stare at each other) And yes that is a question.....it needs to be answered so I can help you get out of this bath of shredded paper or your life's work or whatever you have chosen to call it. I can help you come to terms with whatever is bothering you.....I can help you understand yourself, that is, if you let me. (Looks away from JEAN1) JEAN, what I'm about to tell you may come as a complete surprise to you.....in a way it's like a sort of confession!

JEAN1: Confession.....I've heard everything.....my conscience has a confession to make to me.....I'm going mad.....madder than I thought I was.....you're only here because I've just resurrected you.....you don't, you can't have a life outside of me.....you're not real.....get it.....you're not real you don't really exist on less I allow you!

JEAN2: JEAN.....this is it and I'm only telling you this so you'll know that I really do understand what's inside your head.... when you tell me things JEAN.....you're not my first nor my only charge.....I've been a conscience to many since.....well.....forever.....I've advised Kings, Queens and guess who.....go on guess.....try?

JEAN1: How can a conscience be a conscience to more than one person? Sit there and shut up.

JEAN2: Who are you talking to JEAN, yourself or myself? You know they don't use the term 'Conscience of a Nation' irrationally.....now go on be serious, guess.....and by the way just for the record I've never been the conscience of two people who were alive at the same time.

JEAN1: Oh go on then who.....I may as well know.....(Shakes her head and bits her lip)

JEAN2: NAPOLEON BONAPARTE!

JEAN1: (Closes eyes and shakes head pretending to be excited) YIPPEE! (Shakes head) Am I supposed to pretend to listen to this.....I don't even have a conscience instead I've a part of me that doesn't make sense.....and that's for real! That's the only thing about me that really is real. (Silence then change of tone) The only thing NAPOLEON BONAPARTE and I have in common is A Bottle with his name on it.

JEAN2: Now who's not talking sense. You and he do have a commonality of doing business in the bath-tub JEAN. He sold land from his and you're trying to sell yourself and.....for less than your worth.....to me!

JEAN1: What land? NAPOLEON wasn't a salesman he was a military man a King an Emperor a scoundrel a hero a villain, he wasn't a salesman (lifts shredded paper and throws it onto floor in defiant gesture) what land and that's definitely a question?

JEAN2: Does Louisiana ring any bells JEAN.....that's not a question!

JEAN1: Yeah it's ringing bells all right.....alarm bells. I think it's time for you to go back into hibernation.....go back to sleep..... I'll see you when it's all over.....silly me..... there'll be no need of you then.....it's just me.....and the TRUTH and the consequences that I'm left with.

JEAN2: JEAN.....look at me.....please.....(JEAN looks over) JEAN there's always hope!

JEAN1: And I suppose it's called JEAN as well.....how many damned JEANS are there.....every time I turn round there's another one!

DEEP AND LOUD SIGH FROM JEAN1 THEN LIGHTS OUT:

END OF ACT 1 BREAK FOR 15 MINUTES

ACT 2

JEAN1 & JEAN2 ARE WEARING THE SAME NEW DRESSES

JEAN3 IS STANDING OFF STAGE:

JEAN2: Can you see how daft this looks.....a bath tub of shredded paper.....it's a non-starter JEAN it aint taking you anywhere that you haven't already been.....it can't do a thing for you..... proves nothing except you're very imaginative.....you do know that you can never put the pieces back together?..... they're gone now forever!

JEAN1: Forever what's forever. That's not a question....because there is no answer and I don't need one anyway.

JEAN2: JEAN.....maybe you don't need an answer or 'The' (indicated inverted commas with fingers) answer to the question, 'what's forever,' in that question or non-question, lies not The Truth, but A truth or truth of A kind. Do you know, The TRUTH? (slight pause) JEAN.

JEAN1: The truth about what..... about my life? I don't know what TRUTH is anymore. I always thought I told the truth, that is, I didn't tell lies or half truths but THE TRUTH .....and now I don't believe I would recognise the truth if it looked me in the eye! It's a stranger to me.....or I to it.....it's like someone I never got to know; or maybe it's a long lost friend.....the kind of friend who tells you when there's a boogie on the end of your nose or the buttons of your blouse are opened and your boobs are hanging out..... or you smell like fish.....that is a friend.....but then again sometimes you just don't want to hear the truth from a friend.....sometimes you know you're in the wrong and you don't want to get it right if you're enjoying doing what's not right.....it's hard being me.....I get mixed feelings sometimes about things.....about almost everything.

JEAN2: TURNS TO LOOKS MISCHIEVOUSLY AT JEAN1 AS SHE LIFTS UP SHREDDED PAPER AND THROWS IT UP IN THE AIR.

To shred or not to shred.....is that your question?

JEAN1: No.....that was not the question..... the question was and is.....to be me or not to be me.....I'm looking for the answer.....I'm looking for the strength to answer the question myself.....but I don't seem to have enough courage to face the possibility that the answer might mean..... curtains up or curtains down for me.....(looking directly at JEAN2 she hesitates before saying) I don't think you can help me because you're too influenced by me.....I need a higher power than a conscience.....maybe that's what THE TRUTH is.....I've hid from it and now I call on it to help me.....(Shouts) TRUTH, where do you hide?

JEAN2: JEAN don't let go of me again.....you still need me.....I can help you cope with the truth as it unfolds. The truth can hurt, I can cushion that hurt.....I'll help you understand it o.k. JEAN.....now listen to the truth.....first open your heart and believe in the truth and let it liberate you, let it become what makes the difference between being yourself and being a fraud!

JEAN1: I'm here, in my shredded world.....my now comfort zone!

JEAN3: WALKS OVER TO BATH TUB FACING AUDIENCE

JEAN2: (Looking at The TRUTH)

And not a moment too soon!

JEAN1: Is it the truth or is it my tormentor?

JEAN3: TRUTH IGNORES QUESTION

It's wonderful to be back JEAN and to be wanted. I'm not here to frighten you JEAN I'm here at your invitation. I'm here to tell you how it really is (slight pause) shall we begin then?

JEAN1: You've been like a stalker following me everywhere, creeping behind me freaking me out.

JEAN3: You were afraid of me JEAN and you shouldn't have been, after all I'm your TRUTH there's no malice or bitterness in me I'm pure uncontaminated truth; no more and no less than the truth, the whole truth and nothing nothing but the truth!

JEAN1: CLOSES HER EYES AND RAISES HER RIGHT HAND TOWARDS THE TRUTH AS THOUGH SHE'S BEING SWORN IN AT COURT

I didn't know who you were; I'd never have guessed that you were the truth.....MY TRUTH?.....I thought the truth was just a feeling, something inside each one of us.....I didn't think it was visual.....tangible or even active....alive or dead! But now...now I understand my need for you.....for the TRUTH my very own TRUTH.

JEAN3: JEAN, TRUTH is ALL

JEAN1: All..... what does that mean.....all what? You are so pretentious you make yourself sound like the voice in the burning bush that told MOSES..... I AM!

JEAN3: If you love TRUTH then you live by the truth and you accept TRUTH as THE way of life. Everyone has their own TRUTH.....JEAN MACINTOSH'S TRUTH is JEAN MACINTOSH'S TRUTH.....and that's not necessarily THE TRUTH or THEE TRUTH but your TRUTH! Was JEAN MACINTOSH'S TRUTH also JEAN WHITE'S TRUTH? And then did it become JEAN BLACK'S TRUTH? (Stretches out hands as if balancing the truth) And is it the truth that you married JOSH just so you could boast about your marriages being BLACK and WHITE? A metaphor for the obvious, perhaps!

JEAN1: TRUTH..... you're a damned liar you're not my truth or the truth or.....or any sort of truth concerning me.....

SHAKES HER HEAD AND CRIES OUT

I don't want to know the truth anymore.....you hurt....dig too deep. My life's here (Points at bath) in this bath.... in shreds. I'm here watching, as my life ripped asunder into tiny fragments that make no sense, it crumbled and fell, soon I won't be able to stand up straight because of the weight of it all at the same time. I want to lie down and close my eyes and sleep.....drown myself with my words, choke myself with every single letter of every single word that I've ever written.....sense, rubbish.....fact, misinformation..... Deliberate or in ignorance.....whatever.....! Just leave me alone let me (snaps) Sleep! (crying tone) Where are you sleep.....my sleep.....I need you more than damned truth or bloody conscience!

JEAN2: Sleeping beauty.....JEAN this is no fairy-tale! Face facts! Waken up!

JEAN1: Waken up? Shut up!

JEAN2: Why? Is it because you really do hate yourself JEAN.....and me.....!

JEAN1: You.....you're nobody.....who do you think you are.....you're nothing.....nothing.....nothing.....just go away leave me alone go back to BONAPARTE get him to listen.....

JEAN2: You want me to be a negative and not a positive? Am I right? And yes that was a question! (Motions hands) Answer please. Quick!.....If you reject the truth it will just leave you at the same speed it came to you and you're left with nothing; I mean, JEAN, if you don't value the truth in your life then what is there to value.....not much.....eh?

JEAN1: (Distressed) Oh go back to sleep, I'll wake you if I need you.

JEAN3: JEAN, (Softly) let us begin, all you need to do for now is listen and accept; don't be afraid; what's done is done; you can't undo it no matter how you try and just be aware that the truth lives on..... it travels with you.....you don't leave it behind and it still has to be sorted! Now, where do we begin?

LONG SILENCE

JEAN1: I don't know, (in a whisper) I just don't know!

JEAN3: Well, if I Google you JEAN would I find the real JEAN there, JEAN the writer, JEAN the journalist, JEAN the friend, JEAN the wife, JEAN the hateful bitch? Yes JEAN, the hateful bitch that's what you call yourself when you think no one can hear and you're alone with yourself.....isn't being alone with yourself like being alone with another person in the form of your own self.....isn't it so JEAN.

JEAN1: Was that a question?

JEAN3: It was a truth JEAN, a shocking truth! Not because that's how you refer to yourself in private but the why you refer to yourself at all in that way is what's so shocking.

JEAN1: There's no getting away from you.....is there!

LONG SILENCE AS SHE RUNS HANDS THROUGH SHREDDED PAPER  
CONTINUES:

(Examining shredded paper in her hands) I didn't always loath myself.....it was the opposite.....at least I think it was! It only takes two things in your life to go wrong at the same time and the next thing you know your life's been turned upside down and you're incapable of turning it back round..... not for everybody off course it just seemed to be that way for me. (Pauses then says quickly) you know about the rape.....don't you?

LIFTS HER HEAD HIGH AND LOOKS TRUTH IN THE EYE  
CONTINUE:

So you must know why I didn't report it.....he said.....in a well rehearsed tone and.....I knew it was a line he'd said before.....'you journalists you'd do anything to get a story isn't that right' .....and then he laughed.....and I screamed inside.....that endless silent scream.....it echoed through my every waking hour afterwards.....that alone should have killed anything growing inside of me.....but it didn't.....I got the abortion 10 weeks and 1 day and 3 hours later.....it was only a foetus.....just a foetus.....something that had been forced inside me something I didn't want something I didn't ask for.....that's all it was and it wasn't even a relief to be rid of it, I really didn't give it a second thought I even went back to work that evening it didn't interrupt my

life.....my life became routine after that and I still aspired to be like MARGARET.....I wanted to be a MAGGIE (lifts shredded paper and throws into air) a MAGGIE MAGGIE MAGGIE (almost crying) until I became so disillusioned during the miner's strike; the minor details of it all; and before that the hunger strike.....but I ignored that at the time and then connected the two later.....too late by then and I realised that MAGGIE was really a man with a handbag.....she'd done nothing for the sisters.....nothing like she could have done and should have done.....and I asked myself what did I do with the truth about the hunger strikers and the miners and their families.....I didn't tell it in fact I even defended the lies put out about them.....I tried to disillusion people with the lies.....God forgive me for my sin wasn't so much the lies but the fact and the act of trying to disillusion people.....I betrayed my own profession.....I was a dressed up well paid con merchant!

