

# Plays for Young Audiences

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

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## *The Troubles: Children of Belfast*

By  
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Music by  
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**Characters:**

Leprechaun  
Irish Child  
English Child  
Irish Adult  
English Adult  
Irish Youth  
Protestant Child  
Catholic Child  
Kenna  
Alf  
Ted  
Mother  
Little Girl  
Drunk 1  
Drunk 2  
Linda  
Tommy  
Brian  
Soldier 1  
Soldier 2  
Soldier 3  
Sean  
Joseph  
Brede  
Maire  
Audrey  
Sheila  
Mandy  
Caroline  
Bridget  
Pat

**Prologue**

Pool of light bursts up on Leprechaun as he lights a pipe.

LEPRECHAUN      Boo! (A laugh. Lights gradually reveal rubble in front of twenty-foot high corrugated steel wall, marred with graffiti.) What? Did I give you a fright? Oh, come, come - you've nothing to fear in me. I'm only just a wee leprechaun, I am. How's that? You say I don't look like a leprechaun? You think I'm too big, do you? Compared to a giant, I'm small enough. But now, you're saying that giants don't exist. Don't they? And who told you such a thing? Ah, well - other folks tell us lots of things, starting when we're just wee little people ourselves. And from then on, we're always comparing things against what we were taught is real and true. Ah, but there I go, getting ahead o' meself. . . And what about meself. Believe what you like, I am a leprechaun. One o' the wee fairy folk - the little people. Once upon a time, we were many - and ever so much bigger - aye, we were great giants roaming about a sweet and peaceful island. But then one day the common folk came, and not longer after, the saints - and they taught folk to believe in things altogether different than we. So, with less and less folks believin', the giants started to quietly fade away, becomin' smaller and smaller. But there are still a few of us, here and there, in Ireland. Aye - that's what I said - Ireland. (He gestures to the steel wall.) Erected by the British after the civil rights marches and violence in 1969. The "Peace Line," they call it - dividin' two ghettos. Protestants live in "the Shankill" -- they might be called "Prod, Orangie, Hun, Loyalist." Catholics, they live in "The Falls." They've got their nicknames too: "Taig, Fenian, Mick, Republican." Surprised, are you? You thought Ireland was all lovely green fields of shamrocks and quaint wee cottages, did you now? Wrong again. There now -- already you might be learning a different thing or two about what you thought you knew. And depending upon what you've been taught already by your families, your schools, your churches - well, maybe a few more things you might find surprising - even shocking. Like now, for instance. . . Cover your ears! Quick! (A great explosion is heard from offstage.) Now, now - I warned you, didn't I? Most folks in Belfast aren't so lucky, gettin' told ahead o' time. (In the distance is the sound of yelling and sirens.) Speakin' o' time, I've got to be on me way. Now don't you worry if you can't tell the difference between the Catholics and the Protestants. They can. Ah, yes. And all this commotion? Most call it "The Troubles."

Peace walls part as children, men and women rush into the street – two bombed out shells of row houses on either side of the stage with a rear-projection slide screen upstage. A helicopter searchlight hovers above, then flies off. The cast slowly turns to face the audience.

## Opening

The cast is divided in half with an empty 'neutral' area separating them.

ENGLISH CHILD     The Troubles.

IRISH CHILD        What?

ENGLISH CHILD     The Troubles.

TWO IRISH GIRLS   *(Sarcastic.)* The Troubles.

ENGLISH CHILDREN  
& ADULTS           The Troubles.

IRISH CHILD        *(Laughing)* The Troubles.

ENGLISH CHILDREN  
& ADULTS           The Troubles!

IRISH CHILDREN  
& ADULTS           The Troubles!

ALL                 The Troubles!

IRISH CHILD        They've been goin' on forever.

ENGLISH CHILD     Hundreds of years, at least.

IRISH CHILD        There was a time when all in Ireland were Catholic.

IRISH ADULTS  
& CHILDREN         God bless and keep Saint Patrick.

IRISH ADULT        There was a time when all in Ireland were Irish.

IRISH YOUTH        Erin go braugh.

ENGLISH ADULT     The year of our Lord, 1169.

ENGLISH CHILDREN The English invaded.

ENGLISH CHILD      And Henry the Second, King of England, declared himself King of Ireland too.

IRISH CHILD        The first of many English to dare presume control over the Irish.

ENGLISH CHILD      Colonists immigrating. . .

THREE ENGLISH  
CHILDREN            . . . ship upon ship of loyal Englishmen!

IRISH CHILD        Within two generations, half the population was English.

IRISH CHILD        Most of the Irish tried to share their land in peace.

Hand extended to an ENGLISH; another ENGLISH steps forth and separates the hands.

ENGLISH ADULT     Enough! You colonists are becoming too Irish!

IRISH ADULTS  
& CHILDREN        "Too Irish?!"

IRISH ADULT        Now what in heaven's name is that supposed to mean?!

ENGLISH ADULT     The year of our Lord, 1366. Statutes of Kilkenny.

IRISH CHILD        What?

ENGLISH ADULT     Laws.

IRISH ADULT        English laws!

ENGLISH ADULT     Statutes of Kilkenny.

IRISH CHILD        I still don't get it.

ENGLISH CHILD     English are forbidden to embrace the customs...

ENGLISH CHILD     ...language. . .

ENGLISH CHILD     ...and the fashion of the Irish.

ENGLISH            (*Incredulous.*) Irish fashion?!

ENGLISH CHILD Forbid their music.

ENGLISH CHILD Forbid their stories.

ENGLISH ADULT Forbid their love in marriage.

IRISH ADULT It is written, "Forbidding all others keep only to yourselves."

IRISH ADULT Racial segregation.

ENGLISH ADULT By law.

IRISH ADULT English law.

IRISH CHILD Forbidding also their worship together.

ENGLISH CHILD One God, one faith. . .

ENGLISH CHILD Separate service.

IRISH ADULT Religious segregation.

ENGLISH ADULT By law.

IRISH ADULT English law.

ENGLISH CHILD Made all the more so by King Henry the Eighth.

IRISH ADULT The year of our Lord, 1540.

PROTESTANT CHILD The King creates a new religion: Church of England.

PROTESTANT CHILD What?

ALL "Anglican ."

PROTESTANTS No more Pope telling the English what to do!

CATHOLIC CHILD Yet few of the native Irish convert.

CATHOLIC CHILD Let their heretic English souls be damned!

CATHOLIC CHILD Our faith remains in Rome.

CATHOLIC ADULTS

& CHILDREN       Aye!

