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THE SUPERLATIVES

MARY SIOBHAN BRIER  
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Reviewed and approved\* by the following:

Jessica O'Hara  
Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences  
Thesis Supervisor

Marcy North  
Professor of English  
Honors Adviser

\* Signatures are on file in the Schreyer Honors College.

## ABSTRACT

*The Superlatives* is a two-act historical fiction play. It tells two parallel stories that alternate scenes, then intersect toward the end of act two. The first story is that of Ross and Norris McWhirter, identical twins with photographic memories, the original creators of the *Guinness Book of World Records*. The second story revolves around Emma Duggan and Colleen Butler, two impoverished women in Northern Ireland who grow up to become passionate Irish Republicans. Throughout the show, the main characters have similar experiences in their personal lives, but move further and further apart politically, with the girls becoming IRA leaders and the McWhirter twins spearheading political campaigns opposing the IRA. The storylines meet when Ross places a bounty on the head of Colleen, and in retaliation, Emma assassinates him. The play contains themes of political polarization and radicalization, and is a poignant commentary on the current divisiveness of our times.

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Thank you to Jake Geroski, who is the reason I feel emboldened enough to write.

And thank you to my original support system and the talented cast of *To the Rescue*, Frank, Claire, Pete, Anna, Claire B., Sam, and Kitty Brier.

## FOREWORD

Siobhan first approached me about her project over social media. I was intrigued enough by her initial description to have an extended conversation with her about the IRA campaign of terror on the streets of London, and the associated siege at Balcombe Street. It was clear she had done her homework on the topics, and had indeed read my book on the subject – *The Road to Balcombe Street*.

She carefully explained to me her approach to adapting the historical facts around the IRA Active Service Unit (ASU), the assassination of Ross McWhirter by that group, and the eventual standoff at number 22B Balcombe Street in London. She was going to write a play. I must confess that, as a researcher and writer of nonfiction material on terrorism, I could not imagine how one would even start to go about writing such a project. Siobhan sent me a sample, which intrigued me even further – as she had clearly taken a strong position on the characters involved, plus also introduced some of her own. I keenly awaited the finished product.

I have to say that when it arrived in my inbox, I printed it off and read it in one sitting. Siobhan is to be congratulated on weaving a totally compelling tapestry of very believable characters, all mixed into a rich cocktail of emotion, passion, and beliefs. I also appreciate the tip of the hat to the Moysey name in the text!

I can recommend this work without reservation. I hope the reader enjoys the experience as much as I have done. Well done, Siobhan.

Dr. Steve Moysey

3/30/17

Inspired by true events.

“People are fascinated with extremes.”

-Norris McWhirter, 1979

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

### In Order of Appearance

**Storyteller-** *A zany American professor. Warm and wise. The audience must trust him, and he tells a hell of a story. Written as a man, but could be played by a man or woman.*

**Sir Hugh Beaver-** *61 years old with white hair and very expensive clothes. Refined, snobby, and authoritative.*

**Mrs. Duggan-** *A widow and a mother of two. She was young when her children were born, but she has been aged by stress and loss. Quiet and motherly, but also very emotional and still deeply hurting from the loss of her husband.*

**Emma Duggan-** *19 in the beginning of the show, then ages four years between Acts One and Two. Short, but a bold presence. Carries a fire underneath her skin. She is brash, but charismatic. Aggressive, but loving.*

**Colleen Butler-** *Emma's best friend and the same age as her. Taller than Emma with a slight build. Quiet, but she matches Emma with a protective love she has for those she loves.*

**Ross McWhirter-** *About 30 in the first act and about 50 in the second. Absolutely identical to his twin, Norris. Takes himself very seriously, and somewhat pompous and aloof. Not very good at picking up on social cues. Flawless photographic memory. Speaks very quickly and in perfect pace with his brother.*

**Norris McWhirter-** *The older twin. All qualities same as Ross, but ever so slightly more dominant and a touch more socially adept.*

**Hugh Doherty-** *22 in the beginning of the show, then ages four years. Slightly heavysset, with a beard and messy hair. Quiet and sweet but has a tendency to convert all negative emotions into anger. Good with building things and electronics.*

**Joseph O'Connell-** *23 years old. Tall, intimidating, and attractive, with a commanding presence. Shows enormous potential in terms of intelligence, charisma, and leadership skills. He may be, perhaps, a bit too ambitious.*

**Rosemary Grice-** *In her teens or early twenties in the beginning of the show, then in her 40s or 50s in the second act. Tall and blonde with a long face and high cheekbones. Carries herself with long, energetic strides matched with a small smirk. Exceptionally good at working people to get what she wants.*

**Mrs. Wallace-** *Old, pompous British woman in her 50s.*



Sir Wallace- *Old, pompous British man in his 60s.*

Tom Hodges- *Old man, works in publishing because he loves books. Very mousey and quiet. Does not like conflict or noise. Loves his cat.*

Carole Eckert- *In her 20s. Elegant, poised and beautiful. Condescending and opinionated. Loves to drink.*

Iain McWhirter- *Son of Rosemary and Ross. Teenager. Exactly like his father.*

James McWhirter- *Same as Iain.*

Mr. and Mrs. Matthews- *An old British couple. Mr. Matthews can be played by the same actor as Tom Hodges.*

\*Casting Notes: The Irish Catholic characters in the Irish plot line should be played by non-white people (Middle Eastern, Black, Asian, etc.) and the English Protestant characters in the British plotline should be played by people who are white. Also many of the more minor character can be played by the Storyteller changing his costume and stepping in.

# **Act I**

## Act One, Scene One

*The house lights are still up and the curtains are closed. Onstage there is a podium and a portable projector screen that is rolled up.*

*The storyteller hustles down the aisle with his arms full of papers and files, some of which fly out of his arms behind him.*

### STORYTELLER

Hello, hello. I hope I'm not too late. Or too early. My watch stopped working a long time ago! But welcome. Welcome! I love seeing all the old people. And the young people. Opposite ends, but everyone can enjoy a good story.

*He drops the papers and files onto the podium and adjusts his glasses.*

### STORYTELLER

Since we're just getting started, please allow me to share a few rules. Please only take notes on a notebook and not on a laptop or phone. Uh, don't stick your gum under the desk. It took a long time to compile all these facts into a story so do your best to pay attention to the lecture. Oh, and just because they're facts, that doesn't mean they're true.

*He pulls down the projector screen and on it there is a sketch of a red grouse with its proportions and some facts about it written out.*

### STORYTELLER

Now, the red grouse is also known as *Lagopus Lagopus scotica*. *Lagopus* coming from Ancient Greek *lagos*, which means "hare," and *pous*, which means "foot," in reference to the bird's feathery feet which have evolved to withstand cold. *Scoticus* means, "of Scotland," as the bird is native to the UK. You may see here that a grouse's speed can vary anywhere from 60 to 90 feet per second, averaging out at 75 feet per second.

*The projection switches to a similar image of a bird, this time of a golden plover.*

### STORYTELLER

Here we see a Eurasian golden plover, also known as *pluvialis apricaria*. The genus name comes from the Latin *pluvia* which means "rain," as it was believed that plovers flocked before rain.

And the species name *apricaria* means "to bask in the sun." The speed of plovers varies depending on variety, but there have been reports claiming that the golden plover can travel as quickly as 100 feet per second, clearly more than 75 feet per second.

*The storyteller snaps his fingers to open the curtain and reveal the set. There are two British teenagers sitting and waiting, holding an assortment of hunting gear.*

STORYTELLER

In 1951 I travelled to the UK as I was fascinated with the area and started picking up odd jobs. One of these jobs was aiding a millionaire named Sir Hugh Beaver on his hunting trips. Of course, before aiding him in hunting I had to research the speed of European game birds, and that's when I learned the facts I just shared with you now. Here you see County Wexford, Ireland, 1951.

*He looks back at the two boys.*

STORYTELLER

You may be wondering which one I am.

*YOUNG STORYTELLER, who is only 16, comes running from the back of the audience, trying to contain papers flying out of his bag.*

YOUNG STORYTELLER

Am I late? My watch stopped working.

TEEN 1

You're fine, he's not here yet.

YOUNG STORYTELLER

Odd that he asked us to meet here.

TEEN 1

We just do what he says.

TEEN 2

Are you American?

YOUNG STORYTELLER

Oh, yes! I'm from Massachusetts. But I finished high school early and just had to come to Ireland as I love the location and find the history and facts of this area to be fascinating-

*SIR HUGH BEAVER comes striding onto stage. He wears expensive hunting clothes and has a Celtic harp sewn into his breast pocket. The teenagers jump up quickly to greet him. He speaks with an upper class British accent.*

SIR HUGH BEAVER

Afternoon.

TEEN 1

Good afternoon, sir!

TEEN 2

So wonderful to see you on this fine Tuesday!

*Young Storyteller extends his hand to Sir Hugh Beaver. Storyteller is embarrassed at the memory.*

YOUNG STORYTELLER

Hey, Hugh, how are ya?

*Sir Hugh Beaver looks down at his hand. Suddenly we hear a gunshot and the fluttering of wings.*

SIR HUGH BEAVER

That bastard Davies has already started! Quick!

*They duck and load a gun for him. He aims and fires. A large, dead bird falls from the balcony and into the aisle in the back of the theatre.*

SIR HUGH BEAVER

I got one.

TEEN 1

Excellent shot, sir!

TEEN 2

You truly are a talent.

*Sir Hugh Beaver begins to walk off the stage and down the aisle. The three teenagers follow in a line behind him.*

SIR HUGH BEAVER

I think I should go on holidays like this more often.

TEEN 1

Great idea, sir.

TEEN 2

You need time to relax.

SIR HUGH BEAVER

But then, the work I do is important.

TEEN 1

You do lead a major company.

TEEN 2

Guinness Breweries wouldn't be what it is today without you!

SIR HUGH BEAVER

It's just, the air is so fresh here in Ireland!

TEEN 1

It truly is, sir.

TEEN 2

They are known for that in County Wexford.

SIR HUGH BEAVER

Someday I'll make the air this fresh in London.

TEEN 1

An ambitious goal, sir!

TEEN 2

If anyone can do it, it's you.

SIR HUGH BEAVER

I'm proud to have caught a Red Grouse so quickly. You know, it's the fastest game bird in Europe.

TEEN 1

Oh, definitely the quickest bird.

TEEN 2

I've never seen anything else as fast.

YOUNG STORYTELLER

Oh, actually you're wrong.

*The birds stop chirping and Sir Hugh Beaver's smile drops. All three other men onstage turn back and stare at young storyteller.*

TEEN 1

*(under his breath)*

Damn Americans.

STORYTELLER

Oh, I should mention, I'm telling this story, in part because I'm the reason this story came to exist. I'm the impetus.

YOUNG STORYTELLER

I-I don't mean any disrespect, of course. But the fastest game bird in Europe is not the Red Grouse. It's the Golden Plover.

*He senses their disapproval.*

YOUNG STORYTELLER

Well, but, don't worry, the Red Grouse is second-fastest. So, in that regard, you're sort of... second best! A silver medal.

*Sir Hugh Beaver looks shocked.*

YOUNG STORYTELLER

But it doesn't really matter too much. It's just a silly little pub debate sort of thing. And I should mention that I really love this job so far-

SIR HUGH BEAVER

What did you call it?

YOUNG STORYTELLER

What?

SIR HUGH BEAVER

Our disagreement with the bird.

YOUNG STORYTELLER

A... A sort of pub debate?

SIR HUGH BEAVER

I suppose that is the sort of thing people debate in pubs, isn't it? Things like the fastest game bird in Europe.

*Sir Hugh Beaver looks off, lost in thought for a moment. He then walks up to young storyteller slowly.*

SIR HUGH BEAVER

You...

*He places his hand on young storyteller's shoulder.*

SIR HUGH BEAVER

Just gave me an excellent business idea.

*He leaves his arm around young storyteller's shoulder and shakes his hand as they walk offstage together. The other two men follow, leaving the Storyteller alone on stage. People set up the next scene as the Storyteller talks.*

STORYTELLER

So, I should clarify, this is really two stories. They go back and forth every other scene. One takes place in the 1950s. That's the story of which you just saw the beginning. And the other

story is in the 1970s. This was just the best way to organize the facts. If you find yourself confused, the bibliography can be found in the back of your text. Now, let me take you out of County Wexford and up to Northern Ireland, in a poor Catholic ghetto, in 1971.

## Act One, Scene Two

*We are in the Duggan home in June. It is a small flat in Derry, Northern Ireland. They live in the Bogside. It should be apparent that the family is poor, but there should also be props that nod to their Catholic faith.*

*At the kitchen table sits MRS. DUGGAN. She is sewing a man's shirt. The phone rings. The Storyteller begins to exit.*

*Enter EMMA DUGGAN, who is 19. She walks in quickly and the Storyteller has to jump out of her way before exiting.*

EMMA

Don't get up, ma, I'll get it.

*She picks up the phone.*

EMMA

Hello, you've reached the Duggan Castle.

*Her mother makes an exasperated sound and shakes her head as Emma looks back at her and chuckles.*

EMMA

Colleen! How are ye?... Of course you can. Is everything alright?... You just sounded upset...

Oh, alright. Come over when you can. We'll be here.

*She hangs up.*

MRS. DUGGAN

Could you help me with this?

EMMA

Of course.

*She walks over and picks up the shirt her mother has been sewing. She sighs.*

EMMA

Ma...



MRS. DUGGAN

Now, I know what you're going to say and-

EMMA

This is da's shirt.

MRS. DUGGAN

Yes, but-

EMMA

You don't need to sew the holes in his clothes. You don't need to wash his clothes. You don't need to fold them and put them away. He isn't going to wear them.

MRS. DUGGAN

I know, I-

EMMA

I let you do it right after he died, but it's been three years and I thought you were over this habit.

*Mrs. Duggan finally takes the shirt back from Emma's hand.*

MRS. DUGGAN

It's for your brother. He asked me to send him a box of clothes. I'm tailoring it so it'll fit him.

EMMA

Oh. Good.

MRS. DUGGAN

He said he's still growing and needs clothes! So I'm mailing this box of your father's clothes to Belfast later today.

EMMA

He's still growing? God, it's like he's a list of superlatives.

*Mrs. Duggan doesn't respond.*

EMMA

You know? Superlatives? Tallest, biggest, oldest-

MRS. DUGGAN

I know what a superlative is.

*There is a knock.*

EMMA  
That must be Colleen. COME IN!

*Enter COLLEEN BUTLER, also 19. She is holding a handkerchief over her eye, which is bleeding and bruised. Emma has her back to her, but Mrs. Duggan sees her and gasps.*

COLLEEN  
I'm fine.

*Emma turns, sees her, and immediately jumps up and runs to her.*

COLLEEN  
I'm sorry.

EMMA  
Let me see.

*Mrs. Duggan picks up a rag and goes to Colleen to start wiping blood from her face.*

EMMA  
What happened?

COLLEEN  
I am really fine. It isn't hurting me much anymore.

EMMA  
What happened?

COLLEEN  
Relax, Emma. It looks gory now, but-

EMMA  
Did your father hit you? Did he get drunk and hit you again?

*Colleen does not respond.*

MRS. DUGGAN  
Come here and sit down, love.

*Mrs. Duggan takes her to the table and gently cleans her eye. Emma turns around and walks offstage. As Colleen and Mrs. Duggan talk, she comes back onstage with a stick or bat and walks offstage and into the audience. Colleen and Mrs. Duggan do not notice at first.*

COLLEEN  
I'm sorry I came here, I-

MRS. DUGGAN  
You don't need to apologize.

COLLEEN  
My da, he- he didn't really mean to. I was making him mad.

MRS. DUGGAN  
We can talk about it later. Can you open your eye?

*Colleen tries to open her eye, then winces in pain.*

MRS. DUGGAN  
Emma, grab some ice.

*Emma has left the house by this point.*

MRS. DUGGAN  
Emma? Where is she?

COLLEEN  
Shite.

*Colleen jumps up and runs out of the house after Emma.*

MRS. DUGGAN  
What? Where are you going? Sit down!

*Emma is in the audience by now. Colleen runs after her.*

COLLEEN  
Emma. Emma! Stop!

EMMA  
I'm going to kill him.

COLLEEN  
I'm okay! Relax!

MRS. DUGGAN  
Are you holding a BAT?!

*Colleen finally manages to stop Emma.*

COLLEEN  
It's alright. Look at me. Just breathe. I'm alright.

MRS. DUGGAN

Emma, you're shaking! I've never seen you like this before!

EMMA

He hurt you.

COLLEEN

If you go over there right now, you'll just get yourself in trouble.

EMMA

Could I kill him later this evening?

COLLEEN

*(laughs)*

Sure, maybe we'll kill him later this evening.

EMMA

I wasn't joking.

MRS. DUGGAN

That's enough of that violent talk. Come back inside. Colleen you can stay here tonight.

*They walk back toward the house and Colleen goes inside. Mrs. Duggan stops Emma before she enters the house.*

MRS. DUGGAN

You need to control yourself.

EMMA

Did you see what he did to her?!

MRS. DUGGAN

You were about to go over there and get yourself killed.

EMMA

She was bleeding-

MRS. DUGGAN

That's not our place. Just be there for her, and calm yourself.

*Mrs. Duggan puts out her hand and Emma hands her the bat. Emma starts to walk inside. Mrs. Duggan stops her again.*

MRS. DUGGAN

And if you ever do need it, get that big hammer from the shed. It would be much more effective than a bat.

*Emma smirks. The Storyteller re-emerges. As he speaks, the table is turned so it faces the other way and it is set with a more elaborate meal.*

STORYTELLER

And now we go back to the other story. Okay? Back and forth.

*He pulls down the projector, which shows images of the historical figures and the Guinness Company as he explains.*

STORYTELLER

In the first scene you saw Sir Hugh Beaver tell me he had an idea. Well he was the managing director of the Guinness Company, and his idea was that Guinness could sell a book of facts that could settle little debates people had in pubs. Debates about the fastest this and the strongest that.

It was a good idea. I was fired the next day. But I had started the story, which, turns out, was really my purpose here anyway. Far more important than a caddy job. I digress. Sir Hugh Beaver started looking around for someone to help him compile the book, because he was busy and didn't have time to do it himself. After searching, he found two names. A pair of people who ran a fact-checking company in London.

*The Storyteller switches the slide to an encyclopedia page about eidetic memory.*

STORYTELLER

Photographic memory is a concept in popular culture that is more accurately referred to as eidetic memory. It is the ability to vividly recall images, even after only seeing those images for a few moments. It is commonly seen in children, but can sometimes persist to adulthood as well.

The ability to have this exceptional form of memory is genetic and also must be practiced regularly. So if, say, a pair of identical twins both had a gene for a photographic memory...

*Sir Hugh Beaver enters behind the Storyteller and sits at the head of the table.*

STORYTELLER

Well, they could learn a lot of facts.

### **Act One, Scene Three**

*The Storyteller exits and NORRIS MCWHIRTER and ROSS MCWHIRTER enter. (They are sometimes referred to as "The Twins.") They enter in perfect pace with each other and take in the scene around them with quick alertness. When they speak, they have upper-class British accents that match Sir Hugh Beaver's.*

*Sir Hugh Beaver is both taken aback and intrigued by the sight of the twins. He stands to greet them.*

SIR HUGH BEAVER  
Mr. McWhirter! Mr. McWhirter!

*The Twins flank him on either side and stick out their hands for handshakes.*

NORRIS  
Norris.

ROSS  
Ross.

NORRIS and ROSS  
Charmed.

SIR HUGH BEAVER  
Yes! Well, I would like to extend the warmest welcome to my estate.

NORRIS  
The pleasure is ours, sir.

ROSS  
Quite the pleasure.

NORRIS  
We are rather delighted.