JEAN3: You conned yourself that's for sure.....and your own disillusionment was like a mustard seed, so small at first that you couldn't see it take root.

JEAN1: It was everyone around me I was disillusioned with..... not me..... JEAN know it all..... can do anything JEAN..... yesterday today and tomorrow all rolled up into one big ball and I could roll it any which way! I controlled my life!

JEAN3: You didn't report the rape.....he got away with it and you let him..... (motions with hands to get JEAN1 to articulate her reasons) not because..... because what JEAN

JEAN1: Do you know how many people are raped every day and don't report it, I can give you surmised statistics and you could multiply it by 100 and you still wouldn't be near to the truth! .....he had diplomatic immunity as you know.....so what would the point have been..... I would have been got rid of through time.....lose what my life revolved around..... my career....wasn't just about writing or about selling stories it was about telling the truth to the world as I believed then.....I would have lost that power and for what.....? He was never going to be punished or get what he deserved.....That's the truth!

JEAN3: But JEAN after you there were others who didn't get what they deserved either! He had a bad ending.....you even wrote compassionately about it didn't you?

JEAN1: Yes.....(thoughtfully) guilty as accused.....but I had the satisfaction of knowing that it was all lies.....lies.....and more lies! I didn't share the rape, the abortion, with anyone but now I had the secret pleasure of spreading lies about the bastard! And the thing was that I knew those who were close to him would know it was all lies.....they would resent him getting credit for their ideas.....(shaking her head) get me... do you?

JEAN3: Yes I get you JEAN Truth is Truth even if you use it as a weapon for revenge it's still Truth and nothing can change that fact but sometimes revenge distorts Truth and Truth becomes less important than the consequences.....get me.....do you?

JEAN1: (Sighs) Yes I do know.....that's why I'm here in this bath of the shredded words of my life. Copy and paste can't make them whole again. If only I could have been more like MAGGIE.....(opens her mouth but at first words don't come out, deep sigh) I believed that and I admired her so much because I thought she didn't have a heart.....she only

broke twice in her 11 years.....the time MARK was lost in the desert and maybe for her, she was also lost in a desert, because, it was new territory for her, this powerful lady, lost because her son was lost.....

to me she was like the mother of Christ broken hearted at what was happening to her only Son.....some made the connection between the mother's of the 10 hunger-strikers but I didn't.....maybe I should have.....then when she was rejected by her party.....she couldn't take rejection.....anything else maybe but not rejection! I think we all fear the thing that can bring us to our knees! The TRUTH did it to me! (puts her head down)

JEAN3: The TRUTH gets the bad press the world over..... it gets the blame for so much and yet lies and cover-ups are the preferred options for nearly everything in between! If you love TRUTH then you have nothing to fear only fear and lies! The TRUTH really does set you free.....and you look for it first and foremost where it begins and that's in your heart.....you can lie and pretend to the rest of the world but not to your own heart and you have to live with that.....no one else can live the truth or the lie for you.....you chose to walk in the light or the shade.....the choice is yours.....I say follow The TRUTH.....speak it with kindness and compassion never with bitterness or hatred or resentment.....learn to love it as if it were the true reflection of your soul and let no one ever take that from you!

JEAN1: No wonder we mortals find the truth so boring.....have you ever listened to yourself?

JEAN3: I'm you JEAN! Don't you get it? I'm you.....just listen to yourself.....you'll do or say anything to avoid me.....Look at me.....LOOK AT ME.....what's the truth JEAN.....what happened after she knocked on your door.....go on JEAN no one else is here.....you're alone with only your conscience and truth which only you know.....we both belong to you.....JEAN MACINTOSH or should I use your pseudonym (silence) well should I?

JEAN NODS HER HEAD IN AGREEMENT

CONTINUE:

Well, its JEAN FRENCH then is it?

JEAN1: Is that seriously a question?

JEAN3: And why not?

JEAN1: And why not indeed!

JEAN3: Indeed why not (they both laugh) and no that isn't a question. (Stares at JEAN like a barrister in court) Now back to where you were two weeks ago. Remember?

JEAN1: How can I forget.....I wish I hadn't been at home.....but then she would have caught up with me somewhere else.....but maybe I wouldn't have said it the way I did if I'd been somewhere else.....maybe.

JEAN3: Right, begin at the knock at the door.

JEAN1: It was a bell.....actually!

JEAN3: I thought I heard you say earlier that it was a knock at the door.....

JEAN1: A mince pie.....(puts index finger between her teeth before whispering) a little lie.....a knock or a ring what's the difference?

JEAN3: Go on what happened then?

JEAN1: Well, that wasn't the start of it you see, I got a few phone calls, no one spoke and the number withheld..... then the Wednesday before she showed up I could have sworn someone was following me at St James's station and when the tube doors closed, it was packed and someone pushed past and I felt someone touch the back of my hair..... it was like someone being intimate with me.....a soft a very soft and tender touch but I just thought it was my Imagination.....when the bell rang I wasn't going to answer it.....I wasn't expecting anyone so I just went on writing my report and it rang again and this time it didn't stop.....I ran to the door to tell whoever it was to pull their finger out and to clear off I thought it might be someone selling something.....(Gulps) but it was this young beautiful girl.....very slim.....shoulder length dark brown shiny hair and the most lovely smile.....she was wearing a pink gingham Laura Ashley dress with matching cardigan and small pearl earrings.....she'd no bag so I presumed that she was at the wrong door and needed directions or something.....she searched my face as if waiting for me to recognise her or say something.....I just didn't know what.....then I asked her if she was lost.....I don't know why I asked that.....it just came out.....again I ask 'are you lost can I help you' she looked so bewildered and said.....not any more.....I'm CELINE your daughter.....then she smiled and I slammed the door closed.

LONG SILENCE: BOTH JEAN2 AND JEAN3 STARE AT JEAN1

CONTINUE:

Don't look at me like that! You give me the creeps! Both of you.

JEAN2: CELINE.....PARIS?

JEAN1: CELINE.....SIMON'S daughter. Not mine.....no not my daughter .....SIMON'S. I don't know if she intended it or not but it was her birthday.....Maybe she actually thought that I would have been thinking about her on that day.....that very moment.....(sighs) I never did.....I never let myself.

JEAN2: You brought her in.....surely?

JEAN1: I slammed the door hard.....then after a few seconds she started shouting 'I'm your daughter.....I'm CELINE..... open the door I've got something important to tell you..... open the door open the door.....and I thought the craziest of things.....open the door open the door.....there was a poem I wrote about years before called Open the Door by MIROSLAV HOLUB.....open the door.....

JEAN3 RECITES THE POEM IN A FAST SOMBRE TONE: (by Miroslav Holub)

Go and open the door. Maybe a dog's rummaging. Maybe you'll see a face, or an eye or the picture of a picture. Go and open the door. Even if there's only the darkness ticking even if there's only the hollow wind even if nothing is there go and open the door. At least there'll be a draught.

JEAN1: Yes (pause/far-away look).....that's how it was.....I didn't know what I would be confronted with if I opened the door.....but briefly..... in the end I did. I opened the door. She walked in. I.....I didn't touch her.....she tried to embrace me but I turned away. I was numb. I wanted to reach out to her but I couldn't move. I was paralysed emotionally paralysed.....I was dead. I never felt more dead in my entire life than at that exact moment..... I felt nothing. She seemed to pick up on my shock. She tried to restrain her feelings.....(closes her eyes) it must have been traumatic for her.....my lack of emotion I mean. Then she dropped the bomb shell.....after telling me about the wonderful life she'd had without pausing to take a breath and then just as fact told me that she didn't blame or hold any bitterness against me for giving her up she said (pause) and in such a happy tone that she was getting married and wanted me to be a part of everything.

JEAN2: And what was wrong with that JEAN?

JEAN1: Nothing, except that wasn't the bombshell. The bombshell was that..... (Looking at JEAN3) You know what it was.....I don't want to say it.....you say it for me.....I just can't!

JEAN3: CELINE announced that the man she was in love with and with whom she could not live without and who meant the world to her was called KARL and she wanted you to meet him the following day.....and that there was a coincidence an amazing coincidence.....and that was that KARL'S father SIMON was on the same assignment as you JEAN in Paris during the student riots in '68 when he died in an accident!

JEAN1: IN A SORT OF A DAZE JEAN1 THEN SPEAKS

She saw the horror on my face and asked what was wrong.....

JEAN3: TRIES TO COAX JEAN1 WITH HER HANDS TO SAY WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

You said.....you screamed.....'you can't marry him he's your brother.....SIMON was your father.....'

JEAN1: Then the look of disbelief on her face.....the horror.....the sudden disgust.....we were still standing still in the hall way and she just ran.....bolted for the door...it slammed and she was gone.....(puts her head down) I didn't know she was fragile.....if I had known.....maybe.....but I didn't know anything I didn't know this child I gave away to the nuns to do with her as they pleased.....I didn't care.....at least up to then I didn't think I cared!

JEAN3: And..... you didn't know that she was also pregnant.....

JEAN1: STANDS UP IN BATH AND HOLDS TIGHT THE SHEET WRAPPED AROUND HER  
Guilty as accused.....and then four days later.....the unthinkable happens. Through the same door she entered my life a letter drops. It was addressed to JEAN FRENCH.....not JEAN

MACINTOSH or JEAN BLACK or JEAN WHITE.....JEAN FRENCH.....the pretend  
JEAN.....the made-up lies JEAN.

JEAN3: PRODUCES AN ENVELOPE AND TAKES THE LETTER FROM IT  
Would you like me to (motions with letter)

JEAN1: NODDS HER HEAD IN AGREEMENT

JEAN3: It feels strange to be writing such a private and intimate letter to someone whom I have just met, but we, Karl and I, want you to know that we cannot possibly bear the thought of living the lie that you lived for all these years. We cannot contemplate life without each other. We take with us our love and our joy and also your first and possibly only grandchild who is already moving in my womb as I must have moved in yours at just 10 weeks. The only thing we ask is that you tell no one of your secret. The deed has been done as we post this letter and now we go off to somewhere quiet to sleep.

SILENCE FOR A FEW MOMENTS

JEAN1: Do you know do any of you understand what it felt like when I read that.....I'll tell you what I thought..... I thought I had just aborted my baby.....not a tiny 10 week foetus but a 27 year old beautiful child who came from me and went from me.

JEAN2: Why didn't you talk to me all those years ago JEAN? I really could have helped you! Or at least, I would have tried to get you to face The TRUTH.