CATHOLIC CHILD    But at home, our lands and power dwindle. . .

PROTESTANT ADULT  1607. The Ulster Plantation.

PROTESTANT CHILD  The King sends one hundred fifty thousand English-Anglicans.

PROTESTANT CHILD  ...and Scots-Presbyterians...

CATHOLIC CHILD    . . .yet another kind of foreigner. . .

CATHOLIC CHILD    -Scottish-

CATHOLIC CHILD    . . . to serve under the English. . .

CATHOLIC CHILD    . .yet another religion -- Presbyterian --

CATHOLIC ADULT    . . . disapproved, though tolerated, by Anglicans of great wealth, political  
                          influence and military power . . .

CATHOLIC CHILD    You know what that means? The Irish in the North -

CATHOLIC CHILD    - in Ulster -

CATHOLIC CHILD    . . . struggled to keep hold of their lands. . .

CATHOLIC CHILD    . . . their only means of living. . .

CATHOLIC CHILD    . . . against the ever-increasing, greedy foreign settlers.

CATHOLIC ADULT    1641. Ulster Irish peasant uprising.

CATHOLICS         Hurrah.

PROTESTANT CHILD  Thousands of British colonists are massacred.

PROTESTANT CHILD  England's army defends the settlers.

PROTESTANTS       Hurrah!

CATHOLIC CHILD Slaughter. . .

CATHOLIC CHILD . . . starvation. . .

CATHOLIC CHILD . . . exile . . .

CATHOLIC CHILD . . . even deportation as slaves. . .

CATHOLIC CHILD . . . thus the native Irish population is reduced by half.

CATHOLIC CHILD But there is hope!

CATHOLIC CHILD Not long after, King James the Second. . .

CATHOLICS A Catholic!

CATHOLIC CHILD . . . ascends the English throne and Umpts to restore to the Irish their rights and lands.

PROTESTANT CHILD We can't allow that!

PROTESTANT CHILD We're all settled in!

PROTESTANT CHILD So James is quickly deposed by the great Protestant King. . .

PROTESTANTS William the Third! Prince of Orange!

*Battle drum begins beating slowly to crescendo through the following.*

CATHOLIC CHILD Only James, he runs to Ireland, hoping to win back the crown by raising up an army of Catholics.

CATHOLIC ADULT Catholic army holds Ulster Protestants under siege.

PROTESTANT CHILD We will not surrender!

PROTESTANTS No surrender!

PROTESTANT CHILD Thousands of Protestants die from disease and starvation!

PROTESTANT CHILD Still we will not surrender!

PROTESTANTS No surrender!

PROTESTANT CHILD King William and his English army come to the rescue!

PROTESTANTS Hurrah for King Billy!

PROTESTANT ADULT 1690. Catholic defeat at the Battle of the Boyne.

CATHOLIC CHILD Thus England shall rule over Ireland's patriots. . .

CATHOLIC CHILD . . . with a blood-red hand about the poor, wee island's neck.

PROTESTANT CHILD The red hand of Ulster!

PROTESTANTS Hurrah for King Billy!

CATHOLIC CHILD Again the Irish were punished for defending their own homeland.

CATHOLIC CHILD Laws would limit civil rights and religious freedoms. . .

CATHOLIC CHILD . . . imposed and enforced by a government not their own.

CATHOLIC CHILD Laws to promote the few while forsaking the majority.

CATHOLIC CHILD To perpetuate a hate for centuries to follow.

CATHOLICS AND THE TROUBLES NEVER END. . .

PROTESTANTS AND THE TROUBLES NEVER END. . .

CATHOLICS AND THE TROUBLES NEVER END. . .

PROTESTANTS AND THE TROUBLES NEVER END. . .

ALL NOW ALL IRELAND'S DIVIDED IN TWO

CATHOLICS AND THE TROUBLES NEVER END. . .

CATHOLIC ADULT Two races: British or Irish

PROTESTANTS AND THE TROUBLES NEVER END. . .

PROTESTANT ADULT Two faiths: Protestant or Catholic.

CATHOLICS            AND THE TROUBLES NEVER END. . .

PROTESTANT ADULT   Two causes: keep British rule or create anew a free Irish.

PROTESTANTS        AND THE TROUBLES NEVER END. . .

CATHOLIC ADULT   1922. A troubled compromise: two nations.

CATHOLICS            A REPUBLIC IN THE SOUTH

PROTESTANT         HAS A CATH'LIC MAJORITY  
THE SOUTH HAS A CATH'LIC MAJORITY  
THE SOUTH HAS A CATH'LIC MAJORITY  
CATH'LIC RULE

CATHOLICS            FREE AT LAST FROM ALL FOREIGN RULE

CATHOLIC CHILD    Free at last!

PROTESTANT CHILD   Rule Britannia!

CATHOLICS            BUT IN THE NORTH -- THE SIX COUNTIES -- OF ULSTER  
WE ARE RULED BY THE QUEEN

PROTESTANTS        THE PROTESTANTS MAINTAIN A MAJORITY  
HERE THE ORANGE RULES O'ER THE GREEN.

PROTESTANTS        (*Various.*) Welcome to West Belfast. Once a thriving industrial center,  
home to an impoverished Presbyterian and unemployed Catholic  
underclass of Ulster.

CATHOLICS            (*Various.*) Governed by Great Britain, with a Protestant majority and a  
Catholic minority. Home to the Troubles.

CATHOLICS            AND THE TROUBLES NEVER END...

PROTESTANTS        AND THE TROUBLES NEVER END. . .

CATHOLICS            AND THE TROUBLES NEVER END. . .

ALL                    AND THE TROUBLES NEVER END!

VARIOUS                    *(Over the final part of the song.)* 1964. Civil Rights Movement. 1968. Marches for fair housing, employment. Riots. 1969. British army occupation. 1970. Bombing campaigns. 1971. Death toll: 120. 1972. Bloody Sunday. Bloody Friday. Death toll: 467. Imprisonment. Terrorism. Trial without jury. Hunger strikes. Patriots. Assassins. Revenge. 25 hundred dead.

All freeze. On tape, the sound of a phone ringing.

VOICE-OVER            *(Muffled; over phone.)* This is the Belfast Brigade for Freedom. Evacuate immediately. We have set a bomb.

Click of disconnection and then a tone. All scatter to reveal, Center Stage, a large "cartoon " bomb with a burning fuse. LEPRECHAUN rushes in, cuts the fuse, and carries the bomb off as the Cast exits, except for KENNA, ALF and TED.

## Scene 1

ALF and TED each go to a bricked window which has graffiti written on it.

