FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

CALVARY

BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY
Written by
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INT. CONFESSIONAL - DAY

FATHER JAMES LAVELLE, fifties, is idly reading *Moby Dick*. Dressed in an old-fashioned black soutane. He hears someone enter the confessional. Marks his page. Waits --

MAN’S VOICE (O.S.)
I first tasted semen when I was seven years old.

HOLD CLOSE on LAVELLE.

MAN’S VOICE (O.S.)
Nothing to say?

LAVELLE
It’s certainly a startling opening line.

MAN’S VOICE (O.S.)
What is that, irony?

LAVELLE
I’m sorry, let’s start again. Are you...What do you...What do you want to say to me? I’m here to listen to whatever you have to say.

MAN’S VOICE (O.S.)
I was raped by a priest when I was seven years old. Orally and anally, as they say in the court reports. This went on for five years. Every other day for five years. I bled a lot, as you can imagine. I bled a terrible amount.

LAVELLE
(after a pause) Have you spoken to anyone about--

MAN’S VOICE (O.S.)
I’m speaking to you now.

LAVELLE
I mean, have you sought professional help?

MAN’S VOICE (O.S.)
Why, so I could learn how to cope? So I could learn how to live with it? Maybe I don’t want to cope. Maybe I don’t want to learn how to live with it.

LAVELLE
Why don’t you make a formal complaint? You can testify--

(CONTINUED)
MAN’S VOICE (O.S.)
The man’s dead.

There is silence for a moment.

LAVELLE
I don’t know what to say to you.
I have no answer for you, I’m sorry.

MAN’S VOICE (O.S.)
What good would it do anyway, if he
were still alive? What’d be the point
in killing the bastard? That’d be no
news. There’s no point in killing a
bad priest. But killing a good one?
That’d be a shock, now. They wouldn’t
know what to make of that.

(pause)
I’m going to kill you, Father.
I’m going to kill you ‘cause you’ve
done nothing wrong. I’m going to kill
you ‘cause you’re innocent.

(pause)
Not right now, though. I’ll give you
enough time to put your house in order.
Make your peace with God. Sunday week,
let’s say. I’ll meet you down on the
beach there. Down by the water there.

(with a laugh)
Killing a priest on a Sunday.
That’ll be a good one.

(pause)
Do you not have anything to say to
me, Father?

LAVELLE
Not right now, no. But I’m sure I’ll
think of something. By Sunday week.

There is a pause. Then the MAN laughs. The confessional
door is heard opening and closing. LAVELLE waits.

INT. CHURCH — DAY

LAVELLE emerges from the confessional. Looks around --
The church is empty. He stands alone.

INT. OPENING TITLES — PHOTOS — DAY

Sepia, b/w, colour photographs, from the ‘20s to the ‘90s,
of children with priests.

INT. OPENING TITLES — CHURCH — DAY

LAVELLE and his altar boy, MICHEÁL O’SULLIVAN, serving
Communion to his PARISHIONERS.

(CONTINUED)
Some of whom -- MILO HERLIHY, GERALD RYAN, SIMON ASAMOAH, JACK BRENNAN and VERONICA BRENNAN -- we will encounter in due course.

LAVELLE
Body of Christ.

VERONICA
Amen.

She receives the Eucharist. She is wearing shades to cover a black eye. LAVELLE moves on to the next PARISHIONER.

EXT. OPENING TITLES - EASKEY, CO. SLIGO - DAY

The town’s main street. Houses brightly-painted as in a Jacques Demy film. A GRUMPY BASTARD zips by in a wheelchair.

A young priest dressed in a black clerical suit -- FATHER TIMOTHY LEARY -- exits the village store with the Sunday newspapers.

EXT. OPENING TITLES - O’DOWD CASTLE - DAY

TOURISTS exploring the picturesque castle, a thirteenth-century structure overlooking the shoreline.

EXT. OPENING TITLES - EASKEY BEACH - DAY

One of the finest surfing destinations in the world, renowned for its two reef breaks.

SURFERS riding a massive wave that eventually comes crashing down.

EXT. OPENING TITLES - CHURCH - DAY

A large wooden church on a hill. The PARISHIONERS exit. OPENING TITLES end.

INT. SACRISTY - DAY

TITLE -- “Sunday”.

LAVELLE and MICHEÁL enter. MICHEÁL slouching.

LAVELLE
A little too much wine in the chalice again, there, Micheál.

MICHEÁL
Sorry, Father.

LAVELLE
(taking off his chasuble)
I’m wondering is this some kind of ploy on your behalf.

(CONTINUED)
MICHEÁL
A ploy, Father?

LAVELLE
(untying his cincture)
A ploy, Micheál. I’ve noticed my
stocks of booze appear to be
somewhat diminished of late.
I’m wondering is this some kind of
ploy you’re working to cover up
for the wine you’ve been imbibing
on the q.t.

MICHEÁL
I have no idea what you are talking
about.

LAVELLE removes his stole. Studying MICHEÁL all the while.

MICHEÁL
Father Leary noticed nothing amiss.

LAVELLE
Father Leary does not know you as
well as I do, Micheál. I’d say he
may well underestimate the depths
of your Machiavellian chicanery.

MICHEÁL
Can I go now, Father?

LAVELLE
What’s the hurry? Have they called
a meeting at Mafia Headquarters?

They look blankly at one another.

LAVELLE
On your way.

INT. RECTORY (KITCHEN) - DAY

FATHER LEARY is pouring the tea. LAVELLE reading the
Sunday newspapers.

LEARY
The things you hear in confession
these days, it’s depressing.

LAVELLE
You have to detach yourself from
it. We’re here to provide solace.
Your personal feelings don’t come
into it.

(CONTINUED)
LEARY
I know that. What d’you take me for? It’s very difficult, though. The mess people make of their lives.

LAVELLE
What’s the problem? Without going into details, obviously.

LEARY
Your one with the big black eye on her, have you seen her?

LAVELLE
Veronica Brennan. I have, yeah.

LEARY
She’s an odd one. The things she comes out with. It’s like she’s trying to drag you down into the muck. D’you know what felching is?

LAVELLE
I do know what felching is, yeah.

LEARY
I had to look it up.

LAVELLE
This is you not going into details is it?

LEARY
Oh sorry. Anyway, whatever’s going on with her it’s obviously all gotten out of hand and she’s being knocked around now.

LAVELLE
Well if you speak to her she’ll raise holy hell and say it was on the basis of something she said to you in the confessional.

LEARY
I know, I know. We can’t have that. She’ll get me excommunicated, the cow.

LAVELLE
I’ll have a word with her. Jack as well. Part of my pastoral duties and what-have-you, nothing to do with her confession or anything. See what’s going on.

LEARY
And that coloured fella, the Ugandan? He’s one of her lovers, I think.

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE
Simon’s from the Ivory Coast.

LEARY
Right, right. I knew it was that, or Guyana. One of those African countries.

LAVELLE
Guyana is in South America.

LEARY
I don’t think so, now, Father. I was always pretty good at the auld geography.

LAVELLE glances at him. Sips his tea.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

CLOSE on the skirts of LAVELLE’s black soutane as he walks across the sandy beach. He pauses at the water’s edge and looks out.
CLOSE on a picture -- a fair representation in charcoal of the beach scene, but with the addition of two black figures in a corner of the paper.

REVERSE-SHOT -- LAVELLE looking over MICHEÁL’s shoulder, impressed. MICHEÁL ignoring him as he scratches away.

LAVELLE
Not bad. Surprisingly.
I was expecting a daub.

MICHEÁL
I was thinking, though, Father,
what if I was no good at all?

LAVELLE
How do you mean?

MICHEÁL
I mean, what if there’s something you really want to do, or something you really want to be, but you’re no good at it at all?

LAVELLE
That’s most people’s lives, Micheál.
Sadly.

He looks up at the beach. Looks back at the picture.
LAVALLE
Who are those two lads supposed to be?

MICHEÁL
Don’t know. I've been reading these ghost stories. Maybe it’s got something to do with that. Spooky.

LAVALLE looks at MICHEÁL. Pats him on the head.

INT. LAVALLE’S ROOM - NIGHT

LAVALLE enters, turning on the light, closing the door. The room is spare --

Wooden bed, where his Golden Retriever, Bruno, is sleeping. Grey wool blankets.

Whitewashed walls without adornment, save for a crucifix. Cupboard. Writing desk with a large white seashell. Two chairs, one at the desk, one beside the bed.

He tosses Moby Dick onto the bed. Bruno yawns. He sits on the chair beside the bed. Thinks.

Removes one of his black leather Oxfords. Then the other. Pauses, the second shoe still in his hand. Thinking.

Puts down the shoe beside its comrade. Gets up and goes to the desk. Takes off his clerical collar. Pauses.

He looks out the window over the writing desk.

EXT. SLIGO CATHEDRAL - DAY

TITLE -- “Monday”.

The cathedral is an imposing structure. A handsome modern edifice, with a massive tower.

INT. BISHOP’S OFFICE - DAY

BISHOP GARRET MONTGOMERY is eating a large cream scone the size of a baby’s head. A silver tea-set in front of him. His office opulently furnished and decorated.

MONTGOMERY
So do you know who it was?

REVERSE SHOT -- LAVALLE seated opposite. Bereft of tea.

LAVALLE
Yes, Your Excellency.
I know who it was.

MONTGOMERY
Do you know him well?

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE
Well enough.

MONTGOMERY
Knowing this man as you do, do you think it was an idle threat?

LAVELLE
I don’t know. I’m not sure.

MONTGOMERY
“Not sure” means it’s possible.

LAVELLE
Yes. I suppose.

MONTGOMERY puts down the scone. Licks his fingers.

MONTGOMERY
You didn’t grant him absolution, obviously.

LAVELLE
He didn’t ask for it.

MONTGOMERY
Well there you have it. The man is not penitent. There is no contrition. He’s threatening to commit a crime, not asking for forgiveness for one. The inviolability of the sacramental seal does not apply.

LAVELLE
You’re saying I should go to the police?

MONTGOMERY
I’m not saying anything. The choice is yours.

EXT. SLIGO TRAIN STATION (PLATFORM) – DAY

A train exits the station to reveal FIONA LAVELLE. Thirty, attractive, her wrists bandaged. A suitcase at her feet. [Note: she has an English accent.]

LAVELLE appears.

LAVELLE
Don’t tell me. You made the classic error.

FIONA
You’re supposed to cut down, not across.
LAVERLE
(after a pause)
I don’t know what else to say.

They look blankly at one another. LAVERLE opens his arms. FIONA stands up. They embrace.

EXT. SLIGO TRAIN STATION - DAY

CLOSE on a little red convertible sports car. Bruno in the passenger seat. He barks.

REVERSE SHOT -- FIONA and LAVERLE looking at the car.

LAVERLE
Always wanted a fast car. A red one.

FIONA
I thought you’d already had your mid-life crisis.

LAVERLE shoots her a glance.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

The sports car crests a hill and zips by, LAVERLE at the wheel, FIONA beside him, Bruno in the middle.