ROSS  
You have an impressive estate.

NORRIS  
54 acres it seems?

SIR HUGH BEAVER  
*(can't keep up)*  
I- Sorry, it's nice to meet you, as well.

ROSS  
54 acres.

SIR HUGH BEAVER  
I, my estate? Yes. Did you ask someone?

NORRIS

No, sir.

*Beat.*

SIR HUGH BEAVER

Alright. Well have a seat, then. I'm so glad you were able to come. Help yourselves to the meal.

*The twins both sit and begin to eat ravenously. Sir Hugh Beaver looks from one to the other, still daunted by the pair.*

SIR HUGH BEAVER

Well I suppose I should introduce myself. As I'm sure you know, I am Sir Hugh Beaver, the managing director at Guinness Breweries. Something that you may not know about me is that I hunt game birds in my free time. The other day I was trying to shoot a Red Grouse, which as I'm sure you know is the fastest game bird in Europe an-

NORRIS

No, it's not.

ROSS

Golden Plover. Golden Plover is the fastest game bird in Europe.

SIR HUGH BEAVER

Well I didn't know either of you were bird experts.

NORRIS

We're experts on most things.

SIR HUGH BEAVER

Well I'll believe that fun fact when I see it in a book. Anyways, someone questioned me and we disagreed. And upon returning home realized that none of my expensive encyclopedias could answer my question of the fastest game bird! There is no book of superlatives. You know, the *fastest*, the *tallest*, the *strongest*?

ROSS

We know what superlatives are.

SIR HUGH BEAVER

Oh, very well. Anyways I decided there ought to be a book of superlatives, no? Why wouldn't there be? Think of all the pub debates that must happen across the country every night that can't be settled! That's what makes this a Guinness project. We at Guinness are willing to provide the money necessary to create a book to answer pub debates. There are so many pubs in the UK-

NORRIS

81,400.

SIR HUGH BEAVER

Sorry?

ROSS

There are approximately 81,400 pubs in the UK at this moment.

SIR HUGH BEAVER

HOW do you know these random facts?

NORRIS

It's partly photographic memory, and partly logical thinking.

SIR HUGH BEAVER

Logical thinking?

ROSS

Logical thinking.

NORRIS

Say you want to know the widest river that's ever been frozen.

ROSS

Really quite simple. There are only three contenders.

NORRIS

No rivers in the Antarctic.

ROSS

So it's down to the three main Russian Rivers.

NORRIS

The Ob', the Yenisey, and the Lena.

ROSS

And since the Lena is the largest of the three, that must be the one.

*Sir Hugh Beaver looks from one to the other, stunned. Then, starts quizzing them quickly.*

SIR HUGH BEAVER

What's the longest filibuster recorded?

NORRIS

Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon. Over 22 hours.



SIR HUGH BEAVER

What's the longest time spent pole squatting?

ROSS

Another man from Oregon named Howard. Stayed up for 196 days.

SIR HUGH BEAVER

Language with the fewest irregular verbs?

NORRIS

Turkish. Only one.

SIR HUGH BEAVER

What's the irregular verb?

NORRIS and ROSS

Imek.

ROSS

*(slower, leaning in)*

It means "to be."

*Sir Hugh Beaver leans back in his seat.*

SIR HUGH BEAVER

I believe I have a job for you gentlemen.

*The lights go down on the stage and they remove the set quickly. The Storyteller approaches the audience.*

STORYTELLER

Here's something to write in your notes that will help you keep track. Our one story, the one you just saw a bit from, the one in the 50s, is about British people. The one that takes place in the 70s is about Irish people. Make sense? Let me know if I'm going too fast. I also have office hours every Tuesday from one to four so please feel free to stop by and we can have some coffee and chat. Anyways, in our Irish storyline it's a month later. Emma, the girl you met in the last scene *(he describes Emma's physical appearance)*, she has grown up listening to stories from her brother and father about the Irish resistance against England. That resistance concept becomes more and more tempting as she grows up facing discrimination as a Catholic in Northern Ireland.

So now she's finally decided to act.

*He sits in the audience for the next scene.*

## Act One, Scene Four

*Emma and Colleen enter from the back of the audience and walk toward the stage. Colleen's eye is still somewhat bruised, but healing. Emma is tugging Colleen by the hand. After walking in, Colleen pulls her hand away from Emma.*

COLLEEN

You need to tell me where we're going.

*Emma looks around anxiously.*

COLLEEN

What, is this top secret?

EMMA

Sort of, yes!

COLLEEN

There's no one around. You can stop looking.

EMMA

Okay. So you know how my da lived in London for years and the British treated him absolutely horribly?

COLLEEN

I know. He talked about it all the time.

EMMA

Well when my brother was a bit younger, he started getting involved in some Irish independence groups. And now, in Belfast, he's starting to become a leader of sorts.

COLLEEN

Irish independence?

EMMA

Well, they're Catholic, republican groups that want to fight against sectarianism, oppression, and violence toward Irish Catholics. Especially here in Northern Ireland.

COLLEEN

You said Irish independence.

EMMA

I- sure, the ultimate goal would be removing the imperialist British presence from Ireland.

*Beat.*

COLLEEN

People get mad about this stuff, Emma.

EMMA

I know. I know. But it's all peaceful. The groups are doing things like raising money for certain politicians, helping other Catholic families pay food and rent-

COLLEEN

They don't even bring you to trial, if they hear you have ties to Irish independence they can just pick you up.

EMMA

But it's worth the risk! You saw what happened in America over the last few years. Peaceful protest. Congregating. It makes a difference! "Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle." Martin Luther King junior said that. I know you were excited about all the protests and rebellions we've had around here like the Battle of the Bogside.

COLLEEN

Of course, but-

EMMA

We need to be a part of it. Everything is made harder for Catholics. Look at the slum we live in. This is one of the most economically depressed areas in Ireland and we hardly have any social housing. Look at how hard it's been for us to get jobs and medical care and government benefits, and political traction. And when we try to rebel, people are beaten, jailed, and tortured. BRITISH IMPERIALISM RUINS-

COLLEEN

You still haven't told me where you're bringing me!

EMMA

Oh! My brother said some of his friends who still live here in Derry are working on starting their own secret republican group and they're recruiting young Catholics.

*Colleen starts to leave.*

EMMA

Where are you going?!

COLLEEN

You want me to join you and some strangers in this secret Irish republican group? Are you forgetting how mad people get about this thing, Emma? You and I watched your own brother get beat at that protest three years ago!

EMMA

That's exactly why we need to join!

COLLEEN

You've seen the British soldiers about. Just last week they locked up Meave's brother.

EMMA

That's why it's secret.

COLLEEN

Why can't you do it alone?

EMMA

When have you and I ever done anything alone?

*Colleen sighs.*

EMMA

Come in with me. It'll just be us and the two leaders having a chat.

*Colleen uncrosses her arms and she and Emma walk forward. A hand reaches out and stops them. Colleen screams and Emma elbows her.*

EMMA

Emma Duggan. Harry Duggan's sister.

*She looks at Colleen.*

COLLEEN

Colleen Butler. Um, I'm an only child.

*Beat. HUGH DOHERTY, who is 22 years old, steps from the doorway.*

HUGH

Hi.

EMMA

Hugh Doherty! How are ye?!

*He puts his finger over his lips to tell her to be quiet. He leads them back farther in the room. Sitting on a chair at a table is JOSEPH O'CONNELL. He is the oldest of the bunch at 23. He stands when the women come in.*

HUGH

Joseph, this is Emma, Harry's sister, and her friend, Colleen.

JOSEPH

I'm Joseph O'Connell. It's very nice to meet you both. Have a seat.

*The girls sit down. Hugh stands behind Joseph, almost as a bodyguard.*

JOSEPH

Thank you both for coming to meet with us. I'm from Derry, as both of you probably know. But I've been living in Belfast the past few years. I'm involved in a group there of people like us; Catholics who want to fight against issues like sectarianism, racism, and classism. That group, which is led by your brother, sent me back to Derry to find interest and start a chapter here.

EMMA

What does this "group" entail?

JOSEPH

It's an Irish republican club. We have a few different initiatives. We'd start raising funds for certain families who need it. For example, my friend Hugh here, he's an engineer. An exceptional engineer. But he can't find employment because all the companies around here are Protestant-owned. So he can't always pay to feed his younger brother. We would make sure he doesn't need to worry about that.

HUGH

I want to be able to get him a football for Christmas. He's a talented little lad, very athletic.

JOSEPH

We're also planning to stage another protest in one of the Protestant districts in town, where we know they intentionally intimidated Catholic families out of the neighborhood.

EMMA

*(cannot contain her excitement)*

This- Joseph, this sounds amazing. I have so many ideas about different things we can do.

JOSEPH

I'm glad.

EMMA

When can we start? When is the first meeting?

JOSEPH

There's something else we need to know before we can admit you.

EMMA

Of course! What do you need?

JOSEPH

This group is committed to fighting back. We need your promise that if we ever need to take up arms, you will be willing.

*Beat. When Joseph and Emma argue, it is fast and intense.*

EMMA

What? Take up arms? You mean fight? Physically?

JOSEPH

It could mean that, yes. It could mean a lot of things.

EMMA

But you would want us to hurt people?

JOSEPH

It would be retaliatory. People who have been hurting us for years. Why do you seem surprised? Didn't you live here for the Battle of the Bogside?

EMMA

Yes, but we don't need to be a group like that. We could be like NICRA.

JOSEPH

You fail to see the effects of sectarianism. Not only does it directly lead to violence- beatings, jail time. But it does indirectly as well. Fathers who can't feed their children because they can't get a job because they're Catholic. Poor families who can't get government benefits. Loyalists have attacked local protests! Police have openly beat men and women for protesting in Protestant areas! And their silent discrimination alone leads to starvation, assault, alcoholism, abuse-

EMMA

I'm aware of the consequences. I've watched my own brother get his face broken by police officers for protesting with the DHAC right in the city center.

JOSEPH

Then why aren't you angry?

EMMA

I am! And I want to fight back. But not with violence. Not by hurting people. That just gives them more of an excuse to make us the villains.

JOSEPH

If you disobey your ma, she gives you a warning. But if you disobey her again, and again, and again eventually, you'll be slapped. Maybe someone needs to be slapped for them to wake up.

*He turns to Colleen, as Emma is clearly not receptive.*

JOSEPH

Do *you* understand? What we're trying to do here?

*Colleen looks confused.*

COLLEEN

My da slaps me even if I didn't do anything.

*Joseph grabs Colleen's arm.*

JOSEPH

And don't you ever want to hit back?

*Emma pushes Joseph away from Colleen.*

EMMA

Don't touch her.

*Beat.*

JOSEPH

So Miss Peaceful Protest does have a temper.

HUGH

Let's sit back down.

JOSEPH

It's alright. They'll be on their way now.

EMMA

*(to Colleen)*

Let's go.

*Colleen is out the door and Emma is about to leave when Joseph speaks to them.*

JOSEPH

We'll be meeting as a group next Tuesday at 11PM at McFarley's pub. Knock on the back window twice and when he opens it, say you're Paddy's friend. That is, if you're still interested in coming.

*Emma takes a moment to consider this.*

EMMA

We'll be there.

JOSEPH

Good. Remind me your name, Harry's sister?

EMMA

It's Emma... Don't forget it again.

JOSEPH

I have a feeling I won't.

*The lights go down and they exit.*

STORYTELLER

Now we're headed back to the British story now. The one in the 50s. See, it's not too hard. If you remember, the twins are putting together a book. After they met with Sir Hugh Beaver they started putting together this book of superlatives that he had requested. But it turns out, that isn't as easy as it sounds. Again, I'm available for questions during office hours. But, please, before you come, review the syllabus. I have an FAQ section on page four.

*The Storyteller exits.*

### **Act One, Scene Five**

*The stage is rearranged while the Storyteller is talking so two desks are wheeled out and placed opposite each other. They are covered in papers and clutter. The twins come out and each sits at his own desk. Outside the office there is a single chair. This set should be ready by the time the Storyteller is done speaking (this happens often in the show- the Storyteller used to make transitions seem quicker).*

*Ross picks up the phone.*

ROSS

*(speaking quickly and matter-of-factly)*

Hello, Sir. My name is Ross McWhirter and I'm calling from McWhirter Twins Limited. I want you to tell me about your cows.

*Enter ROSEMARY ECKERT. She sits in the chair outside the office and eavesdrops on Ross's call.*

ROSS

It's your job to... milk cows... or something, correct? ...Oh, alright. So I want to know which cow produced the most milk. Ever. I've been directed to you as someone who would know this fact. And I need it. So tell me now, please. ...What? Why is that a strange question? I'm



compiling a book of facts and I need to know the cow that has produced the most milk ever. ...Sir? Hello?

*Ross hangs up the phone.*

NORRIS  
He hung up as well?

ROSS  
I don't know what we could possibly be doing wrong.

NORRIS  
We've both been perfectly amicable.

ROSS  
I'm beginning to worry about our deadline.

*Rosemary stands and approaches their office.*

ROSEMARY  
Excuse me?

*The twins turn to look at her.*

ROSEMARY  
Please forgive me, but I couldn't help but overhear your call. I was wondering if possibly, I could try?

*The twins look at each other.*

ROSEMARY  
My name is Rosemary Grice. I was just waiting outside. I'm usually good with people, and I think I could help you.

NORRIS  
Perhaps you could let her call the man who just hung up.

ROSS  
I don't know if I can trust her.

ROSEMARY  
You can trust me.

ROSS  
I wasn't talking to you.

NORRIS

You don't really have anything to lose. Not with that man at least.

ROSS

I suppose she doesn't seem very threatening.

NORRIS

No.

*Ross picks up the number from his desk. It is written on a piece of paper. He hands it to Rosemary.*

ROSS

We've conferred and decided there's no harm in you trying. Call this number.

*Rosemary takes it and leans over Norris to make the phone call. Norris looks very uncomfortable. She waves her hand and he stands up. She sits in his seat. When the person on the other line answers, she does an impeccable American accent.*

ROSEMARY

Hello, sir! My name is Stacie and I'm a reporter for the New York Times. I figured that for such a prestigious newspaper we would have to get in touch with the smartest and most capable dairy expert we could find. We're doing a story on Bessie, the American cow who has managed to produce more milk than any other cow in the world! We were-

*She holds the phone away from her ear as someone hollers on the other line.*

ROSEMARY

What? You mean it wasn't an American cow that's produced the most milk? Well that can't be! Then what cow has?

*Ross quickly grabs a pen and paper.*

ROSEMARY

A cow in Scotland produced 17 gallons in one day! Impossible! What was she named? Hmm, Daisy, owned by a man named Martin Littleton at the Littleton Dairy Cow Farm? And you're positive? ...Oh dear, we'll have to check our facts then! Thank you for correcting me! Do you mind if we cite you as our source? ...Thanks so much! Have a good day.

*She hangs up.*

ROSEMARY

That's the fact you needed?

ROSS  
How did you do that?

ROSEMARY  
They may not give you the facts point blank. But people do love correcting each other.

NORRIS  
Why the accent?

ROSEMARY  
People especially love correcting pompous Americans.

ROSS  
Alright, well. Thank you, girl. Perhaps you could come back at a different time. We're actually waiting for someone to come have an interview to be a secretary.

ROSEMARY  
Oh, that's me.

ROSS  
I beg your pardon? The interview isn't until 11 o'clock. It's 9:30.

ROSEMARY  
I came early.

*The twins look at each other.*

ROSS  
Perhaps you could wait outside until 11-

NORRIS  
Ross, why don't you conduct the interview now?

ROSS  
I'm busy.

NORRIS  
We don't want to keep the lady waiting.

ROSS  
Then why don't you do the interview?

ROSEMARY  
I don't mind waiting.

NORRIS

Nonsense. I was just about to leave for a little while.

ROSS

*(slightly panicking)*

Norris.

*Norris grabs his coat and exits.*

NORRIS

I'll be back in 45 minutes.

*Norris exits. Beat.*

ROSS

So. You'd like to be a secretary.

ROSEMARY

Yes, sir. I don't have much experience but I'm willing to learn.

ROSS

Very well. We're compiling a book of facts for Sir Hugh Beaver, the director of the Guinness Company. You would mostly be taking calls and taking notes and filing all the facts we find in one place.

ROSEMARY

Can I help you find facts?

ROSS

No. We're doing that on our own.

ROSEMARY

But it doesn't seem like that's working very well.

ROSS

Excuse me?

ROSEMARY

*(pacing, taking in the room, cleaning up small messes)*

I've researched yourself and your brother. You were born to a very distinguished father who edited three national newspapers. You were always sent to the best boarding schools. You were both in the Royal Navy for three years before going to Oxford. Along with your impeccable photographic memories, you're also both extremely talented track runners. Only Norris was always a slightly better runner than you were.

ROSS

I was better at Rugby!

ROSEMARY

Norris even ran with Roger Bannister, and announced it when Bannister ran the four-minute mile. And now, apparently, you're compiling a book of facts.

ROSS

I already know all these things. Why are you telling me these things?

ROSEMARY

I just wanted to show that I took the time to learn all that just for this interview. Imagine how much more I can learn when I get the job.

ROSS

*If* you get the job.

ROSEMARY

But I believe I will. Because, you see, you both have a very impressive resume. But in order to create this book, you need to work with people. And that has never been your strong suit. And that's where I come in.

*Silence as Ross considers this.*

ROSS

Unfortunately we can't hire you.

ROSEMARY

What? Why?

ROSS

I find you... distracting.

ROSEMARY

That sounds like a personal issue.

ROSS

I also need to talk it over with Norris before making a decision.

ROSEMARY

Of course. By all accounts I've read, Norris seems to be the slightly more... How shall I put it? The slightly more dominant twin? So if you need to ask his permission, I understand.

ROSS

I'm not asking his permission.

ROSEMARY

Most pairs of twins have a leader and follower.

ROSS

I can hire you without Norris!

ROSEMARY

Excellent!

ROSS

I didn't say I would-

ROSEMARY

When could I start? Does tomorrow work? 6AM?

ROSS

We don't usually come in until 8.

ROSEMARY

6AM, then!

ROSS

Well... fine.

*She writes her phone number on a paper on Ross's desk.*

ROSEMARY

I'll write down my home phone number.

ROSS

I don't need that.

ROSEMARY

Oh, it's not for the job.

*She finishes writing and stands.*

ROSEMARY

It's for you.

*She holds the paper out.*

ROSEMARY

Do I get weekends off?

ROSS  
Of course.

ROSEMARY  
Good. Call me this Saturday.

*Ross, confused, takes the paper. Rosemary exits. The lights go down onstage and they clear the set. The Storyteller leans against the side of the stage.*

STORYTELLER  
And after that meeting, Ross and Rosemary began to get to know each other. Meanwhile, a bit of time went by in our Irish plotline, a few months, and now it's November. Emma, Joseph, Colleen and Hugh are all good friends now. But the relationship between Emma and Joseph is a little bit... complicated.

*He exits.*

### **Act One, Scene Six**

*Emma and Joseph enter from a door toward the back of the audience. Emma, Joseph, Colleen, and Hugh were at the pub, where Joseph got too drunk. Joseph starts walking through the aisle, still holding a pint. Emma leans back in the door and yells. Joseph drunkenly flirts with a woman in the audience, improvising lines.*

EMMA  
Goodbye Hugh! Colleen. Colleen! We're leaving! No, I need to get him home, he's a mess.  
Okay! Leave with Hugh! I love you both. See you on Tuesday, Hugh!

*She turns and sees Joseph. She runs to stop him.*

EMMA  
What are you doing? What are you doing? Leave that woman alone. I'm sorry, ma'am.

*They continue to walk down the aisle.*

JOSEPH  
She was a pretty one.

EMMA  
Alright, let's go.