KENNA                    *(To Audience.)* What d'ya think you 're lookin' at?! Expected to see "Finian's Rainbow," did you? *(A pause. )* Alright - we'll give you a bit more help, now an' then. But don't you go thinkin' you're gonna understand. There's a saying we've got up here: "If people say they understand the Troubles, you know they've been badly misinformed."

TED                        The Irish Republican Army . . . *(Indicating the "Up the I.R.A. " slogan he stands by.)* I .R.A. . . . they've got a different saying. . .

KENNA                    "To those who believe, no explanation is necessary. For those who don't believe, no explanation is possible."

ALF                        Believe what?

KENNA                    Believe in what they believe, what else? But there are too many groups, too many beliefs. Even the I R.A. is divided. Political wing, paramilitary wing. Paramilitary means armed terrorist or armed patriot -- depending upon how you think about what you believe.

ALF                        *(Indicating "Long Live the U.D.A.")* There's the U.D.A.

KENNA                   The Ulster Defense Association. If a name has Ulster in it, it's almost always Protestant. If it's got an "I" - meaning Ireland – it's probably Catholic.

TED                       *(Spraying over I.R.A. )* R.U.C. -- Royal Ulster Constabulary.

KENNA                   Constable means police. Cops. Almost all the police in Northern Ireland are Protestant.

ALF                       *(Spraying over U.D.A.)* O.D.C.

KENNA & TED           O.D.C.?!

ALF                       Ordinary Decent Criminal.

KENNA                   Yeah. It's easy to forget that the biggest group is ordinary people – folks who just walk into trouble without belonging to any group except the masses of unemployed and hopeless. Got that? *(Starting off )* C'mon, Ted! - take us to Wimpy's for a Filet 'o Fishburger and chips! *(To audience.)* French fries, to you.

TED                       What d'you mean "Take you?" Do I look like the bank of Belfast?

KENNA                   Aye, and you're being robbed. But that's alright; it's for a good cause.

KENNA and ALF exit. TED goes to ALF's graffiti to spray again, as a MOTHER enter with her LITTLE GIRL.

MOTHER               *(To Ted.)* Hey, youse - get on away from there! *(Ted rushes away. MOTHER addresses the audience.)* Ah, well - I don't suppose the kids here in the ghetto are all that much different than any other kids - exceptin' o' course that they're terrible poor and left to themselves a lot. Where are their mothers, you're wonderin'? Home, most of 'em – raisin' up a squad o' littler kids. An' the da's? Well, them what can't find work might spend the day playin' snooker, or drinking down at the corner pub. Ah – now there's a familiar stereotype for you: "The Drunken Irishman." But you think a minute - if you were without a job and livin' in the ghetto, might be you'd drink too. You really can't blame 'em. *(She starts off.)* What does bother me, thou, is to see some wee ones take their fathers' drunkin' stumblin' an' bigoted cursin' as somethin' funny. 'Cause when the kids grow up to become alcoholic or racist themselves. . . well, can you see the humor in that?

## Scene 2

*Two DRUNKS stumble in. DRUNK 1 looks at graffiti "Long Live O.D.C."*

DRUNK 1 "O.D.C.?!" Long live Offensive Drunken Choirboys!

DRUNK 2 I'll sing to that! (Music. )

DRUNKS SHOTS RANG OUT IN THE MID 0' THE NIGHT  
AND I BOLT UP IN ME BED  
IS ITTHE A.S.U. OR THE U.V.F.  
OR THE I.R.A. INSTEAD?  
IF I SHOULD HEAR A BOMB EXPLODE  
I THINK I WILL LOSE ME MIND  
OH, I'LL GET ME A BULLEI'FOR EV'RY MAN  
WHO LIKES TO HIDE BEHIND. . .

### Chorus

THREE LETTERS,TH REE LEITERS  
EV'RYONE'S GOT THEIR THREE LEITERS  
AND LIVIN', IT GETS NO BELTER,  
NO SIR!  
AND LIVIN', IT GETS NO BETTER

DRUNKS WELL, I WALK IN ME HOUSE AND THE TELLY IS ON  
THE PEOPLE ARE TALKIN' TO ME  
WHETHER THEY'RE N.I.O. OR D.U.P.  
THEY'RE TELLIN' ME WHAT I SHOULD BE.  
AND IF I HEAR ONE MORE STUPID SPEECH  
I'LL TEAR OF MY SHIRT SLEEVES  
AND I'LL GET ME A BULLET FOR EV'RY MAN  
WHO SAYS WHAT HE BELIVES IN. . .

### *Repeat Chorus*

NOW ON THE "PRODDY SIDE  
YOU GOTTHE U.D.A.  
AND THE U.D.R. AND THE U.V.F.  
AND THEY'RE RUN BY THE P.T.A.  
(Prevention of Terrorism Act.)

AND ON THE CATHOLIC SIDE  
YOU WI' THE I.R.A.  
AND THE I.N.L.A. AND I.R.S.P.  
AND THEY'RE ALL LIVIN' GRAND UP IN H.M.P. TODAY.

(H.M.P.? The Hmp! "Her Majesty's Prison!" That too!)

BUT IT'S NOT JUST HERE NOW IN IRELAND DEAR,  
IT HAPPENS ALL OVER THE WORLD  
SEEMS LIKE PEOPLE ALL WANNA MAKE CORPSES  
OUT O' WELL-BEHAVED BOYS AND GIRLS  
OH, I KNOW IT SOUNDS CRAZY AND DOESN'T MAKE SENSE  
BUT GENTLEMEN, TAKE IT FROM ME  
WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD IF WE WANNA  
WITH A LETTER OR TWO, OR THREE. . .

I.R.A.  
U.V.F.  
I.R.E.L.A.N.D.  
MAY SHE "R.I.P."

*They laugh and stumble away as LINDA and TOMMY enter and address the audience.*

LINDA                    Another common misunderstanding is that "The Troubles" has to do with religion.

TOMMY                   That's just a wee part of it. Consider this: when one of Ulster's 11,000 British soldiers is killed by a bomb, do you suppose anyone ever cared about his religion?

LINDA                   We will fight anyone to remain British. Even the British!

TOMMY                   Here comes wee Brian -- out for a bit of fun with some of the big boys. . .

*LINDA and TOMMY exit.*

### Scene 3

*The sound of gunfire. Lights rise on BRIAN, a boy of nine, scrambles on stage, carrying a parcel. He quickly hides it amidst the debris and starts to run away but is blocked by British Soldier. Brian turns to run in opposite directions, but sees his escapes are blocked by Soldiers 2 and 3. He stands for a second.*

SOLDIER 3                   Name! (*Brian doesn't answer.*)

SOLDIER 1                   (*Cocking his rifle.*) Answer him, you Fenian bastard!