EXT. SPORTS CAR - DAY

LAVERLE accelerating ever faster, Bruno barking, FIONA throwing her arms up in delight.

EXT. LYNCH’S BAR - DAY

Bruno sitting calmly in the car.

INT. LYNCH’S BAR - DAY

MILO HERLIHY, twenties, polka-dotted bow-tie, an oddly blank look about him. FRANK HARTE, a good-looking older man with a clinical air. Guinesses in front of them.

HERLIHY
You’re a very nice-looking young woman.

REVERSE SHOT -- FIONA and LAVERLE waiting for their drinks. FIONA laughs, glancing at LAVERLE, who smiles.

FIONA
Thank you. I like your bow-tie.

HERLIHY
It’s got polka-dots.

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE
This is my daughter, Fiona, Milo. She’s over from London.

HERLIHY
You’re having me on.

LAVELLE
I’m not having you on. What are you on about?

HERLIHY
You’re a priest!

LAVELLE
I was married before I became a priest. My wife and I had a child, Fiona. My wife died. And after that I joined the priesthood.

HERLIHY
You can do that, can you?

HARTE
It would appear so. (noticing FIONA’s bandages) Don’t tell me. You made the classic error.

LAVELLE
I’ve already done that gag, Frank.

HARTE
You’re supposed to cut down--

LAVELLE
I’ve already done it, I said.

LYNCH (O.S.)
Now, now.

BRENDAN LYNCH appears with a Coca-Cola bottle and glass, and a double whiskey. Forty, handsome. Hands the Coke to LAVELLE, the whiskey to FIONA --

LYNCH
A drop of the hard stuff for yourself, and a generous serving of the auld water of life to this beautiful and yet troubled--

FIONA
Oh fuck off.

LYNCH looks blankly at FIONA. She takes a sip of the whiskey as she moves towards a table. LAVELLE following.

(CONTINUED)
LYNCH
You have an exceedingly dirty mouth. I like that in a hoor.

LAVALLE
Brendan. Now’s not the time.

LYNCH looks from FIONA to LAVALLE.

LYNCH
Whatever you say, Father. You’re the boss.

INT. LYNCH’S BAR – LATER

LAVALLE and FIONA in a little nook. FIONA drinks her whiskey. LAVALLE pushes his Coke bottle around.

FIONA
How’s that working out for you?

LAVALLE
Oh I haven’t been out on the tear in a good while.

FIONA
So you say.

LAVALLE
Ah no, I’ve been a very good lad. And don’t change the subject.

FIONA
What was the subject?

LAVALLE
You know what the subject was.

FIONA
Oh Daddy, a man, a man. What else.

LAVALLE
It’s getting to be a habit, honey.

FIONA
I know. Pathetic. Can’t do anything right.

She sips her whiskey. LAVALLE takes one of her hands. Rubs the bandage with a thumb.

LAVALLE
“Razors pain you.”

FIONA
(looking at him)
“Rivers are damp.”

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE
“Acids stain you. And drugs cause cramp.”

FIONA
“Guns aren’t lawful. Nooses give.”

LAVELLE
“Gas smells awful.”

FIONA/LAVELLE
“You might as well live.”

They smile.

LYNCH studies them from the other end of the bar.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY
CLOSE on various angles of the church’s architecture -- windows, steeple, etc. -- emphasising its simple, unpretentious nature.

FIONA (O.S.)
Back-to-basics, is what you’re saying.

LAVELLE (O.S.)
Simplicity. Lack of ostentation. That kind of thing.

LEARY (O.S.)
All your father’s idea. His baby.

LAVELLE, FIONA and LEARY are standing to the front and sides of the church. LEARY carrying a box of toys.

LEARY
We couldn’t go on with the old one anyways. Falling to pieces. Liable to get someone killed.

FIONA
It’s a good gimmick, I suppose.

LAVELLE
It’s not a gimmick.

FIONA
I’m sorry, I didn’t mean...

LEARY
They’d call it a rebranding in the advertising world.

(Continued)
FIONA
I suppose you are a corporate entity,
if you look at it in one way.

LEARY
It’s the only way to look at it.
We provide a product and a service
and that’s all there is to it.

He strolls away. FIONA smiles wryly. LAVELLE gives a shake of the head. Glances up proudly at the church.

EXT. BRENNANS’ HOUSE - DAY

VERONICA BRENNAN, thirties, wearing shades, pegging up the linen. White sheets fluttering in the wind. She looks up --

LAVELLE at the other side of the line. His black soutane fluttering in the wind.

LAVELLE
Nice shades.

VERONICA
Do they make me look like Jackie O?

LAVELLE
Not really, no.

VERONICA smiles. Raises the glasses up on her forehead.

VERONICA
This what you came to gawp at?
Nasty, hah?

LAVELLE
It’s an interesting colour.

VERONICA lowers the shades and continues with the laundry.

VERONICA
They say you can find beauty in everything, if you look hard enough.

LAVELLE
I’d say you can find beauty in most things, but not everything.
That’s nonsense.

VERONICA
Sure what would I know? I’m just an auld washerwoman.

The washing that she’s hanging on the line now seems to be comprised solely of items of lingerie.

VERONICA
See anything you fancy?

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE
If you don’t want to talk to me, that’s fine. I’m not here to compel you to do anything.

VERONICA
You never know, Father, maybe I’d like to be compelled. Maybe I’d enjoy it.

LAVELLE
I’ll have a word with Jack. See what he has to say for himself.

VERONICA
The Grand Inquisitor, hah? Go on ahead for yourself so. I’m sure he’ll be only too pleased to have someone else to bore the ears off. I stopped listening to his auld shite a long time ago.

LAVELLE
That’s how it is, is it? I didn’t realise.

VERONICA
You thought we were another Grace Kelly and Prince Rainier?

LAVELLE
That wasn’t a very happy marriage, so it’s not a great analogy.

VERONICA looks at him. Laughs.

VERONICA
Y’know that’s what I’ve always liked about you, Father. You’re just a little too sharp for this parish.

INT. BRENNAN’S BUTCHERS - DAY
A meat cleaver comes down hard on a rack of ribs. JACK BRENNAN, forty, in a bloody apron, chopping up the meat.

BRENNAN
(to his ASSISTANT)
--Mad fella altogether. Decapitated the two of them. Blood all over the place there was.

He chuckles and looks up --

LAVELLE has entered.

BRENNAN
Father.

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE
Jack.
(glancing at the ASSISTANT, who is serving a CUSTOMER)
Could I have a word in private?

BRENNAN
(nervous laugh)
Sounds ominous. Where’s Johnny Cochran when you need him, hah?

INT. MEAT FREEZER - DAY
Carcasses of pigs, and sides of beef, hanging from hooks. The icy breath of LAVELLE and BRENNAN floating between them as they converse --

BRENNAN
(giggling)
Hope we don’t get locked in. We’ll have to make love to keep warm.

LAVELLE
I had a word, there, with Veronica, Jack.

BRENNAN
You were over to the house? Is everything alright?

LAVELLE
Everything’s fine. I mean, no, it’s not fine. Mass on Sunday, with the shades and everything--

BRENNAN
Oh that.

LAVELLE
Yes, that. Have you been laying into her or what’s going on?

BRENNAN
Ah that wasn’t me, now. That was that black fella she’s been seeing. Coloured fella, I mean, sorry. Didn’t mean to be racist, slip of the tongue.

LAVELLE
You’re saying he beats her up?

BRENNAN
Well don’t quote me on it. I mean, that’s what I’m assuming, like. She talks in riddles half the time, I can’t get any sense out of her.

(CONTINUED)
BRENNAN (CONT'D)
I think she’s bi-polar, or lactose-intolerant, one of the two. I never know where I am with her anymore. I’m glad to have her off my hands, to be honest with ya.

LAVELLE
Even if this new fella’s knocking her about?

BRENNAN
Sure what’s that got to do with me? Not everyone can carry the weight of the world, Father.

LAVELLE
What about your marriage? The oaths you took?

BRENNAN
(with a laugh)
The oaths I took!

He sees the look LAVELLE gives him and stops laughing.

BRENNAN
Listen, Father, she’s been a lot happier since she’s been seeing him, a lot calmer and more settled down, like. I’m not under surveillance any more either, I can reel in home whatever time I like. So everybody’s happy. Now where’s the harm?

LAVELLE looks blankly at him.

BRENNAN
Will I cut you a nice side of beef to be taking home with you, Father? Freshly slaughtered.

EXT. GARAGE – DAY

Boots sticking out from underneath a car. The skirts of LAVELLE’s soutane appear. He nudges a boot with his shoe.

SIMON ASAMOAH glides out on a car trolley.

LAVELLE
Simon.

ASAMOAH
Hello, Father. (getting up, wiping his hands on a rag) I am rather busy today--

((CONTINUED)
It’s not about my car. It’s about Mrs Brennan.

ASAMOAH reaches for a Coca-Cola bottle and takes a swallow.

LAVELLE
You’re her boyfriend?

ASAMOAH
I fuck her from time to time. Does that make me her boyfriend?

LAVELLE
It does around here.

ASAMOAH
She has a lot of boyfriends, I have heard.

LAVELLE
Is that right?

ASAMOAH
Do you want me to confess to adultery? Is that why you are here?

LAVELLE
Somebody beat her up.

ASAMOAH
She told you I beat her up?

LAVELLE
No, she didn’t.

ASAMOAH
Then why are you here?

LAVELLE
Somebody beat her up. It’s either you or the husband.

ASAMOAH
I do not think Jack beat her up. He is not the type.

LAVELLE
What is the type?

ASAMOAH takes a pack of cigarettes from his pocket and lights one, looking out over the garage forecourt.

ASAMOAH
Some of them like to be hit, you know.

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE

Who?

ASAMOAH
White women. Irish women. Do not ask me why. You would have to be a psychiatrist--

LAVELLE
Ah that's nonsense. A justification for your own brutality.

ASAMOAH
No, no, they like to be hit. In certain...situations. They beg for it, in fact.

LAVELLE
So she got what was coming to her, did she?

ASAMOAH
I was speaking generally.

LAVELLE
Oh you were speaking generally. Well I'm speaking specifically. Don't do it again.

ASAMOAH
You cannot tell me what to do. We are not in the Missions now.

LAVELLE
Oh the Missions, right--

ASAMOAH
Are you going to chop off my hand if I disobey you?

LAVELLE
You know your history, that's grand.

ASAMOAH
I like to read. You probably do not think that black people--

LAVELLE
Yeah, yeah, yeah, black people, white people, blah, blah, blah.

ASAMOAH looks at him. Flicks his cigarette at him. LAVELLE flinches, taken aback.

ASAMOAH
Run along now, Father, your sermon is finished.

(CONTINUED)
He slides back under the car. LAVELLE exits.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

LEARY is preparing the altar. LAVELLE glancing through the large Bible set for Mass.

LEARY
You’d better watch your step there.

LAVELLE
Why is that?

LEARY
If it was him who was laying into her. You’ll have to tread very carefully there. It’s a very sensitive area.