SILENCE FOR A BRIEF MOMENT

JEAN1: Do you think so.....and by the way that's not the whole story.....it didn't end there.....you see.....the funny thing was.....funny because usually I didn't care about anything like that like the effect my words had on people....I went to the funeral service.....and for some reason something inside me forced me to go to the burial.....I was in a bewildered state.....I can't explain how I was feeling or why I went.....it was like a dream.....a dream of some sort.. anyway.....(looks straight into Truths eyes) CARLA, KARLS mother shook hands with me and ask who I was.....I mumbled that I'd read about the tragedy in the papers and I felt I just had to come along to pay my respects.....it hurt so much to say all those lies.....trying to protect myself by lying to a grieving mother.....but.....then for some reason I said, I ask her, if her son, if KARL was like her late husband, did he take after him .....I told her I'd read the whole story in the papers and she said.....'Isn't it strange the way you can speak to a stranger about something that no one else knows, something you've kept a secret.....it must be to do with grief and shock.....' she looked me in the eye and took my hand and said.....'my late husband SIMON wasn't KARLS father.....he knew that before we got married and I'd promised never to tell our child no matter what.....and I never did, but now he's gone and I'm sure he knows the truth.....now!

JEAN2: This is where I step aside.....The TRUTH.....will set you free JEAN....your conscience can't.....I'm for early intervention.....and at this stage.....well go with The TRUTH!

JEAN1: I can't.....I can't go on.....how can I and that's not a question that's a fact!

JEAN3: JEAN most people wrestle with the Truth at some point in their lives.....you never had to wrestle with it because you ignored it.....you'd your own set of rules and that's what lead you to where you are now..... listen.....can you change anything that can possibly make thing better or easier or different for anyone involved in any part of all this? (no answer) No..... so we have to look at it all from a fresh angle.....if you can't change or undo mistakes from the past you have to try and find a way to live with it.....

JEAN1: I can't live.....I can't and I don't want to live.....

JEAN3: But why?

JEAN1: Because of what's happened.....what I've caused

JEAN3: But JEAN why didn't they get a DNA test instead of taking your word for it.....don't you think that maybe there was a bit more to it than what you know?

JEAN1: I don't know anything.....I just know how I feel.....I'm rubbish.....I've never did a thing right in my life.....every piece of paper with my imprint on it is here below my feet in shreds.....it's all gone.....I've wiped the computer I've destroyed everything.....I can't get any of it back even if I wanted to.....

JEAN3: That's right you can't get it back you can't put it all back together again and even if you could it would be distorted by the scars you can't just patch things up and hope they'll look the same as before.....too much history.....too much hurt! Tell me JEAN what exactly do you think you've lost that you had two weeks ago?

JEAN1: Two weeks ago I had everything and thought I had nothing but now I have nothing and I've lost everything that I might have had if I'd kept my mouth shut!

JEAN3: JEAN trust me, if you give me your hand I can set you free from this burden.....

JEAN1: I see no way out of here not now.....I'm drowning I'm choking on (points down) every word I've ever used.....

JEAN3: You won't drown if I can get you out of there! It's a hard swim to the shore-line but I know you can make it.....give me your hand.....

JEAN1: I won't be able to face CARLA.....I'm a coward.....how can I face her.....

JEAN3: Will The Truth set her free? Or perhaps CARLA knows things that you don't!

JEAN1: Like what?

JEAN3: Like the truth! You only know your Truth JEAN.....you don't know the whole TRUTH.....do you?

JEAN1: Do you really exist? Are you a figment of my imagination? Answer me.....please.

JEAN3: Get out.....I order you in the name of THE TRUTH.....get out and face me and leave all this mess behind you.....learn to love TRUTH and everything else will follow.....that is the truth! There is no word that was ever badly written or spoken that can't

be redeemed by the truth.....have patience with THE TRUTH.....Acknowledge the truth respect it and hold it close.....keep it safe where no one can distort it or belittle it TRUTH is TRUTH always was and always will be .....now give me your hand.

JEAN1: Will you stay with me if I say.....if I try.....if I fall will you help me up.....will you comfort me.....will you matter.....will you matter to me.....will you?

LIGHTS DIM: ACTORS FREEZE PHONE RINGS THEN GOES ON TO ANSWERING MACHINE

V/O Hi JEAN, it's the emergency Foster Services, CATHY here, great having you on our books we have another lost child for you to look after please get in touch asap. She's 14 years old and has a real problem with the truth. You'll love this challenge. Talk soon.

JEAN3: THE TRUTH WALKS OVER TO EDGE OF STAGE AND SAYS:

(With arms wide open) The Truth really can set you free.

BLACK OUT- THEN AFTER APPLAUSE:

TRUTH IS JOINED BY JEAN1 AND JEAN2 TAKE BOW THEN SONG (NINA SIMONE FEELIN GOOD) IS PLAYED AND EVERYONE INVOLVED IN PLAYS COMES ON STAGE AND DANCE.

END

DEAR NIALL

BY

ROSELEEN WALSH

This drama consists of 6 monologues, 5 female and 1 male. It covers 6 decades in which the perspective of how sin and sex and attitudes in society has changed. Each character portrays a separate issue that was of moral importance in their given decade. Each had a relationship with someone called Niall who had a profound effect on their life. They are writing to or talking to Niall as though he were present in the room with them and in some scenes Niall will answer in voice over.

Cast:

NARRATER

JEAN

LILY

SUGAR

GRAHAM

JOY

SUMMER

NIALL (voice over)

The stage is in darkness except for a faded light on large stool to the left centre and a prayer kneeler to the right centre stage and in the middle is a head stone and coffin. At the back of stage are 5 small tables and chairs where the five characters are seated writing their letters to Niall. As each actor

goes to stool the others continue writing and as each finishes monologue they return to table and sit down. Jean is the first to sit on stool. She puts letter in her handbag. Running order:  
1940's,50's,60's 70's, 80's 90's.

JEAN I have many regrets in my life and this is the most profound for I believe it changed the entire course.....(closes eyes) the path I took (opens eyes thoughtful pause) I choose out of desperation. I've never spoken these words to anyone.....just to a bare page... that was all I had to tell my story to.....a bare page.....who will ever hear my story? No one.....for it will never be re-read or spoken off again.....never! (Reads from memory then looks at audience) I wrote.....Dear Niall, you will, I have no doubt be surprised to receive this letter, you may in fact not even remember me nor perhaps want to recall the incident for it was such a long time ago (looks at audience) in years that is, though the consequences have remained with me my whole life time which I may add has not been measured in days or weeks or even years but in every second that I breathed, slept, talked, pretended.....mostly pretended.....everything since that night has been a pretence, nothing more and little less when I'm lucky that is. You loved us Derry girls, the most beautiful girls in the world and I smiled at the compliment as you drank the beer that I'd just served you. Your American accent added to the fascination that we Derry girls had for the G.I's stationed here in Derry.....our George had got me the job serving in the bar and I was safe enough with my big brother working there and we always came home together talking about the all the different customers especially the American G.I's. (Pause and smiles) You winked at me several times and I loved it (slight pause, smiles) you made me feel special, I suppose.....I told our George that you were walking me home and he went mad.....he told me never to trust a G.I..... and I should have listened.....but I didn't.....! Bye the way my name is Jean.....not Jane which you called me in the letter.....in case you can't remember you said it was the most beautiful name and in fact it was your mother's name also.....I thought at the time 'what a coincidence' what are the chances of that.....oh how naïve I was.....just turned 18 and I didn't even know the facts of life, though, that wasn't unusual then for a Derry girl. I'd never had a boyfriend before and now I was getting walked home from work by this good looking American soldier who told me his name was Niall. I never knew anyone called Niall before.....and I felt so happy so at ease..... you were so interested in everything about my life.....Everything about my life changed after that night.....18th December 1943.....around 2am.... it was a Saturday...though looking back in my mind I always referred to it as Friday night.....it was as though the night before had never ended.....it went on and on and on.....cold and icy and the sky was black with millions of stars and the quarter moon.....so romantic I thought as you held my hand to stop me from sliding. ....I thought so endearing so considerate.....(change of tone) we always went down town on a Saturday Patricia Marley and Pauline Doherty.....we'd go into Austin's department store and look at all the make-up and we'd try the lipstick and the eye shadow on if there were none of the staff about...innocent times.....times that ended there and then behind that ditch.....for me.....I said no no no I shouted No don't what are you trying to do don't.....stop.....stop it but you didn't listen. (Pause) You raped me! You hurt me.....you destroyed my life.....I was sent away from my family I gave birth to a baby and it was taken from me and it was sent away.....(says slowly thoughtfully) to America of all places.....I didn't know that at the time it was only years later I was able to trace him.....and a strange thing I found out was, the name I

gave him was George and the people who adopted him renamed him Niall.....how strange was that.....(speaks fast without pausing) what a coincidence what were the chances of that I ask myself remembering that once before I asked myself that same question as I wondered why he didn't want to know anything about me or you; (pause, slows down) I did find out why eventually.....I knew nothing about you except your military number which I memorised 717...thats how I traced you.....after all this time....you could have been killed for all I knew.....but you weren't.....you survived.....I don't think much of your reply.....(takes letter from her hand bag and rips it up and throws it out towards audience with force) Sorry.....sorry is that all you can say, you were young and facing death and you thought I wanted it....that must have been why as I was pleading with you to stop that you covered my mouth with your G.I's hat.....(long pause) Well I'm sending you this piece of information about your child.....I'm hateful I know..... but your son Niall is on death row....he's been there for the last 18 years and that's where I've been for the last 55 years since that December night in 1943.....that poor baby boy I gave birth to.....we both have two things in common and they are this .....we do not know when the night mare will end and someone called Niall!

JEAN STANDS UP AND CLOSES HER HAND BAG AND SAYS:

Ps. No reply is necessary! I don't live here anymore!

LIGHTS OUT:

VOICE OVER OF NIALL IS HEARD IN DARKNESS

V/O (speaks with amusement in his voice) Jean, that wasn't my mother's name, I'd have told a girl anything at that time to get her interested, we were only passing through your wonderful city of London Derry and you must remember Jean, we could have been killed at any time life was so uncertain for all us military men during the war. I'm sorry if I treated you rough that night, though, I can't say I remember it too well, too much of your wonderful Guinness I guess. About the boy, there is no way to know for sure if I fathered him it could have been someone nearer home, I guess. I think we should just leave things as they are and I'm sure you don't want to be digging up mistakes from the past. Nice to have heard from you Jean. Ps. Jean sure is a lovely name. Niall.