BRIAN                        I ain't a Fenian! Let me go!

SOLDIER 3                   Not until we've had a wee chat.

BRIAN                        Don't know nothin'.

SOLDIER 3                   I'll be the judge of that. What's your name?

BRIAN                        Brian.

SOLDIER 3                   Last name?

BRIAN                        MacNeil.

SOLDIER 1                   He's lying.

BRIAN                        Why should I lie? You can't hurt me.

SOLDIER 2                   Oh, can't we?

BRIAN                        I'm a kid.

SOLDIER 3                   So what? Kids get hurt all the time hereabouts, don't they?

BRIAN                        The others'll tell.

SOLDIER 2                   First you tell us about the others. Who was driving the car?

BRIAN                        I said I don't know nothin'.

SOLDIER 3                   Oh, you like to go out joyridin' with strangers, do you?

BRIAN                        I was hitchhikin'.

SOLDIER 2                   Sure you were.

SOLDIER 1                   And where were you going?

BRIAR Home.

SOLDIER 3 And where's that? (*No answer.*) Come on, little Brian MacNeil -- you don't want us to take you down to headquarters, do you?

BRIAN I've been lifted before. Thought you squaddies liked liftin' kids - gets you off the streets away from the snipers, don't it? Cowards!

SOLDIER 2 What a smart-mouthed little. . .

SOLDIER 1 Just tell us -- who was drivin' the car?

BRIAN I don't know, do I? Older kids.

SOLDIER 2 I should hope so. How old are you anyway? Eight?

BRIAN Ten. How old are you? Seventeen? I got a sister, seventeen. And she could kick your ass without even tryin'.

SOLDIER 1 Shut your filthy little mouth, you hear?

BRIAN You're no help to us here. Go on back to London, Nancy-boys.

SOLDIER 2 We'd be delighted. But you bloody savages don't know how to stop killin' one another, do you?

BRIAN Stop protectin' them filthy Fenians and it'll stop soon enough.

SOLDIER 1 We do our share, protectin' you Prods.

BRIAN Do you?

SOLDIER 2 (*Furious.*) You think it's a great game, do you? Well, we're the ones who've got to go seek out your little booby traps or clean up after folks who've been blown to bits. That includes our own mates who've got families at home, with little kids who know how to behave!

SOLDIER 3 That's enough, soldier. Come on boy -- down to headquarters with you and we'll call your parents.

SOLDIER 1 Scum like him don't have parents.

SOLDIER 3                    *(To Soldier 1.) I said "enough!" (Brian makes a run for it, getting the parcel he hid.)*

BRIAN                        I ain't goin'. You just try liftin' me now.

SOLDIER 1                 What's he got?

BRIAN                        Come find out.

SOLDIER 2                 For Christ's sake, it's a bomb!

BRIAN                        T'were meant for the Fenians, but you had to go an' stop us.

SOLDIER 1                 He's bloody out of his mind!

BRIAN                        My Granddad - he fought for England in the war against the Germans. But now, when we're in trouble - you won't fight for us.

SOLDIER 3                 For God's sake, what would you have us to do?

BRIAN                        Leave me go about me own business. Try liftin' me an' you'll be lifted too. *(They pause.)* Just go. You never should ha' come over here in the first place.

*Soldiers slowly exit as the lights fade to blackout. Spotlight up on SEAN, JOSEPH and KENNA.*

SEAM                        *(Showing a visual aid.)* Ever see one o' these? It's a plastic bullet. Imagine a hockey puck flying toward your head at 180 miles per hour.

JOSEPH                     They're used to disperse crowds "unlawfully assembled."

KENNA                      Like at the demonstrations for the Hunger Strikers seven year ago.

JOSEPH                     Aye, the Strikers!

SEAN                        Ten Irish Republicans, imprisoned for alleged crimes against the British nation, were denied special treatment as political prisoners. How could they protest? They could starve themselves, that's how.

KENNA                      Brede doesn't go out to the Busy Bee Shopping Center very often. But she and her sister, they've got a visiting cousin to entertain, and there isn't all that much to do. . .

They exit.

#### Scene 4

BREDE, MAIRE and AUDREY enter with a fast-food bag of fries and burgers. They sip sodas.

BREDE                    There were a lot of demonstrations, during the hunger strikes.

AUDREY                *(Complaining to BREDE.)* Brede! Maire's eatin' all your chips!

MAIRE                    Am not!

BREDE                    *(Ignoring them.)* The fourth had just died.

MAIRE                    Joe McDonnell it was.

AUDREY                McDonnell? Wasn't it his funeral procession the Brits attacked? Of course, I was just a wee girl; but I think they showed it on the TV. How long ago now?

MAIRE                    Seven years.

BREDE                    But me and Fiona had nothing to do with any of it. We were only just steppin' out o' this one shop when all of a sudden the bangin' and the runnin' started.

AUDREY                Bangin'? From guns, you mean?

MAIRE                    No - bin lids! Warnin' folks the squaddies were comin', don't you know.

BREDE                    And even though it was only just speeches they'd been makin', and it was mostly women too, still the Brits started firing anyway.

AUDREY                Rubber bullets?

MAIRE                    Plastic! Hail Mary, Audrey -- don't you learn nothing down in Dublin?

BREDE                    There were soldiers everywhere, shootin' to make the people leave.

AUDREY                No!

BREDE Oh, not straight on. No. they're only to fire at the ground, you see.

MAIRE All the while hoping for a hit from a ricochet, though. And that hurts plenty too. Can knock you right over.

AUDREY And that's what happened to Fiona, then?

MAIRE Damn right!

BREDE Don't curse, Maire. *(To Audrey.)* We don't know for certain it was a bullet.

MAIRE Ma says. . .

BREDE Ma wasn't there! I was with her, wasn't I?! *(To Audrey.)* We were running. Everybody was. Fiona just fell. And then...when I tried to help her up. . . she couldn't move.

MAIRE But she was awake still -- all the way to hospital. *(To Brede, sarcastic.)* I got that much right, didn't I, sister?

BREDE Aye, but. . . well, she wasn't "all there," like.

MAIRE You see, she had blood leakin' into her brain.

AUDREY Do you mind, Maire?! I'm eating!

BREDE Well, that's what happened, and there was no helping it. Oh, how our Ma did cry.

MAIRE Fiona was the youngest.

AUDREY Maybe we don't hardly ever come up here, Maire, but I know how old my cousins are.