LAVELLE
You'll have to explain this one to me, now, Father, I'm afraid you've lost me completely.

LEARY
Well the Church can’t be seen to be getting involved in matters of diversity and the like, d’you know.

LAVELLE
You mean, like, what if beating her up is one of those ethnic rituals or something? Like when they do that thing when they shake hands?

LEARY
(after a pause)
You're mocking me, now, I can tell.

LAVELLE looks blankly at LEARY.

LEARY
We have to be very circumspect in those areas, is all I’m saying.

LAVELLE
I’ll be very circumspect, Father. Don’t you worry about that.

INT. COTTAGE - DAY

An older man -- GERALD RYAN -- is leaning back in a chair, deep in thought, a shillelagh between his legs.

An American, slightly bohemian, he wears an old brown corduroy suit, blue shirt, black boots. Music playing on an old record player.
He leans forwards over an old manual typewriter. A stack of manuscript pages next to it. Examines the paragraph he has just written. Pauses. The sound of an outboard motor can be heard.

He gets up, using the shillelagh, and goes to a pair of large wooden shutters. Opens them to reveal --

LAVELLE upon a stretch of water in an old white wooden speedboat propelled by an outboard motor.

EXT. SPEEDBOAT - DAY

LAVELLE is at the stern, a box of provisions beside him --

LAVELLE’s POV -- the prow of the boat, the island. RYAN framed in the window of the monastic cottage.

LAVELLE waves.

EXT. COTTAGE - DAY

RYAN does not return the wave. Disappears from the window.

EXT. INISHMURRAY ISLAND - DAY

LAVELLE navigates the speedboat to the shoreline of the island, situated four miles off the coast of Sligo.

He drags the boat onto the shore, next to an old currach. Hefts the box and tramps up the path to the stone cottage.

INT. COTTAGE - DAY

RYAN has returned to his seat at the typewriter. LAVELLE appears at the door.

LAVELLE
How is all?

RYAN
At death’s door. You?

LAVELLE
The same. Still using the old typewriter, I see. Bit of an affectation.

RYAN
My whole life has been an affectation.

LAVELLE
That’s one of those lines that sounds witty but doesn’t actually make much sense.

RYAN
Caught out again!

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE crosses to the kitchen table and deposits the box.

LAVELLE
How’s the latest masterpiece coming?

RYAN gets up, struggling with the shillelagh.

RYAN
Better than Cecelia Ahern, but not as good as Banville.

LAVELLE
Sure you could say that about everybody.

RYAN
What you got for me?

LAVELLE unloads the provisions -- sushi, Maker’s Mark bourbon, Green & Black’s organic chocolate --

RYAN
Ah, the staff of life.

-- and two books: a paperback, Jernigan, by David Gates, and a hardcover, HHhH, by Laurent Binet.

RYAN smells the hardcover and handles it reverently.

LAVELLE
Need anything else?

RYAN
A gun.

LAVELLE
Hah?

RYAN
A Walther PPK oughtta do it. James Bond’s weapon of choice. Old Adolf killed himself with one in the bunker.

LAVELLE
That’s the plan is it?

RYAN
I’ve no intention of writhing around in agony for hours on end when the time comes. Or not knowing who I am or where I am. I ain’t going out like that, as the young folks would have it.

LAVELLE
Romantic nonsense.

(CONTINUED)
RYAN
Pragmatism.

LA VELLE
Where would I get a gun from?

RYAN
Aww come on, now, gimme a break. You’ve never been short of guns in this country, have you?

LA VELLE
God, you’re awful maudlin today, I must say.

RYAN laughs, pops a piece of the chocolate into his mouth.

INT. LA VELLE’S ROOM - DAY

LA VELLE is at his desk, reading *Moby Dick*. Bruno asleep on the bed. There is a knock at the door.

FIONA pops her head in, then enters, closing the door behind her and leaning against it. She glances around.

FIONA
You don’t have any photos.

LA VELLE
No. I’m in agreement with the Apaches on that score.

FIONA
The Apaches?

LA VELLE
The Apaches. The Arapaho.

FIONA
The Hunkpapa Sioux!

She laughs. LA VELLE smiles.

FIONA
Not even one of Mum?

LA VELLE
I don’t need a photograph to remember your mother.

FIONA
Memories fade, though. That’s what’s so terrible about them.

LA VELLE
No they don’t. Not really.
LAVELLE and FIONA are walking briskly up the incline of the road, Bruno running on in front of them.

FIONA
I should buy a cane.

LAVELLE
It’d suit you. You’re old beyond your years.

FIONA
Yeah. It’d give me a feeling of... imperiousness.

She looks at him. They laugh.

LAVELLE
And you could lean on it.

FIONA
I could lean on it. Reflectively.

LAVELLE
Point things out.

FIONA
Club someone to death with it.

LAVELLE
A blunt instrument, yeah. Who, though?

FIONA
A certain young man from Rathmines.

He glances at her. She is looking at the ground as she walks.

FIONA
Aren’t all instruments blunt?

LAVELLE
Flugelhorns?

He looks blankly at her. She laughs.

On the road ahead, MICHAEL FITZGERALD appears on a fine black thoroughbred. Handsome, suave, Forties. He turns the horse in front of LAVELLE and FIONA.

FITZGERALD
Who’s this now?

LAVELLE
This is my daughter, Fiona.
FITZGERALD
Oh right. Like a French novel or something. What’s the fella’s name? Bernanos.
(to FIONA)
Michael Fitzgerald. I bought the Big House, up the road a-ways there, beyond.

Fiona nods, unimpressed.

LAVELLE
I haven’t seen you at Mass lately.
I was wondering--

FITZGERALD
Haven’t had the time. I’m actually thinking of building a chapel on the grounds, y’know like in *Brideshead Revisited*? You could pop round then, freelance, like, save me the trouble.

They look blankly at one another. FIONA pats the horse.

FIONA
Lovely creature.

FITZGERALD
Really expensive, too. Prime horse flesh.

FIONA looks up at him. He smiles a bright flashing smile.

FITZGERALD
He’s an interesting man, your father.

FIONA
Is that right?

FITZGERALD
A good man. A fine man. No one has a bad word to say about him. Makes me wonder what he’s hiding.

FIONA
God, you’re a fucking prick--

FITZGERALD
Oh! Feisty!

LAVELLE
Fiona--

FITZGERALD
Ah I’m only codding. No offence meant, as they say. Do me a favour, though, Father, and swing by the house one afternoon.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
I have a proposition that might interest you.

LAVELLE

Really.

FITZGERALD

Yes, really. A financial proposition. That interests you, doesn’t it?
Sure it’d be a black day altogether the day the Roman Catholic Church is no longer interested in money, hah?

He laughs jovially, gives an Edward G. Robinson salute, and spurs his horse away between them.

EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

LAVELLE and FIONA are walking along the deserted beach. The waves rolling in. Bruno noses at something in the sand. They pause, look down --

Their POV -- a dead seagull, insects swarming over it.

LAVELLE squats. Extends the gull’s wingspan, examining the white feathers, curious.

FIONA

Dirty thing.

He lays it back down. Stands. Turns --

LAVELLE’s POV -- a FIGURE has appeared at the end of the beach, lending a sinister aspect to the scene.

LAVELLE strolls on, seemingly unconcerned. FIONA dallies with Bruno. After a moment, LAVELLE glances back --

LAVELLE’s POV -- the FIGURE is approaching.

LAVELLE

Let’s head back.

He quickens his pace. FIONA and Bruno catching up. After a good few strides, he glances back again --

LAVELLE’s POV -- the FIGURE has disappeared.

FIONA

What is it?

LAVELLE scans the horizon. Puzzled, but relieved.

LAVELLE

Nothing.
EXT. STANTON’S HOUSE – NIGHT

The door is opened by GERRY STANTON, a Garda Inspector. LAVELLE standing there.

LAVELLE
Inspector Stanton.

STANTON
The clergy. At this time of the night. When I could be getting up to all sorts.

INT. LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

LAVELLE enters, followed by STANTON. A young man buckling up his jeans descends the stairs. This is LEO MACARTHUR.

LEO
(talking like Leo Gorcey from The Dead End Kids)
Hey, Fada! Whaddaya hear, whaddaya say!

LAVELLE
I’m sorry, I didn’t realise you had company.

STANTON
Ah sure, it’s only little Leo.

LEO smirks as he zips up his fly.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

LEO bending over a jukebox to select a tune. LAVELLE sitting on a couch, glancing at photographs of Stanton. STANTON with a brandy balloon.

LEO
You checking out my ass, Fada?

LAVELLE
What? No--

STANTON
He’s only messing with you, Father. What can I do for you?

He sips his brandy. LAVELLE glances at LEO.
STANTON
I’ve nothing to hide from Leo.
Have I, Leo?

LEO
Your life is an open book, Gerry.
Like your ass.

Flanagan & Allen’s “Run, Rabbit, Run” begins to play. LEO dances as if he were a little rabbit. STANTON laughs.

STANTON
Is this a police matter, Father?

LAVELLE
No, it’s a personal...a personal thing.

STANTON
It’s a personal a personal thing.

LEO
You look worried, Fada. My advice? Take it on the lamaster. You don’t wanna drop in for the phonus-bolonus and wind up with a sock in the kisser. Get me?

LAVELLE looks blankly at LEO.

STANTON
He’s not in the mood, Leo.

LEO
Maybe I can cheer up the old sour-puss. I’ll show ya a good time, Fada. Good Time Leo, that’s me! Although it’ll be extra if I let ya wear the cassock. I know what you holy-rollars are like when ya get goin’! Hell’s bells!

LAVELLE looks blankly at LEO. LEO and STANTON look at each other and laugh. LEO grabs his leather jacket.

LEO
I’m oudda heah!

He tap-dances out the door.

STANTON
He’s a character, hah?
What’s troubling you, Father? You seem agitated.

LAVELLE
I need a favour.
CLOSE on a Webley Revolver, circa 1920, laid out in a beautiful velvet case.

STANTON
My great-grandfather’s. Said he took it off one of the Cairo Gang when they shot them all on Bloody Sunday. The first Bloody Sunday, obviously.

LAVELLE
Ever had call to use it?

STANTON
Yeah. I killed a man with it once. In the Wicklow mountains.

He hefts the gun, sighting along it, straight at LAVELLE.

LAVELLE
What case was that?

STANTON
Ah he was just pissing me off, like.

LAVELLE is not sure if he’s joking. STANTON hands him the gun. Passes him a carton of bullets. LAVELLE flips open the chamber. Loads it.

STANTON
Somebody been threatening you, Father? What have you been up to, now? (with a smirk) Not you as well, hah?

LAVELLE flips shut the chamber. Sights along the revolver, straight at STANTON. STANTON looks blankly at him.

STANTON
What did you say you wanted it for, Father?

LAVELLE
I didn’t say.

He replaces the revolver in the case.

STANTON
I’d say you wanted it for your dog. The dog’s dying, it’s in pain, you’re worried you might have to put it out of its misery one of these days. Isn’t that right?