JOSEPH

You're no fun at all. Your brother, now he knows how to drink!

EMMA

Then go back to Belfast to be with him.

JOSEPH

That would be nice.

EMMA

We wouldn't miss you.

JOSEPH

Ohh, you would miss me, Emma! I see the way you look at me!

*He looks at someone in the audience.*

JOSEPH

You should see how she looks at me.

*Emma scoffs. By now they are onstage.*

EMMA

Will you shut it? For once? I don't want anyone associating me with you.

JOSEPH

Stop here, Emma.

*He stops walking and takes out a cigarette and lights it.*

EMMA

It's cold!

JOSEPH

I can't believe you've known me for months now and still don't expect me to stop for a fag on the way home after a night at the pub.

*Emma groans and stands next to him, leaning against a building. On the opposite side of the stage from them, an older man and his wife walk onstage. They are SIR ALFRED WALLACE and MRS. WALLACE, and they are dressed expensively. They approach Emma and Joseph.*

MRS. WALLACE

*(to Emma)*

Pardon me? Do you know where the Moysey Restaurant is?



EMMA

Oh, em, I think it's on Strand Road, but I'm not positive.

SIR WALLACE

She doesn't know where that restaurant is, darling, look at the way she's dressed.

JOSEPH

What does that mean?

SIR WALLACE

She just doesn't look like she would go to such an expensive restaurant.

JOSEPH

*(defensive)*

I think she looks lovely.

MRS. WALLACE

*(not listening)*

Is this building here a restaurant? Maybe we could go here? I'm tired of walking around.

SIR WALLACE

If it will stop you complaining.

*They take off their coats and hand them to Emma and Joseph, thinking they work for the restaurant, and start to walk inside.*

SIR WALLACE

*(as he gives his coat to Joseph)*

Try not to steal it, eh?

*He laughs.*

EMMA

Why are you handing us your coats? We don't work here.

MRS. WALLACE

So, what, you're just standing about?

*Sir Wallace grabs his coat back. He examines it and shows it to his wife.*

SIR WALLACE

He got soot on it.

*Mrs. Wallace tries to grab her coat back from Emma, but Emma pulls it away and drops it on the ground. Mrs. Wallace scrambles to pick it up.*

MRS. WALLACE

What is wrong with you?! That coat is worth 1,000 pounds!

JOSEPH

I know who you are. You're that British couple that bought the property in center town. Five families lived in that house before you bought it. I bet all the local loyalists just love you now, eh?

SIR WALLACE

Actually they do! My business is booming.

JOSEPH

I don't give a fuck about your business.

MRS. WALLACE

Let's go, Alfred.

SIR WALLACE

*(his ego bruised)*

This scum on the street thinks he can talk to me with no respect! Why don't you go back to the slum with your little girlfriend? You stupid taig.

MRS. WALLACE

Alfred.

JOSEPH

Look at you walking about thinking you're better than everyone else. I see you for what you really are. You're nothing. You're irrelevant. You don't even know how to conduct yourself around a beautiful woman. *(He gestures to Emma.)*

SIR WALLACE

I'm a very powerful man. Do you understand what I could do to you?

JOSEPH

Do I look scared?

*Emma holds Joseph's arm, and looks at the couple.*

EMMA

Leave us.

*Sir Wallace nods, smiling.*

SIR WALLACE

I'll let you go back to the Bogside, walking street corners waiting for business.

*He scoffs and leaves along with his wife.*

JOSEPH

They shouldn't be talking to you like that! What kind of people could look at you and proceed to talk like that?

*Emma turns and holds his face in her hands.*

EMMA

Hey, Joseph, look at me. Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out.

*They breathe together as she holds his face. He places his hands over hers. She kisses him. He wraps his arms around her. After a few moments. Emma leans away, slowly.*

EMMA

Thank you for standing up for me. You were very brave.

JOSEPH

Thank you for calming me down.

*She smiles, then starts to walk away.*

EMMA

I'm off this way. I'll see you Tuesday.

*He stops her.*

JOSEPH

Now, you wouldn't let me walk home alone this shitfaced? Walk me all the way home. For my safety. Would ye?

*Emma considers this a moment, then smirks and walks off with him. The Storyteller comes in on the other side.*

STORYTELLER

I suppose both of our stories have a little romance blossoming. But "the course of true love never did run smooth." Our British plotline moved forward a bit. They finished the book, and through the process Rosemary and Ross have continued to be... friendly. But finishing a book is one thing. Publishing it is another.

*As he walks off, he mutters to himself.*

STORYTELLER

Don't I know.

*He exits.*

### **Act One, Scene Seven**

*Sir Hugh Beaver stands outside a publisher's office. Rosemary, Ross, and Norris approach him. Rosemary is out of breath. She sticks out her hand to Sir Hugh Beaver.*

ROSEMARY

You must be Sir Hugh Beaver. I'm Rosemary Grice. I'm Ross's girlfr-

ROSS

Secretary. She's our secretary.

ROSEMARY

Oh, well, yes. That, too.

*Sir Hugh Beaver shakes her hand.*

SIR HUGH BEAVER

*(addressing the twins)*

So did you bring your final copy?

NORRIS

Yes!

*Ross holds up the manuscript proudly.*

ROSS

Over 10,000 records, facts, and statistics.

NORRIS

Compiled by us.

ROSS

For you.

NORRIS

Also we've memorized it.

ROSS

All of it.

NORRIS

Down to the decimal.

SIR HUGH BEAVER

That's impressive.

ROSS

Honestly, that was the easy part.

NORRIS

Actually compiling it was far more daunting.

ROSS

We're calling it-

NORRIS and ROSS

The Great Big Book of Superlatives Created and Funded by Guinness compiled and edited by McWhirter Twins Limited!

*Beat.*

ROSEMARY

You're calling it *what?*

SIR HUGH BEAVER

Brilliant! What a wonderful title.

NORRIS and ROSS

Thank you.

*TOM HODGES, an old man, enters from his office. He is a publisher on whom they are relying to publish the book. He bumps into them, in a hurry.*

TOM

Oh! Sorry. So sorry.

*Sir Hugh Beaver steps in front of him and sticks out his hand.*

SIR HUGH BEAVER

You must be Tom Hodges. I'm Sir Hugh Beaver.

TOM

Oh, sure. Well I'm just going to the men's room-

*Sir Hugh Beaver steps into Tom's office.*

SIR HUGH BEAVER  
Let's talk publishing, shall we?

*Tom Hodges, clearly uncomfortable, follows him in.*

TOM  
Well, I suppose we could now.

*Ross hands Sir Hugh Beaver the book as Sir Hugh Beaver walks into Tom's office.*

NORRIS  
This is going to go very well. I can feel it.

ROSS  
Let's get comfortable in the waiting room.

*Rosemary, Ross, and Norris may exit, or may sit somewhere inconspicuous where they chat and Ross and Rosemary flirt. Sir Hugh Beaver and Tom Hodges are still onstage. On Tom's desk there are a few framed photos of cats. Tom sits behind his desk and Sir Hugh Beaver drops the book on his desk. Tom jumps a bit. In this scene, Sir Hugh Beaver is dramatic, over-rehearsed, and far too confident.*

SIR HUGH BEAVER  
Tom, may I call you Tom?

TOM  
I actually prefer Mr. Hodges-

SIR HUGH BEAVER  
Tom, before I speak about the book, I want to make sure you're prepared.

TOM  
*(slightly concerned)*  
Prepared for what?

SIR HUGH BEAVER  
Prepared to be amazed.

TOM  
Oh. I suppose I am.

SIR HUGH BEAVER  
Because what I am about to show you is the single best project that has ever entered this office.

TOM  
May I see the book?

SIR HUGH BEAVER  
I'm going to tell you a little about myself. My name is Sir Hugh Beaver and as you probably already know, I am the managing director of Arthur Guinness, Son and Company Limited. And I have commissioned a book... of superlatives.

TOM  
So it's a book of facts?

SIR HUGH BEAVER  
Yes!

TOM  
So an encyclopedia?

SIR HUGH BEAVER  
No! It's sort of... records! World records! The greatest feats of humanity. The sort of things people squabble in pubs about.

TOM  
So the target audience is... drinkers?

SIR HUGH BEAVER  
No! Well, yes. The target audience is everyone!

TOM  
Hm. What sort of facts do you include?

SIR HUGH BEAVER  
All the most fun and interesting and entertaining ones!

TOM  
Do you stretch the truth?

SIR HUGH BEAVER  
No, of course not! Well, I suppose. I don't know.

TOM  
You don't know?

SIR HUGH BEAVER  
No, I didn't compile it. But I've asked the fact checking company that works for me to make it as entertaining as possible!

TOM

So is it an entertaining “believe it or not” type of book, or is it more of an encyclopedia?

SIR HUGH BEAVER

From my understanding, it’s somewhere in the middle.

TOM

You don’t seem to know a lot about it.

SIR HUGH BEAVER

Well I didn’t write it. I’m a very busy man. I’m actually the managing director of Guinness-

TOM

You mentioned that.

*Tom takes out a pencil and paper.*

TOM

And what is the name of this book?

SIR HUGH BEAVER

The Great Big Book of Superlatives Created and Funded by Guinness and compiled and edited by McWhirter Twins Limited.

*It takes Tom a long time to write all of this. Sir Hugh Beaver twiddles his thumbs. Finally he speaks.*

TOM

Mc..Widdle?

SIR HUGH BEAVER

McWhirter.

*He goes back to writing. Then he finishes.*

TOM

Brilliant. Well. We’ll order six copies.

SIR HUGH BEAVER

SIX?!

*He crosses something out.*

TOM

Actually, make that seven. My nephew, Frank, he collects encyclopedias. Now, that’s my sister Mary’s son. He’s a very kind man, he sold me my cat who is named-



SIR HUGH BEAVER

Why only six?!

TOM

Oh well I find you very unappealing and just brash and that pitch was, well, that was the worst I've ever seen, I- I don't know how you survive going through life with that sort of attitude, I, well, actually now that I think about it, well, yes, I would really just prefer if- if you left, preferably right now, um, yes, actually, just, leave my office, please. Please.

SIR HUGH BEAVER

This is absurd.

TOM

Please leave.

SIR HUGH BEAVER

I don't deserve this sort of treatment! I'll be taking my business elsewhere. You will regret this!

*Tom doesn't like being yelled at. Sir Hugh Beaver storms out. Ross, Rosemary, and Norris either enter or stand to address him. Now that Tom is alone in his office he cries a bit.*

SIR HUGH BEAVER

This man is daft.

ROSS

What? What do you mean? What's the problem?

SIR HUGH BEAVER

They only want six copies.

NORRIS

Are you joking?

ROSS

What went wrong?

SIR HUGH BEAVER

I haven't the slightest notion. I did everything properly.

NORRIS

We just spent months of our lives working on this project. We need to be compensated.

SIR HUGH BEAVER

Well to be frank I'm not going to compensate you for a book that didn't sell.

NORRIS

You guaranteed we would be paid!

ROSS

I need to pay for a wedding!

SIR HUGH BEAVER

I don't know what to tell either of you. But I'm on a tight schedule, so I need to go. We can...  
work something out. Maybe a different publisher.

*Norris and Ross mutter to each other and Rosemary puts her hand on Ross's back. Sir Hugh Beaver and Norris exit. Ross starts to leave but Rosemary stops him.*

ROSEMARY

Darling.

ROSS

What on earth are we going to do?

ROSEMARY

We'll think of something.

ROSS

Like what, Rosemary? We've been working on compiling this nonstop for almost a year, and now he's not going to pay us for a project that he initiated? I'll have to ask my parents for help, this is humiliating-

ROSEMARY

Ross. Sweetheart. Breathe in.

ROSS

I don't need to breathe, I need to-

ROSEMARY

Breathe in.

*He does so.*

ROSEMARY

Hold it. Then breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out. We'll be fine.

NORRIS

*(offstage)*

Ross!

ROSEMARY

Go ahead, I need to get my coat.

*Ross exits. Rosemary waits for him to go, then takes out a little notebook and writes down Tom's room number.*

*As she exits, the Storyteller comes out. Someone kicks a soccer ball onto stage and the Storyteller scrambles to kick it back. A little boy runs onstage to grab it. As he speaks to the Storyteller, the next scene is set up and Colleen and Joseph come out and sit next to Hugh, comforting him.*

STORYTELLER

Hello, hello! How are you feeling?

BOY

*(has an Irish accent)*

Really... I'm better than I ever have been. Peaceful.

STORYTELLER

Sounds about right. Would you like to help me tell the story?

BOY

I'd love to, but I'm just passing through.

*He drops the ball again and dribbles it across the stage. Before exiting he looks back.*

BOY

Could you make sure Hugh knows he'll be okay?

STORYTELLER

*(looks at Hugh with his friends)*

Don't worry. He has people to make sure he knows.

*The boy smiles. He throws the soccer ball to the Storyteller and exits. The Storyteller tosses the ball around as he exits on the opposite side.*

### **Act One, Scene Eight**

*It is now December in the Irish plot. Hugh is sitting on a bed in the middle of the stage. He is hunched over, with his face in his hands. Joseph is sitting on his left and Colleen is sitting on his right. Emma comes in, taking off a scarf and hat.*

EMMA

Hugh, what happened? Is everything okay?

*Hugh doesn't lift his head. Colleen stands and walks over to address Emma.*

COLLEEN

Hugh's younger brother who he's been supporting... He didn't wake up this morning.

*Emma covers her mouth.*

COLLEEN

He had been sick, he had pneumonia. They tried wrapping him up and putting him on bed rest until this Sunday when Hugh was off work and had time to bring him to the doctor's, but it moved to both lungs too fast.

EMMA

How is Hugh?

COLLEEN

Not good. I guess he couldn't afford to have heat in the house, so he's sort of blaming himself.

*Hugh stands and yells to them.*

HUGH

I'm not blaming myself! I'm a fucking engineer! I could have built him a whole new Goddamn house if I had the material! But instead I spend all day sweeping floors, because no big engineering company wants to hire a taig! They killed him! It wasn't me! It wasn't pneumonia! *They killed him!*

*Colleen has started crying. Joseph puts his hands on Hugh's shoulders and calms him down.*

JOSEPH

You're absolutely right, Hugh. They'll pay for his life. They will.

*Hugh sees Colleen is in tears and steps back a bit.*

HUGH

I'm- I'm sorry, Colleen. I'm not upset with you.

COLLEEN

I know, love.

*She goes to him and holds him as he cries again.*

EMMA

We love you, Hugh. You're the most gentle and good man we know. And we're going to help you-

JOSEPH

We're going to make those bastards pay, is what we're gonna do.

EMMA

Not now, Joseph.

*Beat. Hugh lifts his head.*

HUGH

No. He's right.

*He swipes his hand under his nose.*

HUGH

*(slowly, with increasing volume)*

My brother was murdered. My little brother. And he left us on this earth. I'm tired of it. I'm tired of seeing my own people suffer. And I'll be damned if they think they're going to get away with it this time.

JOSEPH

Yes!

COLLEEN

Maybe right now isn't-

HUGH

No! Right now! We're fighting back.

*Hugh walks around to a table and grabs a paper and something to write with.*

COLLEEN

Hugh, you aren't your usual self. You're very emotional right now.

JOSEPH

*(ignoring Colleen)*

We need money!

HUGH

Yes! How are we going to get money?

*Hugh writes quickly as he and Joseph make plans. Emma doesn't react much, she looks somewhat confused.*

JOSEPH

All the money will go to your family.

HUGH

*And* this organization. So we can help more families.

JOSEPH

How are we going to get it?

COLLEEN

*(upset)*

Are you sure you're acting rationally?

JOSEPH

Is there a legal way we could get it? The church is usually willing-

HUGH

Fuck that. I don't want loose change.

JOSEPH

*(nods)*

We'll steal it.

HUGH

Yes! We'll steal right from the feckers that did this to him!

COLLEEN

Hugh, this isn't who you are! You're such a good and honest man-

HUGH

Who could we target? Loyalist politicians? What about the wealthy Protestant families in the center of town? The family that owns that construction company?

JOSEPH

Now, hold on a minute. The British couple that moved here recently.

HUGH

The one who fought with you and Emma!

JOSEPH

Yes! Sir Alfred Wallace, that's the man's name! That feekin' arse, have you seen that house? They have a flat in London, too! They just came here temporarily to expand his business, they don't want to stay around us poor folks for too long.

HUGH

Their second home. An imperialist presence, as if the British police walking about isn't enough.

JOSEPH

Think of all the valuable things they must have in that home.

HUGH

Why don't we redistribute the wealth?

COLLEEN

STOP IT!

*They finally look at her.*

COLLEEN

They are an old couple! I know they said hurtful things to you and Emma but I-, I just don't see how this would help anything! It says in the Bible, (*clears throat and recites*) "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins." It's hard but we have to forgive! We have to rely on each other and keep going!

*She looks at Emma to back her up.*

COLLEEN

Right, Emma? We can't break into their home. They're people just like us!

*Beat.*

EMMA

We can get in through the back window.

*Hugh and Joseph celebrate.*

COLLEEN

Emma, no! We-

EMMA

Can you get off work on Monday, Hugh and Joseph? They probably won't be there then.

COLLEEN

Think of what you're saying, Emma!

HUGH

Yes, they said they'd give me some time off.

EMMA

We'll have to be quick. Prioritize jewelry and art.

JOSEPH

Let's take every last penny from these bastards!

EMMA

We'll teach them what happens when you fuck with the Irish!

HUGH

For my brother!

*They look at Colleen.*

COLLEEN

Well... Emma if you're going then... I have to go-

*Before she finishes the sentence, the other three begin to cheer and Emma hugs her. Colleen is still visibly worried.*

COLLEEN

I'm not happy about it!

*Lights down and they exit as the next scene begins.*

### **Act One, Scene Nine**

*Rosemary enters from the back of the audience, leading Norris and Ross. Tom enters and sits at a desk as they speak.*

ROSS

I can't believe you've convinced us to do this.

NORRIS

Why don't we just leave the man alone?

ROSEMARY

Be brave, men! I know you have it in you.

*She turns and walks into Tom's office. They look at each other, then follow her.*

ROSEMARY

Excuse me? Sir?

*Tom notices the book she's holding.*

TOM

Oh, no, I, see, I recognize that book. And, I- I told your friend. There are enough encyclopedias out there and there's no need for one that isn't factual.



*This offends the twins.*

NORRIS  
Isn't factual?!

*They enter the office fully.*

ROSS  
We have the most sincere, utmost dedication to the factuality of our book.

NORRIS  
Our favorite book growing up was the almanac.

ROSS  
We run a fact-checking company.

NORRIS  
We love facts.

ROSS  
We live for facts.

*Rosemary enters fully, with confidence. As the scene goes forward, Tom should become more and more enamored with her and her sales pitch.*

ROSEMARY  
Tom- May I call you Tom?

TOM  
I really prefer Mr. Hodges.

ROSEMARY  
*(smiles)*  
Mr. Hodges, then.

*Tom is pleasantly surprised.*

ROSEMARY  
Have you and a friend ever gotten in a little debate, just a silly one? Perhaps about the longest anyone has ever stayed awake? Or the largest living creature? Or the farthest a human has ever jumped? Or maybe-

*She notices the framed photos of cats.*

ROSEMARY  
The... fattest cat ever?

TOM  
*(perks up)*  
The fattest cat?!

NORRIS  
We have that record in our book. The world's biggest cat is over three stone.

TOM  
No!

ROSS  
Yes. To be exact he was 42 pounds and ten ounces.

TOM  
Now, the owner of that cat should put him on a diet. My cat, Starla Rose, she started putting on weight because I was giving her a few too many treats but she only ever got a bit over 16 pounds. Now she's back to about 11 pounds.

NORRIS  
That's still a perfectly acceptable weight for a domestic housecat.