MAIRE I was only tryin' to tell you why Brede's always fussin' over me.

AUDREY Why?

MAIRE 'Cause now it's me who's the youngest. Our Ma's forever worried.

AUDREY Then why do you stay? Why don't you move on down to Dublin like us?

MAIRE You wouldn't understand.

AUDREY Well, what about your Dad?

BREDE What about him?

AUDREY How does he feel about Fiona dyin' and the Troubles and all?

BBEDE Well, Dad -- he don't ever express his feelings.

AUDREY Never? Oh, I don't think that's good, do you? No. I think that's bad for a person.

BREDE Our Dad used to. . . well, he used to sing a bit. (*Music.*) But he don't so much anymore. . . .

AUDREY Don't he? Why not?

MAIRE Shut up, Audrey! You ask more questions than the damned police!

*She grabs AUDREY's bag and runs away. AUDREY chases her.*

AUDREY Maire! Come back, you! Where do you think you're goin' with my chips?!

BREDE (*Singing.*) 'T WAS DOWN BY THE WAYSIDE. I MET AN OLD WOMAN  
A-PLUCKIN' YOUNG NETTLES; SHE NE'ER HEARD ME COMIN'.  
I LISTENED A WHILE TOTHE TUNE SHE WAS HUMMIN':  
"GLORY O, GLORY O TO THE BOLD FENIAN MEN."

'TIS FIFTY LONG YEARS SINCE I SAW THE MOON BEAMIN'  
ON TALL MANLY FORMS WITH THEIR HOPES EVER-GWIN'  
I'LL SEE THEM AGAIN IN ME EVERY-DAY DREAMIN'  
"GLORY O, GLORY O TO THE BOLD FENIAN MEN."

SOME FEU BY THE WAYSIDE, SOME DIED WITH A STRANGER  
AND WISE MEN HAVE SAID THAT THEIR CAUSE WAS A FAILURE  
BUT THEY LOVED DEAR OLD IRELANDD  
AND THEY NEVER FEARED DANGER  
"GLORY O, GLORY O TOTHE BOLD FENIAN MEN."

*Brede takes one last slurp of her soda, then casually exits as SHEILA, MANDY and CAROLINE enter.*

SHEILA                   The Orangies and the Fenians -- they each have their patriots and martyrs from the past.

MANDY                   If I had but a penny, you know what I would do? I'd buy a rope and hang the Pope and let King Billy through!

SHEILA                   *(Outraged, dragging MANDY off. )* Mandy!

CAROLINE               *(Hopscotching. )* St. Patrick's Day will be jolly and gay  
As we kick all the Protestants out of the way  
And if that won't do, we'll cut 'em in two  
And send 'em to hell with their red, white and blue!

### Scene 3

Two young Catholic girls, BRIDGET and CATHERINE, are skipping rope.

BRIDGET &  
CATHERINE               *(In unison.)* Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
Pray for me and Tommy Todd.  
I'm a Catholic; he's a Prod --  
Holy Mary, Mother of God!

A young boy, SEAN, enters with an even younger boy, PAT.

SEAN                   Now, then, Pat -- the first thing you're gonna need to learn about livin' here in West Belfast, is how to keep from dyin'. Now, I don't care what you've heard in England, but this here is a war, and you'd best not forget it. So. . .why don't we begin with you tellin' me what you know already about fightin' Orangies and Squaddies.

PAT                    "Orangies?"

SEAN                   That's right. *(PAT shrugs.)* Orangemen. Billy's Boys. Loyalist Huns. UDA. UDR. UFF, UVF?! *(PAT shrugs again.)* Prods?

PAT                    Oh, you mean Protestants!

SEAN                   Aye. Now, Squaddies. . . *(A vacant smile from PAT.)* Tommies. Brit Paras...

PAT                    Brit. . . British?

SEAM                   Go on. . .

PAT Paras.. .Paras.. .

SEAN Paratroopers! British Paratroopers! The bloody army, Pat! (*A sigh.*) Well, you've got a lot to learn, I can see that much! (*Spying Bridget and Catherine.*) Hey, Bridget, Catherine! - would you come help me explain some military tactics to our new neighbor Pat here?

BRIDGET & CATHERINE (Alternating.) Anything for a Free nation, Sean! Screw the Orangies! Kill the Prods! (*In unison.*) Two, four, six, eight, England is the land we hate! (*They cheer.*)

BRIDGET (*To PAT*) So from where do you come , Pat?

PAT England.

CATHERINE Sorry.

SEAN Oh, Pat understands our feelin's, don't you, mate? (*PAT nods.*) Now, girls -- would you just stand here and make believe you're lamp posts then?

BRIDGET & CATHERINE "Lampposts?!"

BRIDGET (*A shrug.*) Whatever you say.

CATHERINE Somehow I doubt Bernadette Devlin ever started out as a lamp post.

BRIDGET Perhaps a barricade.

SEAN Now it's only just for a wee moment -- please? (*Girls allow SEAN to move them into position, side by side, a few feet apart. He indicates the space between them.*) Now, Pat -- here's the street, right? And there's your lamp posts. Now think of me as a land rover comin' up the street.

PAT "Land rover?"

SEAN A jeep!

PAT Ah.

SEAN                    Alright then, I'm full of Squaddies.

PAT                     Soldiers!

SEAN                    Good! So what do you do?

PAT                     Run away!

SEAN                    No -- you take your cheese wire. . .

PAT                     The rope's cheese wire.

SEAN                    Aye -- and what do you do with it? (*Pat shrugs.* ) You quick tie it between your two lamp-posts, that's what you do. . .

*Catherine slaps Sean's hand away as he begins to tie the rope around her torso.*

CATHERINE            Mind your hands there, "Mr. Land rover!"

SEAN                    Alright then, just hold it, will you? (*To Pat as he hands the rope ends to the Girls.*) You see, Pat, there's almost always a soldier standing on the outside, and the cheese wire's so thin that he can't see it. So if you tie it at about six feet up, it's just the right height to. . . (*Sean moves between the Girls who hold the rope taut and catch Sean at the neck. Sean collapses.* )

BRIDGET &  
CATHERIE             Hurrah!

PAT                     (*Eyes wide.*) Wow!

SEAN                    Oh, but that's only just the start of it all. When the others hop out to help their unfortunate friend, what do we do?

PAT                     Run away! Run away! (*Others groan and look at Pat with great disdain.*) No, we don't. We. . . (*He thinks.*) I know! I know! We throw stones at 'em - right? (*Others slowly shake their heads.*)

SEAN                    Pat. . . only children throw stones. (*To Girls.*) Tell 'em what we use, girls.