LIGHTS ON:

LILY WALKS OVER TO STOOL AND COFFIN (which has been placed on stage) SINGING 'ROSE GARDEN' SHE DOESN'T SIT ON STOOL BUT STANDS DURING THE WHOLE MONOLOGUE

LILY (Singing) I beg your pardon I never promised you a rose garden along with the sunshine there's gotta be a little rain some time..... Gotta be happy.....if I'm not happy for me then there is no one else to make me happy.....no one who really cares (to herself) is there? Well Lily (pronounces Lily Lil-Lay) old girl, is there? (Slight pause) Now you Niall.....my.....dear Niall.....that's what his dearest mother used to call him her dear Niall..... she never believed that he'd knock the crap out of me if his team were beat on a Saturday.....(deep sigh) and then we'd go to bed..... and I'd have to pretend that nothing happened.....he'd cry like a cry baby and say he'd never lift his fist to me again.....and you know he loved music.....Elvis.....Cliff.....not the Beatles he was jealous of Paul McCartney.....he didn't allow me to look at him on T.V. he though I fancied him.....he thought I fancied everyone in trousers.....he timed me going to the shops and questioned me if I was longer than his allotted time

to me.....I thought I could change him but (shakes her head) you can't make a Leopard change its spots.....how blind was I how naïve?.....Really Lil-lay.....how silly you were then.....17 and never been kissed.....it should be 16 and never been kissed but what the hell when you're having fun (starts singing) I got you babe I got you babe.....I got you to hold my hand I got you to understand I got you to kiss good night I got you to hold me tight (slight pause).....I got.... you babe. Niall loved that song in fact he fantasised that we were Sonny and Cher.....he made me practice it every night for two weeks before his Freda's wedding and I had to get up on the stage with him to perform it (closes her eyes) in St Lawrence's Hall at the reception..... I stood there pissed out of my mind smiling and.....well the hiding I got that night it was one of his best...it was so good I don't remember it at all it was just when I woke up with the drip in my arm and I didn't know what it was at first because I couldn't see a thing.....(says sarcastically) it was the bandages you see you can't see through bandages over your eyes..... (slight laugh) he told the doctor he found me round the corner from our flat and that I came home alone from the wedding and.....(speaks slow and low) got into a fight somehow.....Dear Niall you had a great imagination you know you should have been a writer.....all the stuff you made up all the things you imagined about me and other men..... (spits the words out) Niall you were a brute.....and I told the pastor in preparation for your funeral and want to know something Niall.....he didn't mention it.... in fact if I hadn't been at the end of your fists so many times I may have believed this guy saying all those nice things about you.....I suppose most of the congregation believed him.....and there were tears in your mothers eyes when the pastor said that it was so sad you never became the dad you always wanted to be.....(says with vengeance) surprise surprise Niall.....it takes two to make a baby and only one to destroy it.....and I did just that.....you did it to me.....(pause) I kept it a secret for 18 weeks.....(sadly) I don't want to remember that.....what I did.. I'm quite good at not remembering.....things....events.....and I do have to admit that I regret it every day of my life.....I should have killed you.....I would have had no regrets about that.....no after thoughts or guilt or remorse.....anyway the booze helps and the tablets.....its breathing and thinking and wanting to turn the clock back that stops me from forgetting that I ever knew some one so tall and dark and handsome and funny and kind who I fell in love with and married and promised to love honour and obey for the rest of my life.....then I went to sleep with him and woke up beside a monster!

LILY SINGS 'ROSE GARDEN' AS SHE STAGGERS BACK TO TABLE.

LIGHTS OUT QUICKLY

NIALL SITS UP IN COFFIN

NIALL You still talkin crap Lils!

COFFIN IS WHEELED OFF STAGE

LIGHTS ON KNEELER: GRAHAM WALKS ACROSS TO KNEELER AND KNEELS AS IF HE'S PRAYING (kneeler is facing audience) HE WAITS A FEW SECONDS BEFORE STARTING MONOLOGUE:

GRAHAM Dear Lord.....(puts head down) Dear Niall, 40 years of living a lie and it took just one look – one instant – a moment in a gaze – and I knew I had to give in to the truth – A Terrible

Truth – The truth will set us free – the truth and only such a truth that can cause so much pain – so much heart ache – so much – hatred – contempt – it was like a flash of lightning – and all was revealed – everything I’d kept secret – suppressed (quietly) yes suppressed – oppressed! Suddenly with the sight of you – that embrace – every fear became to a reality – everything was revealed – it was who I was that I feared oh God help me! Please!.....You were impressed by my military medals.....You said I had what it took.....I had guts.....and that was true.....I had gut, as they say, but who was to know that the only thing in my life I had ever feared – that had ever frightened me was – what was inside of me – I feared the real me and then you came – Niall – and the fear – intensified – evaporated all at the same time – I just couldn’t understand it all – in an instant – simultaneously – how strange life truly is – I’d never felt such joy – such a mixture of joy and pain – I just knew you were the one! .....(long pause) I remember one night on duty – sentry duty in Aiden – I saw two men two soldiers together in the shadows and I full of shame watched from above and I wished – I wished I had that sort of courage – to do what they were doing - I thought the sight so beautiful.....the movement the rhythm – the total connection it seemed so so natural and I understood this kind of love of fellowship.....(deep sigh) but then someone else came across to me and looked to see what it was that held my interest and he recognised one of the men and ran and got them both arrested – I was interviewed and had to give a statement but it never reach the court martial because shortly afterwards they were both dead – one suicide – apparently shot himself in the head and the other fell from the window of a sentry post – while trying to fix it - both deaths questionable – I always felt both of them dying extraordinary – no witnesses either.....the British Army produced men of one sort and they would not tolerate any other sort – I kept my mouth shut. I never mentioned it to Angie when I got back and I soon left the army to open my own small garage – I had learned a lot about mechanics and engines in the army – I’d joined up just after we were married and Angie was expecting Graham – I thought being a dad would make me happy – but it didn’t – Angie loved me and then, well eventually, and I never blamed her, she loved most of my customers – Angie to an extent was an innocent Lancaster lass – she said afterwards – when it all came out – that if it had been another woman she could have excepted that – but the fact that it was another man – she just couldn’t. It was Graham who found us together and he’ll never forgive me either – maybe they both thought that our whole life together as a family was a lie – I suppose it was – really!

SONG: MARC ALMOND & GENE PITNEY ‘SOMETHINGS GOT A HOLD OF MY LIFE’

CONTINUE:

Aids was a new word in the 80’s I’d no other partner Niall – only you – but you were never in a closet – you were you from the start – you were an actor – you belonged to the theatrical world where no one cares about sexual orientation – they only care about your talent – nothing else – the stage for you was where you could be whoever you were playing – it was all real to you – When you told me you had aids I – I – I didn’t care if I got it because you had given me a life and I could not go back – not on my own – I could not live without your love – (paused) you went peacefully in my arms – I held you – we held each other – but – but – I woke up – I was devastated – your brown eyes closed tight and your cheeky smile – gone – you were gone – I was left – alone – it wasn’t meant to be like that – we were supposed to go together – that last breath – disappearing into nothingness – but together – (long pause) I’m a grandad now Niall, I havn’t seen her – I’ve never

held her in my arms – it's not that Graham won't allow me, no, I could take that if it were only prejudice but it's not – no – you knew when we met that you had it, you had this animal inside you, you had aids when we met and you didn't say – you didn't tell me – you let me love you – and I'll never know why – why and if you even cared for me or was it all an act played out on the theatre of my heart – the final stage you acted on – were you only my stage lover – did you do to me what I did to my family – were you only playing the role of my lover? That is a question but I don't think I want to know the answer Niall. All my love, Graham x

GRAHAM PUTS HIS HEAD DOWN AS IF PRAYING. LIGHTS OUT. V/O OF NIALL.

V/O You were really a great person Graham, I couldn't have asked for anyone better to be there when the lights went out. You were a tower of strength mate and I respected you so much for the way you handled all that I put you through; you were even prepared to go with me you cared so much. When I arrived here, I looked around to see where you were and I realised you didn't make it. It was never easy for you or anyone from your generation and now with aids everywhere people are back in the closet hiding like the scared trembling foxes that run for cover as soon as they hear the horns sound in the distant field such it is with our hidden community and the media. I didn't use you Graham, I really loved you and if there had been more time ahead I think we may have been a Darby and Joan couple.....you know in it for life. I've taken OUR love with me and I see you are keeping it safe within as well. I'm not the jealous kind Graham, I won't look if you meet someone else.....I think Tony had an eye for you definitely!

Yours forever Niall.xx

BREAK FOR 10 MINUTES

SUGAR GETS UP FROM TABLE AS NINA SIMONE SINGS 'FEELIN GOOD' FROM AND I'M FEELING GOOD TO .....WALKS TO HEAD STONE ( which has been placed on stage music stops) HOLDING FLOWER POT CONTAINING LUPIN PLANT IN BLOOM SHE SITS ON STOOL AND HOLD POT AS THOUGH SHE'S HOLDING SOMETHING SACRED.

SUGAR Hi Niall, I hope you like the gesture (holds out the pot as though he's present)  
It's a Lupin plant.....you know what a Lupin plant is.....surely.....I mean you know ops I mean you knew everything didn't you.....you were so smart it was unbelievable at time.....know what I mean like I was so stupid so (laughing) dumb wasn't I just? Go on answer I'm sure you would if you could.....in fact I think I can hear (puts hand to ear) that wheezily voice that I once adored and thought so perfect.....(cries) didn't I just.....you ba (holds breath) .....no I'll not say it (loudly) I'll not degrade myself by doing that.....(deep breath to control voice) No I am better than that (silence) and I know that now! (Change of tone) Yes, Niall, you'd say to me.....You are what you eat.....right.....(waits for agreement) and so I ate nothing..... Nothing I starved myself for you just to look good.....get the picture Niall...I made myself sick for you Niall.....so you could look good.....I didn't even come in to the equation I wasn't even in the picture.....you were a barrister a good one too you had this image that you tried to force me into becoming just so your mates your buddies at the Bar would think Oh Niall everything he touches turns into gold.....perfection.....Isn't Niall's life perfect.....I can just hear them all.....(puts on a posh voice) Oh yes old chap hasn't Niall such an ability at winning his cases his home his car his holidays and off course his.....(struggles

to say word) your me.....with a small m not a capital M no I wasn't important enough to be given even that recognition how stupid is that how stupid does that sound.....well I'll tell you Niall.....I was stupid to have put up with you....for all those years.....calling me fat.....fatso.....fatty.....if my mother had been alive and heard you say that she'd have boxed the ears off you you hung over piece of (hesitates) over rated mouth piece.....that's what you were (changes attitude) It was such a pity I loved you.....if I hadn't loved you then I could have gave as much as I got and took from you.....you prevented me from being me and the terrible thing is I think you knew it...it was like a jealousy thing.....and eventually I couldn't go out without you....you were the cause of my de-habilitating inferiority complex.....all I could think was how fat and horrible I looked.....but I didn't look like the fat blob you imaged on me.....you knew how to do it didn't you you did that to me.....I'm ok now.....without you to beat that image thing into my ear....I'm free.....and regretful that I wasn't strong enough in the beginning when you started to chip away at my confidence.....but maybe I was strong enough and you did other things to undermine that confidence that I was oblivious to.....at the time.....anyway I'm here and I'm beautiful....as beautiful as I always have been and I love my self.....I'm big and beautiful.....and I love my life because it's my life and not anyone else's it belongs to me and I love who I am.....(looks at pot gets up and sets it down beside head stone) Oh yes, the Lupins, I learned something from them, it's how they grow and manage to stay strong and beautiful.....they need the sun to live to stay strong and they also need to be watered daily.....they stand erect and majestic displaying the most beautiful colours the eye can enjoy but the one thing about them is this: if they aren't watered regularly then they begin to droop and look as if they're dead.....but they don't die easily.....all it takes is some water to revive them and they regain their strength and beauty.....and that was like me Niall, all I needed was your love.....to keep me to yourself you were willing to let all that was truly me die.....you used my weight to destroy me and all you had was a diminished me.....that was never me.....but that's what you wanted and that's what you got.....Poor you Niall..... Poor you!

SLOWLY GETS UP AND WALKS BACK TO TABLE AS NINA SIMONE SINGS 'IT'S A NEW DAY IT'S A NEW DAWN AND I'M FEELIN GOOD'

NIALL V/O Fat ugly bitch.....look at you.....go tidy yourself up

SUGUR TURNS AND STARES AT HEAD STONE AND LAUGHS OUT LOUD BEFORE SITTING.