ROSS  
Unless she's a purebred Maine Coon, in that case she would be a bit underweight.

TOM  
No, she's an exotic shorthair.

ROSEMARY  
She sounds lovely.

TOM  
You must also be cat lovers to know all these facts.

ROSS  
Actually we know all sorts of facts.

TOM  
How?

NORRIS  
Well, for one, we've memorized the book.

TOM  
This book? Of facts? That's extraordinary!

NORRIS

I suppose.

ROSEMARY

This book is full of astounding facts. Anything you've ever wondered or wanted to know. An encyclopedia includes facts, sure. This book includes extremes.

NORRIS

We've pitted the facts against each other and compared them.

ROSEMARY

People consult encyclopedias when they need to. But people will read this book because they want to. It's all the most interesting feats of humanity.

TOM

That's all well and good, I just am worried that you'll stretch the truth to be interesting.

*The twins gasp.*

ROSS

Absolutely not.

NORRIS

Never. Never!

ROSS

What many people may not realize is that only about three percent of the book is devoted to zany records.

NORRIS

Life isn't all frivolous.

ROSS

But it isn't all serious either.<sup>1</sup>

*Tom, Norris, and Ross all share a haughty little chuckle together.*

---

<sup>1</sup> "Life isn't all frivolous, I know that. But it's not all serious, either. It's the same with records. There's room for all kinds. I don't like saying something is beneath me" is a direct quote from a 1979 Sports Illustrated interview with Norris McWhirter.

ROSEMARY

Now, Mr. Hodges, we came to you because you are the most trusted and talented man in publishing. And we've heard so many good things. And we want to help you. Would I lie to you?

TOM  
No!

ROSEMARY

That's right. And, as your friend, I can promise you, this book will sell. Massively. I personally became involved in this project because I heard about it and knew it would be huge.

*Tom thinks about it.*

TOM  
You're right.

*They celebrate in a burst.*

TOM  
I'll get five thousand copies.

ROSEMARY  
Why not ten thousand?

TOM  
Ten thousand!

*They all cheer. Ross hugs Rosemary. Norris shakes Tom's hand.*

NORRIS  
We'll sell every one and more. You don't need to worry about a thing.

TOM  
I love you three!

ROSEMARY  
We love you, Mr. Hodges!

TOM  
So it's...

*He glances at his notepad.*

TOM  
The Great Big Book of Superlatives Created and Funded by Guinness and compiled and edited  
by McWhirter Twins Limited?

NORRIS  
Yes!

ROSEMARY  
Um, actually, why don't we call it... The Guinness Book of World Records?

*Beat.*

TOM  
I like that.

### **Act One, Scene Ten**

*Note: This scene should be funny, as the group is trying to partake in dangerous criminal activity, yet they are still nice kids who don't want to hurt anyone.*

*We are a few days later in the Irish storyline (around Christmastime, 1971) in the Wallace's large home in the middle of the day. They have paintings around the room.*

*The window opens to reveal Hugh on the other side, holding a small tool he used to unlock the door. He pulls a black ski mask down over his face to cover it. He peeks around and slowly climbs through the window. Emma comes in after him. Then Joseph. All three are dressed in black with black ski masks and gloves. The only person without gloves is Colleen.*

EMMA  
Can you tell if anyone is home?

*Joseph and Hugh frantically shush her. She mouths "Sorry!" They look around. She turns back and waves in Colleen. Colleen is shaking and holding a golf club. She climbs through the window.*

HUGH  
*(whispering to Colleen)*  
Relax. There's no one here.

JOSEPH  
This art must be worth a lot of money.

EMMA

*(examining a painting with a flashlight)*

They're originals, not prints.

JOSEPH

Form a line, we'll pass them back. Colleen, stand outside. You can just put them in the car since you forgot gloves for the fingerprints.

COLLEEN

I said I was sorry!

*Colleen climbs back out the window. Joseph picks up a painting and passes it back to Hugh, who passes it to Emma, who passes it to Colleen. They repeat this process with another painting; building suspense, slow and eerie.*

*Colleen, who is outside at this point, screams. She runs into the room and frantically waves and points her hands.*

JOSEPH

What!? WHAT?! Just say what it is!

*She steps inside and lifts her mask for a moment.*

COLLEEN

They're- They're HERE!

JOSEPH

How do you know?

COLLEEN

Their car just came up the driveway and I saw them walk-

*The British couple enters in the back of the audience, as though they are coming through the front door of their home. Emma, Colleen, Hugh, and Joseph all spin around. The couple is chatting and doesn't see them.*

*Emma, Joseph, and Hugh jump through the window and start to run. Colleen panics and hides behind the couch. Emma comes back. She peeks through the window and looks around.*

EMMA

Colleen! Colleen!! Get out here!

*The couple reaches the stage (i.e. the living room) and they see Emma and make eye contact with her (she is still wearing her ski mask). Beat.*

*Mrs. Wallace screams. Sir Wallace lifts his umbrella and prepares to hit Emma. She ducks. Joseph runs in through the window and grabs Mr. Wallace. He fights with him briefly then delivers a punch that knocks him down. He holds him on the ground. Mrs. Wallace has been standing in the corner screaming, but not doing anything to stop them.*

JOSEPH

Get her to shut up!

*Emma stands behind her and covers her mouth. At about the same time, Hugh comes back through the window. He is holding duct tape and rope.*

COLLEEN

What on *earth* do you need that for?

HUGH

We could still take more paintings.

JOSEPH

No, we need to get out of-

SIR WALLACE

Get your paws off me, you dirty little Irish brat!

*Beat.*

JOSEPH

You know what, sure, let's steal their shit.

COLLEEN

What! No! Stop it!

*Emma, Colleen and Joseph begin to bind their hands and cover their mouths.*

COLLEEN

You cannot be serious!

EMMA

We'll be gentle with them, Mary.

SIR WALLACE

OW!

JOSEPH

*(not sarcastic)*

Oh, sorry.

MRS. WALLACE

Don't hurt us!

HUGH

We aren't going to hurt you.

*Once they are tied, Emma, Joseph, and Hugh get back to work on taking the last two paintings. They can improvise lines about removing the artwork. Colleen disappears offstage and comes back with two glasses of water, which she places in front of the couple then nudges close to them. Joseph turns around and sees her.*

COLLEEN

I- I know I shouldn't, I just-

JOSEPH

Get them something to eat as well.

COLLEEN

Good idea.

*Colleen runs back offstage. Emma, Joseph, and Hugh finish stealing the paintings and Colleen comes back onstage with oatmeal, which she places in front of the couple.*

JOSEPH

Okay, let's go.

*They hop through the window and exit as Mrs. Wallace works off the tape on her mouth.*

MRS. WALLACE

What a strange bunch.

*The Storyteller comes out and pulls one of the curtains closed as he speaks.*

STORYTELLER

So Emma and Joseph and Colleen ran down the hill and managed to get away with the paintings before the Wallaces could get themselves out. They sold the paintings to a bigger Irish republican group, so even when the paintings were found, it wasn't quite clear who in the group stole them.

*He finishes closing the curtain and people come sit in front of it. He places a cap on his head and puts on a vest with a nametag that says "London Transportation Personnel."*



## Act One, Scene Eleven

*In front of the curtain represents the tube. Rosemary enters and sits on the tube, zoned out. We hear the door to the tube open. A woman steps onstage to get in front of the curtain and slips. The Storyteller catches her hand and smiles*

STORYTELLER  
(British accent)  
Mind the gap.

*The woman sits by Rosemary. She pulls a book out of her bag and begins reading. It is the Guinness Book of World Records. (Note: The cover of the play and the Guinness Book of World Records should look similar so the audience notices the nod to the book in the logo.) Rosemary does not notice. A couple gets on the tube and also pulls out the Guinness Book of World Records. They laugh at it together and mutter about facts. A man who was already on the tube lifts the book that was on his lap and we see the cover. It is the Guinness Book of World Records. A group of children sitting behind Rosemary compare their two copies of The Guinness Book of World Records. She still does not notice. A man carrying a pile of five copies of the Guinness Book of World Records bumps into Rosemary and drops the books.*

MAN  
Oh sorry! Sorry. I'm sorry!

*Rosemary bends to pick one up and notices the cover. She looks at it for a moment before handing it back to the man. She then looks around the tube. She is surrounded by the Guinness Book of World Records.*

STORYTELLER  
Next stop, Chancery Lane. Mind the gap.

*Rosemary runs off the tube. The Storyteller takes off his cap and opens the curtain again, and exits. Ross is sitting inside reading. Rosemary bursts in.*

ROSEMARY  
Ross! ROSS! I was just on the tube coming home and I was looking around and Ross- the Guinness Book, it was everywhere. Everyone was reading it.

ROSS  
I wanted to be the one to tell you. We got a call while you were out, it's exploding. People love it.

ROSEMARY  
Oh, darling.

*They kiss.*

ROSEMARY

This changes- this changes everything!

ROSS

Yes.

ROSEMARY

We can-

ROSS

Yes.

ROSEMARY

And we'll-

ROSS

Yes.

ROSEMARY

I love you!

ROSS

You made it happen.

*Norris staggers in. He has been beaten.*

ROSS

Oh, my God. Norris.

*Rosemary gasps. They help him sit.*

ROSEMARY

Are you alright? What's happened?

NORRIS

Some bastard mugged me. He took everything on me. My watch, my wallet.

ROSS

Where?

NORRIS

On my way over here.

ROSEMARY

I'll phone the police.

*She exits.*

NORRIS

I was coming over to celebrate the good news with you. It was right in front of Arnold's office.

ROSS

No.

NORRIS

And of course the man who did it had an Irish accent.

ROSS

I can't believe it. In this neighborhood?

NORRIS

They're everywhere.

ROSS

Like vermin.

ROSEMARY

*(offstage)*

Come here, Norris!

*They get up and start to leave.*

NORRIS

Politicians need to admit it and do something about it.

ROSS

Once we get our fortunes we can do something about those people ourselves.

*They exit. Joseph, Emma, Colleen, and Hugh all enter wearing winter clothes.*

### **Act One, Scene Twelve**

*Joseph, Colleen, Emma, and Hugh are all sitting on a bench on a hill. Joseph and Emma are cuddling. They are all holding flasks, which they drink from periodically. They all have rosy cheeks from the cold and the booze. They are rowdy, and they should smile and laugh a lot throughout this scene. Joseph stands to address them.*

JOSEPH

Ladies and Gentleman... Lasses and Lad. I have called you here tonight to this very secret location to celebrate two momentous occasions!

*He gets distracted.*

JOSEPH

Look at my girlfriend. Isn't she lovely?

*He jumps forward to try to kiss Emma. She laughs and pushes him away.*

HUGH

Get to the point!

*Colleen giggles madly and almost falls over.*

JOSEPH

Ey, stop feckin' around! I got a speech!

*Hugh boos, the girls continue laughing.*

JOSEPH

Today! It has been one month...

*He holds up one finger and sticks it out in front of him.*

JOSEPH

Since we successfully stole, not one, not two, not three... but *four* paintings from the home of Sir Alfred Wallace and his wife, Mrs. Edith Wallace. And we are still free men and women!

*They all cheer. Joseph drinks from his flask.*

EMMA

Let me tell ye, that is nothing short of a miracle.

COLLEEN

An act of God!

HUGH

Or, should we say, an act of the gracious Pope Paul the sixth.

JOSEPH

In celebration, I have brought some literature...

*He pulls a newspaper from his pocket.*

HUGH  
You don't know how to read!

EMMA  
Stop bein' an arse!

HUGH  
Never!

JOSEPH  
Tank you, Emma. Here I have today's paper. January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1972.

*He clears his throat.*

JOSEPH  
"Local Londonderry police," excuse me, I think they meant to type local *Derry* police-

HUGH  
Sláinte!

COLLEEN  
Why did it say Londonderry?

EMMA  
Colleen! Are you dense? That's the real name of our city!

COLLEEN  
No, it's not!

EMMA  
It is! Just the British and loyalists call it that, none of us do.

COLLEEN  
I had no idea!

JOSEPH  
Ladies! "The local police have made progress in the ongoing investigation into the case of the breaking and entering of the home of Sir and Mrs. Alfred Wallace on the afternoon of December 29<sup>th</sup>."

COLLEEN  
Progress?

*Joseph holds up a finger.*

JOSEPH

“Mrs. Wallace recalled that on the evening of the break in, one of the perpetrators accidentally called another by her first name. She was quoted saying, (*Joseph mocks a British accent*) ‘Without thinking, one of the women addressed the other, calling her ‘Mary.’ They were clearly very inexperienced and unintelligent criminals so I doubt this slip was planned or intentional.’”

HUGH

Good work, Emma!

EMMA

It was the only thing we did properly all night!

HUGH

Good thing they think you’re an idiot.

JOSEPH

“In response to this information-“

*Joseph stops reading because he is laughing so hard.*

JOSEPH

“In response to this information, local police are questioning all women in the area between the age of 15 and 25 with the first name ‘Mary.’”

*The group howls in laughter.*

HUGH

They’ll have to gather the whole feckin’ country!

COLLEEN

The first name Mary! That’s every Irish woman born in this century!

JOSEPH

And the last!

EMMA

EXCEPT US!

*They all lean on each other, laughing, and wipe tears from their eyes. Joseph takes a deep breath and motions to them to calm down.*

JOSEPH

Moving on to our next point of celebration! As you know, our group is gainin’ some traction. Us four are now the leaders of a group of 40 different Irish Republicans.

EMMA  
That's right, Mr. President!

JOSEPH  
With that group, under our leadership, in conjunction with the Civil Rights Association, we've been able to help organize one of the largest marches that Derry has ever seen. And that will be happening tomorrow morning. I've already heard of people driving from all over Ireland, as far as Dublin, to support our civil rights march.

EMMA  
Peaceful march!

JOSEPH  
That's ri-

EMMA  
Like Martin Luther King!

JOSEPH  
Yes, love. Tomorrow morning. And listen. Emma, Hugh, Colleen, the four of us are going to make a difference. You're my best friends, and I wouldn't want anyone else by my side as we fight for justice for our people. We've been hearing rumors that they're calling in more British troops than usual to keep the protest from getting out of hand. They're scared. They're threatened. They know that what we're doing might really make a difference.

*They all cheer. Joseph goes to sit down and Emma stands.*

EMMA  
I'd like to say somethin' if ye don't mind.

*Colleen cheers wildly.*

EMMA  
Tanks, Colleen. I'd like all three of you to look up.

*They all look up. Bright stars begin to shine all over the stage and audience. They grow brighter as her monologue continues.*

EMMA  
Look at the stars. It's always so cloudy here on the emerald isle. We don't often get to see the stars. But as a result, when we can see them, they seem so much brighter. Look at them tonight. They're exceptional. They look like fireworks. This is a country with a history marked by war, and famine, and struggle. Ireland is familiar with clouds. In our own lives, we've seen death, and poverty, and sickness, and loss. I'd say we're personally familiar with clouds as well. But when you see how rare and bright it makes the stars, you can't help but feel like it's all worth it. You

three, you are my stars. You make me feel like every cloud I've ever had to dig through was worth it. So, I'd like to make a little toast.

*They all lift their flasks.*

COLLEEN  
To stars?

EMMA  
To Hugh's little brother. Colin Doherty.

*Hugh looks like he might cry. Beat.*

HUGH  
You're all such a sappy lot.

*They laugh.*

HUGH  
Let's get off this hill and go to a proper pub! I'm freezing!

*They stand. Colleen and Hugh exit together, and Emma is about to leave, when Joseph holds her arm and pulls her to him.*

JOSEPH  
That was lovely. And I think it meant a lot to Hugh.

JOSEPH  
So, what do you think, are you the best thing that's ever happened to me? Probably, yeah?

EMMA  
I guess I have my moments. Are you nervous for tomorrow?

JOSEPH  
I hope so. I can't tell ye how excited I am. Being involved in the Battle of the Bogside, it was the most invigorating experience of my life. They start to care when they see us all out there. And this is the first protest I'll be involved in as a leader and not just another member of the group and I hope that I've been a good president to everyone-

EMMA  
Hey.

*She holds his face in her hands, like the night they first kissed.*



EMMA

Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out. You're going to be amazing.

JOSEPH

I love you.

EMMA

I love you, too, Joseph.

JOSEPH

Colleen and Hugh are probably home by now.

*He starts to leave, but Emma stops him.*

EMMA

Joseph... I'm so glad I get to share this with you. All of this.

*He kisses her forehead gently, then takes her hand and they exit together. The Storyteller enters and Ross and Rosemary set up the next scene. Rosemary has her back to the audience so we don't see her pregnant belly. The Storyteller pulls down the projector again. And it shows images corresponding with what he talks about.*

STORYTELLER

Now, with our British story, we moved forward to 1959. They've had a pretty nice few years. The Guinness Book of World Records was an unprecedented success. It was published just in time for Christmas every year and became a common Christmas gift. It was a bestseller in the UK four years in a row, and they even started selling overseas in the United States. Ross and Rosemary were able to have a nice big wedding in 1957 and they moved into a house outside of London. Norris was a wealthy bachelor, until recently. Am I forgetting anything?

*Rosemary turns around and reveals her big pregnant belly.*

STORYTELLER

Oh yeah. That, too.

*He closes the projector and exits.*

### **Act One, Scene Thirteen**

*Rosemary and Ross have set up a nice dinner at their home. Rosemary is rushing around last minute making sure everything is perfect. The house should make it clear that the book has been a large source of income.*

ROSS

Why are you checking everything again? You've gone over it all four times already.

ROSEMARY

I do hope she likes us.

ROSS

Are you nervous?

ROSEMARY

I don't know. I wasn't raised under the same wealth and renown as you all. And in situations like this I worry that will become apparent.

ROSS

When have *you* ever been one to be nervous in a social situation?

ROSEMARY

I know. I just feel a bit off. My stomach keeps cramping.

ROSS

You're probably starving. You haven't eaten since 11:34 AM.

ROSEMARY

That must be it.

*Norris comes in. He is accompanied by a young woman, CAROLE ECKERT. She is elegant and beautiful.*

ROSS

Norris!

NORRIS

Ross!

*They embrace.*

ROSS

It is so good to see you.

CAROLE

Didn't you both just see each other at work a few hours ago?

ROSEMARY

They don't like being separated.

ROSS

It's very nice to meet you, Carole.

*He kisses her on the cheek.*

CAROLE

Charmed. You truly are identical!

ROSS

I'll take your coats. Please sit down.

NORRIS

It smells wonderful, Rosemary.

ROSS

She's been working on it all day.

ROSEMARY

*(gesturing to everything as she talks about it)*

We have some split pea smoked ham soup, Yorkshire puddings with gravy, shepherd's pie, and some St. Clement's pie for dessert.

CAROLE

Brilliant.

*Rosemary pauses.*

ROSS

You look perplexed. Are you forgetting something?

*She stares forward for a moment, then gasps.*

ROSEMARY

The roast beef!

*She runs offstage. Ross smiles apologetically.*

ROSS

What would you like to drink?

*He fixes himself and Norris a fine whiskey, and pours Carole and Rosemary some expensive red wine.*

CAROLE

Does she need help?

ROSS

Rosemary is fine. She typically has a lot going on in her mind at once, which can make her forgetful sometimes.

NORRIS

Fair.

CAROLE

I don't know how you could forget the centerpiece of the whole meal. Don't you two have enough income now to hire some help? Norris has a very kind Irish woman who cooks everything for him.

NORRIS

Ross and Rosemary have always been very frugal. They save everything. I say, what's the point of earning it in the first place, then?

ROSS

Rosemary likes to cook. And she's very good at it.

*Rosemary comes in holding the roast beef. It is black from being burned.*

ROSEMARY

I think it's still salvageable.