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE looks round at STANTON. Understands --

LAVELLE
My dog’s dying. It’s in pain.
I’m worried I might have to put
it out of its misery one of these
days.

STANTON
An act of compassion, hah?
Well I can’t argue with that.
I’m a compassionate man meself.

EXT. STANTON’S HOUSE – NIGHT

LAVELLE and STANTON exit the house. LAVELLE carrying the

*case.

STANTON
I had one of those, y’know.
Early on.

LAVELLE
One of what?

STANTON
Paedophile priest. Twenty years ago
now this was, in Dublin. Young girl
made a complaint. A rape.

LAVELLE
What happened?

STANTON
Ah sure, what d’ya think happened?
I arrested the bastard and forty-
eight hours later I was packing my
bags and making my way out West.

LAVELLE
They moved you on?

STANTON
Reassigned, yeah.

LAVELLE gets into his car.

*LAVELLE
What happened to him?

STANTON
I was told they were sending him
to one of the missions overseas.
Africa. He could do whatever he
wanted over there, I suppose.

(CONTINUED)
Well thanks, anyway.

Like the man in the dicky bow says, Father, “Protect yourself at all times!”

LAVELLE drives off.

INT. RECTORY (FIONA’S ROOM) – DAY

FIONA awakens, wearing a man’s shirt. Sits up in bed, contemplative. Through a window, LAVELLE can be seen walking away with a fishing rod, Bruno at his side.

EXT. EASKEY RIVER – DAY

FIONA raises the hem of her skirt to her thighs and steps down into the cool clear water. Bruno watching her.

She paddles out to where LAVELLE is standing in waders, fly-fishing, the skirt of his soutane floating out over the water.

FIONA
How long you been at this craic?

LAVELLE
Last coupla years. Supposed to be therapeutic.

FIONA
Maybe I should take it up.

LAVELLE
Maybe you should.

FIONA
Have you been seeing anyone, in London?

LAVELLE
I’m assuming you mean professionally rather than--

FIONA
Ah come on now, let’s stop with all that carry-on.

There is a pause.

LAVELLE
If you can’t talk to me, you should talk to someone.

(CONTINUED)
FIONA
I suppose I should.

A further silence between them.

LEARY (O.S.) * Enjoying yourselves?!

LAVELLE and FIONA look up to see FATHER LEARY looking down on them from the nearby bridge, smoking a cigarette.

LAVELLE
We are indeed!

LEARY
Lovely day!

LAVELLE
It is indeed!

LEARY (esoterically) *
Stamps!

He looks at them a moment longer, then disappears over the bridge.

FIONA
That’s the future of the priesthood.

LAVELLE looks at her. They laugh.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

LAVELLE is distributing hymnals to all the pews. Suddenly he senses something, looks round --

MILO HERLIHY is standing there, having materialised seemingly out of nowhere.

LAVELLE
Milo.

HERLIHY
I need to speak to you, Father.

LAVELLE
Take a pew. Literally.

HIGH-ANGLE SHOT -- They sit in separate pews. A large wooden cross looms above them.

HERLIHY
Why do people kill themselves, Father?

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE
Why do people kill themselves.
That’s jumping in at the deep end. Lots of reasons, I suppose.
Why do you think yourself?

HERLIHY
I dunno. The drink. Depression.
Lack of sex, maybe.

LAVELLE
You’re a presentable young man.
I wouldn’t have thought you’d have too much trouble in that area.

HERLIHY
I don’t have the gift of the gab.
Never had it.

LAVELLE
And it’s making you feel suicidal?

HERLIHY
More bored than anything else.
It’s either committing suicide or joining the Army.

LAVELLE
Those are pretty drastic choices, either way.

HERLIHY
You can learn a trade if you join the Army.

LAVELLE
You can learn a trade if you don’t join the Army.

HERLIHY
You can experience more of life.

LAVELLE
You think you can become a more authentic person by fighting in a war? By killing people?

HERLIHY
You’re against me joining the Army, is what I’m sensing.

LAVELLE
Let’s put it this way, I’ve always felt there was something inherently psychopathic about someone who joins the Army in peacetime. As far as I’m concerned, people join the Army because they want to find out what (MORE)
it’s like to kill someone. I don’t think that is an inclination that should be encouraged in modern society, do you?

HERLIHY shrugs, non-committal.

LAVELLE
Jesus Christ didn’t think so either. And the commandment “Thou Shalt Not Kill” does not have an asterisk beside it, referring you to the bottom of the page, where there’s a list of instances where it is okay to kill people.

HERLIHY
What about self-defence?

LAVELLE
(after a pause)
Well that’s a tricky one, alright. But we’re hardly being invaded, now, are we?

HERLIHY
The War on Terror has no borders.

LAVELLE
I don’t think Sligo is too high on al-Qaida’s agenda, Milo, do you?

HERLIHY
Who knows what goes on in the Muslim mind?

(pause)
I have had murderous feelings, though, I have to admit. Not getting laid. It’s starting to make me feel really angry towards women. And so I thought, well, if I joined the Army, those inclinations as you call them would be seen as a plus. On your application, like. I mean, they don’t come right out and say that’s what they’re looking for, in the advertisements, it’s all about seeing the world and all that shite, but I would assume that wanting to murder someone would be like having a degree in engineering or something, y’know? It would outweigh my lack of qualifications.

LAVELLE
Right.

(pause)
Do you use pornography at all?
I’m assuming--

(CONTINUED)
HERLIHY
Ah, I feel I’ve exhausted all the possibilities of pornography.

LAVELLE
All of them?

HERLIHY
Well nearly all of them. I’m onto transsexual pornography at the moment.

LAVELLE looks blankly at him.

HERLIHY
Chicks with dicks, y’know?

LAVELLE looks blankly at him.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

CLOSE on HERLIHY and LAVELLE. HERLIHY putting on goggles.

LAVELLE
Maybe there’s a simpler solution. Leave home and go somewhere your chances of meeting available young women with loose morals are increased proportionately.

HERLIHY
Sligo Town, you mean?

LAVELLE
No. I was thinking more Dublin, London, New York--

HERLIHY
New York? I’d only end up getting the Aids. Knowing my luck.

PULL BACK to reveal HERLIHY is astride a motorbike.

HERLIHY
Thanks for taking the time to talk to me, Father. I can’t say it’s been of much help, but it’s good to get these things out in the open, I suppose.

He zooms off down the hill.
EXT. MANSION - DAY

A bright blue sky.

FITZGERALD (O.S.)
Pull!

Two fluorescent orange targets appear in the sky and are summarily shot to pieces --

FITZGERALD, in a corduroy three-piece suit and a red cap, standing next to a voice-activated clay pigeon trap, ejects the shells from his shotgun and quickly reloads.

FITZGERALD
Pull!

Two more targets are launched --

FITZGERALD hits both. Ejects the shells. Pauses in the act of reloading --

(CONTINUED)
FITZGERALD’s POV -- LAVELLE is standing on the crest of the path leading up to the mansion.

FITZGERALD clicks shut the shotgun.

INT. MANSION - DAY

FITZGERALD fixes himself a large whiskey.

FITZGERALD
They've all left me, you know.
That's why the place is so empty.
Like a tomb.

LAVELLE is wandering about the opulently furnished and decorated room, examining various objets d’art, a glass of sparkling water in his hand.

LAVELLE
Who’s left you?

FITZGERALD
The wife. The kids. Even Consuela, and she’s from Ecuador. You’d think she wouldn’t have a lot of options, but apparently not.

LAVELLE
Well I’m sorry to hear that.

FITZGERALD shrugs, takes a swallow of his drink.

LAVELLE
You mentioned a financial proposition?

FITZGERALD
I want to make amends. Do penance for past sins. Although I suppose all sins are past, aren’t they, or they wouldn’t be sins, they’d just be evil thoughts floating around in your mind. Why do you wear the auld soutane, by the way? Trying to make a statement or something?

LAVELLE looks blankly at him. Sips his water.

FITZGERALD smirks. Shoots back a cuff to reveal a gold Tag Heuer watch at his wrist.

FITZGERALD
This watch, now. This watch is making a statement. It’s a Tag Heuer. Really expensive.
LAVERLE
Are you going to get to the point, Mr. Fitzgerald, or are you just going to ramble on--

FITZGERALD
Let me ask you something. What do you see when you look at me?

LAVERLE looks blankly at him.

FITZGERALD
I’ll tell you what you see. You see a handsome, sophisticated, eminent man in the prime of his life. A Colossus, let’s say. A Colossus who once bestrode the world of high finance and became profoundly influential in certain spheres, not to say inordinately wealthy, not to say sickeningly wealthy, let’s face it.

(knocks back the whiskey, pours another)
Sure I can’t tempt you?

LAVERLE
I’ll stick to the water.

FITZGERALD
I heard you liked a drink.

LAVERLE
I liked it too much.

FITZGERALD
There’s no such thing as too much, there’s only not enough.

LAVERLE exits the room.

INT. GRAND HALLWAY - DAY

LAVERLE is examining a display of antique and contemporary firearms. FITZGERALD joins him.

FITZGERALD
Where was I?

LAVERLE
Talking about money, what else.

FITZGERALD
Now now.

LAVERLE
Got out in time, did you? Before it all came crashing down?

(CONTINUED)
FITZGERALD
’Twas the perfect getaway, Father. They say charges are going to be filed against me, for various so-called irregularities, but sure the Guards are always threatening guff like that. They’d have to charge half the financiers in Ireland, and half the bank managers along with them, and troop into government then and charge those cunts as well, and we all know full well that’s not going to happen. No, there’ll be no punishment forthcoming for a man such as myself. There never is. Still, I do feel a modicum of guilt about the whole thing.

LAVELLE
A modicum. Do you?

FITZGERALD
Well. I feel like I ought to feel guilty. And sure isn’t that the same thing?

INT. VESTIBULE - DAY
CLOSE on a painting -- Holbein’s The Ambassadors. LAVELLE pauses in front of it. FITZGERALD at his shoulder.

FITZGERALD
I love this one. Really expensive. Not sure what it’s supposed to mean, though.

LAVELLE
Why does it have to mean anything?

FITZGERALD
Everything has to mean something, otherwise what’s the point? Of course, I don’t have to know what it means. I own it. That’s enough.

LAVELLE
That’s all that matters? Ownership? Possession?

FITZGERALD
How much land does the Church own? How much gold?

LAVELLE
That’s the Church, that’s not me.

(CONTINUED)
Fitzgerald
But you’re a representative of the Church, are you not?

Lavelle
If you say so.

Fitzgerald
I do say so. I think you’re a very judgemental man, Father.

Lavelle
Yes, I am. But I try not to be.

Fitzgerald
You think I have no feelings? You think I don’t care about—

Lavelle
I think you don’t want to do penance at all. I think you asked me here to make fun of me. But when you do want to do penance, sincerely, you can give me a call, at any time, and I’ll try my best to help you.

He walks towards the front door.

Fitzgerald
You know, I could piss on this.