JOY WALKS TO STOOL WITH HER HEAD DOWN. SHE SITS AND CROSSES HER LEGS AND READS FROM HER LETTER OCCASSIONALLY

JOY (Looks up at ceiling) Niall, Dear Niall, they're all blaming me but you know it wasn't my fault, I didn't make you do it, you know that's the truth. I didn't ask you to fall in love with me, I don't know how that all happened. You said that first time that you loved my name.....Joy.....you joked you loved to feel Joy everywhere. You were a naughty boy I thought in the beginning. Everything was rushed into, I didn't want to get married, you knew I didn't, but you told your family it was me pushing for it, I can see now you had problems long before we met. I didn't know you before the drugs I only knew you afterwards, people said you

were a great laugh, a great fella, a great hurler.....a great kisser.....(softly) and you were...I just wanted more and more of those kisses.....(smiling) but you knew I fancied Roy before you before I got to know you...and yeah I shouldn't have well I shouldn't have used you.....I didn't mean to....it was just to make Roy jealous.....but it didn't work.....he went off with Sue.....and I was stuck with you.....sorry for putting it that way but that's the way it was! I couldn't say I couldn't just come out and say I was only with you because there was no one else.....(softly) and then Dave.....he had a good job and plenty of money, a car and personality.....by this time you just couldn't stop taking the stuff and then I got pregnant and I was ok with that..... you were elated and well it was great to see at last you had an incentive to get of the stuff.....so good bye to a good life with Dave, I thought....because of the baby I had to stick it out with you....but I was wrong I shouldn't have gone down that road at all.....(pause) then.....(change of tone) even when Tilly was born I knew you were full of it when you came down to the hospital..... I was even afraid to let you hold her.....but then yes Niall things did get a little better for a while and I knew you loved us both so so much but when you progressed into the cocaine (deep sigh).....I'll never forget that night when Tilly came into the bedroom with white powder on her chin I just cracked up.....you were using our bath room to snort the stuff...(loudly) I had to get you out and yes I told Dave and he helped and he stood by us and no I couldn't let you see Tilly I had to protect her I had to protect me.....it was about me as well.....in the back of my mind I knew or I believed that there would come a time when I could let you see Tilly but not just at that time you needed to sort yourself out.....oh yeah the debts you owed were also in my name....don't forget that Niall because that made me bitter.....I still can't get anything in my own name.....I'm stranded.....it will be years before I'm debt free.....I was lucky not to lose the house but I nearly did only my family helped.....your family just blamed me on your death they said I pushed you too far.....Niall, I take full responsibility for my life and for Tilly's on till she's old enough herself.....I'm not responsible for what happened to you.....I'm not blaming you either but I'm not responsible. You took your own life I didn't! In a sense you took my life.....I'm not miss perfect Niall I never was that.....but don't blame me for what you did.....you may have been out of your head with coke and other stuff but that wasn't my doing.....sometimes I wonder did you do it to despise me or was it the accident I believe it was.....I just wish you hadn't left the note because that's what your family whip me with.....who will ever know what your frame of mind was when you wrote it.....I think.....I like to think that you wrote it when you were drunk and thought you'd waken up and burn it.....but that's not how it all ended Niall...you didn't wake up and I'm being punished for that.....Tilly will always love you Niall because she never knew you.....but I will always love you because I did know you and there was nothing I could do about it! Isn't that life? I wonder if you could speak to me now what would you say?

GETS OF STOOL WALKS TO EDGE OF STAGE STARES AT AUDIENCE THEN CLOSES  
HER EYES DOESN'T MOVE UNTIL LIGHTS GO OUT  
LIGHTS OUT THEN VOICE OVER FROM NIALL

V/O Just two things Joy: Will you forgive me and keep Tilly away from drugs.

SUMMER IS STRAPPED ONTO THE ELECTRIC CHAIR AWAITING EXECUTIONS. SHE IS DRESSED IN AN ORANGE PRISON JUMP SUIT. A SMALL BELL IS HEARD EVERY SO OFTEN THROUGHTOUT MONOLOGUE WHICH WAS AN IMPORTMENT PIECE OF EQUIPMENT IN THE LIFE OF PROSTITUTION THAT SUMMER HAD LED.

SUMMER (Bell rings) This is it, Niall, I'm moving shortly to hell, where I know you'll be waiting.....but I really don't want to see you....even in hell! For hell's sake.....take a vacation! Do ye all know what this is? This here is what got me into all this trouble and landed me here.....on Death Row.....(sarcastically) I'm a princess in waiting.....it's the only way I can look at it without breaking.....I'm here ten years now and if I'd killed him in the state of West Virginia instead of Virginia I'd be free by now; maybe! It all began like any fairy tale; I was a much loved daughter, so I've been told, but I don't actually remember that far back. Newry in Ireland, but I don't remember that either, maybe there were shops all dark and scary and a canal and what I do remember was the big massive Court House (pauses) Court Houses played a big part in my life though how could a little child know that as she was carried into that first one.....I liked to think that my mother was a missionary kind of person who went about helping people with their problems until one day she got knocked down and killed.....I don't even know if that is true but at night, when I got older, I used to put that as the reason for her going.....the big Court House was where it was decided that my daddy wasn't fit to take care of me and so I was sent to Derry to live with my mother's sister Celine. There was no love there it was revenge auntie Celine wanted.....she never wanted me not really.....apparently she hated my dad I was the only weapon she could find to beat him with.....maybe I would have been worse of with him but I'll never know that now but it was living with Celine that through me into the arms of Niall. I recall most days and night having knots in my stomach and a lump in my throat.....there just was no love or affection I didn't know what those two things were until I met you Niall.....the only thing was Niall.....it wasn't real.....though it felt real enough at the time to me at least.....the nut doc in here told me to write you this letter Niall and to ask for your forgiveness.....and so this is it Niall.....will you forgive me (laughs) don't matter if you don't but someone said that even if a person is murdered and they pass on to the next life they sort of live on (lifts her shoulders) but they have to forgive whoever it was that killed them otherwise they can't move on themselves... that is if they're going up the ladder and not down.....because they've been murdered Niall doesn't mean that they themselves had been a good person, maybe the person who murdered them is a better person than they were.....that's what I think Niall. I see the shrink just for the sake of it.....it breaks the monotony in here.....I've remained a virgin in here Niall (pause) for moral reasons off course (laughs) I believed you Niall when you said you loved me....the thing about me was I was so good looking and that was my burden Niall and you knew it.....if it hadn't been for my looks you'd never have wanted me for me because you saw me...my looks as a way of making money for you and to help get you out of Derry fast..... and I was dumb to have believed in you.....you took me away from the tortured life I had with the two ugly sisters that my cousins were.....it was amazing the similarities between me and (laughs) and Cinderella.....but I didn't marry a prince I married a (spells it out) P I M P. You put me to work as soon as we arrived here in America.....you'd the clients queuing up for me.....3 abortions, drugs, porn movies.....yes I know it didn't seem too bad at first with the

money you were generous but I didn't know how much I was worth in dollars.....it was the 3rd abortion that did it for me.....I wanted a baby.....I wanted a normal life.....all those.....those pictures that I can never erase they still haunt me.....sometimes I cry.....and you know Niall crying was not for me.....I hid things pretty well.....(rings bell) there it goes again the bell the summoning me to a bed to a bed room mostly but not always..... to a car, sports cars were the most awkward to do the job that I was paid for, sorry, you were paid.....(bell rings) that ring was for the parties.....(deep sigh) I'm glad we didn't have children.....how could I hold my baby and go out and do what I did for you.....it had to end Niall.....I had to put an end to it and the only way was to put an end to you.....before the third abortion I pleaded with you..I didn't want to go through with it.....it felt special this time, you tied me up and locked me in the boot of your rolls and delivered me to that butcher.....and then afterwards I find a picture of you and her and you're holding a beautiful little new born baby.....(rings bell) your baby Niall.....you and Cherrie (says Cher ee) .....she was old enough to be your mother.....you (stops herself from saying bastard) I didn't mean to kill you all Niall.....I just don't remember.....(rings bell) I'm due to join you in hell in five minutes..... Niall.....(rings bell until lights go out)  
LIGHTS OUT.....

Then death knell rings 3 times. Voice Over from Niall is heard still in darkness.

V/O Looking forward to seeing you kid.....it's as boring as hell here! (sinister laughing is echoed)

END

CAST AULD MICK

OLD GIRL (AULD MICK'S WIFE WEARING SHABBY WEDDING DRESS)

MICK ENTERS STAGE FROM BACK WEARING OLD JACKET, TROUSERS AND WELL USED SUIT CASE WHICH HE PUTS UNDER TABLE IN A DIMMLY LIT KITCHEN. THERE IS A TABLE COVERED WITH: A GINGIAM TABLE CLOTH, A PLATE WITH HALF EATEN DINNER AND BOTTLE OF SAUCE WITH NO CAP ON TOP ONE GLASS AND BOTTLE OF LEMONADE BESIDE IT; ALSO AN OLD ARM CHAIR WITH THROWOVER. A ROCKING CHAIR OVER FROM RIGHT OF TABLE. MICK HOLDS URN TO HIS CHEST, KISSES AND SETS URN ON TABLE HE SITS IN CHAIR, TAKES HIS SHOES OFF (NO SOCKS ON) AND GIVES A DEEP SIGH. ABOVE CHAIR AND TABLE IS A CLOTHING LINE. PEGGED TO LINE ARE 30 PAIRS OF SOCKS (NOT ALL MATCHING)

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

MICK: Blisters bloody blisters plagued with them all me life; me own fault, never should have wandered so much if I couldn't put up with them! Clean pair of socks everyday was the cure, but sure never had that in me life - until I met her. (STARES AT URN) The old girl. My old girl. Got her ashes today. That's all there is.....ashes and memories. No more clean socks. Extraordinary it is that me thinks of her in that way. Clean socks. Love it was. Why don't I think of the love. Maybe the love was in the clean socks. Maybe there was more of the love in the clean socks than in

the bed! Maybe! I'd swap a clean bed any day for clean socks. Me never knew blisters anywhere except on these feet. Never.

PULLS FROM HIS POCKETS FIVE PAIR OF SOCKS AND THROWS THEM ON FLOOR.

Cobh I love thee. I love the air, the ships, the sea. Me never would have gotten all those blisters if me'd taken to the sea and not the soil! I came here the long way round - born in a stable - a wonder I wasn't called JESUS - never knew I had a mother - farmer JOHN kept me - only to work I shouldn't wonder - but I ran away when 7 years had passed - I think it 7 - though I'd never had a birthday - not like the others - his own - they didn't talk much to me - but I'd hear the music and the laughter echoing from the big house - it kept me awake in summer when I'd keep the stable door open at the top - but I made up my own dreams - my dreams of being free - me didn't know what free was or that there was such a term in language for it - but I felt it - I felt it so strong. I'd think to meself that if that music could be free then my soul could also be free; oh me didn't know such a thing existed as a soul but me did know that there was more to me than flesh and bones. How could me think; if all there was of me was just flesh and bones and nothing other?