*Carole looks at Norris disgusted.*

ROSS

Well, put it on the table now and we can eat everything else first. I'm sure these two are hungry.

CAROLE

How far along are you, Rosemary?

ROSS

Well it's been about eight months, three weeks, four days and-

*He checks his watch.*

ROSS

Twelve hours since we first found out. And it's been about nine months, two weeks, three days and two hours since the baby was conceived-

ROSEMARY

Darling, remember we stopped telling people that bit?

ROSS

Her due date was two days ago.

NORRIS

They think they'll name him Iain if it's a boy, and Jane if it's a girl.

CAROLE

Oh, that's lovely! I adore both of those names. Rosemary, Norris said you work as a secretary?

ROSS

That's her job description, but she does far more than just that.

NORRIS

The Guinness Book of Records really wouldn't exist without her.

CAROLE

So what will you two do when the child is born?

ROSS

What do you mean?

CAROLE

Well you can't work with a child. You would be miserable, and I've read it's detrimental to the baby's development.

ROSEMARY

I plan on continuing to work. I think I would be miserable cooped up here all day.

CAROLE

That's simply not healthy, dear.

ROSS

I suppose we'll cross that bridge when we come to it.

CAROLE

Please tell me you'll at least hire a nanny? I can recommend a lovely woman, her name is, I think you pronounce it Sours?

ROSS

How do you spell it?

NORRIS

I believe she's speaking of the name S-A-O-I-R-S-E.

ROSS

Ah, that's pronounced SARE-shu.

NORRIS

Yes, it means “freedom” in Gaelic.

CAROLE

Oh, well, that’s a dead language anyway.

ROSS

Actually-

CAROLE

My point is, she’s good with children. But ideally you wouldn’t be working with a child at home.

ROSS

I believe she’ll be a brilliant mother no matter what she chooses. And I personally don’t like having Irish people around my home.

CAROLE

I’m only saying, if it were my decision-

ROSEMARY

But it’s not. Your decision. Is it?

CAROLE

Well. Touchy subject, I suppose.

*An awkward silence.*

ROSEMARY

Now, I hate to inconvenience you all. And we’ve been having such a nice dinner. But I feel I should tell you that I’ve been having contractions, and I believe my water broke. So I really ought to go to a hospital.

ROSS

What?!

CAROLE

Oh my goodness, I’m so sorry!

ROSS

What do we do?!

ROSEMARY

You packed a bag for this. You remember?

ROSS

Yes. Yes!

*He runs offstage.*

ROSEMARY

Norris, the car keys are on the table next to the door.

*Norris runs offstage as well. Rosemary and Carole are left on stage together. Carole walks to her.*

CAROLE

Rosemary, I spoke brashly. You're very kind to have us for dinner... I'm sure you'll make an excellent mother.

ROSEMARY

And you'll make an excellent wife to Norris.

*The twins both come back onstage. Ross is holding a bag.*

NORRIS

The car is running!

ROSS

The bag is ready!

ROSEMARY

Very good. Let's go.

*Carole helps Rosemary offstage. Ross starts to exit as well, but notices Norris in front of him. The look at each other for a moment, then Norris embraces Ross. They hold onto each other for a few seconds, then leave.*

### **Act One, Scene Fourteen**

*It is January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1972, the next day in the Irish storyline. We are in the streets of Derry. There are crowds of people holding signs that say things like "Free Derry" and "United Against Police Brutality." There is a huge banner that says "Civil Rights Association." Around the edges of the crowd, there are soldiers dressed in riot gear and wearing black masks. The crowd enters from the back of the audience, chanting "Power to the People!"*

*Joseph, Emma, Colleen, and Hugh are leading the crowd in the front. Joseph stands on a bench to address the crowd.*

JOSEPH  
WHAT DO WE WANT?

CROWD  
FREEDOM!

JOSEPH  
WHEN DO WE WANT IT?

CROWD  
NOW!

*They repeat this chant once or twice.*

JOSEPH  
*(yelling over the crowd)*  
TOO LONG have groups of people been living in fear!

*The crowd cheers.*

JOSEPH  
TOO LONG has all the power been held by the white, Protestant, upper class!

EMMA  
And by MEN!

*They cheer again.*

JOSEPH  
But we demand justice! As a Catholic man, I believe we are all children of God. And to all groups today I say, I STAND WITH YOU!

EMMA  
I love you, Joseph!

JOSEPH  
Every day, children walk to school being watched by these British soldiers, holding guns! Staring at them! There are more here today! Do you know why? It's because they're AFRAID! They're afraid of the POWER we have when we STAND TOGETHER. AS ONE. THEY KNOW, AND WE KNOW, THAT WHEN WE STAND TOGETHER, NOTHING CAN STOP US.

*The crowd goes wild. Joseph hops down and they start chanting "Justice Now!"*

*Offstage, we hear Rosemary scream. Rosemary and Ross appear. Rosemary is in labor, being aided by the Storyteller, who is dressed as a doctor. Ross is holding her hand. She screams as*



*the protest scene continues. Ross cheers her on, saying things that wouldn't be particularly out of place in the protest scene, like "You can do it, darling" and "Stay strong for me." Ideally, the baby scene would take place on a balcony or elevated surface, but it can happen on the side of the stage along with the protest scene if a balcony is not available.*

*In the protest scene, drunk group of men in the crowd start yelling at the soldiers.*

DRUNK MAN 1  
Fuck the British!

DRUNK MAN 2  
Your queen is a cunt! FUCK YOUR QUEEN!

YOUNG BRITISH SOLDIER  
Well fuck the Pope.

DRUNK MAN 1  
What did you say?

*They start getting close to him.*

DRUNK MAN 2  
Oh, so ye think you're tough, then? With your shield and your little gun?

YOUNG BRITISH SOLDIER  
Back up.

*The crowd is closing in on the soldiers, and they begin to lift their guns. They are jumpy and scared.*

DRUNK MAN 1  
WHY DON'T YOU MAKE US?

DRUNK MAN 2  
ARE YE SCARED?

*The young British soldier lifts his gun.*

YOUNG BRITISH SOLDIER  
I TOLD YOU TO BACK UP.

*There is a stray gunshot. It is unclear who fired it, but it was neither the drunk men nor the British soldier in the depicted altercation. The crowd begins to panic.*

COLLEEN  
WAS THAT A GUN?

OLDER BRITISH SOLDIER  
Active shooter!

*The soldiers begin to open fire.*

EMMA  
Stop! STOP! This is a peaceful protest!

HUGH  
Run, Emma!

*Hugh grabs Colleen and they run out with the rest of the crowd. The soldiers disperse as well, but we can still hear gunshots and screaming. The only two people left on the stage are Emma and Joseph. Joseph is on the ground, face down and bleeding.*

EMMA  
JOSEPH. JOSEPH!

*She kneels next to him and lifts his body onto her lap. He is completely unconscious.*

EMMA  
Joseph, love, stay with me. Stay with me, Joseph.

*She begins to cry.*

*In the baby scene, the baby is born. There is a cry.*

ROSS  
Oh, my God.

DOCTOR  
It's a boy!

*He places the baby in Rosemary's arms.*

EMMA  
Listen to me, love. You can't go. We were supposed to grow old together. Listen. Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in...

*She leans to listen to his chest. He is not breathing. Her hands begin to shake.*

EMMA  
Oh, God. OH, GOD. OH, GOD.

*She collapses over him, holding him and sobbing. Colleen comes back onstage, ducking from bullets that are still flying. She spots Emma and Joseph.*

*In the baby scene, the bed is wheeled around so we can see Rosemary and Ross holding the baby. They look like a dream; an image of the life that Joseph will never have.*

COLLEEN  
Shit.

*She makes her way to Emma and Joseph.*

COLLEEN  
EMMA. WE NEED TO GO.

EMMA  
I'm not leaving him. I can't.

COLLEEN  
We need to go, Emma. We need to get out of here.

*In the baby scene Norris comes running in to meet the baby. He looks at his nephew for a moment, then kisses Rosemary on the forehead. She laughs as Ross jokingly pushes him away. Ross and Rosemary both have tears in their eyes. They talk silently.*

*Colleen holds Emma's shoulders and tries to pull her from Joseph's body. But Emma keeps struggling and it's very difficult for Colleen. Finally she drags hers away.*

EMMA  
No. NO. NO. NO.

*The Storyteller snaps his fingers. Everything pauses. The Storyteller approaches Joseph, takes out a handkerchief and gently wipes blood from his face. As he delivers the following line, he cares for Joseph's body, closing his eyes, fixing his hair, etc.*

STORYTELLER

There's nothing I can say to justify the death of someone so young. I believe in a grace strong enough to fill the gap caused by death, but grace is thick and warm, and it moves very slowly.

And this boy will leave a void for a long, long time. I know I sort of edited this story before when I started it, and I'm the storyteller so I can stretch things sometimes. If you're wondering if I can bring him back, I'm sorry, I can't. That's for someone much more powerful than I am. *[He points up.]* But what I can do is exactly what you can do. And it's probably a bigger miracle than bringing the dead back to life.

*Emma gasps and unfreezes, she continues to shake and cry. The Storyteller stands to walk to her.*

STORYTELLER

I can give hope to the people he left behind.

*He lifts Emma's face by her chin and speaks to her sweetly.*

STORYTELLER

You're gonna be alright.

EMMA

No, I won't. No. No. Never. I never will be.

STORYTELLER

Yes, you will. In time.

*She falls forward and he holds her while she cries.*

STORYTELLER

You will. You will.

*Colleen bends down and the Storyteller hands Emma to her. He snaps his fingers. The chaos begins again, with screams and gunshots in the background. But now, Emma is calmer. She stands, looks for the Storyteller for a moment, then looks up at Rosemary and Ross holding their baby. The lights on Rosemary and Ross fade out. Colleen exits, still pulling Emma. Emma is alone with Joseph on stage for a split second, just enough time for her to wish him a safe journey to wherever he is going next. She exits. The Storyteller leans on the side of the stage, puts his head down, and closes his eyes.*

*Joseph's body remains onstage and the lights fade to one color. The following scene should be dream-like. After a few moments, a soccer ball is kicked onstage and it bumps into Joseph. After another moment, he wakes up slowly, sits up, and looks at the ball. He picks it up and stands. He bounces it once, then drops it and kicks it. The boy who played soccer with the Storyteller earlier appears quickly and catches the ball with his foot. He and Joseph kick it back and forth, then the boy runs offstage behind the storyteller. Joseph follows him. Before leaving the stage, Joseph stops in front of the storyteller. They make eye contact, the storyteller squeezes Joseph's shoulder with one hand and they shake hands with the other. Joseph exits. The Storyteller exits out through the audience, whistling, as the house lights go up.*

*At intermission "Sunday, Bloody Sunday" by U2 should play in the auditorium, preferably an acoustic version.*

*End of Act One.*

## **Act II**

## Act Two, Scene One

*The Storyteller enters, now holding a coffee. He places it down and takes a sip.*

### STORYTELLER

Did you have a nice break? Breaks are important. I love a good break. If there's anyone else still filing in, then don't rush. You've got a bit of time. Very few things are important enough to make you rush. So I think that our characters, both the ones from England and the ones from Ireland have much more in common than you'd think. But I tend to focus on the most human moments, like love and loss. Pain. Bliss. And in those moments we're all really the same.

*He shrugs, then pulls down the projector again.*

### STORYTELLER

Okay. So. The scene you saw in the end of Act One was based on a historical event now known as Bloody Sunday. In August of 1971, the British put 343 people in jail without trial in Northern Ireland, saying that they were suspected IRA members. They kept these people in internment camps where they were tortured. On January 30th, 1972 two civil rights groups organized a huge protest in Derry, in a Catholic ghetto called the Bogside, against those people being put in jail. At that event, British soldiers, members of the first battalion parachute regiment, opened fire on peaceful protestors, shooting 26 and killing 14.

They killed Michael Kelly, who was 17-years-old and wasn't involved in the Irish Civil Rights movement. He went to the march because his friends were going. He was shot in the back as he ran away.

They killed Gerard McKinney. Eight days after he died, his son, and namesake, was born. They killed William McKinney, who was 27 and engaged to be married. He got a camera as a birthday present and went to the protest to take pictures. He was shot in the back.

They killed James Wray, who was 22 and who had just returned from working in England with an English fiancé. He was lying on the ground wounded when he was shot a second time and killed.

They killed Bernard McGuigan, who had six kids. He saw a 19-year-old on the ground who had been shot, and he ran to help him out. As he went to him, he put his hands up with a white handkerchief and said, "Don't Shoot! Don't Shoot!" The bullet struck him directly in the back of the head.

After that day, every one of the soldiers claimed they only fired at people holding weapons or bombs, but that was later proven to be untrue. The majority of those killed were 20-years-old or younger. The soldiers were never punished for their crimes.

As you can guess, that had quite an impact on Irish Catholic's view of the British. Many more people signed up for the IRA, just deciding they'd had enough.

*He closes his eyes.*

### STORYTELLER

"We know their dream; enough

To know they dreamed and are dead;  
And what if excess of love  
Bewildered them till they died?"<sup>2</sup>

*A man comes onstage, dressed to cover his face.*

STORYTELLER

Getting back to the story world, a few things happened while you were on your break. First, the Irish story moved ahead quite a bit. For Emma, Hugh, and Colleen, it's now September of 1974.

After Bloody Sunday they moved from Derry to Belfast, the biggest city in Northern Ireland. Emma is now 22 and she's become one of the leaders of a chapter of the IRA in Belfast along with her brother.

*The storyteller exits. We are outside on the streets of Belfast. Emma enters, also dressed in a manner that covers her face. She stands with her back to the man. They exchange their dialogue quietly. This is a very secretive meeting. The first part of the conversation is code for Emma and the man identifying themselves.*

EMMA

Do you hear crickets?

MAN

Yes. They're usually out this time of day.

EMMA

Not in the winter.

MAN

No.

*Emma takes out a cigarette, and the man reaches around with a match and lights it for her.*

EMMA

Tanks.

*Beat.*

MAN

Call me Patrick. I represent a certain Sinn Féin politician. We've been noticing the work you do here in Belfast, and it's impressive. People say you are very dedicated to the fight.

EMMA

I am.

---

<sup>2</sup> Verses from *Easter, 1916* by William Butler Yeats.

MAN

Good. We've also heard you have a friend, Hugh, who is an engineer. Very skilled with electronics. And another close friend? Colleen Butler?

EMMA

Yes.

*He passes her a manila envelope, which she slides into her coat.*

MAN

We've chosen the three of you to partake in a new initiative. We want you to form a part of an Active Service Unit that will carry out a campaign of terror.

EMMA

Where?

MAN

*(definitively)*

London.

*Emma looks at him for the first time, shocked. He looks away and she looks forward again.*

MAN

You may have heard the new assembly at Stormont has collapsed. This means they'll soon reintroduce direct rule from Westminster. We're losing a lot of ground politically and we need to attack London to have the strongest psychological impact possible and regain traction. We want you to be the leader of this ASU while your brother continues his work here.

EMMA

What will we be doing in London, specifically?

MAN

I can't answer that. We'll be in touch with you with instructions after you get there. The envelope includes a lease for a flat in London, and information about the new identity Hugh and Colleen and yourself will be taking on.

EMMA

Okay. I'll give it some thought.

MAN

To clarify, this is not an optional mission. We have chosen you for your leadership skills, yes, but we've also received insider information that police have made significant progress in the case of a breaking and entering three years ago.



EMMA  
What?

MAN  
Yes. An art robbery at the home of Sir Alfred Wallace.

EMMA  
Jesus.

MAN  
Sir Wallace moved back to London and hired a private investigator who is far more thorough than the local Derry police. Your name has been mentioned along with your friend Colleen and a few others. That's why we're giving you new identities and asking you to leave promptly.

EMMA  
We'll act as quickly as possible.

*Emma starts to leave.*

MAN  
One last ting. This is obviously a highly secretive operation, and we want to erase any record of you. Who will you be leaving behind when you go to London? Is there anyone who will miss you and your friends?

EMMA  
Hugh has no one aside from us. Just one brother who died a few years ago. Colleen is the same, no one aside from us. Just a father who she hasn't spoken to in years.

MAN  
And you? Aside from your brother?

*Emma considers lying.*

EMMA  
My mother.

MAN  
And?

EMMA  
We're very close.

*Beat.*

MAN  
I'm afraid that's unacceptable.

*As they exit, the Storyteller pulls down the projector again.*

STORYTELLER

Okay, so I have some good news! The British storyline caught up with the Irish storyline. So now both of our stories are in the mid-1970s. That makes things a little easier, right? So you can stop emailing me about being confused over the storyline, Jim. Life has been going pretty well for Ross, Rosemary, Norris and Carole. The Guinness Book of World Records reached international renown. Ross and Rosemary have two sons named Iain and James, and Norris and Carole married and have a son named Alasdair and a daughter named Jane. Along with making a version of the book every year, the twins have a few jobs, including writing about sports for the Star and the London Observer, and announcing the Olympics every four years for the BBC. Their lives are good. And Ross and Norris are still always thinking of ways they could make it better.

*He exits.*

**Act Two, Scene Two**

*Ross and Norris are waiting outside a TV production company. They are both now about 50. They are nervously chatting.*

ROSS

I don't know.

NORRIS

Ross! It's completely fine. We've created the most successful book not only in this decade, but probably in this century.

ROSS

But we're also selling *ourselves* as the hosts. Do you really think we're cut out for television?

*Rosemary comes in. She is walking with her two sons, JAMES and IAIN, who are 14 and 15 respectively. They act very similarly to Norris and Ross. They look around the room with curiosity. When they see their dad they go to him.*

ROSS

Iain! James! What a lovely surprise!

ROSEMARY

Surprise?

ROSS

Why are they back from school?

ROSEMARY

*(aggravated that she has to repeat this)*

Iain and James just started their break. They'll be home all week. I'm leaving them with you because you said you'd show them what you do at work while Carole and I pick up some materials for the party at Norris's house later this evening.

NORRIS

I forgot about that.

ROSEMARY

Did you both forget? How do you memorize the encyclopedia but forget that you're having company? I've told you that James and Iain would be shadowing you today multiple times, but when I got to your office you weren't there. Your new secretary directed me here.

ROSS

Darling, she's not the "new" secretary. She replaced you 15 years ago.

IAIN

Mum, don't forget that memory is often sensory.

JAMES

And the strength of the memory can depend of which sense you remember it with.

IAIN

For most people, smell is the strongest form of sensory memory.

JAMES

For dad and Uncle Norris, their visual memory is highly advanced.

IAIN

You told them that we didn't have school today.

JAMES

Auditory memory.

IAIN

You should have written it down.

JAMES

Visual memory.

*Norris and Ross smirk at each other.*

ROSEMARY

Wonderful. I'm surrounded by geniuses and I'm the only one who knows we'll be having company later tonight.

IAIN

This is a television production company.

JAMES

Dad, why are you at a television production company?

ROSEMARY

Good question.

NORRIS

We're trying to get a television show!

ROSEMARY

I didn't know about this.

ROSS

We wanted to try to sell it ourselves.

NORRIS

It'll be a show about the Guinness Book!

ROSS

We'll meet people who've broken records and bring camera crews to sites where they're about to break new ones.

NORRIS

And we'll even invite the audience to ask us questions about records.

ROSS

They can put our memory to the test!

ROSEMARY

So you'll be the hosts?

ROSS

Precisely.

ROSEMARY

So you're selling yourselves?

*A TV Producer steps out to address them*

TV PRODUCER

Mr. McWhirter? Mr. McWhirter? Why don't you come in and have a seat?

*He goes in and the twins begin to follow him, but they turn back to share a few last tidbits with Rosemary in hushed voices.*

ROSS

We've been waiting to see them for weeks!