(gesturing at the painting)
I said I loved it, but I don’t. It doesn’t mean anything to me. I could take it down right now and piss on it. Do you want me to do that?

Lavelle
Why would I want you to do that?

Fitzgerald
I don’t know. So I could have some kind of spiritual revelation? Some fucking epiphany?

Lavelle
Well I don’t know, now. People like you have pissed on everything else, I suppose, so why not that, too?

Fitzgerald nods. Grins. Takes down the painting and drops it onto the floor. Looks at Lavelle as he opens his flies.

Lavelle goes out the front door.

Fitzgerald pisses on the painting.
EXT. BEACH - DAY

LAVELLE’s POV -- a MAN walks out of the sun, his image blurred, raises a gun and fires, point-blank --

EXT. SPLIT-ROCK - DAY

LAVELLE lying supine, a straw hat over his face. He jolts. Pauses. Removes the hat. Sits up and looks around.

FIONA is reading H P Lovecraft and eating an apple. The remains of a picnic close by. Bruno sleeping.

Behind them, a massive Ice Age boulder, split in two, in the middle of a field.

LAVELLE
How long was I out?

FIONA
Ages. Eons.

He nods. Glances round at the split-rock.

LAVELLE
Did I ever tell you the story of Fionn Mac Cumhaill and another big strong lad named Cicsatóin?
They were up the top--

FIONA
They were up the top of the Ox Mountains. Cicsatóin challenged Fionn to throw a boulder into the sea at Easkey, claiming he couldn’t do it. Fionn accepted the challenge. Cicsatóin's boulder landed on the Easkey shore, where it created such waves that the sea hasn't been the same since, which is why the Easkey coastline is internationally renowned for surfing. Fionn’s boulder fell short and landed here. Fionn drew his sword and split the rock in two. It’s said that should anyone be foolhardy enough to pass through the rock three times, the two halves will come together and they will be squashed into tiny little lumps. Unceremoniously.

LAVELLE
Not a lot of poetry in that recital.
Not a lot of romance.

FIONA
I’m sick to death of romance.

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE studies her as she continues to read.

LAVELLE
How’s the book?

FIONA
I am filled with cosmic horror.

LAVELLE
I know the feeling.

FIONA smiles, despite herself.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The moon shining over a monolithic hospital.

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

FRANK HARTE, who happens to be a doctor, watching LAVELLE fussing with the contents of a black Gladstone bag.

HARTE
You have your totems, I see.

LAVELLE
Who is it?

HARTE
French couple. Head on. She was totally unscathed. He got fucked.

LAVELLE
Wrong side of the road?

HARTE
Car full of young ones hit them. Drunk, of course.

LAVELLE places a stole about his neck.

LAVELLE
How many?

HARTE
Five including the Frenchman.

LAVELLE
Dear God.

HARTE
Marine biologist he was. That’s where I’d like to be. Under the sea.

LAVELLE
Where are the young ones?

(CONTINUED)
HARTE
The morgue. Best place for them.

LAVELLE
Every life is sacred, Frank, for God’s sake.

HARTE
Some are less sacred than others.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

LAURENT ROBERT lies dying, his face and body bandaged, tubes sticking out of him. TERESA, his wife, holding his hand, her mascara wet around her eyes.

LAVELLE looks at them both.

DISSOLVE through CLOSE-UPS of LAVELLE, TERESA, LAURENT.

LAVELLE
Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

DISSOLVE through CLOSE-UPS of LAVELLE’s fingers, the oil, and LAURENT’s forehead, as the anointing of the forehead takes place.

TERESA
Amen.

DISSOLVE through CLOSE-UPS of LAVELLE’s fingers, the oil, and LAURENT’s hands, as the anointing of the hands takes place.

LAVELLE
May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up.

TERESA
Amen.

INT. CHAPEL - NIGHT

CLOSE on the face of Christ. A stained-glass window. The faces of LAVELLE and TERESA.

TERESA
Have you performed the Last Rites many times?

LAVELLE
Yes. Usually with older people, of course. You have time to prepare for it. Everybody knows what’s coming.
TERESA

It is easier?

LAVELLE

It's never easy. More understandable, let's say. Less unfair.

TERESA

Unfair.

LAVELLE

Situations like this one, people are shocked. The randomness of it. They curse God. Curse their fellow man. They lose their faith, in some cases.

TERESA

They lose their faith? It must not have been much of a faith to begin with, if it is so easy for them to lose it.

LAVELLE

Yes. But what is faith, at the end of the day? For most people it's the fear of death, nothing more than that. And if that's all it is, then it's very easy to lose.

TERESA

(after a pause)

When we are children we are told to say our prayers. Our parents tell us, our teachers. Then we grow up and we think people who say their prayers are stupid. They're ridiculous. Unless we want money, of course, or a good job, or we have a child who is sick, or a lover who is dying. Then we are allowed to pray again. Then it is okay.

LAVELLE

Yes. But the prayer must be answered.

TERESA

Yes, the prayer must be answered. And if the prayer is not answered then there is no God and it is all a lie. If God does not pay attention to us, because we are so important, then God does not exist.

LAVELLE

Yes. We must be paid attention to.

(pause)

He was a good man, your husband?

(CONTINUED)
TERESA
Yes, he was a good man. We had a very good life together. We loved each other very much. And now he has gone. That is not unfair, that is just what happened. But many people do not live good lives, and they do not feel love. That is what is unfair. I feel sorry for them.

LAVELLE
(after a pause)
Will you say a prayer with me, Teresa?

TERESA
Yes.

LAVELLE
Hail Mary, full of grace--

TERESA/LAVELLE
--the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

HARTE is smoking a cigarette. LAVELLE steps outside.

HARTE
Finished with all your gobbledegook?

LAVELLE does not acknowledge the insult.

HARTE
How’s she holding up?

LAVELLE
She’s a strong woman.

HARTE
Good-looking, too. I could be in there. I have a thing for widows, did I ever tell you?

LAVELLE
I think you might have done. Your material is getting a little stale after all.

HARTE
Ah sure, the atheistic doctor, it’s a clichéd part to play. There’s not that many good lines. (MORE)
One part humanism to nine parts gallows humour. Playing you, though, that might be interesting.

LAVELLE
Playing me. Who’s “me”?

HARTE
The good priest.

They look at each other. Then HARTE looks up at the moon.

HARTE
I heard a story once about one of the astronauts who slept on the moon. He had a dream where he was driving one of those moon buggies across the surface of the moon, and he rode and he rode until he came upon another buggy that was exactly like his. He looked into the face of the man who was driving the buggy and he saw that it was himself. And his double said to him, “I’ve been waiting for you for thousands of years.” And that was the end of the dream.

LAVELLE studies him. HARTE turns aside, opening the door --

HARTE
Excuse me, won’t you. I have to go kill somebody.

INT. SACRISTY -- DAY

TITLE -- “Wednesday”.

MICHEÁL is in his vestments, swinging a thurible to and fro, the incense rising. LAVELLE moves in and out of frame, preparing for Mass.

MICHEÁL
They’re mad auld things thurifers, aren’t they?

LAVELLE
That’s a thurible. You’re a thurifer.

MICHEÁL
I’m a thurifer?
    (pause)
Thurifer. Funny word.
    (pause)
I like the smell of this stuff. It gets me high.

LAVELLE
What do you know about “high”?

(CONTINUED)
MICHEÁL
I know plenty.

LAVELLE
Micheál, why did you become an altar boy? I ask this because it can safely be said, without fear of contradiction, that you have no vocation whatsoever.

MICHEÁL
My Ma told me they give you money at weddings and christenings.

LAVELLE
I see. It was purely a moneymaking scheme on your part.

MICHEÁL
Yeah. To pay for my oils.

LAVELLE
To pay for your oils.

MICHEÁL
Yeah. And I haven’t had a sovereign off anybody. People round here are pure mean.

EXT. INISHMURRAY ISLAND - DAY

HIGH-ANGLE SHOT -- LAVELLE and RYAN walking through the remains of an early Irish monastic settlement. They enter the cemetery. RYAN leaning heavily on his shillelagh.

LAVELLE
Is this where you want to be buried?

RYAN
Why in the hell would I want to be buried in this godforsaken place?

LAVELLE
(with a laugh)
Where then? Pere Lachaise? Next to dear old Oscar?

RYAN
No. Next to Apollinaire and Max Ophüls.

LAVELLE
Oh very fancy, I must say.

(pause)
I have your gun for you, by the way.

RYAN
Yeah right.

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE
I do so. A Webley. Circa 1920. Still in good working order, though. Or so I’ve been told by a man who would know.

RYAN
Hand it over, then.

LAVELLE
I don’t have it on me.

RYAN
I knew it. Worried I might follow through with it, huh?

LAVELLE
You might take a potshot at me, for all I know.

RYAN
Why would I do that? What have you ever done to me except talk garbage?

LAVELLE
Sure that doesn’t mean anything. Bloody idiots can’t even be bothered coming up with a reason for murder these days. They wake up in a foul mood and it’s bang bang bang.

RYAN
Oh I don’t know about that. Some people have very good reasons.

EXT/INT. CONFESSIONAL - DAY

CLOSE on FIONA and LAVELLE. The shadow of the grille playing across their faces. DISSOLVE THROUGH --

FIONA
There was a Japanese writer committed suicide. He wrote out a list beforehand of all the famous suicides throughout history. He included Christ.

LAVELLE
Sounds like a smartarse.

FIONA
In the Middle Ages they would’ve said I was possessed by demons.

LAVELLE
Maybe you were. Maybe they were nearer the mark back then.

(CONTINUED)
FIONA
You think what happened was unimportant. Insignificant in the great scheme of things. To provoke such a reaction. But what may mean nothing to you may be very important to me.

LAVELLE
I’d never say it was unimportant. I’d just say that the choices you make when you’re thirty are not the same choices you’d make when you’re sixty.

FIONA
That’s irrelevant. Every moment of living has its own logic.

LAVELLE
Maybe so. Maybe you’re right, there. I’d have to have a think about that.

(pause)
It’s a tired old argument, I suppose, but what about those you leave behind.

FIONA
I belong to myself, not to anybody else.

LAVELLE
True. False.

FIONA smiles. LAVELLE waits, attentive.

FIONA
Funny, in the old days it was the priests who’d tell you you were sick. Now it’s the psychiatrists.

(pause)
You know Freud had cancer of the gums at the end of his life. The smell from his mouth was so bad even his own dog wouldn’t go near him. He asked his doctor, an old friend of his, to give him an overdose of morphine. Which he did.

LAVELLE
Not a big fan of Freud. Never have been.

FIONA
(after a pause)
The absurdity of existence versus the absurdity of nothing.

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE
tough choice when you put it like that.

FIONA

FIONA

FIONA

LAVELLE

(after a pause)

God is great. The limits of His mercy
have not been set.

EXT. PRISON - DAY

A GUARD escorts LAVELLE around the prison.

GUARD

Which of the lads are you here to see, Father?

LAVELLE

Freddie Joyce.

The GUARD pauses and looks at LAVELLE.