FILLS OUT A GLASS OF LEMONADE AND DRINKS IT QUICKLY IN ONE GULP  
CONTINUE:

Seven years were a long time for a boy to be wandering around aimlessly; I were 14 or thereabouts when that first war happened. I couldn't read nor write but I was like a fox (POINTS WITH FINGER TO SIDE OF HEAD) up here - always avoiding them that could harm me. I was in a place called Ballymena and all me can remember are all the Union Jacks hung out everywhere you looked. I'd not seen so many flags before in me life; farmer John was never one for flags or bunting or things like that, I didn't even know that I was Irish; all me knew was that I was alive and was trying to survive and the blisters, oh the blisters. I used to stand with the crowds, listening to the speeches about home rule and the popish traitor's, didn't even occur to me that I was one. Didn't know I was born Catholic. Though it never mattered to me.....until I met her, it mattered to her all right. Worked for her father in Queenslands (PUTS HAND UP TO HIS MOUTH AS IF TELLING A SECRET) not allowed to call it that, she goes mad when I don't say it's proper name, Cobh. Anyhow, there was this big ship in the port and I tried to pass meself of as a boiler boy, you know stoking the engine fires with the coal, but, because I'd no shoes on, that's how they caught me out. Good job they did because it was sank to the bottom of the ocean a few days later, the Titanic, that's what it was called, and anyhow if I'd gone I'd never have meet her. (POINTS TO URN) Me joined the army, the British army, to go out and fight those Boars, seems strange now, looking back, poor Boars, like meself they didn't know what it was all about. The man, at the desk ask "what age are you boy, you look a fine 18 years old" and me says to him, 'it's 18, I be then sir' me was big and muscly and healthy looking and they gave me a uniform and a rifle that I killed with. It's hard to think now how me killed without a thought, back then. Maybe it was because me'd no mother to ever hold me close to her beating heart that me didn't have the instinct to care or to feel anything in anyway human. Me'd more in common with the cows me looked after in farmer Johns. Me'd lay on top of them and feel a warmth I didn't understand. Their beating hearts.....there was life there. Interaction they called it.....mixing with other people.....getting on with people.....making friends.....that was funny.....making friends. Keeping them was the

hard part. I didn't have any feelings (LOOKS OVER AT URN) until I met her.....you my sweetheart.

LIGHT ON ROCKING CHAIR WIFE IS SITTING THERE

WIFE: Yes sweetheart I knew that.....you knew I knew. Didn't you?

MICK PUTS HEAD DOWN AND NODDS

What would you have done without me..... gangrene would have taken you sooner or later.....am I right.....you know I am! I was always right for you.....isn't that right.....sweetheart?

MICK SMILES COMFORTABLY

MICK: That's right all right old girl. I'd seen them in the trenches crawling in agony as the gangrene crawled upwards from their torn feet. If I had no feelings towards another human being before then it surely came to me with such ferocity that it made me throw up.....it made me feel. I had never felt before!

WIFE: Sweetheart, you never told me how it felt to kill; you told me how everything else you'd experienced.....felt..... but never how killing felt. Was it so intimate an experience that you thought it might lose something in the telling of it? Or was it pure shame.....regret?

MICK: The shame only came later..... after I was loved by thee! It's easy to kill a man when you don't understand what it is you've killed! (MOTIONS IN CIRCLE WITH HIS HANDS) The whole thing I mean. War makes it easy because everybody is doing it. Governments need you to do it so they tell you it's all right.....it's only when you are loved that you appreciate what it means to have life; to be loved is to be born at whatever age it happens! Some folk are always alive, others, like me dear, only become alive when we feel we are loved; I have known them who have lived to be old and yet never lived at all.

WIFE: Me..... I was always loved. My father loved me my mother loved me and my brothers loved me.....yes, I was always loved. Never knew what it was like to be without being loved.....until I met thee! It took me a long time to convince you, sweetheart, to love me. I was never sure at first, if you really loved me, or, if I had just talked you into it. You had never been acquainted with love and you didn't recognise it when it sat on your lap. (LAUGHS) You were such a silly boy, sweetheart.

MICK: (EMOTIONAL CHANGE OF SUBJECT) The trenches were cold and wet and places of despair. The far cries hunted me for so long. We could never have buried all those dead bodies, we moved on and then noticed on the way back that others had made attempts to bury some of them. But.....the fields still in bombardment and the buried bodies were blown out of their graves. They were dead and didn't feel the absolute desecration of it but those of us left alive saw it and felt it.....oh woman what I'd have given then to be one of those dead. (THEY BOTH STARE AT ONE ANOTHER) I was so young, YOUNG MICHAEL, those who used a name would call me. I was like their message boy, I made tea and wiped their brow of sweat and blood and tears. I thought I should have died there..... afterwards, I was glad I didn't.....I never told you about

that first Christmas dear.....I did not know it was Christmas, how could I have known, it was something I needed to be told.....anyway, the rain stopped and a frost came bedding itself across the top of the fields and all the surrounding earth looked like a painting with sparkly tiny pieces of crystal lying loosely on top. It took a while before most noticed that a silence that matched the crystal layer on the earth had erupted.....the sound of silence.....the silent sound of an eruption an explosion that reverberated in the stillness of our blood; it brought instant joy to the soul of every man there in those trenches, including my own.....for now after all I was a man.....no longer the boy who came to make tea.....for I was now also employed to bury the dead.....to pick what pieces I could find of fallen foolish patriots; Sacred, I beheld them, each one, to leave them in empty trenches. I heard the shouts of Merry Christmas from the enemy and the shouting back was like music it was a rhapsody, an explosion of enthusiasm between strangers who found a commonality in their opposing positions.....they played football, where the ball came from I still don't know to this day, and no one but me kept score.....

WIFE: And who won dear.....was it the Germans?

MICK: The strange thing was, dear, when they played I couldn't for the life of me distinguish who my comrades were and who the enemy were.....who was fighting who.....they all looked the same.....we were all the same.....all human.....at the time I felt foolish but in later years I understood perfectly.....

WIFE: Now, tell me again about FRANK. I too fell in love with his memory, your memory of him. Recite me one of his poems with the same clarity you did so many times as we engaged in making love..... such beautiful love it was..... by the shore of the Atlantic Ocean, watching the waves..... the white foam smother the seaweed and redeem the shore.....(SAYS IN A WHISPER) taking back to the ocean what belonged to the ocean!

MICK: The love a man can have for a man isn't the same as the love I had for thee.....FRANCIS wasn't the only man I had those feelings for (SMILES) or about! The main ingredient was admiration and that caused the fire in me to overcome all else, so little wonder at the time did it frighten me because I had not then known thee. Where he died near the village of Boezinge, I carried him his tea minutes earlier, he enquired if I'd delivered his letter and I just nodded, embarrassed because I witnessed him kiss the envelope as he sealed it; (LOOKING DOWN AT HIS FEET AS IF EMBARRASSED)

I wiped his face when it bled and my reward was to hear him say aloud, though, he couldn't have known that I heard above the roar of bombs and guns those beautiful words his Meath voice spoke so distinctly.....shall I stand or do you prefer I stay as I am?

WIFE: (SMILING) As always, as you please sweetheart.

MICK: MICK STANDS, CLEARS HIS THROAT AND RECITES POEM\*

He shall not hear the bittern cry  
in the wild sky, where he is lain,  
Nor voices of the sweeter birds  
Above the wailing of the rain  
Nor shall he know when the loud March blows

Thro' slanting snows her fanfare shrill,  
Blowing to flame the golden cup  
Of many an upset daffodil.  
But when the dark cow leaves the moor  
And pastures poor with greedy weeds  
Perhaps he'll hear her low at morn  
Lifting her horn in pleasant meads. (SHORT SILENCE)

Imagine, just imagine, someone write that about someone.

WIFE: Oh but I can imagine, I can imagine so much, about words and feelings and life and love; our love MICK, ours was a quiet kind of love, wasn't it dear?

\*POEM WRITTEN BY FRANCIS LEDWIDGE RECOVERING IN AN ENGLISH HOSPITAL  
1916 IN REMEMBRANCE OF HIS CLOSE FRIEND THOMAS MACDONAGH ON  
HEARING OF HIS EXECUTION.

MICK: It was something, my dear, it was a something that held all the beauty of life in it and brought to life every imaginative thought that had before slept unused in my disused being. It was something real and something good; yet sometimes it terrified me. It shook me to the bone, I have no adequate words to explain it, my dear, only to say that the thought of losing it brought on a fire in me and I felt if I should not have thee then I should have nothing and would not be of any importance to any other, so I would therefore be dead, and so die quietly without anyone ever noticing my absence!

WIFE: You have such a way with so few words, my dear.

MICK: Thinking has always come easier to me than talking. Sometimes words can be a nuisance, they don't always say what a man means! They get in the way of honesty, the sweat that trickles from my brow after a hard day in the field cannot be summed up in words, for it is truth, my truth, my honest to God truth. There are no lies in the work that brings out the best of what's in every man. The sweat between a man and a woman when their bodies roar and beg for more of what they have just shared is by far the most honest of expressions; they need no words to convey their utopia of reaching true joy. The horse, my dear, when in labour, has it words of thanks when you wipe the sweat from its body? No, it needs no words for its eyes convey the thanks it feels for that act of compassion; it knows not what the word compassion means; but it knows what compassion is! Am I right dear?

WIFE: As always, sweetheart. (SLIGHT PAUSE) How long will you be? (REFERRING TO HIS DEATH)

MICK: (LOOKS AROUND AT SOCKS ON LINE) Thirty pair of clean socks. One pair for each day left. I'm taking you with me, this time. So we can enjoy together all the battle fields that brought life into me. Those fields, battle fields, brought life into me and you brought meaning. (PAUSE) Then from the ship on our voyage home, we'll swim the ocean together, and when the exact time is right, I'll unscrew the top of this urn that holds your precious ashes; and yet tis more than just ashes or powder or death.....yes (LOOKS AS IF IN A TRANCE) it holds still the

energy that gave you life and made you you, my sweetheart.....and like a genie, you'll gush out over me and we'll swim together forever. Is that all right dear?

WIFE: That's all right MICK, if that's how you want it!

MICK: It's the way it is meant to be.....for you and I dear! Oh, I forgot to mention I bought new boots in Rogan's store yesterday, they're a bit on the big side but I need the room for the thick stocks. Old ROGAN said in his usual dull voice, "ach MICK, it's a sad time for you, what do you want new boots for at your age?"

I said back to him, "what do that matter to thee, I'm not asking for them for free, (LAUGHS) go Mr ROGAN and mind not only your manners but your own business!"

WIFE: I told you before, MICK, never to be too harsh with any man because you never know when it will be your turn.....am I right dear?

MICK: You're right dear, but, I take no heed of that stuff anymore. I am who I am; I am, I know also, who you made me! But, it's a bit late in the day to start and get manners. (RUNS PALM OF HIS HAND OVER HIS SOLE OF HIS LEFT FOOT) by the way dear, you looked beautiful like a bride.... at the wake, I could see they were all taken by the glamour of the occasion; you lying there in your wedding dress, as was your wish; see, even in death I obeyed thee and soon, after 30 pair of clean socks to be exact, we'll be joined together again. Love does not die, no, it finds a way, always.

WIFE: You won't be looking for another, then?

MICK: You want me to say it don't you.

WIFE: Yes. I would like to hear you say it MICK. Just the once. Most women are told it at least once in honesty, in their life time, hearing it eluded me MICK; but I can tell it to you now that for years and years I waited on those words, those 3 words 4 if you count my name at the beginning or the end, but I never heard them.