BRIDGET &  
CATHERINE            Petrol bombs!

SEAN                    But now I'm supposin' you don't know what petrol bombs is.

BRIDGET                    Nothing in all the world's more simple to make.

CATHERINE                Just fill a milk bottle with petrol.

BRIDGET                    To help the petrol stick, you can add a little fairy liquid.

CATHERINE                *(To Audience.)* Now, all you kids out there in the audience. . .

BRIDGET                    *(To Audience.)* Don't you try this at home!

BRIDGET &  
CATHERINE                Un-unh! *(They turn back to Pat.)*

PAT                         "Fairy liquid?"

CATHERINE                Dish soap -- are you dim?!

PAT                         Help the petrol stick to what?

SEAN                        To their shields! Their shields are plastic, and after a few petrol bombs, they'll melt, won't they?

CATHERINE &  
BRIDGET                 Damn right!

SEAN                        So they drop their shields, and then they're really in for it!

PAT                         Why?

SEAN                        'Cause that's when the little kids start in throwing stones.

PAT                         And what do we do?

SEAN, BRIDGET  
& CATHERINE             Run away!

SEAN                        Well, that's enough for one day. Tomorrow I can teach you about paint bombs.

CATHERINE                And joy riding!

BRIDGET                    Oh, aye, that's great crack! *(Sean, Bridget and Catherine start off together.)*

PAT                               Wait -- what about nail bombs?

SEAN                              What about 'em?

PAT                               I don't know, I just heard. . . is somethin' wrong with nail bombs?

SEAN                              *(After a look at the Girls.)* Listen, mate. We're all of us agreed that here in the Falls we've got to defend our rights as best we can. But nail bombs -- we leave that to the Provies and the I.N.L.A.and such.

PAT                               You don't belong to them groups then?

SEAN                              Hell, no!

CATHERINE                      If Sean's Mother found out he was messin' with them sort. . .

BRIDGET                        She'd kill him!

PAT                               Why?

SEAN                              Pat - them groups all believe in violence!

Sean, Catherine and Bridget exit, leaving Pat to ponder his lesson.

## Scene 6

Justin, about 11, in a school uniform with a bandaged wrist, sits alone in a pool of light. Adult Voices – one female, one male – interview Justin from the darkness.

VOICE F                        Good day, Justin.

JUSTIN                         Hi.

VOICE M                        Your wrist is bandaged.

JUSTIN                         Clever you.

VOICE M                        Got into another fray at school?

JUSTIN                         No.

VOICE F                   How then?

JUSTIN                    You mean how did it happen? Filthy Fenian hit me with a brick.

VOICE M                   Why?

JUSTIN                    'Cause we were throwin' bricks at them, I don't wonder.

VOICE F                   And why do you do that?

JUSTIN                    Because they throw 'em at us! We got to show 'em, don't we?

VOICE M                   Show them what?

JUSTIN                    That we've a right to live here, just as much as them. More than them. It's us who built up Belfast in the first place, wasn't it? Nothing but a muddy old swamp for muddy old Catholic pigs till we came over.

VOICE M                   And do you think throwing rocks. . .

JUSTIN                    Bricks.

VOICE M                   . . . bricks is going to make the Catholics change their minds about living with you ?

JUSTIN                    Who gives a damn about changing their minds? They don't have proper minds anyway. And besides, we don't live with them scum no more. We moved.

VOICE F                   It's not on file. When did you move, Justin?

JUSTIN                    Three weeks now.

VOICE F                   To where?

JUSTIN                    Me Granny's. Unity Flats.

VOICE M                   No more than two blocks away.

JUSTIN                    At least it's all Protestant. Maybe now we won't get burned out no more.

VOICE M                   Maybe. And what about your father, Justin -- any news?

JUSTIN                    Didn't you hear? He's dead.

VOICE F                 Sorry.

JUSTIN                    Died last Tuesday morning at half six. Got burned tryin' to save me cat and hamster. He said once I'd grow up to be like him, because I liked pets and so did he. Only he'd keep fishes. But they all got burned.

VOICE F                 And you and your mother are staying with your grandparents?

JUSTIN                    Me uncle lives there too. He gave me a dog. Named him Oliver -- after Cromwell. Cromwell really showed them Catholics once, didn't he? He showed 'em what happens to murderers. When I save up three shillings I'm gonna buy a goldfish like me Da.

VOICE M                 That's very nice, Justin.

JUSTIN                    Is it?

VOICE F                 And what about death, Justin?

JUSTIN                    What do you mean?

VOICE F                 How does it make you feel?

VOICE M                 Does it scare you?

JUSTIN                    You only die once, don't you? Then it's over. That's not so scary.

VOICE M                 Do you think about it much?

JUSTIN                    Can't help But do that. People die all the time.

VOICE F                 Yes, but what about you? Do you worry about dying?

JUSTIN                    Didn't I just tell you I wasn't afraid?! Didn't I?! Don't you listen?!

VOICE F                 Of course we listen, Justin. We're concerned about every child in West Belfast. Terribly concerned.

JUSTIN                    Last week, on me Granny's telly, they were sayin' how many people dead since '69. Almost twenty-five hundred, they said. But they didn't say nothin' 'bout cats or hamsters.

VOICE M                No, I'm sure they didn't.

VOICE F                That will be all, Justin, for today

JUSTIN                 Okay.

VOICE M                Please give your Mother our condolences, won't you?

JUSTIN                 "Condolences?"

VOICE F                Tell her we're terribly sorry.

JUSTIN                 Oh.

*A pause. Justin slowly exits. Lights burst up on Elizabeth and Seamus (Voices F&M), removing their clinical smocks and putting their files in briefcases.*

ELIZABETH            How?! How could we not have heard his father had died?! The whole session was ruined!

SEAMUS                Never mind the session, Liz -- what about the poor wee lad?

ELIZABETH            You know that's precisely what I meant! Seamus, we both read McWhirter's study on stress events -- a parent being killed ranks number one.

SEAMUS                Yes. And that came as no surprise. What's the matter. Liz?

ELIZABETH            I'm angry; aren't you?! Look at this. . . nowhere in all this paper is there a simple note informing us about that little boy's father!

SEAMUS                There are limits to what we can do in a day.

ELIZABETH            Try explaining that to Justin.

SEAMUS                I don't imagine we need to. He's grown up with limitations all his life.

ELIZABETH            I haven't!

SEAMUS                    So let's do something for you, then. We've both had a very long week of it. (*A pause.*) Come, lass - I, for one, am positively chokin' for a pint, I am.