NORRIS

We're going to call our show-

NORRIS and ROSS

An Exploration of the Records that Either Have Been Recorded or are yet to be Recorded in the Guinness Book of Records, with us, Norris McWhirter and Ross McWhirter.

*They both smile at Rosemary and the kids and go in for the meeting. Beat.*

IAIN

Maybe you should be selling-

ROSEMARY

I'll be right back.

*Rosemary exits with Iain and James following.*

*Norris and Ross come walking out, now dressed for their television show. They wave to the crowd as we hear a studio audience clapping. They seem uncomfortable, as they are clearly not performers. They still state everything very matter-of-factly and do not act overly excited or goofy.*

NORRIS

Welcome. Welcome.

ROSS

Good evening.

NORRIS

How do you do?

ROSS

My name is Ross McWhirter.

NORRIS

And I'm Norris McWhirter.

NORRIS

You may not know us, but you're probably familiar with our book.

ROSS

The Guinness Book of World Records.

NORRIS

Over 1.5 million copies sold!

ROSS

On this show we'll be meeting people who have broken records and learning their stories.

NORRIS

We'll also be bringing record breakers here to our show to hear about their amazing feats.

ROSS

Sometimes we'll even see people breaking records on camera!

NORRIS

But to start off the show...

ROSS

We have a little impressive talent of our own.

NORRIS

The book contains over 10,000 records, facts, and statistics.

ROSS

And...

NORRIS and ROSS

We've memorized all of them.

*The studio audience applauds.*

NORRIS

At the start of every show, we'll invite members of the audience to put our memory to the test!

ROSS

Ask us about any record in the book.

NORRIS

And we can answer it.

ROSS

Down to the decimal.

NORRIS

Now, this has not been planned in advance, folks.

ROSS

Do any true members of the audience have any questions for us?

*This next part can be executed by placing actors in the audience before the show or during intermission. Norris and Ross will know who in the audience is an actor. Each night the show goes on, the actors in the audience who Norris and Ross call on will ask different questions. With this being the case, anyone who goes to the show twice will believe that it was not orchestrated in advance.*

*Actors in the audience will memorize their questions, and Norris and Ross will memorize the answers provided below.*

*Question: "What is the world's best-selling music single?" Answer: "White Christmas by Bing Crosby, which was originally released in 1942 has sold 50 million copies."*

*Question: "What is the world's highest-grossing movie?" Answer: "If adjusted for inflation, the answer is Gone with the Wind, which grossed \$393.4 million in 1939."*

*Question: "Who is the richest person to have ever lived?" Answer: "Again adjusted for inflation, no one had ever been as rich as John D. Rockefeller. Which makes sense when you consider that in 1913 he controlled 90% of the oil in the United States. By the time he died in 1937, his assets equaled 1.5% of the United State's total economic output."*

*Question: "What's the biggest diamond in the world?" Answer: "The Cullinan diamond, which was discovered in 1905 in South Africa weighs 3,106.75 carats. For reference, my wife's engagement ring is a little over one carat!"*

*Question: "What's the farthest anyone has ever jumped?" Answer: "Well as I'm sure you remember, at the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games, Bob Beamon from the United States jumped 8.9 meters."*

*Question: "We're in a nice sort of auditorium here so it made me wonder what the biggest auditorium in the world is?" Answer: The largest auditorium is in Atlantic City, New Jersey, with a capacity of over 42 thousand people.*

*Question: "Who had the largest family in the world? Or, I guess, what woman has had the most children?" Answer: "Oh that's quite easy, a Russian woman called Madame Feodor Vassilyeva had 69 children in 27 confinements... She had 16 twins, seven sets of triplets, and four sets of quads."<sup>3</sup>*

---

<sup>3</sup> Verbatim answer from Ross McWhirter on the show *I've Got a Secret* in November, 1965. Other questions are sampled from the same show.

*Question: "What person has held the most university degrees?" Answer: "The record for most honorary degrees is held by former President of the United States, Mr. Hoover, with 84 honorary degrees."*

*Question: "I think I can stump you with a strange one. I love riding horses and I've always wondered the fastest a horse has ever run. But to make it more interesting, what's the fastest a horse has ever gone not running, but pacing." Answer: "Well Adios Butler is the famous pacing horse. He was the first to beat the mile in less than two minutes. He did it one minute, 55 seconds and two-fifths of a second."*

*Only three or four questions will be asked at each show. The storyteller can also ask one. Norris and Ross will know where the actors are sitting (so they can call on them) and they will know the answers, but they will not know what exact questions will be asked each show, which will add to the show feeling genuine and impromptu.*

*The following lines will take place after they've finished answering a few questions.*

NORRIS

Surely, you believe us now.

ROSS

We'll be answering more questions after the commercial break.

NORRIS

But before we go for a moment, we want to thank you so much for watching our show.

ROSS

We never dreamed that we would find this sort of success.

NORRIS

Nonetheless, success from doing what we love.

ROSS

We are very excited to share our love of facts with you all.

NORRIS

And we're glad to see there are people out there enjoying this just as much as we do.

ROSS

We'll be right back with...

NORRIS and ROSS

Record Breakers!



**Act Two, Scene Three**

*We are at Emma's childhood home from the first scene. Emma's mother carries tea from a counter to the kitchen table and sits to drink it. Hugh walks to their front door and knocks. She looks excited at the prospect of a visitor and answers the door. He takes off his hat.*

HUGH

Mrs. Duggan, I don't know if you remember me-

MRS. DUGGAN

Hugh! Of course I remember you! Come in, come in! I hardly ever get visitors anymore. Why don't I make you some tea? How is Emma? And Colleen! How is she?

HUGH

I'm afraid I can't stay for long. I'm here as a representative of the Provisional Irish Republican Army. Your son wanted to come, but as you know Harry is high in the chain of command now and he's very busy.

MRS. DUGGAN

I understand. Tell him to try to visit more often, though, will ye? Emma comes here every other weekend and we have a ball! Other than that, I'm all alone here. My husband, Harris, he passed away a few years ago but his son is really just like him-

HUGH

Mrs. Duggan, I come here with a heavy heart. I'm afraid I have some horrible news.

*Mrs. Duggan is silent.*

HUGH

Emma and Colleen have both passed away. They were killed on active service with the IRA while on an operation in the North. They've been buried, with honors.

*He offers her an envelope. She doesn't move.*

HUGH

Please take this. It contains some monetary compensation. The IRA is grateful for the sacrifice Colleen and Emma made.

*She continues to stare at him.*

HUGH

They died fighting for a cause they both believed in.

*He bends down and slides the envelope past her and into the house.*

HUGH

I wrote my flat phone number and address on the outside of the envelope. Please contact me if you need anything.

*She stares at him in silence.*

HUGH

Well, have a good evening. I'm so sorry for your loss.

*He begins to leave uncomfortably. She closes the door and turns around, still in shock. He is almost offstage when he stops to think, then turns around and goes back. He knocks and she answers again. He reaches out to her and she falls forward into him. He holds her while she cries. After some time, she stands straight and pats his chest.*

MRS. DUGGAN

Tank you, Hugh. Tank you. You can go. I'm sure you need to go.

HUGH

Please call me when you need to.

MRS. DUGGAN

I will.

*They let go of each other and she goes back inside. Hugh walks offstage, and meets up with Emma and Colleen.*

EMMA

Did she believe you?

HUGH

Yes.

*Mrs. Duggan, inside her home, collapses on the ground.*

COLLEEN

How did she handle it?

HUGH

How do you think?

*Beat. Emma starts walking away and the two follow her.*

EMMA

It's what we needed to do.

*They exit. The Storyteller comes onstage and kneels next to Mrs. Duggan. He comforts her as the lights go out.*

**Act Two, Scene Four**

*Norris and Ross are sitting at a table in an expensive restaurant.*

ROSS

It's very unlike Rosemary to be late.

NORRIS

Well she is getting drinks with Carole.

*Ross leans back and looks around.*

ROSS

Did you ever think we would be able to afford such a place?

NORRIS

I still wonder sometimes if it's all been a dream.

ROSS

We're a very lucky pair, aren't we, Norris?

NORRIS

Yes we are, Ross.

*Their wives come in, with Rosemary leading the way. Carole seems a bit tipsy.*

ROSEMARY

I am so terribly sorry.

CAROLE

Why are you sorry? We're fashionably late.

ROSEMARY

I tried to get her to leave.

*Norris stands and helps Carole with her coat. Ross starts to stand too but Rosemary has already taken hers off and sat down.*

ROSS  
It's really not a problem.

CAROLE  
Goodness, Rosemary, you can be so *pushy*.

ROSEMARY  
How else would any of you ever get anything done?

NORRIS  
She's been pushing my brother his whole life!

ROSEMARY  
I believe you meant to say, "Thank you, Rosemary, for all of our astounding success."

CAROLE  
I think I'll order more wine.

NORRIS  
I already ordered you one.

*He passes it to her and she smiles as a child approaches the table cautiously.*

CHILD  
Um, excuse me? I'm terribly sorry to interrupt you. But are you Norris and Ross McWhirter?

NORRIS  
Yes, we are.

CHILD  
Oh, well, I'm just a massive fan. If it's not any trouble, may I have your autographs?

NORRIS  
Of course.

*He hands them a napkin and pen and they both sign the napkin.*

ROSS  
Good lad. There you go.

*He hands him the pen and napkin.*

NORRIS  
And remember to tune in next Tuesday at 5:15 for Record Breakers.

CHILD  
Of course!

*He scampers away.*

ROSEMARY  
Do you ever get used to that?

ROSS  
I don't think I ever could.

NORRIS  
It doesn't bother me when it's a child. But sometimes when it's an adult, it just makes me sort of...

ROSS  
Sort of uncomfortable.

NORRIS  
Sort of uncomfortable, yes.

CAROLE  
Really? I LOVE it!

*Norris chuckles.*

ROSEMARY  
You have a bit of influence now.

ROSS  
Well... Yes, I suppose that's true.

NORRIS  
We're definitely known.

ROSEMARY  
And you're known for good things. For being intelligent, and entertaining our nation's children.

ROSS  
Why, yes. What a wonderful position to be in. To be known for good things.

*Beat.*

CAROLE  
So then... Why don't you do something about it?

NORRIS

What do you mean, darling?

CAROLE

Well you have influence. You just said that. So why wouldn't you use it? I mean, why stop with just a book and a children's show?

ROSEMARY

*Just a book?*

ROSS

It's not really just a children's show.

CAROLE

You know what I mean. You're two very capable men, you don't need to just accept what you have when you could have so much more.

NORRIS

What are you getting at?

CAROLE

You could move into a different field. I mean, aren't you interested in something like, I don't know, politics?

ROSEMARY

Oh don't even mention politics, their beliefs are ridiculous-

ROSS

You know, that's not a bad idea.

ROSEMARY

What?

CAROLE

People know you and they trust you and I think you could really win if you try to become members of parliament. Not to mention, between the two of you, you have the necessary funds for it.

NORRIS

We have entertained the possibility before.

CAROLE

I didn't know that about you!

ROSEMARY

No, you don't want to know. Their beliefs border on extreme.

ROSS

Now, that's not true.

ROSEMARY

It is! (*Turns to Carole*) You should hear them rant about socialism. They're as far right as you can go without being an imperialist.

ROSS

Now, that's not true. We just believe strongly in the freedom of the individual in all aspects of life.

NORRIS

And those freedoms are being eroded by the left.

ROSS

We believe in civil liberties.

ROSEMARY

And what about the civil liberties of immigrants?

ROSS

That's another matter entirely.

CAROLE

Listen to you three! Talking about –isms. You're putting me to sleep, which means you could probably run for parliament tomorrow and win. Isn't that all being a politician is? –isms and –ists?

NORRIS

Thank you for your encouragement, Carole.

ROSS

I rather like this idea.

ROSEMARY

I cannot support this. You have your skills and you're excelling in them. Why try to start in an entirely new field? Also you know how I feel about your political beliefs and I can handle you feeling that way but I don't know if I could handle seeing you enacting those ideas on a national level.

CAROLE

You need more wine.

*She pushes some wine toward her.*

CAROLE

I'm only saying, why limit yourself? Why not live to your full potential? I wouldn't mind being married to a member of parliament.

*Norris and Ross look at each other.*

ROSEMARY

No. No. I see what you're doing. You're using your telepathic twin communication. Don't make this decision without including me in it. I don't want to be known as the wife of one of those hyper-conservative-

NORRIS

We'll do it!

CAROLE

Brilliant!

*They clink their glasses together and Rosemary covers her face.*

### **Act Two, Scene Five**

*It is still September of 1974 in the Irish storyline. Colleen and Emma are dressed to travel and carrying suitcases down the aisle of the theatre.*

EMMA

I can't tell what gate we're supposed to go to.

COLLEEN

This airport is so *big*!

EMMA

Why do they all leave from different gates? Can't they leave from the same gate?

COLLEEN

I've never heard so many different languages!

EMMA

So... we all check our luggage in the same place, but we leave from different gates? That doesn't make any sense.

*Emma sits down on the edge of the stage and stares at the ticket trying to figure out what they're supposed to do. Emma looks forward and gets lost in her thoughts. She looks at the audience.*



COLLEEN

Do you think any of these people live in London?

EMMA

Probably, considering we're flying to London.

COLLEEN

But... there are kids here.

EMMA

Mhmm.

COLLEEN

Hey, when we're in London, we won't be targeting any children, right?

EMMA

SHHH.

*Emma glances around, then stands and pulls Colleen to the side.*

EMMA

Don't speak so loudly!

COLLEEN

I'm still confused about what we'll be doing.

EMMA

We'll be doing what they tell us to do.

COLLEEN

Is it specific targets?

EMMA

Sometimes.

COLLEEN

And the rest of the time?

*Emma glances around nervously again.*

EMMA

Well they asked Hugh to meet us there because he's an engineer.

COLLEEN

So?

EMMA

So I'm guessing they'll be asking us to make and plant bombs.

COLLEEN  
BOMBS?!

EMMA  
SHHHHH.

COLLEEN  
You didn't tell me that!

EMMA  
I don't know for sure. But they chose us for a reason and they're planting this ASU for a reason as well, and we need to trust in our leadership. And I've heard from some higher ups that the goal isn't hurting civilians. It's more targeting troops, police, or anyone who works with them, like builders working on police stations or something.

COLLEEN  
That's still wrong.

EMMA  
What's wrong with retaliation? What's wrong with fighting back?

COLLEEN  
But bombs can hurt innocent people!

EMMA  
NONE OF THEM ARE INNOCENT!

*She looks around, embarrassed by this outburst.*

EMMA  
We need to do this. We need to scare them and hit them where it hurts so they'll actually listen to the Sinn Féin politicians. One bomb in London is worth twenty in Belfast. The British people who choose to ignore or swallow the lies of the British gutter press are responsible for the actions of their government unless they stand against them.

COLLEEN  
But bombs?!

EMMA  
The UVF- the loyalists- just bombed Dublin last year! Colleen, listen, these are the people,- these people are the reason we grew up in poverty. That's why your father drank. That's why my father worked himself to death. That's why Hugh's little brother is dead. *They killed Joseph.* And 13 other innocent people died on that day, on Bloody Sunday, and their murderers never

answered for their crimes! British soldiers in Northern Ireland are mercenaries of British imperialism and not one of them has ever been convicted of the murders of the unarmed civilians that they have committed. We are struggling to free our country from British rule. We are patriots! With or without us, the war against imperialism will go on. Because... true peace can only come about when a nation is free from oppression and injustice.<sup>4</sup>

COLLEEN

I know, Emma. You say so all the time.

EMMA

Not without reason.

COLLEEN

I'm still coming. I'm just not sure about this whole bomb ting.

EMMA

We'll see. We don't even know what specifically they're requesting yet. You've never had a problem with committing violence over the last few years.

COLLEEN

I know. Something about bombs.

*The overhead speaker comes on, with a woman speaking in a British accent.*

SPEAKER

Flight SB9636, the 11:35 flight to London Heathrow is now boarding.

EMMA

Which damn gate?!

COLLEEN

It's A9. They told us when we bought the ticket. Weren't you listening?

*The rush off the catch their flight as the Storyteller enters.*

STORYTELLER

So Emma and Colleen headed off to London. Now our time frames and locations have come together. Whew! I am glad that worked out because, I'll be honest, all this gets away from me sometimes. The McWhirter twins took Carole's advice and ran for parliament, and today they discover if their success as writers will translate into politics.

---

<sup>4</sup> Verbatim from a speech written and delivered by the real Joseph O'Connell to a British jury before he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

**Act Two, Scene Six**

*We are at a small party in Ross and Rosemary's home. They are holding signs and wearing shirts that say "McWhirter 1974" with blue and red lettering. Ross stands apart from the crowd to address them.*

ROSS  
Hello, everyone.

*They continue to speak, ignoring him.*

ROSEMARY  
EVERYONE.

*They quiet down and turn to Ross.*

ROSS  
Now, thank you so much for coming this evening. And thank you so much for your votes earlier today.

*They applaud.*

ROSS  
My wife, Rosemary, and my brother, Norris, and his wife, Carole, you see, we've all been quite lucky in this life. And we have God to thank for that and we also could not have done it with such wonderful support from all of our friends and family. You truly are good to us and for that we are so grateful. Together, as a unit, I think we can really change Great Britain for the better.

*He takes out a list and puts on glasses.*

ROSS  
I just wanted to reiterate some of our policy points.

*The crowd grows more bored as his speech goes on.*

ROSS  
For one thing, we've been subject to a few attacks from the radical extremists, members of the Irish Republican Army. I feel as though the British government has been far too lenient in dealing with this terrorist organization. They try to compromise and listen to Sinn Féin politicians, but we have nothing to gain from amnesty. My brother and I believe that we should prevent more Irish people from coming into our country. And the Irish that do live here should be held responsible for reporting any suspicious activity among their communities. The Irish simply are not like you and I-

ROSEMARY

Thank you for your lovely speech, darling!

ROSS

I wasn't-

*She claps her hands and the crowd follows suit with some lackluster applause.*

ROSEMARY

(to Ross)

We can save the rest for the victory speech.

*Ross takes Rosemary aside to address her.*

ROSS

I've tried to be patient with you through this process.

ROSEMARY

I don't-

ROSS

I know it's not exactly what you planned for us and our family. But everything I say and everything I do is truly what I believe is right.

ROSEMARY

There are just certain things you say. Generalizing groups like that...

ROSS

I'm motivated by a sense of patriotism. And protection! I want to be able to protect you and Iain and James from people who are truly dangerous. The IRA, they're terrorists. There's no reason to be understanding and open with people like them who are murderous villains-

*The phone rings offstage.*

NORRIS

That must be our campaign manager!

*The crowd grows quiet.*

NORRIS

Ross, why don't you answer it?

*Ross puts his hand on his brother's shoulder, then walks offstage to answer the phone. Rosemary disappears in the middle of the crowd.*

CAROLE

*(to Rosemary)*

Isn't this exciting? We'll be the wives of Members of Parliament!

NORRIS

Quiet, dear! We want him to be able to hear the good news.

*Carole locks her lips and throws away the key. Ross comes back onstage. Beat.*

NORRIS

Well? What did he say?

ROSS

Congratulations, Norris.

*Carole screams and hugs her husband.*

NORRIS

But what about you.

ROSS

I didn't get it this time.

ROSEMARY

Oh, Ross.

CAROLE

You'll get it next time, Ross!

*She turns to everyone else at the party.*

CAROLE

The victory cake is on the patio in the backyard!

*She exits with the crowd. Norris approaches Ross.*

NORRIS

Ross...

ROSS

Don't let my loss dampen your mood. Go eat your victory cake.

*Norris puts his hand on Ross's shoulder, then exits. Ross sits in a chair and places his face in his hands. Rosemary is still standing nearby, looking at Ross. She walks to him and touches him.*

ROSS

Well, you've gotten what you wanted, then.