MICK: Yes dear, but for some they are words easily spoken, but that was.... for me impossible. Impossible because of fear, fear that if I said the words, that you or the meaning of the words would disappear. I was afraid. I needed to hold the words inward, in my soul or somewhere so deep inside here (HOLDS HAND OVER HEART) that they would not spill out when I least expected them to.

WIFE: And my name, you never spoke it though I heard you call me by it that night when you had the fever and nearly died on me. Remember? (LOOK INTO ONE ANOTHER'S EYES) You cried it out loud and then you whispered it. The blankets were soaking with your sweat, I thought then you would drown.... and now you tell me that's your choice in how you leave this earth, by the sea my love, by the wicket sea! How interesting! But sweetheart, you always were interesting, to me.....and to others perhaps more of a curiosity.....but what did that ever matter to us.

MICK: Nothing outside of this room, or that room, (LOOKS OVER AT BEDROOM DOOR) or the land we worked on together mattered to us, and why should it have mattered for we relied on no one, we had our own strength and our mind that worked and thought as one. We needed no other.

That's how it was for me (PAUSE AND CHANGE OF TONE) you should have been called MAGGIE, and not JEAN, that's why I never spoke your name to you.

WIFE: Why?

MICK: Why what, old girl?

WIFE: Why should I not have been called JEAN? And why MAGGIE?

MICK: I never told you this before, but, farmer JOHN'S wife was called JEAN, and she was a hateful woman, I was only a child, and she was hateful to me, I think, looking back that she didn't want me in her house with her children. I thought MAGGIE, a kinder name.

WIFE: Why would any woman be so hateful to a child?

MICK: Well, I never knew who my father was..... maybe it was farmer JOHN!  
(THOUGHTFUL) When people are so unkind it has to be either nature or nurture.....dare I be right old girl! But, had I known thee before her then I would have thought it a sacrilege to have one so full of hate and resentment named thy name!

WIFE: Move on sweetheart, I never before heard you talk so. Sentimentality isn't your nature.....don't look back now with bitterness.....I'm still with thee.....and in 30 pair of sock days you'll be with me.....again and forever! Now tell me more about Francis and how he died.

MICK: They said they all died bravely.....but I was there and not one wanted to die, though the ones who were still conscious did opened their arms and bid death a welcome.....death in the end was the messenger and their only friend. FRANK died in a hole, drinking tea.....that's all there is to be said.....a war won or lost.... I never knew.....but the world lost and that I knew without a single doubt..... after I was loved by thee.

TAKES OUT A LARGE HANKERCHIEF AND WIPES HIS EYES

WIFE: And where too now, sweetheart?

MICK: Before Flanders we leave here and go firstly to (SINGS)  
Dublin's fair city where the girls are so pretty  
tis there I first laid eyes on sweet MOLLY MALONE,  
she wheeled her wheel barrow through streets broad and narrow  
crying cockles and muscles alive alive oh,  
she died of a fever and no one could save her  
and that was the end of sweet MOLLY MALONE,  
now her ghost wheels her barrow through streets broad and narrow crying cockles and muscles  
alive alive oh;

I learned to sing that song dear one in the local jail house: Mountjoy Jail. Though there was no joy to be had there in 1922; December 8th it was, that I recall, the feast they told me of the Immaculate Conception; but, in my complete ignorance I could not ask any man except one what that title meant.

I had no part of that fight, I was on my way to Cobh to find thee when out of an entry a crowd of fellows ran, they were chased by uniformed men and one of those fellows stopped near to where I stood watching, and he flung a grenade in the direction of the uniformed men though it failed to explode and for the life of me, I can't say why, because simply I do not know, but I ran following in the direction of those being pursued. I was caught and brought to the ground by heavy blows to my head and back, and then dragged off to Mountjoy prison in an armoured car

WIFE: And you protested your innocence dear? (LOOKS AT HIM KNOWINGLY) Oh dear..... you did not protest your innocence I presume! Now, tell me what happened that makes you want to return and pay tribute?

MICK: I was in a cell with a lot of other men, they had all been engaged in this uprising that had now become a civil war; the Four Courts almost destroyed and most of these men had been taken from there.

One of the men, a musician, he played the violin, and the soldiers came to his cell and destroyed all that he owned and all that he held dear, he was broken hearted on account of his violin and so I knew he was a man of depth and understanding and I would converse with him. He was a serious, but jolly character, and I heard the men say that tomorrow was the feast day of the Immaculate Conception, and I asked this man, I never knew his name and even afterwards I never enquire either, but, I felt he was someone who would understand my ignorance.....and I was right.....for I knew by the way he looked me in the eye when I asked what this feast was about.....I laughed when he explained and he didn't scold me for that.

WIFE: I'm anxious now to know what it is you're going to tell me, sweetheart. It can't be that bad or memorable.....or can it?

MICK: I said I didn't know his name nor did I enquire and that is true, but, the next morning there were 4 names whispered from cell to cell and I suspect his name was one of the 4, because, I neither saw nor heard him again; the names were: Rory, Dick, Joe and Liam and I had heard the shooting that morning and I was not so stupid not to know that men had been executed in the court yard. I heard the whispers and quiet cries from grown men.....but in every battle field it is the same; men remember how to cry, how to pray.....but not to die, for death only catches up on us the once!

WIFE: I know the four you speak off: DICK BARETT a Cork man, RORY O CONNOR Dublin, JOE McKELVEY claimed by Belfast and that man who was your friend he was LIAM MELLOWS born in England and raised in Wexfort..... and so MICK, my MICK, did you attend that feast day mass of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception?

MICK: I did not, sweetheart!

WIFE: And why did you not my dear?

MICK: I did not go there because the grief was not my grief and I could not shoulder more grief than I could bear; I had shared enough grief in Flanders, my sweet. I was now in search of thee and had to keep my strength and my grief..... for love.....for thee!

WIFE: I understand that dear, but others would not. They would see it as something else..... and you were never one for explanations dear and that was one of the reasons why I loved you so. You were a strong man MICK even though you didn't know your origins you knew who exactly who you were and you never doubted yourself. Isn't that right, my wise one?

MICK: No (NODS HEAD IN AGREEMENT) that's right, I never once doubted myself..... (SMILING) but that was because I just never had the sense too..... (LAUGHS) I appeared wise to men because I always kept my mouth shut.....at least until I met thee and then suddenly all these words took meaning and I spoke and I shared and I.....I loved.....I loved thee (BREAKS OUT IN A BIG SMILE) and then..... my life began.....!

WIFE: I loved thee first.....what I gave to thee I gave to no other man, (WHISPERS NAME) MICK..... my darling..... darling MICK. (ROCKS AWAY UNTIL END OF SCENE)

MICK: What you gave and what I took from thee, I count as treasure..... for I never before knew nor had meaning that brought life to me. You gave me life and I was often sad that my seed never gave new life to our love..... for thy safe, but, I needed nothing other than yourself and your love for me.....my love.

(KISSES INDEX FINGER AND BLOWS IT TO HER) but I often thought you needed more! I watched thee look wistfully at the village children.....as they played in the streets on market days...

WIFE: My darling MICK you never knew because I never said..... (LOWERS HER HEAD) my womb was home to your seed for 12 weeks.....it happened after 2 years after our union and then it departed...left in a gush at the same speed it entered for I could remember the moment of conception; I knew it because I felt it.....I felt your seed enter and join my seed and at that exact split second I thanked God as you lay on top of me making us one making us three!..... I could not hurt thee and at the time my mother said 'there will be more' and don't burden the heart of the man who loves you with this. It was foolish advice, I know, but that was the way women thought of things such as that, then. She covered it and took it out in the dark and buried it beside the hawthorn bush where you learned to read. Should I have been ashamed, my love, not to share this grief with you all those years ago? I lived in hope that we would get a second chance but that was never to be.....was it! The moment left us and it was too late to tell thee.....to break thy heart!

MICK: But why tell me now? Is it because you know I'll know in 30 clean sock days.....or maybe I already knew and you knew I knew? Is a man not entitled to know what has become of his seed.....dear?

WIFE: Perhaps.....but not always! It depends.....

MICK: Let us not argue now..... what we never did in life let us not do in death! I will make a pot of tea.....this is the first time in this scullery that we have not drunk tea together nor sipped of the cup of truth.....am I right my love.....(LONG STARE) am I?

WIFE: You're always right, MICK. Always! What we never did in life let us not do in death.....my love.

MICK GETS UP AND LIFTS TEAPOT  
LIGHTS OUT  
BREAK FOR TEN MINUTES

ACT 2

BEFORE LIGHTS GO UP MANDELIN PLAYS 'WHEN YOU WERE SWEET SIXTEEN' AS IT FINISHES LIGHTS GO UP: STEAM IS STILL COMING FROM TEAPOT ON TABLE: MICK LIFTS SUIT CASE FROM UNDER TABLE AND TAKES SOCKS DOWN FROM LINE AND PUTS THEM INTO SUIT CASE:

WIFE: Already you're missing me, my love.....

MICK: There is no reason to match them up, I alone will wear them and no one but thee will know that they're not a match. Why should it matter anyway? A sock is a sock.....is it not?

WIFE: Yes MICK a sock is a sock and only for show do they need to look the same, but the texture needs always to be the same, otherwise they make the feet uncomfortable and also your balance.....everything in life must have its balance.....and if one foot is unbalanced by the other then it upsets the harmony of the rest of the body and maybe also it may unbalance the mind.....could I be right sweetheart?

MICK FINISHES PUTTING THE SOCKS IN SUIT CASE WALKS TO EDGE OF STAGE AND LOOKING TO BACK OF HALL SAYS:

MICK: In Spain we didn't all look the same, the Spanish texture of skin was different to ours, but the mind set was the same and I suppose that was how we managed to survive; we became brothers. In 1936 I had been loved by thee and had a mind and point of view that I cherished as intimately as I cherished the love that you awaken in me. (TURNS SLIGHTLY ROUND GLANCING AT HER) I never mentioned the name CHARLIE DONNELLY to you before, my beloved, did I?

WIFE: No, I believe not. Who was CHARLIE DONNELLY and why should he have mattered to thee.....when you had me and all my love? I find it strange to think someone then should have mattered to thee.....I am at a loss my dear.....my love.....don't keep me waiting tell me now before I die.....I almost forgot.....I did die.....I am dead.....or (SPEAKS SLOWLY) I was dead till you resurrected me somehow!

MICK: No (SOFTLY) no my dear, I did not resurrect thee for thee had never left me, we are like what skin is to bones, what flesh is to blood; we are one; two bodies one journey and one end. From this moment I carry (WALKS OVER TO TABLE AND LIFTS THE URN AND HOLDS IT TO HIS HEART) what dust remains of thee in this vessel but your heart I carry in my heart, your spirit with my spirit, there is no one here, or anywhere to bury me, no one will even notice my absence, so I go freely.....we go together my love to eternity.....(WHISPERS) soon. Anyway you ask me about CHARLIE DONNELLY. I never spoke of him before because there was not a need for it but now there is because when we reach Jarama, where he fell.....

WIFE: (CUTS IN QUICKLY) We go to Spain then my love, how delightful, how thoughtful!

MICK: I want to stand on the hill and think back to how I watched, and could do nothing, as he died! He was a fine fellow from a place called Dungannon, in Tyrone, I believe; so sensitive, I witnessed him say, and in such a sad tone 'even the Olives are bleeding'.

WIFE: Why? What did that mean.....how can Olives bleed?