ELIZABETH                Are you? And is that your way of inviting me out for a drink?

SEAMUS                    (*Stepping nearer.*) Unless you've a better suggestion.

ELIZABETH                I feel like hell.

SEAMUS                    Is that why I'm forever burnin' when you're about?

ELIZABETH                (*Fending him off, laughing.*) Is that a fact, Seamus?

SEAMUS                    Oh, aye, aye -- and ain't it a grand feeling indeed! (*They kiss.*)

ELIZABETH                Your district or mine?

SEAMUS                    Hmm?

ELIZABETH                Where shall we have our drinks?

SEAMUS                    Who cares?

ELIZABETH                Your neighbors and my neighbors all care a great deal.

SEAMUS                    (*Stepping away, clearing his throat.*) Yes, well, why don't we just go downtown to one of the hotels? (*Elizabeth gives him a stern look.*) To a hotel bar. Elizabeth -- that's all I meant.

ELIZABETH                Just let me telephone my daughters and tell them I'll be late.

SEAMUS                    I'd think they'd be used to your hours by now.

ELIZABETH                They probably are. Maybe I find a kind of comfort in imagining they worry.

SEAMUS                    Worry over you and me?

Elizabeth                 No, love. Over Catholic you and Protestant me and our bloody wee town of Belfast.

*They exit.*

## Scene 7

A pub. Spotlight reveals Comic, who welcomes the smoking, drinking Patrons.

COMIC Welcome! Welcome all to the best wee pub in the Shankhill -- "The Ulsterman's Elbow!" (*Patrons applaud as Comic ushers in Singer.*)

SINGER  
HERE AM I, A LOYAL ORANGEMAN  
JUST COME ACROSS THE SEA  
FOR SINGIN' AND FOR DANCIN'  
I'M SURE THAT I'LL PLEASE THEE.  
I'LL SING AND DANCE WITH ANY MAN  
AS I DID IN DAYS OF YORE  
AND ON THE TWELFTH I'LL PROUDLY WEAR  
THE SASH MY FATHER WORE. . .

SINGER & PATRONS SURE IT'S OLD, BUT IT IS BEAUTIFUL  
AND ITS COLOURS THEY ARE FINE  
IT WAS WORN AT DERRY, AUGHRIM,  
ENNISKILLEN AND THE BOYNE  
MY FATHER WORE IT WHEN A YOUTH  
IN BY-GONE DAYS OF YORE  
AND ON THE TWELFTH I'LL PROUDLY WEAR  
THE SASH MY FATHER WORE!

Singer bows to applause and exits as Comic takes the stage.

COMIC Hae's 'bout ya? Terrible nice to be here this evenin'! And speaking of terrible, have you heard this one?. . .

"There was this Catholic fellow on his way to work. . . "

"There was this Catholic brain surgeon. . . "

Say. do you know why the Irish Catholic are like bananas?  
Because they're born green, live as a bunch and then turn yellow.

An I.R.A. prisoner tunnels his way out of his cell and comes up in  
a school playground. "I'm free!" he cries, "I'm free!"  
A wee girl steps up and says, "So what? I'm four!"

How many Irish does it take to change a lightbulb?  
Doesn't matter -- they never pay their electric bills.

Blackout.

Donald and Catherine enter, applauding.

DONALD           Wasn't that just great, Catherine?

CATHERINE       Sure was, Donald.

DONALD           *(To Audience.)* When almost a third of the people are out of work and livin' on welfare, you can forget your troubles at pubs with your drink.

CATHERINE       Or with tranquilizers. Ulster's housewives consume more Valium than anywhere else in the United Kingdom.

DONALD           But d'you know something else what helps? Seein' that other folks got problems too.

CATHERINE       Like on the telly.

DONALD           And the most popular TV shows?

CATHERINE       The evening soap operas from America, of course.

DONALD           "Dallas", "Dynasty."

CATHERINE       Ach, the problems those poor rich folk get into in a week!

DONALD           So, in the tradition of Alexis and Blake, J.R. and Sue Ann – we present "Family Matters." Only these families aren't near so rich.

CATHERINE       Remember the social workers -- Elizabeth and Seamus? Well, they've got kids, you know. Catholics first, Protestants after. . .

They exit as lights shift.

## **Scene Eight**

Night. Sheila enters and anxiously looks about.

SHEILA           *(An urgent whisper.)* David? David! *(Out of the darkness, a voice. )*

DAVID                    Shut up, Sheila.

SHEILA                  David? Where are you?

DAVID                    Leave me alone.

SHEILA                  Supper's ready.

DAVID                    I'm not hungry.

SHEILA                  Father won't come home till late.

DAVID                    *(Rising from his place.)* I'm still not hungry.

SHEILA                  He asked after you.

DAVID                    Oh, did he now? Well, isn't he a thoughtful son of a . . . *(Sheila slaps him across the face.)*

SHEILA                  I'm sorry.

DAVID                    Don't be. It's a waste of energy.

SHEILA                  I can't help it, David, I am. Lately, there's just no talking to you. I don't know what you're thinking anymore; what you do all the day and night. I'm worried, David. And so is Father.

DAVID                    If he's so worried over me then why is he always spending his time with that bloody Protestant hag?!

SHEILA                  They work together! *(An snort of disgust from David.)* And he's in love with her, yes. David, you'd best face it -- they're going to be married.

DAVID                    *(Softly, threateningly.)* Oh, are they now?

SHEILA                  Can't you try to be glad for him. David? Nearly twenty year he's been without a wife.

DAVID                    And whose fault is that? Have you forgotten how our mother was killed? And who did it?

SHEILA                  And have you forgotten why she took part in the demonstrations? Because she was working for a way everyone could live together! And

our Father's been trying to do that too. Maybe if you -- if we -- had been old enough to ever know Mother, we'd understand better.

DAVID My God, Sheila, you're a stupid cow! Our Mother was part of the I.R.A.

SHEILA So what if she was? It was different then.

DAVID It was not as different as you'd like to think.

*He exits. Sheila stands and watches him go. She turns and exits opposite. From the house, and offstage argument – speeches shouted simultaneously.*

ELI ZABETH Alice! Alice, listen to me!

MARY Give her a chance!

ALICE Whore! You make me sick!

ELIZABETH How dare you. . . !

PATRICIA *(Crying.)* Mama! Mama!

ELIZABETH Alice! Come back here! Alice!

*Alice enters with great anger. Mary and Patricia enter soon after.*

MARY Alice, that was very cruel! How could you say things like that?

ALICE 'T'were easy! And I'd say as much again!