LAVELLE

Freddie Joyce? He’s--

GUARD

I know who he is. What in the hell d’ya want to see him for?

LAVELLE

He’s an old pupil of mine.

He asked to see me.

The GUARD stares at LAVELLE. Then proceeds.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

FREDDIE JOYCE at a table. Thirties, thin, hair all over the place, hands cuffed behind his back.

JOYCE

Y’know I’ve asked them to hang me.

LAVELLE opposite. A Bible and rosary in front of him. The room is gloomy, lit by a single lightbulb.

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE
There's no capital punishment in Ireland, Freddie, as you well know. Why do you want them to hang you?

JOYCE
'Cause that's the way Lesley Ryan died.

LAVELLE
You're saying you feel remorse.

JOYCE
I'm not a monster. Do I look like a monster?

LAVELLE
What do monsters look like?

JOYCE
"To thine own self be true," they say. Well I was, and look where it's got me.

LAVELLE
They've never really thought that one through, you're right.

JOYCE
It's a terrible world. When you think about it.

LAVELLE
Yes it is. And a beautiful one.

JOYCE
It wasn't for me.

LAVELLE
You're not the whole world.

JOYCE
That's a matter of opinion.

He watches a cockroach scuttling around in a corner of the ceiling.

JOYCE
I'm reading Paradise Lost at the moment. You know that one? "Better to reign in Hell--"

LAVELLE
"--than serve in Heaven." Yeah. Yeah I know that quote. Yeah.

JOYCE
You're making fun of me.

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE
Have I hurt your feelings?

JOYCE stretches his arms, flexes his fingers.

JOYCE
I had the cops in here the other day. The third degree. Wanting to go over all the gory details.

LAVELLE
Which I’m sure you were only too happy to provide.

JOYCE
They’re obsessed with cannibalism. “What did it taste like?” Told ‘em it tasted like pheasant. Bit gamey.

LAVELLE
Good for you. Make a joke about it.

JOYCE looks blankly at him.

LAVELLE
Why were they--

JOYCE
Same as always. They want to know where the last one is. The one I connected up. The one they never found.

LAVELLE
Why can’t you tell them, Freddie? Give the family some kind of peace.

JOYCE
I wanted to, Father, but for the life of me I can’t remember. I know it was out in the woods somewhere--

LAVELLE
Where did I leave my keys.

JOYCE
No. I wasn’t in my right mind. The LSD. It was like a fairytale--

LAVELLE
Yeah you said all that at the trial. It’s getting kind of tiresome now.

JOYCE
She was a lovely girl...Y’know she told me she’d been abused before. So I said, “Well once more won’t make any difference, then.”

(CONTINUED)
He laughs to himself. LAVELLE reaches for the rosary. Fingers the beads absently.

JOYCE
You see the light go out in their eyes and you become God.

LAVELLE
No you don’t. No. You don’t.

JOYCE smirks. Watches LAVELLE fingering the beads.

JOYCE
“The woods are lovely, dark and deep, but I have promises to keep.”
(with a laugh)
It’s like that joke. You know that joke? There’s a fella with this young lad driving into the woods, right. It’s getting darker and darker the deeper into the woods they go, and the young lad says, “I’m getting scared, Mister.” And the fella says--

LAVELLE
Yeah I do know that joke. I’ve heard it before.

JOYCE
You’re always one step ahead, aren’t you, Father? It’s like when we were back in school--

LAVELLE
(angrily)
Why am I here? For the love of God.

JOYCE
(taken aback)
I just wanted somebody to talk to.

LAVELLE
I don’t think you feel any guilt whatsoever about anything you’ve done.

JOYCE
(suddenly sobbing)
I do, Father, I do.
(sniffling; wiping his nose on his shoulder)
I believe what the Bible teaches. I believe if I repent my sins I’ll be forgiven and I’ll be able to go up to Heaven and see those girls and tell them how sorry I am, and I’ll hug them and I’ll kiss them and I’ll love them with a real true love, and have no desire to hurt

(CONTINUED)
them in any way.

(sobbing again)
God made me, didn’t he? I mean, didn’t he? He understands me. He must do.

LAVELLE looks blankly at him.

JOYCE
I mean, don’t you think?

LAVELLE
I think if God can’t understand you, Freddie, no one can.

EXT. LYNCH’S BAR - EVENING

LYNCH is keeping up a ping-pong ball with a table tennis bat. The sound of Irish music can be heard. LAVELLE appears, nods to LYNCH.

LYNCH
You know they’re foreclosing on me.

LAVELLE
Who?

LYNCH

LAVELLE
I’m sorry to hear that.

LYNCH
How come I never hear your mob preaching about that?

LAVELLE
About what?

LYNCH
All these bankers who’ve brought the country to its knees. Still throwing people out of their homes, though, when they can’t make their payments. Never hear your mob talking about that. Those are sins, too, aren’t they?

LAVELLE
Yes they are.

LYNCH
Ah sure, I suppose when you have a history of screwing the Jews out of their money and collaborating with the Nazis then, it’s like the pot calling the kettle black, hah?

(continuing)
LAVELLE
Yes, I suppose it is. Been getting the full use out of your library card, there, Brendan.

LYNCH
The library’s been shut down, did you not hear? Cutbacks.

INT. LYNCH’S BAR – EVENING

A rowdy CEILIDH BAND is playing on a dais in a corner.

FIONA waves to LAVELLE as he enters. Then returns to her conversation with some SURFERS.

LAVELLE notices JACK and VERONICA BRENNAN at a table together, not speaking. SIMON ASAMOAH is the other side of the room, talking to a blonde SURFER CHICK.

STANTON and HARTE are knocking back shots at the bar. STANTON sees LAVELLE. Raises his shot glass in salute.

FATHER LEARY is talking to a handsome blond SURFER DUDE.

MILO HERLIHY is sitting on his own with a Guinness. LAVELLE sits down beside him.

LAVELLE
You not dancing, Milo?

HERLIHY
I don’t like this music.

LAVELLE
What music do you like?

HERLIHY
Dolly Parton.

LAVELLE
Dolly Parton’s good, yeah.

INT. TOILETS – LATER

VERONICA is snorting cocaine, while HARTE waits his turn, singing like The Count from Sesame Street --

HARTE
“Bones, bones, bones, bones, bones inside of you!”

LAVELLE enters. Pauses. HARTE and VERONICA turn.

HARTE
It’s purely medicinal, Father.

VERONICA laughs. LAVELLE betrays no emotion. Exits.
INT. LYNCH’S BAR – NIGHT

LAVELLE and LEARY are standing at the bar, nursing Diet Cokes. STANTON seated beside them, bleary-eyed.

LEARY
How was your man, Joyce?

LAVELLE
It’s been a tough day, let’s put it that way.

LEARY
How can you ever hope to connect with someone like that?

LAVELLE
“Nothing human is alien to me.”
Or shouldn’t be, anyways.

LEARY
I can’t see the point in it myself. Dead loss.

STANTON
Who are you talking about? Not Freddie Joyce?

LAVELLE
I visited him in prison today.

STANTON
Why?

LAVELLE
Prisoners deserve spiritual guidance as much as anyone else. Maybe more so.

STANTON
Is that right? So they can find God and then say God has absolved them of all their sins and what they did didn’t really matter anyways ‘cause now they’re saved?

LAVELLE
Something like that, yeah.

LEARY
(to STANTON)
Calm down. You don’t know what you’re talking about.

STANTON looks blankly at LEARY. Then suddenly clamps a hand over his face and shoves him backwards -- (CONTINUED)
Sending him flying into the table at which sit JACK and VERONICA BRENnan, glasses shattering --

BRENnAN
Jesus, lads, mind the drinks, for Christ’s sake!

HARTE, HERLIHY, ASAMOAH, FIONA and the SURFERS look round. Then continue on as if nothing has happened.

LAVELLE and STANTON look at each other.

STANTON
He’s had that coming a long time. You know yourself.

INT. LYNCH’S BAR - LATER

LAVELLE is standing next to FIONA, watching HARTE dancing with the SURFER CHICK.

FIONA
Fine-looking man.

LAVELLE
I’d watch yourself around him.

FIONA
Oh I gave up the cocaine a long time ago.

LAVELLE
You took cocaine?

She shrugs. She smiles.

FIONA
How about a dance? Or what did they call it in your day, a jive?

LAVELLE
Ah now, I’m not cut out--

FIONA
Ah come on.

She hauls him onto the dance-floor.

HIGH-ANGLE SHOT -- LAVELLE and FIONA dancing together, alongside HARTE and the SURFER CHICK, VERONICA and ASAMOAH, and OTHERS.
INT. LYNCH’S BAR - LATER

VERONICA pauses beside LAVELLE at the bar.

VERONICA
Forgive me, Father, for I have sinned.

LAVELLE
Say ten Hail Marys and an Our Father.

VERONICA
Ah, I’ve sinned more than that.

LAVELLE
Make an ascent of Croagh Patrick, then, on your knees.

VERONICA
On my knees, is it? What made you say that?

She looks blankly at him. He finishes his Diet Coke. She laughs and moves on. LYNCH appears, inside the bar.

LYNCH
Your church is on fire.

LAVELLE
Brendan, I’m not in the mood--

LYNCH
Your church is on fire.

LAVELLE looks up -- LYNCH is gazing straight past him --

LAVELLE looks round --

REVERSE SHOT -- through a large rectangular window, the church can be seen burning at the top of the hill.

LAVELLE
Jesus Christ.

EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

The burning church. LAVELLE arriving at the scene. Followed by OTHERS from the bar.

LAVELLE is frozen to the spot for a moment, stunned. The flames look beautiful in the dark of the night as they lick up the sides of the wooden structure.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

A burning beam collapses. The pews burn. Wooden plinths around two statues burn. The Stations of the Cross burn.
EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

JACK BRENNAN runs up to LAVELLE --

BRENNAN
I’ve called the fire brigade, Father. For all the good it’ll do.

He stares at the fire, his mouth open, enthralled.

HARTE lights a cigarette.

HARTE
They won’t get here in time.

LEARY looks on, a hand to his head in shock.

LAVELLE circles the church, realising there is nothing to be done, the entire building is afire.

LAVELLE
Why didn’t anybody see?

FIONA finds him, pulls at his sleeve --

FIONA
Come away, Daddy.

LAVELLE
Why didn’t anybody see?

MILO HERLIHY laughs childishly, a pint of Guinness still in his hand.

VERONICA BRENNAN and SIMON ASAMOAH glance at each other.

VERONICA
You’ll probably get the blame for this.

They laugh. Turn away from the scene.

INT. LYNCH’S BAR - NIGHT

STANTON and LYNCH look on dispassionately.

LYNCH
Professional job. I’ll say that for them.

STANTON
Any fool can start a fire, for fuck’s sake.
EXT. CHURCH - NIGHT

HIGH-ANGLE SHOT -- LAVELLE looking on impotently as the timbers in the church start to give way.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH - DAWN

TITLE -- “Thursday”.

HIGH-ANGLE SHOT -- LAVELLE looking on at the blackened embers. FIONA, STANTON and LEARY nearby.