ROSEMARY

Ross. Don't say that. You know I always want you to be happy. Come here.

*She holds his face.*

ROSEMARY

Breathe in and breathe out with me.

ROSS

I really thought I had it.

ROSEMARY

I know, dear.

ROSS

I swear I did it for the right reasons.

ROSEMARY

I believe you.

*Ross sits in silence, upset. Rosemary is bothered by his melancholy. She debates what to do, then crouches next to him.*

ROSEMARY

Well, this doesn't have to be it.

ROSS

What do you mean?

ROSEMARY

I mean... This doesn't have to be the end. You can keep fighting for what you believe in.

ROSS

Our campaign manager, he was always trying to get us to be more moderate. The same way you encouraged us.

ROSEMARY

Well maybe if you run again you can move more in that direction?

ROSS

But I don't want to sit around waiting until I can run again. I want to make change now. I know I'm not charismatic like you or Norris but I really thought I could do it. I thought I could make a difference.

ROSEMARY  
You still can.

ROSS  
How?

ROSEMARY  
Well maybe... I don't know. Something with the IRA? A pamphlet?

ROSS  
A pamphlet?

ROSEMARY  
With your views on it and advice to stop them

*Ross stands.*

ROSS  
Something more than that...

ROSEMARY  
It wouldn't be hard for you to find access to a form of publishing.

ROSS  
You're right. I am still a powerful man. They think they can beat me after just one run?

ROSEMARY  
Well we don't need to do anything right now.

ROSS  
Why not right now? I know what I believe right now! Why stop at a pamphlet? I have the means to really fight these nasty terrorists.

*He starts to leave.*

ROSEMARY  
Ross, what are you planning?

ROSS  
I'm going to take my anger about losing, and I'm going to do something with it. I will not let the left destroy my country because they're too concerned with trivial niceties. I'll get angry. I'll stay angry.

*He storms off, leaving Rosemary onstage. The Storyteller enters and pulls down the projector as she exits.*



STORYTELLER

So the IRA, the organization of which Emma, Hugh, and Colleen are a part, already carried out a few terrorist attacks on British soil. There was an explosion at the House of Parliament in 1974 and no one was killed, and another bombing at the Tower of London a month later in which one woman died and 41 were injured. Those were the attacks that Ross was talking about in the last scene. But what the people living in London did not realize was that the IRA was planning to plant a unit of people in London to carry out a more consistent bombing campaign. By the end of 1974 that unit arrived to start their campaign of terror. The people in this ASU were Hugh Doherty, Colleen Butler, and Emma Duggan.<sup>5</sup>

**Act Two, Scene Seven**

*It is October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1974. We are in Emma, Hugh, and Colleen's London flat, in the secret back room that Hugh has built to make the bombs. Hugh is in the middle of the stage, with glasses on and a bomb under bright lights. He wears black gloves to conceal his fingerprints. He is carefully tinkering with it. Colleen enters. Hugh continues tinkering with the bomb while she talks to him.*

COLLEEN

Hugh, can I come in?

HUGH

Sure. How are ye, Col?

COLLEEN

Will that explode with us in the flat?

HUGH

No. I haven't even put the nitroglycerine in it yet

COLLEEN

Oh. The nitroglycerine. What are you all going to do with this?

HUGH

They told us to place it in Guilford in Surrey at the Seven Stars Pub. It's popular with young squaddies.

COLLEEN

Squadies?

---

<sup>5</sup> This story is based on an ASU that was comprised of four main members named Hugh Doherty, Joseph O'Connell, Eddie Butler, and Harry Duggan, with two less consistent members, Brendan Dowd and William Joseph Quinn.

HUGH  
Trainee soldiers.

COLLEEN  
They're our age?

HUGH  
Probably a bit younger.

COLLEEN  
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.

HUGH  
They're training to become British soldiers. Like whoever killed Joseph.

COLLEEN  
I suppose.

*There is an awkward silence.*

COLLEEN  
Hugh...

*She touches the bomb to push it from his hands so he stops messing with it.*

HUGH  
Wait, your fingerprints-

*She tries to kiss Hugh, but he backs away abruptly.*

HUGH  
What are you doing?

COLLEEN  
Oh... I'm sorry.

HUGH  
I, um, I didn't expect that.

COLLEEN  
I just... Don't you get lonely here? We aren't allowed to talk to anyone like us. We can't be associated with the Irish community or else they might suspect us. And Emma and Joseph, they were so happy-

HUGH  
Emma is your best friend. Joseph was mine. Think of how Emma would feel, how she would react, if something happened...between us.

COLLEEN

She would support us if we were happy.

HUGH

Colleen, do you think we're on holiday? We have a mission here. We didn't come here to fuck around.

COLLEEN

Alright, I'm sorry!

*Hugh realizes she's embarrassed.*

HUGH

No, I am. You didn't do anything wrong. I'm sorry. I'm just on edge. I want to make sure this works.

COLLEEN

It's fine.

*Emma comes in, wearing a pretty dress as though she is about to go out.*

EMMA

We should probably- What are you doing in here, Colleen?

HUGH

She wanted to ask me a few questions about making the bomb. In case anything happens to me.

EMMA

Oh. Good idea. Well, I was saying we should get going soon. While the bar is crowded. Are ye almost ready?

HUGH

I just need to add a few more tings.

EMMA

Alright, we'll stay outside while you do it. Come on, Colleen.

*They begin to leave.*

COLLEEN

So... you're really going to do this? You're going to kill these people? These young people.

EMMA

Don't ever forget why. Don't ever forget what they've done to us.

HUGH

Get angry and stay angry. Use it as fuel.

*Colleen sighs.*

EMMA

Let's go kill those bastards.

*The Storyteller, having watched this, walks to center stage and pulls down the projector.*

STORYTELLER

Through 1974 and 1975, this Irish Republican Army ASU in London made up of four people, sometimes five, carried out about thirty bombings, attacks, shootings, and attempted bombings in and around the city of London. They killed many and wounded hundreds. They targeted government officials, soldiers, police, expensive restaurants, and high-end, upper class hotels and neighborhoods.

They almost killed Caroline Kennedy, John F. Kennedy's daughter, when she was on vacation in London, staying with a member of parliament. She was 17 at the time.

They killed Paul Craig, who was 22, celebrating his birthday with his girlfriend in a pub, along with his two friends Bill Forsyth, who was 18, and John Hunter, who was 17. They were killed in the bombing attack you saw Emma, Hugh, and Colleen talk about in the last scene.

They killed Professor Gordon Hamilton-Farley, who, when he died at 45-years-old, was one of the world's most foremost experts in the treatment of cancer. He was a married father of four, who was out walking his two dogs when a bomb under a Parliament Member's car exploded. He had just returned from a research trip to Australia and told a colleague he was coming back just brimming with ideas for the treatment of adult leukemia. We'll never know what those ideas were.

They killed a new member of the police department, PC Steven Tibble, who was 21 and recently married. He was shot while trying to stop an IRA member on the run. He had a wife named Kathryn, and a kitten named Scampi.

These were real people. With families and friends who loved them. And I've only listed a small percentage of them.

Some call it terrorism. Others call it freedom fighting. The truth is, there are no saints. And there are no sinners. There's only the story.

So I guess I should get back to telling it then.

**Act Two, Scene Eight**

*The Storyteller closes the projector, walks to the middle of the stage, then moves upstage. He acts as a divide between the Irish storyline and the British storyline, turning his head to watch*

*each depending on who is speaking. Rosemary sits on the left. On his right, Hugh, Emma, and Colleen sit around bored. Emma and Colleen are playing with a puzzle while Hugh reads the newspaper.*

*The lights go up and down on stage left and stage right depending on which scene we are focusing on.*

STORYTELLER

With every bombing and every witness, the police got closer and closer to finding out the identity of these bombers. Time passed and the bombing campaign took us to November, 1975.

*Hugh sits up, surprised by something he's read.*

HUGH

Emma, Colleen-

*Ross runs in to address his wife.*

ROSS

Darling, listen to this.

*Hugh and Ross both read from the same newspaper.*

HUGH

“Police have made a huge leap forward in the search for those responsible for the campaign of terror led in London that started last year.”

ROSS

“A piece of shrapnel that was uncovered last year at the Seven Stars Pub miraculously yielded a full fingerprint.”

HUGH

“After extensive searching, they have been able to trace the fingerprint back to a crime committed in Londonderry, Northern Ireland in 1971”

ROSS

“When four masked people broke into the home of Sir Alfred Wallace and his wife and stole almost £20,000 worth of artwork.”

HUGH

“Evidently, when the crime was committed, one member of the party was very apologetic, and gave the couple, who had been bound and gagged, each a bowl of porridge and a glass of water.”

ROSS

Apparently she set it in front of them! Could you imagine being that daft? “The fingerprint on the shrapnel from the Seven Stars Pub, matches the fingerprint left on the oatmeal.”

COLLEEN

What?! I wasn't even there on the night of the Seven Stars bombing! Why would my fingerprint be on the bomb?

*Hugh rubs his temple and thinks.*

HUGH

That was the first one we did. You did touch the bomb. While I was making it.

EMMA

What? When?

HUGH

Colleen, it was... that night. You came in to, um, learn more about the bomb. You were talking to me and I kept looking at it, so you, sort of, gently pushed it from me because you were, trying... to...

*Colleen lifts both hands and puts them over her mouth, realizing he's right.*

ROSS

"The fingerprint found on the porridge was discovered to belong to a Miss Colleen Butler, who was 19 at the time. She was a known member of the IRA, and was believed to be dead, which is why it took a year to match the two fingerprints. Authorities claim that the IRA most likely faked her death before she was sent to London to carry out the bombing campaign."

EMMA

Okay, Colleen, relax.

COLLEEN

Relax?! They said my name! Now everyone in the United Kingdom knows me for this!

*Emma takes Colleen's face in hers, like she used to do with Joseph.*

EMMA

Colleen. Listen to me. When have I ever let anyone hurt you? I never have. I never will.

HUGH

We'll just lay low for a while. No bombings for a bit. They can't find us if we don't leave the flat.

EMMA

I love you. I love you. Hugh and I, and all the higher ups, all the officers, we'll protect you. You're here under a different identity. The only picture they have of you is from years ago. Take some deep breaths. It's okay.

COLLEEN  
Okay. Okay.

EMMA  
I will *never* let *anyone* hurt you.

*Colleen puts her hands over Emma's and nods.*

*Emma, Hugh, and Colleen exit.*

ROSEMARY  
So... That's good news, then.

ROSS  
That's great news! This is... This is it! It's time. I need to go out and make a public stance.

ROSEMARY  
Now, Ross, maybe just breathe in-

ROSS  
We have money, we have savings. We can afford a bounty for this woman, this- this terrorist! I need to make a public statement. I know what I'm going to say. I'm going to get a camera crew and get them to come. Here!

*Lights down on Ross. Spotlight on the Storyteller.*

STORYTELLER  
And so he did.

*Music plays as the Storyteller exits. In the middle of the stage, a television faces Emma, Hugh, and Colleen. Behind it, a camera faces Ross. The whole stage is lit. On stage right by the light of the television. On stage left by the light of the camera and television lighting.*

*Ross addresses the camera, and the IRA members watch his address on the television. Ross is surrounded by some members of the press and a camera crew.*

ROSS  
Hello, and good evening. As you may know, my name is Ross McWhirter, one half of the creators of the Guinness Book of World records, and one half of the stars of the television show, Record Breakers. But the topic I am addressing today, I'm afraid, is not so enjoyable. Today, I have been provided with airtime to address how to stop the bombers.

HUGH  
Who is this man?

EMMA  
Apparently he's going to stop us.

*Hugh chuckles. Colleen still looks nervous.*

ROSS  
The reason we haven't stopped them is because we're too concerned with their civil liberties.  
These are terrorists! They've lost the right to those liberties.

EMMA  
What is he talking about?

ROSS  
So I demand of the British government a new system. All Irish citizens living in England must be required to register with their local police in order to receive a pass allowing them to leave or enter Britain. They must also be required to carry a form of identification at all times, and should be subject to random police searches.

HUGH  
Ahhhhh, so he's a bigot.

EMMA  
Yep.

HUGH  
That explains it.

EMMA  
Let's turn him off. Just another crazy lad.

COLLEEN  
Leave him on.

*Emma, who was poised to turn off the TV, shrugs and sits back down.*

ROSS  
And, as the last initiative, before our allotted airtime ends and we go back to commercial, myself and a few friends have gotten together and created an incentive fund. We are prepared to offer £50,000-

*Emma stands.*



ROSS

To anyone who can provide information that leads to the capture or death of the bomber identified as Miss Colleen Butler.

*The press and camera crew on Ross's side of the stage go wild. The lights go off on that side of the stage. At the exact moment the lights switch off, Emma's head whips around and she looks at Colleen. Colleen looks terrified by what Emma might do.*

COLLEEN

Emma-

*Emma exits, quickly. On her way out, she grabs car keys and a gun. Colleen stands to run after her.*

COLLEEN

EMMA!

*Lights out.*

### **Act Two, Scene Nine**

*When the lights come back up, Emma and Hugh are hiding behind some bushes. They are outside Ross's home.*

EMMA

I'd never forgive myself if something happened. I'm the one who got her caught up in all this shit.

HUGH

So what are you going to do to this lad? Just give him a scare?

EMMA

Absolutely not. He threatened Colleen. He won't get off with a scare.

*We hear a car come up the driveway.*

*Rosemary enters and walks past them without seeing them, putting her keys away. Hugh stands and confronts her at gunpoint. She lifts both hands.*

HUGH

Give me your keys.

*She hands them to him and he lowers the gun and turns to go get in the car. She runs to the front door of the house, now without her house keys. She rings the doorbell frantically. Emma follows her and stands behind her at the door.*

ROSEMARY  
ROSS! ROSS!

*He answers the door.*

ROSEMARY  
GET INSIDE!

*She runs past him. But he doesn't listen to her. He steps outside to confront Emma.*

ROSS  
Who are you? Stay away from my wife!

EMMA  
My name is Emma Duggan.

*She lifts her gun and points it at his head.*

EMMA  
Nice to meet you, Ross McWhirter.

*She fires. Ross falls backwards. We hear Rosemary scream.*

ROSEMARY  
ROSS! NO!

*She runs to Ross and gets down on her knees. She holds him in her lap. In blocking and dialogue this scene should mimic the scene when Joseph died. Hugh reappears. As he speaks to Emma, Rosemary keeps talking to Ross and crying.*

HUGH  
Emma, I've got the car running in the driveway. Come on.

*He notices Rosemary.*

HUGH  
Kill her, too. She's a witness.

*He exits. Rosemary doesn't flinch. She is focused on Ross.*

ROSEMARY

Please stay with me, my love.

*Emma aims her gun at Rosemary.*

ROSEMARY

Just breathe in, and breathe out. Come on, Ross. Breathe in, breathe out. Breathe in, breathe out.

*Emma stares at them and, without realizing it, lowers her gun.*

HUGH

*(offstage)*

Kill her, Emma! Let's go!

*Emma looks back at Hugh quickly, then fires a bullet in the sky and runs offstage. Rosemary lays her head on Ross.*

### **Act Two, Scene Ten**

*The Storyteller walks through the aisles and speaks to people personally. As he talks, the boy enters in the other aisle and starts kicking his soccer ball around. He eventually sits on the edge of the stage, tossing the ball up and down.*

STORYTELLER

If Emma never lost Joseph, she woulda killed Rosemary right then, and made their kids orphans. Sometimes the greatest pain brings the greatest sympathy. Life and death, love and loss. In, and out. In, and out.

*The Storyteller takes Rosemary's hand and wipes her tears away.*

ROSEMARY

My husband.

STORYTELLER

I know.

ROSEMARY

My sons. Their father.

STORYTELLER

I know. Come here.

*He helps her up.*

STORYTELLER

The story isn't over yet. The story always keeps going. We're all just parts of a bigger story. You understand?

ROSEMARY

No.

STORYTELLER

It's not real. It's just a ride.

ROSEMARY

But will I see him again?

STORYTELLER

You already can see him. Every time you look at your sons, every time you watch him on TV or read one of his books, or dream at night, or close your eyes during the day. He's here, and he wants you to be alright. So take a sec.

*She closes her eyes. He takes out a handkerchief and wipes another tear and her nose.*

STORYTELLER

Good job. Let's get some coffee.

ROSEMARY

Ugh.

STORYTELLER

Whoops- Tea. Let's get you some tea.

*He helps her offstage. Ross remains. The light dims to the same color it did after Joseph died. Ross stirs, then sits up. Joseph walks onstage. He offers Ross a hand and helps him up. They face each other.*

JOSEPH

I'm sorry.

ROSS

I am, too.

JOSEPH

I forgive you.

ROSS

I forgive you as well.

*The boy throws the ball to them and Ross scrambles to catch it with his feet. They pass the ball back and forth.*

*Someone enters holding signs. They each have a sketch of Emma's face, and sketch of Hugh's face, and an old photo of Colleen. They are under the heading, "THE BOMBERS." The person hands the flyers to people in the audience. Every time he hands one to someone he says, bored, "Report any suspicious activity."*

*The boy kicks the ball at Ross somewhat hard and Ross runs offstage to retrieve it. The boy runs after him and Joseph is still onstage.*

*Emma enters and wanders down the aisle carrying groceries. Her face is completely uncovered, because no one knows who she is or what she looks like. She looks up and stops when she sees Joseph. They make eye contact and Joseph smiles. She smiles, too. The person carrying signs shoves one in front of her face without looking at her. Joseph exits.*

PERSON

Report any suspicious activity.

*The person exits.*

*Emma looks at the flyer, then she looks up and notices them everywhere. She stares at it, then adjusts her collar to cover herself, and runs off.*

*Hugh and Colleen enter onstage. Colleen is pacing and Hugh is frantically trying to make calls. Colleen is holding one of the posters.*

COLLEEN

Who are you calling now? The politician's representative?

HUGH

Yes, yes, who first met with Emma.

COLLEEN

I thought you already called him.

HUGH

I did, he didn't answer- GOD DAMMIT.

*He slams the phone.*

HUGH

And he still isn't answering.

*Emma comes in, holding a poster.*

EMMA

They have sketches of us.

HUGH

We saw. It's all over the news as well.

EMMA

Call the number that gives us instructions.

HUGH

We've been calling everyone. Nothing.

EMMA

Fuck.

COLLEEN

We're disposable to them. It's why they sent us and not someone higher up. They'll take responsibility for the attacks we carry out but they knew this was how it was going to end all along.

EMMA

So, what? We're stranded?

HUGH

I don't understand how they got such perfect images of us.

*Emma turns her back to them.*

COLLEEN

They must be from the McWhirter shooting. Maybe they had a child looking through the window or something.

HUGH

Both of their sons were away at boarding school. We checked.

*Colleen looks at one of the posters.*

COLLEEN

It says it's based on an eyewitness account.

EMMA

It's my fault. I didn't kill the wife.

HUGH  
WHAT? I told you to kill her!

EMMA  
I know, I couldn't do it.

HUGH  
What the fuck is wrong with you?! Do you understand how many people we've already killed? And you couldn't kill just one? All of a sudden you developed a soft spot? Now YOU'RE the reason we're going to get caught! Jesus fucking Christ, Emma! You-

COLLEEN  
SHUT UP, HUGH. FUCK YOU.

*They both look at Colleen, surprised by her outburst. After a moment, we see police lights coming from outside.*

EMMA  
We need to get out of here.

HUGH  
We'll use the fire escape.