MICK: He too was a poet, my dear and that is how poets see things, not in the way others see things, but in a deeper more meaningful way.....

WIFE: You then MICK are a poet, I have never known a more poetic man than thee.....everything in thee is deep and beautiful; you express every little piece of yourself so.....so magnificently.....you do my love; how could I not have loved thee for that.....that intense beauty that lights thee up.....did you not know MICK that my heart still skipped a beat when I'd watch you cross the field on your way home from a hard day's labour in the field? It happened every time without fail. I'd often wonder.....what if.....what if this sensation stopped or ended.....or died.....how dull my life with thee might have become, but never, never once did that quick beat stop, no never not once!

MICK: (HE TURNS AGAIN TO GLANCE AND SMILE) He'd joined the Americans in the Lincoln battalion, Charlie did. We were with the Irish at the start; KIT CONWAY is a name I remember because he had been an orphan from Tipperary, something in the eyes convey all that sadness of being alone, rejected.....and I recognised it without having it told to me; and another Derry man, never knew his first name, McGrotty, he objected to joining us with the British, something to do with the I.R.A. and the Black and Tans I heard them say, there was a vote taken and so we went over to the Lincolns in the American battalion.

WIFE: At least, you weren't soaked like before in the trenches?

MICK: (IGNORING HER QUESTION) The only relief was the smell of the thyme, I recognised it at once, all the Irish did, the Lincolns hadn't a notion. The smell was stronger at night when the earth was settled and I could hear men take in deep breaths to fantasise with.....between fire and then another pleasure would come in the darkness with the machine gun and rifle cracks.....a wonderful vision as the shots lit up the Olive groves. Isn't it strange what can please a man in desperation when he thinks death has arrived to take him!

WIFE: There are more ways to die than being shot or blown up in battle, dear!

MICK: True..... (DEEP SIGH) he lay for ten days before O'CONNOR and the two POWER brothers could break cover and bury him. There were others too who lay for days until their bodies could be got at.....

WIFE: And, my beloved, I know, now, from experience that they felt none of it, it was quite painless for them after death..... But it was good that you had the feeling of grief for their situation. But some things cannot be put right by man, friend or enemy! I have felt no pain since I left.....there is no pain to be had my dear in this other sphere; it is not a numbness nor lack of life... but life... the like of which I surely underestimated when I lived in a body.....I look forward to your coming, I am, for the moment, the messenger who comes to wait.....to wait on

thee, for He alone knows how lonely it has been for you MICK. You had no one for too long. Forget all that I spoke for now and tell me more about what to expect in Spain.

MICK: I hope the thyme is still in fragrance and that we can enjoy it together (HE TURNS AND STARES OVER AT HER BEFORE WALKING TO HER SIDE TO RECITE POEM) When we climb to the spot I will take from my pocket (TAKES A PAGE FROM HIS POCKET) this..... CHARLIE'S poem.....I did not witness his recital but I've imagined it many times and I've seen him in my mind, standing on that hill and tell it to all the dead that they may know, they are not alone.....(CLEARS HIS THROAT) He called it Tolerance of Crows:

Death comes in quantity from solved  
Problems on maps, well ordered dispositions,  
Angles of elevation and direction;

Comes innocent from tools children might  
Love, retaining under pillows,  
Innocently impales on any flesh.

And with flesh falls apart the mind  
That trails thought from mind that cuts  
Thought clearly for a waiting purpose.

Progress of poison in the nerves and  
Discipline's collapse is halted.  
Body awaits the tolerance of crows.

And not a single bird came to feast on all those dead corpses that lay for all those days and nights exposed to our misery; the only thing that distracted my heart felt horror until their remains were buried was the perfume of the thyme and the blood of the olives.....

(IN A LOW VOICE)I hear him forever whisper (GOES OVER AND SITS IN CHAIR AND SIGHS BEFORE SAYING) "even the olives are bleeding".

WIFE: Yes yes my poor darling MICK you returned to me a sad man, bowed but not broken! A forgotten man for no one really cared.....am I telling the truth my lovely MICK? (THEY STARE INTO ONE ANOTHER'S EYES, HE WITHOUT ANSWERING, BEFORE SHE SPEAKS AGAIN) Now MICK, to where will you take me after Spain? Where else shall we go to be miserable.....(LAUGHS)?

MICK: Miserable miserable but my dear I was never miserable in all those battle fields, no, never miserable.

I was truly happy, because I was part of something! Misery was being rejected, not loved, not considered by another human being as a human being; that's miserable, that is misery.

I was loved by thee and accepted into a group of people, I know it was making their tea and killing for them, at first.....and then with them....I could not have been happier for I had you in my

heart and those battles fields below my feet.....did you never understand that.....did you never understand me.....?

WIFE: What does all that matter now MICK.....?

MICK: I'm still alive, I still breathe, it still matters to me.

SILENCE AND THEN CHANGE OF TONE

WIFE: So.....where to now MICK?

MICK: Paris.....old girl.....Paree.....gay paree! You and me!

WIFE: Oh my MICK.....you are a poet and a funny one at that; but why, why MICK, why now when it's almost over.....?

MICK: Would you have liked me to have been funny?

WIFE: I liked you as you were.....I could see a funny side in you .....I knew the man I loved.....(CHANGE OF TONE) now, tell me to where and to whom we go to recall in Paris? You never spoke about that time and I became so madly in love with you for what you did, you're a hero of a man MICK.....I was so proud.... though I could share it with none; others got medals but not you MICK and you never complained, sometimes I thought it must be hard to be overlooked so many times.....but I never once put discontentment in your beautiful mind MICK.....you know that's true.....(THOUGHTFUL) We became so hungry, for passion, on your return, remember? It must have been all that French cuisine..... We had no appetite for anything other than that. Do you recall the time in the far field in the long grass..... just where the narrow stream trickles over the stones; clean and clear, remember.....the rain came unexpectedly, the sky had been cloudless when I went to fetch you..... and the sun scorched our backs as we lay naked..... then it poured and poured and the clips slid from my hair freeing it to fall wet across your face and you licked it like ice-cream and we laughed and laughed as you chased me back to the house still warm from the sun and naked and soaking. Remember.....

MICK: I remember it all so well. No man could ever have been as happy as I.....no man.....

WIFE: To France my dear.....I'm waiting to know for 'whom'.

MICK: Do you remember that time years ago I told thee that I had a notion to go watch a play that came touring in the parish hall?

WIFE: Yes, the only time ever we saw a play together.

MICK: Well, I once met the fellow who wrote it and I'll tell you now what happened. He was Dublin born and in the French Resistance, not a fighter like me, no! He fought in a different way than I; he killed and he saved in a different kind of way, but hand in glove, we fought the same enemy and in our own ways we defeated the enemy. He the writer, me the fighter..... and this is how we met.....I forget the month, but the weather was good, and it had just went dark though there was a full moon and we knew our way through those woods.....

(THOUGHTFUL) sometimes I would try to catch the darkness take over and also I tried many

times to catch the light spread and overtake the darkness in the mornings but I could never catch either, it happens so fast in France..... anyway, it was a meeting we were making our way to when from nowhere it seemed we were ambushed.....I was carrying only a revolver and as I fell the blood of my companion splashed across my face.....I must say it now because it always weighted heavy me my love.....when you spoke of that day in the field and the rain and your beautiful wet hair falling across my face.....that was the thought that crossed my mind and I could not remove it.....then nor now! Your wet hair reminded me of his blood soaking my face, I liked his blood from around my lips and the taste was so sweet.....or so I had thought but it could not have been sweet....I am at a loss for an explanation my love.....

WIFE: I'm sorry and sad that you kept that memory from me. Now you understand why I kept secret about our baby from thee; there are some things, even those who love deeply, cannot share. We know it now.....(NODDING HER HEAD FOR HIS APPROVAL) do we not?

MICK: (IGNORING THE QUESTION) Then there was shooting that came from behind our attracters and then a silence and a French voice shouting as it advanced towards where my comrade and I lay.....before FREDERIC died he indicated for me to take an envelope from his pocket and in a weak painful whisper told me to take it at once without delay to this man's house in Paris.....it was hard to watch him die in my arms and for me to leave him there.....I had learned to love and to feel the closeness and emptiness that death leaves.....among those whose spirits are connected.....united in a common purpose.....(LONG PAUSE) well I arrived and had been cautious and knew I had not been followed. I went to the back door, it led to the kitchen and a women open and she looked at me with suspicion.....but that was only to be expected.....I told her I wished to speak to this man and she told me to wait at the table where tea had already been prepare and invited me to sit and eat, and I did without doubt. The man entered, he was handsome in a smart kind of way, I knew he was a man of letters and he held a pencil in his left hand, like myself he was left handed or so I thought.....he took the letter and told me he would deliver it immediately and then I left and that was that, but I must confess I often thought of this man and our meeting.....I often wondered about him and what ever became of him.

WIFE: So, who was he.....and what was it about him you need to celebrate?

MICK: The play (SLIGHT PAUSE) I saw it on the notice board at St Augustine's as I brought over their order of veg and potatoes and I recognised it immediately, his name was SAMUEL BECKETT and that play I could hardly made sense off because it seemed to be about nothing.....I mean nothing happened in it that I could understand.....that sometimes nothing does happen....but I will bring you to those woods to the very spot where FREDERIC fell, I think I will find the spot easily enough because the trees had a peculiar arrangement and on my way back I carved his initial on the bark of the biggest rooted there; I will read to you a part only a small part of what I remember from the play that he called 'Waiting for Goddot' he surely must have thought it worth writing.....he must have understood it himself.

HE STANDS UP AND WALKS TO CENTRE OF STAGE FACING AUDIENCE RECITING A PASSAGE FROM 'WAITING FOR GODDOT' QUIETLY/SOFTLY.

CONTINUES:

MICK: "Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time? It's abominable! When! When! One day, is that not enough for you, one day he went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we'll go deaf, one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same

CONTINUE:

day, the same second, is that not enough for you? That could have been our epitaph; if you could write it on water.....

WIFE: How romantic MICK.....but now let us take our leave I should have been gone already.....but I wait for you!

MICK: MICK TURNS PICKS UP HIS RUCKSACK HE THEN LIFTS URN AND HOLDS IT TO HIS HEART AND SLOWLY EXITS KITCHEN TURNING OUT LIGHT. AT THIS POINT THE MELODY OF 'SHE MOVED THROUGH THE FARE' IS PLAYED FOR APPROXIMATEDLY 2 MINUTES THEN LIGHTS ON AND MICK RETURNS MINUS SUIT CASE AND URN HE WALKS OVER TO ROCKING CHAIR AND SITS DOWN TAKES OFF HIS SHOES (NO SOCKS ON) AND BEGINS TO ROCK TO AND FRO THEN STANDS AND WALKS TO CENTRE OF STAGE FACING AUDIENCE AND PROCLAIMS.....

Do gooders, bloody do gooders, always rescuing people that don't want to be rescued! I didn't even get to recite my own words my own stupid poem to the 'old girl'. I can't ever say it now it would be meaningless to say it, but this is another instead and I hope she can hear it now for I can no longer see her. "If I could wander with the night, and be myself unseen, I'd travel to your place of sleep and dream with you your dream. But, I can't travel with the night nor be myself unseen, I can only in my sleep, dream alone your dream".....

HE LOWERS HIS HEAD

LIGHTS OUT

END