LAVELLE
So now we’re being burnt out.

LEARY
Who’d do a thing like this?

LAVELLE
Somebody with a grudge against the Church, obviously.

STANTON
Sure that could be half the country.

LEARY
 Burning the place down, though?

LAVELLE
People are angry. They’ve a lot to be angry about.

STANTON
Unless there’s a personal angle.

LAVELLE glances at him. FIONA noticing the look.

FIONA
How d’you mean?

STANTON
Nobody with a grudge against you, Father, no?

LEARY
Why would anyone have a grudge against us?

STANTON shrugs. Toes the embers with his shoe.

STANTON
Maybe this is the future, hah?
Maybe it’ll all be ruins one day.
Maybe one day kids will say to their parents in amazement, They used to believe in what? An auld lad up in (MORE) (CONTINUED)
the sky? And if we’re good we’ll go to Heaven? And if we’re bad we’ll go to Hell?

LAVELLE
Y’know for a policeman you seem to know very little about human nature.

STANTON
Maybe you’re right. Sure you’d know more than me. Don’t touch anything, now, I’ll have to get the forensic boys down, the supercilious pricks.

He exits. LAVELLE, LEARY and FIONA stand in silence for a moment.

LEARY
What do we do now?

LAVELLE
We’ll have to rebuild it, I suppose.

FIONA
Maybe use bricks next time, might be a good idea.

She looks at LAVELLE. He smiles.

LEARY
Sure that’ll take ages.

LAVELLE
Is there somewhere you have to be?

EXT. SLIGO CATHEDRAL (GARDEN) – DAY

BISHOP MONTGOMERY is on his cellphone, strolling along a path, beautiful flowers arrayed on every side --

MONTGOMERY
--Inspector Stanton’s handling all that, as far as I’m aware, you’ll have to speak to him...It looks like arson, yes...Young lads losing the head, I suppose, sure isn’t that always the way?...No, we haven’t had any trouble before now...Thank you. Goodbye.

He flips shut the cellphone and pauses in front of a large rosebush.

MONTGOMERY
You’ll have the press and TV people round at some point.
LAVELLE has been trailing in his wake.

LAVELLE
No doubt.

MONTGOMERY inhales the scent of the roses.

MONTGOMERY
Who is it?

LAVELLE
I don’t know who it is.

MONTGOMERY turns and looks at him.

MONTGOMERY
You said you did.

LAVELLE
I have no evidence it’s the same man.

MONTGOMERY
It’s the same man. Takes a lot of nerve to burn down a church. Helps if you have a burning sense of grievance. If you’ll pardon the...

He walks on. LAVELLE following.

MONTGOMERY
We have to ask ourselves, What does this man want? Well, he wants to be loved, of course. We all want to be loved. Failing that, he wants to be admired. Failing that, he wants to be feared. And failing that, he wants to be hated and despised. We should beware the man who wants to be hated and despised. Don’t you think?

LAVELLE
(after a pause)
I think you read that in a book.

MONTGOMERY smiles. They move on.

LAVELLE
I think he wants to stir up some sort of feeling in others, that’s true. He doesn’t want to be ignored anymore. He wants to make contact.

MONTGOMERY
Well he made contact alright.
Who is it?

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE looks blankly at him. MONTGOMERY nods.

MONTGOMERY
Those roses’ll want cutting.

EXT. BEACH – DAY

VERONICA emerges from the water to find LAVELLE waiting for her.

VERONICA
Is this about the coke? 
I can take it or leave it.

LAVELLE
Really?

VERONICA
Yeah. Most people can. The only ones who can’t, had problems to begin with.

LAVELLE
We shouldn’t write them off, though, the ones who had problems to begin with.

VERONICA dries her hair with a towel. Studies him.

LAVELLE
What do you want to do with your life, Veronica?

VERONICA
Nothing. “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin.”

LAVELLE
That’s a very nice quotation.
Ah sure everybody knows that one.

LAVELLE
It’s hackneyed, yeah. Like “Turn the other cheek,” and “Judge not, lest ye be judged.”

They look at each other.

VERONICA
I’d like to be an actress, maybe. I’ve got an absent father and a domineering mother.

LAVELLE
Well it’s a start. When did your father leave?

VERONICA
He didn’t leave, he was killed.

LAVELLE
He was murdered?

VERONICA
Hunting accident.
(pause)
Completely random.
(pause)
So there’s no use persevering, Father. I’m a lost cause.

LAVELLE
No one’s a lost cause, Veronica.

VERONICA glances at him, then strides away.
FITZGERALD with a big smile on his face.

FITZGERALD
Dreadful business, I must say.
Some little blackguard running riot, I wouldn’t wonder.

He is standing between two desks, jingling the change in his pockets. LAVELLE at one desk. LEARY at the other.

LEARY
Sure what can you do, in this day and age.

FITZGERALD
True dat.
(to LAVELLE)
Sorry about the other day, Father. That was the drink talking.

LAVELLE
What can we do for you?

FITZGERALD
Well it follows on from what I was saying. And it seems more necessary now than ever.
(producing a cheque-book)
I’d like to make a donation.

LEARY
(getting up)
Oh that’s grand!

LAVELLE
To salve your conscience?

FITZGERALD
Surely that’s in the nature of all philanthropy? The expiation of guilt?

LEARY
I’m sure you have nothing major to feel guilty about, Mr Fitzgerald.

(CONTINUED)
FITZGERALD
Oh you’d be surprised, Father. And call me Michael.

LEARY
Michael it is. Any charity is always gratefully received.

FITZGERALD
I know. I believe that’s Church doctrine. And the Church needs all the help it can get these days, hah?

LEARY
Why would you say that?

FITZGERALD
Well, y’know, what with all the compensation that’s been paid out over the years.

LEARY’s superficial smile freezes on his face.

FITZGERALD
I read where it’s up to two billion now. And that’s just the Yanks. And sure we all know they weren’t the worst, now, don’t we?

LAVELLE looks blankly at him. Then blankly at LEARY to gauge his reaction.

LEARY
I don’t know about that, now. And anyways, most of those cases were forty or fifty years ago. Raking up old ground, it’s always seemed to me. It’s time to forgive and forget.

FITZGERALD
Oh I agree with you, I agree with you. It’s time to move on. What’s past is past. Et cetera, et cetera.

LEARY
Ah...Would you like a cup of tea, Michael, or something--

FITZGERALD
No, no, can’t stop.

He sits in LEARY’s chair. Waves the cheque-book --

FITZGERALD
What are we talking? Ten? Twenty?

LEARY
Twenty thousand?

(CONTINUED)
FITZGERALD
Twenty thousand euros, yeah.

LEARY perches himself on the desk. Excited.

LEARY
Why that’d be grand. That’d help with getting the initial building work off the ground.

FITZGERALD
Twenty it is, then. (producing a beautiful Pierrot White fountain pen) This is a David Oscarson pen. Really expensive.

LEARY
It’s lovely.

LAVELLE
Why not make it fifty?

FITZGERALD and LEARY look at him. FITZGERALD smiles.

LEARY
Ah now, Father--

LAVELLE
If money’s no object, make it fifty.

FITZGERALD
Why not make it a hundred?

LEARY’s jaw drops open. He looks at LAVELLE.

FITZGERALD
Means nothing to me.

LAVELLE
I know it doesn’t.

FITZGERALD
A hundred thousand euros, Father. For your pet project. What do you say to that?

LAVELLE
I say, Thank you, Mister Fitzgerald.

FITZGERALD grins.

EXT. RECTORY - DAY

FIONA is playing with Bruno, rubbing his belly, flopping his ears around.

(CONTINUED)
FIONA
Good dog. Aren’t you a good dog.
Yes you are.

LAVELLE appears. He watches them in silence, smiling.

EXT/INT. SLIGO TOWN RESTAURANT – DAY

LAVELLE and FIONA eating.

LAVELLE
It’s my fault.

FIONA
How is it your fault what some

crazy person--

LAVELLE
I should have done something.
Said something.

FIONA
(after a pause)
What was Stanton was getting at?

LAVELLE
If I could tell you I would.
You know that.

FIONA
I thought I was the one supposed
to be in trouble, not you.

They look at each other.

VERONICA (O.S.)
How’s the fish?

They look up to see VERONICA BRENNAN, coked up, standing

over them. Glamorously dressed, a gin-and-tonic in her

hand.

LAVELLE
Too many little bones.

VERONICA
Isn’t that always the way.

She grabs a chair and sits at their table. FIONA looks at

her, then at LAVELLE.

VERONICA
I’m not stopping. Meeting the fella.

LAVELLE
You’re informing me of your adultery

in advance?

(CONTINUED)
VERONICA
Isn’t that more honest than in the confessional when it’s all done-and-dusted and there’s nothing you can do about it?

FIONA
What are you expecting him to do about it now?

VERONICA
Stop me from committing a mortal sin.

LAVELLE
You have to stop yourself. I can’t stop you.

VERONICA
Then what good are you at all?

FIONA shoots another look at LAVELLE.

VERONICA
You’re right, though. I mean, who are you to lecture anyone when it comes to sex?

FIONA
He has as much right as anyone else--

VERONICA
I don’t think virgins have any call to be dictating--

LAVELLE
What makes you think I’m a virgin? Fiona’s my daughter.

VERONICA
Oh I thought she was just some young one you were fiddling around with.

LAVELLE almost flinches.

FIONA
Oh you bitch.

LAVELLE looks at VERONICA with utter disgust. She notices this, and smiles.

VERONICA
You want to hit me now, don’t ya?
Go on. Hit me.

LAVELLE looks blankly at her. She grins.

Suddenly, FIONA hits her a massive slap to the face ---

(CONTINUED)
OTHER DINERS glance around. One of whom is LEO MACARTHUR. He laughs as he picks at his teeth with a toothpick --

VERONICA rubs her reddened cheek. Tears in her eyes. But still defiant. She glares at FIONA.

VERONICA
Nice shot. But I’ve taken better.

LAVELLE
What is this, exactly? The Theatre of the Absurd?

VERONICA
Oh you’re very fond of your high-falutin’ phrases, aren’t you, Father. I do think you do look down on us country people.

She knocks back her drink. Glancing out the window, she sees SIMON ASAMOAH approaching.

VERONICA
There’s my ride, as it were. Let’s do this again some time.

She exits. Leaving startled DINERS in her wake.

FIONA
Do you have to put up with that kind of shit on a regular basis?

Through the window we can see VERONICA as she reappears and throws her arms around ASAMOAH. ASAMOAH looks blankly at LAVELLE and FIONA.

LAVELLE
There’s a lot of it going around, let’s put it that way.

EXT. BEACH - EVENING

LAVELLE and FIONA walking along.

LAVELLE
We really should talk, you know. Get it all out.

FIONA
Like in one of those shit plays at the Abbey? *

LAVELLE
I don’t know what the third-act revelation would be, though.

FIONA
Neither do I.

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE
Your mother dying killed a little something in both of us, I know that.