PATRICIA Mama's real upset.

MARY So am I.

PATRICIA If Mama marries that man, does that mean we'll be Irish too?

MARY No, Patricia.

ALICE I'll tell you what we'll be. Nothing. Our friends will all turn their backs on us.

MARY If that happens, then they weren't worth having as friends in the first place!

ALICE Oh, Mary, don't be stupid! Would you be friends with someone whose mother married a Mick?

PATRICIA *(Starting to cry.)* We could try.

ALICE And you could try to jump over the moon. Your friends'll call you "Fenian-lover" and the Fenians -- well, they already hate us all.

MARY No, they don't! He doesn't!

ELIZABETH *(Calling from offstage.)* Patricia? Mary? Alice? Girls?

MARY Run along, Patricia. Dry your eyes so Mama doesn't see.

PATRICIA Will you be comin'?

MARY Right after. *(Mary silently stares at Alice. Alice looks.)*

ALICE Don't go looking that way at me. It's Mother who deserves it. You know what she's doin' is wrong.

MARY No, Alice. I don't know that. And neither do you!

*Elizabeth appears, with Patricia at her side.*

ELIZABETH Girls? Please come inside. *(Mary takes a step, but Alice doesn't budge.)* Seamus has gone home. I think it's time we all of us had a long talk, don't you? *(A pause.)* Please?

*Lights fade as they enter the house. Children assemble.*

## Scene 9

*Continuous with the preceding.*

BREDE Well, now -- soap operas are all well and good, but there's more to life than that. We've got our sports, haven't we?

SEAN Sure: stone-throwing. . . .

DONALD                   Or dropping bricks off buildings and onto people -- that's breeze-blocking.

BREDE                   No! I mean organized sports. Like football. . . (To Audience.) . . . soccer, to you.

SEAN                     Hurley -- an Irish game. . .

DONALD                   Cricket. . . definitely for the Protestants, since it's British.

*Linda has entered with a portable tape deck and turns on some "Chieftains" music.*

AUDREY                 One activity we can all agree upon is dancing.

LINDA                  Aye -- dancin' to good music! That's universal the world over!

*The Children all dance -- a traditional Irish jig. Suddenly, Alice enters, turns the music off and replaces it with the contemporary music of "U2" Many of the Children continue dancing the jig to the modern music. Suddenly, the crashing din of bin-lids from offstage and the stage quickly clears as Soldiers in riot gear enter and find nobody. They exit. Audrey enters and looks after them, heaving a sigh.*

AUDREY                 Oh, those soldiers! They may be stupid, but. . . well, there's something about a man in uniform. Before you know it, you can fall in love. . . .

*Lights fade to Blackout.*

## Scene 10

*In the Blackout, the ringing of a telephone, as heard through the receiver of the person placing the call. Lights quickly rise to reveal Sarah with the telephone receiver at her ear.*

SARAH                  Charles?! Charles, is that. . .? Oh. Private Ellis, please. Second Battalion. Yes, please. Yes, I'll wait. Thank you. (She breathes a sigh and reaches down to touch her stomach. By this we may understand that she is pregnant, although it doesn't yet show. ) Charles?! Yes, Charles, it's me! Sarah! Yes! No, I'm not in Liverpool; I'm in Belfast still. Yes. What? Charles, could you speak a little louder? I'm afraid the connection's bad. What? No, it's not an emergency. I only thought maybe you'd been trying to reach me and. . . I understand. But you've been gone two months now and I haven't heard. . . Of course. I understand you're busy. Well, when do you come back to Belfast, do you know? Well, can you find out?

SARAH

I miss you, that's why. I had no idea whether you'd gotten my letters or. . . Charles? Is something the matter? Pressure? I understand. Yes, Charles... I thought we'd made plans, Charles. (*A long pause.*) What are you saying? Charles, wait. . . (*Another pause.*) What do you mean -- "interracial problem?" What has that got to do with us? I am not Irish! I'm as British as you, Charles Ellis! The only difference between you and me is the way we speak! We're both Church of England, we've the same... Well, if, I'm a "second-class citizen" in Britain, then we'll just live here. Or we could emigrate to the States, or Canada -- I don't care, anywhere. What does it matter? (*Another pause.*) I'm not upset! I understand. Wait. Charles. . . before you ring off. . . I think you ought to know, Charles, that I'm. . . Will you just listen to me?! Damn you, you owe me that much! You owe me! (*A pause.*) "You don't. . . owe me. . . a thing." I understand. Yes, it must be hard to be shipped about, stationed here and there; I never thought of it that way. Well, I'm glad we had a chance to have some good times too, Charles. Where? South Africa? How nice for you. No, I don't imagine it's all light and nice down there either, no. Problems everywhere, yes. Well, sorry if I troubled you. Well, that's kind of you to say so. Drop me a postcard? Alright. "Cheerio" to you too. (*She hangs up. After a pause.*) Damn Catholics! If they'd only kept still, the bloody British army wouldn't be here in the first place. Catholics. . . they're to blame. . . (*She strokes her belly, looking down.*) . . . isn't that right, Charlene?

Lights fade to blackout.

## Scene 11

The pub.

COMIC

Mrs. Mulligan was overjoyed upon receiving the letter from her son, who'd emigrated to London. "He got himself the best job in the world!" she boasted to the priest. "The lad's working in a crematorium, burning Englishmen, and getting paid for it!"

Have you all seen the Irish Rubik's cube? It's completely green and has no movable segments.

A true and loyal Orangeman, lying on his deathbed, tells his wife to fetch a priest, for he wants to convert. The woman weeps and wails, "Why? Why become Catholic now?" And the fellow replies, "Better one of them dies than one of us."

Speakin' o' death, I'd better quit while I'm ahead. How's about a nice wee song?

Singer enters to applause.

SINGER

'TIS THE LAST ROSE OF SUMMER  
LEFT BLOOMIN' ALL ALONE  
ALL HER LOVELY COMPANIONS  
ARE FADED AND GONE  
NO FLOWER OF HER KINDRED  
NO ROSEBUD IS NIGH  
TO REFLECT BACK HER BLUSHES  
OR GIVE SIGH FOR SIGH.

SO SOON MAY I FOLLOW  
WHEN FRIENDSHIPS DECAY  
AND FROM LOVE'S SHINING CIRCLE  
THE GEMS DROP AWAY  
WHEN TRUE HEARTS LIE WITHERED  
AND FOND ONES ARE FLOWN  
OH, WHO WOULD INHABIT  
THIS BLEAK WORLD ALONE?

Lights fade to Blackout.