*They run offstage.*

### **Act Two, Scene Eleven**

*We are in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Matthews, an old British couple. They are both drinking tea and reading. There can be some copies of the Guinness Book on one of the shelves.*

MRS. MATTHEWS  
You know, Tom, no matter how many times I read *Much Ado About Nothing* I'm reminded of why it's my favorite comedy.

MR. MATTHEWS  
You do love *Much Ado*.

MRS. MATTHEWS  
Yes I a-do.

*Mr. Matthews finds this hilarious. Mrs. Matthews laughs along with him as well.*

MR. MATTHEWS  
You're so cheeky.

*They return to reading in silence.*

*Emma, Colleen and Hugh enter from the back of the audience, running. We hear sirens again.*

MR. MATTHEWS  
What's all that commotion?

COLLEEN  
EMMA! They're coming up the stairs behind us!

HUGH  
We can't keep running.

*Emma looks around and thinks quickly.*

EMMA  
Let's go in that apartment. If there are people inside we'll use them as hostages.

*They burst into Mr. and Mrs. Matthews's flat. Emma points a gun at them.*

EMMA  
Tie them up.

*Hugh and Colleen look around for materials to use to tie them. The couple is stunned.*

EMMA  
Don't bother trying to struggle, either of you. We aren't here to hurt you.

*Police, one of whom is holding a megaphone enter from the back of the audience. The officer with a megaphone, the chief, points the megaphone at the stage.*

CHIEF  
Emma Duggan. Hugh Doherty. Colleen Butler. We have the building surrounded. If you exit the building now, there need not be any violence.

COLLEEN  
Emma, they won't hesitate to kill us. We should just turn ourselves in before one or all of us die.

HUGH  
Why do you think we have hostages?

EMMA  
If we hold out for long enough maybe my brother or someone else will come and help us.



MR. MATTHEWS

Who- who are you?! Why are you doing this?

HUGH

Shut up!

*Emma steps outside to yell to the officers.*

EMMA

We have two hostages. If you attempt to take us, both will die.

CHIEF

Shit.

*The chief turns to another officer.*

CHIEF

Find out what room they're in and who they have.

OFFICER

Are we sure it's them? It's the bombers?

CHIEF

Yes, we're pretty sure we finally have them. But if we can confirm their identities it'll make things a lot easier for us.

*He turns to another member of his team.*

CHIEF

Get in touch with Rosemary McWhirter.

### **Act Two, Scene Twelve**

*The previous scene disperses (or it could be maintained on an upper balcony with the funeral scene below) as a closed casket is carried down the aisle from the back of the audience. It's carried by Iain, James, Norris, and the storyteller. Rosemary walks behind them. They place it onstage and Norris stands near it to give a speech.*

NORRIS

I'd like to make a few remarks. Firstly, to Sir Roger Bannister, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and everyone who came to honor the memory of my brother, thank you so much. It means nothing less than the world to myself and Ross's family.

*He turns to Ross.*

NORRIS

Well, Ross, I suppose this is never where we thought we would end up. You know, the night of my- er, your murder, around 10:05 PM, it was requested that I identify the body. And confirm that it was, in fact, you, who had been assassinated.

The experience of seeing, lifeless, a person who is genetically the same as yourself has an unreality. There is you. The person with whom for fifty years I shared any success, every failure, every aspiration, every hope fulfilled or hope dashed, every expectation, every triumph, tragedy, and worry. Many do not and cannot understand the intimacy of identical twinhoods. This one had lasted literally from the moment of birth to the moment of death.<sup>6</sup>

*He turns back to the audience.*

NORRIS

I have a bit of a confession. This is unknown to everyone here, other than Ross. We always said that we had memorized the whole book. But to be perfectly honest, each of us only memorized half.

*He smiles a bit.*

NORRIS

Of course, that was never a problem. Because we were always together! I suppose now I'll have to memorize the whole thing. For this reason, and for many other reasons, Ross, my brother, I will miss you terribly. I will speak of you, and write of you, and live with you constantly present in my heart and mind. I anxiously await the day I get to see you again.

*He starts to walk down and approach Rosemary. A police officer bursts in the back of the auditorium and bustles onto stage. Everyone turns to look at him. Norris looks confused. The officer stops by Rosemary and whispers something to her.*

ROSEMARY

What?

NORRIS

Excuse me. Excuse me? You may not have noticed, but this is a funeral. Perhaps it is not the best time to harass the widow. What is this about?

*The police officer looks at Rosemary, uncomfortable.*

---

<sup>6</sup> Verbatim from Norris McWhirter's book about his brother, *Ross*.

ROSEMARY

They have the people who killed Ross surrounded in a building. They took an old couple hostage and they want me to identify them.

*Norris raises his eyebrows.*

ROSEMARY

*(looking to the officer)*

But I'm afraid I can't help you.

OFFICER

You're the only person who has seen them in the act. We need your identification specifically!

ROSEMARY

Then keep them there until I feel I'm ready to go.

NORRIS

Rosemary, I know it's not the best time, but this is your chance to put them in prison. They're dangerous people, and a shot at revenge like this may not come again.

ROSEMARY

I have more important things to take care of right now. Specifically two very important things.

*Rosemary looks to her sons.*

OFFICER

I'll tell the others, then.

*All but the storyteller exit.*

STORYTELLER

Emma, Hugh, Colleen held the couple hostage in that flat for six days.

### **Act Two, Scene Thirteen**

*The scene of the hostage situation is set up again. But now, there are hints that time has passed. Everyone looks exhausted and irritated. All of them are sleeping aside from Emma, who still stands and looks over the people in the room.*

STORYTELLER

They barricaded themselves in the living room so they had no food or water or a working bathroom. The Metropolitan Police Service showed exceptional negotiating skills, and the members of the Active Service Unit showed incredible stamina. They held out hoping that other members of the IRA would come help them. No one did. But through the six days, the police service managed to keep pretty consistent communication with the ASU using a walky-talky that they lowered into the flat from an upper level balcony.

*The chief takes out a walky-talky and speaks into it.*

CHIEF

Hello, Emma. How are you doing this morning?

EMMA

Stronger than ever.

CHIEF

I'm sure you must be hungry. We'd be willing to send you some soup. We don't want you to go hungry. We can lower it to you in a container?

*Emma thinks.*

EMMA

We would consider accepting that.

CHIEF

Of course. So what are we getting in return?

EMMA

Nothing.

CHIEF

Why don't you send us Mrs. Matthews. Just her. She's an old woman, Emma. What are you holding out for? No one is coming for you, do you understand? You're alone. You're waiting for someone to come save you who will never come. What would Michael Collins think if he could see you all now, stranded in your tower?

*Emma throws her walky-talky over the balcony and at the Chief. He slams his walky-talky down as well. She hold eye contact with him for a moment, then returns to sit with the rest of the group.*

COLLEEN

Emma. You know he's right.

EMMA

Just... We'll just keep waiting. I don't know what other options we have at this point.

OFFICER

Sir, I'm worried about the couple. They've gone too long without eating.

CHIEF

Hand me my megaphone.

*He speaks into the megaphone.*

CHIEF

Lower the soup.

*From above, they lower soup in a container on a rope.*

CHIEF

We don't want anything in return. Just distribute this among yourselves and the couple. They need it.

EMMA

*(to the group)*

Don't touch it! Let it hang.

MR. MATTHEWS

Please accept the food. My wife is hungry.

COLLEEN

They don't even want anything! Just go take it!

EMMA

It's still leverage. It's putting them in a position of power. If we don't take any, that makes a statement. It shows them how serious we are about holding out.

COLLEEN

What have you become, Emma?

HUGH

Shut it, Colleen. You giving food to some fuckwit British couple is the reason they matched your fingerprints with an identity in the first place.

COLLEEN

You're blaming me?! You two carrying out that McWhirter attack is the reason our faces are plastered all over London!

HUGH

The McWhirter attack was a direct response to him putting a bounty on your head because of the fingerprints.

COLLEEN

I never asked you to go after that man and his family.

HUGH

If Emma weren't here, I never would've defended you. I never cared enough about you to kill for you.

COLLEEN

Great! I don't give a fuck about you either!

HUGH

Really? Because first you got your fingerprints on the porridge at the art heist. Then you got your fingerprints on my bomb when you tried to fuck me.

COLLEEN

That's not what happened!

HUGH

We never should have brought you on any of our missions. We should've left you back in Derry for your piece of shit father to kill you.

COLLEEN

I'm glad that through all of this, I'm still not like you. You became a killer, all because you're angry with your life because you know deep down that you let your little brother die.

*Hugh lifts his gun and points it at Colleen. Mrs. Matthews screams and Mr. Matthews covers her.*

HUGH

Say that again.

EMMA

ENOUGH.

*Beat. Hugh lowers his gun. Colleen stares at him with tears in her eyes, then walks out and grabs the soup. The officers below, who didn't hear the previous conversation, celebrate. She goes back inside and pours soup for Mrs. Matthews and hands it to her. She does the same for Mr. Matthews. Then sits. Beat.*

HUGH

You were never cut out for this.

*Mrs. Matthews starts to cry again. Mr. Matthews puts his hand on her back, then looks at Colleen and whispers, "Thank you."*

*From the back of the theater, Rosemary enters. Her eyes are red from days of crying. Norris walks with her, offering support. She approaches the chief.*

ROSEMARY

Hello, my name is Rosemary McWhirter. You asked to see me a few days ago.

CHIEF

Yes. Yes! You! Oh, goodness, we thought you weren't coming. Someone get Mrs. McWhirter a tea and the photos we have of Duggan and Doherty.

ROSEMARY

So have they come out onto the balcony where you can see them?

CHIEF

Yes. We've definitively identified Colleen Butler. We could still use you to identify the other two.

ROSEMARY

The ones who killed my husband.

CHIEF

Yes. I'm terribly sorry for your loss, by the way.

ROSEMARY

You can console me by putting these people in prison. I can't believe they've held out for so long.

*Someone hands Rosemary a tea and hands the chief the photos.*

CHIEF

I have pictures here of Hugh Doherty and Emma Duggan. You could use them to confirm they are, in fact, the people who were present on the day of your husband's murder. Would you be willing to see them?

ROSEMARY

Yes. Doherty first.

*He hands her the photo. Norris looks over her shoulder.*

ROSEMARY

Yes. This is the first person I saw. He took my keys and went to the car.

CHIEF

You're sure?

ROSEMARY  
Absolutely positive.

ROSEMARY  
Show me the other one.

*The chief hands her a photo of Emma. Rosemary looks at it for a moment, then starts to cry. Norris touches her back.*

NORRIS  
It's her?

ROSEMARY  
It's her. I watched this child murder my Ross.

CHIEF  
Thank you so much for this, Rosemary. This is massively helpful. We can now confirm details about their lives that we've dug up and use them in negotiation. It was difficult before because they all faked their own deaths.

*Norris takes the photos from Rosemary and looks at them. Rosemary wipes her face.*

ROSEMARY  
They faked their own deaths?

CHIEF  
Yes. Even their closest loved ones believed them to be dead.

ROSEMARY  
I wonder who they left behind.

*Norris is still looking at the pictures.*

NORRIS  
God, they look like they're the same age as Iain and James.

CHIEF  
They're both about 23.

NORRIS  
Their parents are probably my age.

ROSEMARY  
I want to talk to them.



CHIEF  
Sorry?

ROSEMARY  
Let me negotiate with them.

CHIEF  
We've held onto a very specific, contained situation. I'm afraid I can't let you do that.

ROSEMARY  
I won't become emotional or yell at them or anything of the sort. I think I could be of immense service to you.

NORRIS  
She understands people. I've seen her completely turn opinions and ideas before the person she's talking to even realizes what's happening.

ROSEMARY  
Please. I want to do this. For my husband.

*The chief looks at her, then hands her the megaphone.*

ROSEMARY  
Hugh Doherty. Colleen Butler.

*She collects herself.*

ROSEMARY  
Emma Duggan.

*The three lift their heads to listen.*

HUGH  
Who is this now?

*Emma peeks out to see who is speaking.*

ROSEMARY  
My name is Rosemary McWhirter. My husband is Ro-... Was... Ross McWhirter.

EMMA  
Ah, Jesus, it's the bride.

*Hugh scoffs and settles in again. Rosemary pauses.*

*Ross enters and places his hand on Rosemary's shoulder. She looks at him, then continues speaking.*

ROSEMARY

My sons, Iain and James, are around your age. A week ago I had to call them and tell them they don't have a father anymore. Now I'm a widow, with two children, and I'm alone.

*Joseph walks out and stands next to Emma. She looks at him.*

ROSEMARY

There's so much pain. Now there are children, a brother, a wife, and friends who planned on growing old with this man and now he's gone. I've been sleeping in the living room because I can't stand walking upstairs to an empty bed that still smells like him.

*Hugh covers his ears. Rosemary pauses to collect herself again.*

*A soccer ball skitters onto stage and hits Hugh's ankles. His little brother comes out and kicks it around. Hugh watches him play. He kicks the ball to Hugh, who turns away and ignores him.*

ROSEMARY

But if you release the old couple you are with, I will forgive you. This is your chance to do it right. This is your chance to give back to all those who have lost loved ones by showing them that hope is not frivolous and that people can be good. You can't undo what you've done but I think you can make the future better. I want my sons to grow up in a world where we can forgive, and realize that as humans we have more uniting us than dividing us. The same pain, the same love, the same deepest desire to keep living after we lose someone we love.

*Beat. She hands the megaphone to the chief. Ross comforts her. Colleen is crying.*

COLLEEN

She looks like your ma.

HUGH

We don't need to make anything right. Everything we did, we did for a reason.

COLLEEN

You don't have any guilt?

HUGH

None.

COLLEEN

I don't believe you.

EMMA

Could you two stop bickering for two seconds? Please. I'm thinking.

*Colleen looks at Joseph and at Hugh's brother. She feels alone. After a beat Mrs. Matthews stands and walks slowly to her. She touches her back. Colleen looks at her and looks at Emma.*

COLLEEN

It's time to go, Emma. This is it.

*Joseph takes Emma's hand.*

EMMA

It think she's right, Hugh.

HUGH

Are you joking?

EMMA

We need to give this couple back to their families.

*Hugh rolls his eyes. Then looks at his brother. His little brother stops playing with the soccer ball and sits next to Hugh.*

EMMA

I'm gonna tell them we'll give the hostages back.

*Hugh's little brother puts his hand on Hugh's knee.*

HUGH

Okay.

*Mr. and Mrs. Matthews both breathe. Emma walks to the balcony and motions for a walky-talky. They lower one to her.*

EMMA

We'll give them back in exchange for a promise of a reduced sentence.

CHIEF

Done. Take them out, starting with Mrs. Matthews and we'll retrieve them.

*Rosemary and Emma hold eye contact for a moment, and Rosemary nods. Emma walks back in.*

EMMA

Hold your heads high. We're making the right decision.

*They begin the process of taking the couple outside, holding them in front of them so they don't need to worry about getting killed. The lights fade.*

## Epilogue

*There is a rocking chair onstage. On the screen we see projected: "April 11, 1998." It cuts to a news reporter.*

### REPORTER

The Easter snow never let up, the air outside the castle buildings stayed bitter and frigid- But still Sinn Féin's chairman described it as "a beautiful day." And so it was. Representatives from British and Irish governments along with eight political parties or groupings from Northern Ireland sat inside the Stormont Building for 30 hours without sleep, but their fatigue from 30 years of war proved greater. Men and women whose adult lives had been filled with talk of armed struggle and no surrender were now sharing a joke, paying warm tribute to each other. One delegation was spotted in the middle of the night, it's members quietly hugging each other.<sup>7</sup>

*Rosemary, now elderly, walks onstage and sits in the rocking chair.*

### REPORTER

In what is coming to be known as the Good Friday Agreement, government officials were able to map out a series of compromises and concessions. It would be difficult to overstate the significance of this document. After tension that has lasted for centuries, unionists and nationalists, loyalists and republicans, Protestants and Catholics, have drafted an avenue to peace. It will develop a new form of government in Northern Ireland, and it will also form entirely new agreements between northern Ireland, Great Britain, and the republic of Ireland. A massive part of the deal states that the Irish Republican Army must call for a total cease-fire and decommission all weapons. In response, England will release members of the IRA who have been imprisoned. Of the people being released, three are Hugh Doherty, Colleen Butler, and Emma Duggan, who are known for carrying out a reign of terror in London that ended with the Balcombe street siege.

*Emma, also aged, walks onstage. She is wearing handcuffs. Someone unlocks them and she rubs her wrists.*

### REPORTER

Today, we can look forward to a future of peace. But can we forgive the past? More at three.

*Rosemary turns off the TV. She looks up.*

### ROSEMARY

Did you hear that, Ross? The people who killed you are free.

*Emma begins to cry. The storyteller enters on Emma's side of the stage dressed as a janitor.*

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<sup>7</sup> Segments taken from The Guardian article published after the Good Friday Agreement.

EMMA

I don't deserve to be free.

STORYTELLER

Why not?

EMMA

Oh, I didn't see you. Uh... I did some bad things.

ROSEMARY

But they're being let go as part of the peace agreement. So I suppose it's worth it.

EMMA

I lost someone, and the pain overflowed. Then it spread.

ROSEMARY

Someone needs to break the cycle at some point.

STORYTELLER

But did you have ups?

ROSEMARY

I don't know how you would feel about it if you were here.

EMMA

Sorry?

STORYTELLER

Ups to go with the downs. Ins and outs. The light stars made brighter by a dark sky.

EMMA

Yes. I've had some spectacular ups with good people.

ROSEMARY

I think maybe you would forgive them.

STORYTELLER

Well there you go. Those ups and downs are like an inhale and an exhale. And together they make breath- they make life.

EMMA

Then what about when you die?

ROSEMARY

Because I imagine that now that you're gone you feel...

STORYTELLER

Well what's the opposite of ups and downs?

ROSEMARY

Peace.

STORYTELLER

With your freedom, may you find peace.

*The storyteller exits.*

*Together, Rosemary and Emma breathe in and breathe out.*

*End of play.*

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ACADEMIC VITA OF MARY SIOBHAN BRIER

MarySiobhan5519@gmail.com

SiobhanBrierWriting.com

Education:

**Penn State University, Schreyer Honors College**

**Bachelor of Arts in English**

**Bachelor of Arts in Theatre**

**Minor in Spanish**

Ireland Study Abroad Various Cities May-June 2014  
Studied Irish art, theater, history, and literature.

Spain Study Abroad Seville, Spain May-August 2015  
Studied Spanish language, history, culture, and politics. Courses were taught in Spanish.

England Study Abroad London, England January-April 2016  
Studied writing for film, writing for stage, and theater in London.

**Fluent in written and spoken Spanish**

**Certified in teaching English as a foreign language**

**Penn State School of Theatre- Playwright** September 2014-Present  
Author of one musical, three plays and multiple skits that have been cast and performed for audiences.

**Penn State School of Theatre- Director** October-December 2016  
Wrote, produced, and directed a collection of skits that premiered in December 2017.

**Published in *Off the Coast* and *The South Carolina Review*** January 2016  
500-word review of a book of poetry published in Maine's International Poetry Magazine, and a 500-word review of a novel published in the South Carolina Review

**Mid-State Literacy Council** May 2016- Present  
Taught English as a Second Language to two classes of adults, and tutored individual learners

**Penn State Dance Marathon** September 2014-Present  
Provided emotional support to a dancer during the 46-hour dance marathon in 2015 and again in 2017  
Communicated and formed relationships with alumni and major donors

**Panama Service Project** March 2014  
Worked with attorneys to help people of the Darien Province to resolve their legal issues  
Worked with and taught children in Spanish

**Penn State Paterno Fellow** September 2014-Present

**Project Hope- United Neighborhood Care Center** July-August 2014  
Served as a lifeguard and counselor at a summer camp for children from low-income families  
Worked with up to 30 children at a time, many of whom were special needs or ESL