FIONA
It was a long goodbye if ever there was one. I sometimes wish she hadn’t hung on as long as she did.

LAVELLE
She was stubborn, alright. But brave, too. I wonder if I’ll be that brave, when it comes down to it.

FIONA
It wasn’t just her dying. You were missing in action a long time. Before and after. When I needed you the most.

LAVELLE
Was it really that bad?

FIONA
I don’t know, maybe I’m exaggerating. You were a highly-functioning alcoholic, I’ll give you that.

LAVELLE
I’ve always thought the “highly-functioning” part should cancel out the “alcoholic” part. Like a double negative.

FIONA smiles. They come upon MICHEÁL sitting in an old wooden boat, staring out to sea, a Davy Crockett hat on.

LAVELLE
What are you up to, there, Micheál, if you don’t mind me asking?

MICHEÁL
Thinking.

LAVELLE
Thinking. Thinking about what?

MICHEÁL
Things.

LAVELLE
Thinking about things. How profound.

FIONA
What’s that you’re wearing?

MICHEÁL
A hat.

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE
A hat. You don’t give much away, do you, Micheál? You should’ve been in the French Resistance, they could’ve done with men like you.

FIONA laughs.

EXT. EASKY SHORELINE - EVENING

LAVELLE and FIONA manoeuvre between the rock-pools.

LAVELLE
I was never neglectful, I don’t think. I never hit you or--

FIONA
There are other forms of violence.

LAVELLE
I know there are. Attempting suicide, for one.

FIONA
Jesus. I walked into that one.

LAVELLE
Not only violence against yourself, either.

FIONA
It wasn’t intended that way. I wasn’t trying to hurt you.

LAVELLE
How could it not hurt me? I love you.

FIONA
I love you, too. Don’t doubt that.

They look at each other. Put their arms around each other and walk on.

FIONA
And just when I thought I had you back and you were all ship-shape and raring to go, go you did. I thought it’d be another woman.

LAVELLE
I have a vocation. I wasn’t trying to escape or--

FIONA
I know that. I know you’re sincere. But the fact remains, first she went away and then you went away. I lost two parents for the price of one.

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE
I never went anywhere. I’m still here.

FIONA
I think you’re being a little naive, there, Father.

They stop as they reach the edge of the rock-face, looking out over the sea.

LAVELLE
I’m still here. I’ll always be here.

FIONA
Will you?
(with a sad smile)
You promise?

LAVELLE
(pointing to her heart)
I’ll always be here.
(pointing to his heart)
And you’ll always be here.

FIONA’s eyes well up with tears.

LAVELLE
How’s that for a third-act revelation?

FIONA
It’s corny. But I like it.

INT. COTTAGE (BEDROOM) - NIGHT

RYAN is lying fully-clothed on his bed, a multicoloured quilt beneath him. The shillelagh by his side.

LAVELLE pours him a bourbon.

RYAN
You know how you can tell when you’re really getting old?

LAVELLE
How?

RYAN
Nobody says the word “death” around you anymore.

LAVELLE looks at him. Holds out the glass. RYAN pops two large pills from a vial into his mouth. Takes the glass --

RYAN
Here’s mud in your eye!

Tosses back the bourbon in one go. Motions for another.
RYAN
That’s great stuff! Makes me feel like bursting into song.

LAVELLE takes the glass. Fixes him another.

LAVELLE
Go on ahead for yourself. Nobody’s stopping you.

RYAN raises the shillelagh as if it were a conductor’s baton and sings --

RYAN
“You will eat, by and by, in that glorious land above the sky--”

LAVELLE smiles. Shakes his head.

RYAN
“--Work and pray, live on hay, you’ll get pie in the sky when you die!”

LAVELLE
God, you’re an awful man altogether.

RYAN cackles. LAVELLE hands him the bourbon.

RYAN
Like the fella said, “There has to be a Devil before there can be holy water.”

EXT. FIELDS - NIGHT

LAVELLE walks through the fields behind the rectory, lighting his way with an old oil lamp.

LAVELLE
Bruno! Bruno!

He goes on through the fields. Pauses, having spotted something up ahead. Walks on --

LAVELLE’s POV -- the dog lying dead.

LAVELLE looks down at the dog. Its throat has been cut. A puddle of blood around its body. He crouches beside the body. Touches its coat.

LAVELLE
Ah what has he done to you? (crying softly)

What has he done to you, Bruno?

He strokes the glossy coat, still crying.
EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

LAVELLE finishes digging a hole. Puts the shovel to one side, where Bruno lies enveloped in a bright red blanket.

He hefts the bundle and places it gently in the hole. Shovels earth onto the bundle until it is completely covered. Pats it down.

He puts his hands together atop the shovel and says a prayer.

EXT. SLIGO TRAIN STATION - DAY

TITLE -- “Friday”.

The convertible screeches to a halt. FIONA jumping out with her suitcase. LAVELLE getting out --

FIONA
Oh no! I forgot to say goodbye to Bruno!

LAVELLE
I’ll give him a big kiss from you.

FIONA
Oh do!

They hug and kiss --

FIONA
I’ll be fine, you know.

LAVELLE
Will you?

FIONA
Well let’s just say, today I’m fine.

LAVELLE
So you say. *

She smiles, and disappears into the station. *

EXT. COUNTRY LANE - DAY

LAVELLE strolls along, brooding. He comes up alongside a young GIRL on her own. Picking petals off a flower.

LAVELLE
Hello. Where are you off to?
GIRL
The beach.

LAPELLE
It’s nice at the beach, isn’t it. Do you surf?

GIRL
No, my Da won’t let me. He says it’s too dangerous.

LAPELLE
Ah, what does he know. Big meanie.

The GIRL laughs.

LAPELLE
Here on holiday?

She nods.

LAPELLE
Where are you from, Wicklow?

GIRL
Yeah.

LAPELLE
Well never mind. We won’t hold it against you--

Suddenly, a car screeches to a halt on the main road in front of them. A MAN gets out, angry--

MAN
Janine! Get in the car, now.

The GIRL quickly crosses to the car.

MAN
(softly)
Where the hell d’ya get to, honey? I’ve been looking all over for ya.

The GIRL gets in. The MAN turns to LAPELLE, angry again--

MAN
What were you saying to her?

LAPELLE
I wasn’t saying anything to her.

MAN
Oh really. You looked deep in fucking conversation to me.

He glares at LAPELLE. Gets back in the car. Drives off.

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE stands there. Runs a hand through his hair.

INT. LYNCH’S BAR – DAY

LAVELLE
Large one.

LYNCH looks at him, as he clicks onto Sky News. He has a bandage on his hand.

HARTE, seated at the end of the bar with a whiskey, glances at him also.

ASAMOAH and BRENNAN are playing chess in a corner of the bar. BRENNAN looks round.

LYNCH
You sure about that?

LAVELLE
Whiskey, I said.

LYNCH gets the drink. Sky News playing a report from Afghanistan.

LYNCH
I wonder what’s the latest in the sand-nigger war?

ASAMOAH looks up. Smirks.

HARTE
Looks like more dead to me.
But then again, who’s counting?

LYNCH passes LAVELLE the whiskey. LAVELLE knocks it back.

LAVELLE
Have one yourself. Might shut you up.

LYNCH
Ah sure that’s what they call them, sand-niggers. The Marines, I mean. I read it in a book about that young one they raped and murdered, y’know? They killed her entire family, then they turned on her.

LAVELLE
That’s your bedside reading, is it?

LYNCH
I like to keep up with American foreign policy. Another?

LAVELLE gives a slight nod. LYNCH turns to HARTE.

(CONTINUED)
LYNCH
Yourself?

HARTE
One ice cube this time.
Two just get in the way.

LYNCH gets the whiskies.

ASAMOAH makes a chess move. BRENNAN smiles to himself.

ASAMOAH
Who burned down your church, Father?

LAVELLE
It’s not my church. It’s our church.

BRENNAN
I’d say it was the Romanians.
They’re heathens, I think.

BRENNAN
The Romanians? What Romanians do we have around here?

BRENNAN
Ah they’re always hanging around, the Romanians. Getting up to no good.

ASAMOAH
I think it must be someone who does not like you, Father. I think it must be one of the good people in this town.

BRENNAN
You should join the Guards, Simon, with your powers of deduction.

BRENNAN
Checkmate.

ASAMOAH looks down at the pieces. Then back up at BRENNAN. BRENNAN picks up his whiskey, and goes to the bar.

BRENNAN
These measures, hey, Father.
It’s like a buttercup in the mouth of a cow. Guinness, there, Brendan.

He knocks back his whiskey. Glances slyly at LAVELLE.

BRENNAN
So you think there’s a God, then, Father, yeah?

LAVELLE looks blankly at him.
BRENNAN
I’m not codding, I’m being serious. I’m having doubts, like. A crisis of faith.

LAVELLE looks blankly at him. Takes his drink and gets up.

BRENNAN
Ah now, I didn’t mean to offend ya, I’m sorry. Really I am. As sure as there’s a hole in a goat.

LYNCH laughs as he pours the Guinness. LAVELLE heads for the pool room.

BRENNAN
I’m an awful messer, Father, God forgive me! Don’t go away mad!

INT. POOL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE on a rack of pool balls being split.

LEO MACARTHUR, practising on his own, chalks his cue as he considers his next shot. Looks up --

LAVELLE is leaning against a wall, whiskey in hand.

LEO
Hey Fada! Whaddaya hear, whaddaya say!

LAVELLE
You’re back, so?

LEO
I got a lotta clients in this town, Fada. From the hoi polloi to the masses of society. I gotta keep my ass lubricated at all times.

LAVELLE
The hoi polloi are the masses of society. You’re using the phrase incorrectly.

LEO pauses in the act of making a shot. Smirks.

LEO
That may be so, Fada. I didn’t get no education, see. I was getting fucked in the ass and fucked in the face all the live-long day. There wasn’t no time for any o’ dat dere book-learnin’. I was sucking the prick of a bishop in his bishopric on a regular basis, ya get me? How d’ya like that play on words, smartass?

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE
Do you need help?

LEO
You’re starting to sound a little screwy, now, Fada. Maybe ya need to see a headshrinker yerself--

LAVELLE
Do you need help? Are you okay?

LEO
There’s nothing wrong with me, my friend, I’m feelin’ fine.

He smacks in a ball.

INT. LYNCH’S BAR — NIGHT

LAVELLE at a table, brooding over a Guinness with a whiskey chaser. HARTE mooches over.

HARTE
Y’know when I first started working in Dublin, there was this three-year-old boy whose parents had taken him into the hospital for a routine operation, but the anesthesiologist made a mistake, and the little boy ended up being deaf, dumb, blind and paralysed. For good.

(pause)
Think of it. Think of when that boy first regained consciousness. In the dark. You’d be frightened, wouldn’t you. But you’d be frightened in that way where you know that the fear is going to end. It has to. It must. Your parents can’t be too far away. They’ll come to your rescue. They’ll turn on the light and they’ll talk to you.

(pause)
But think of it. Nobody comes to rescue you. No light is turned on. You are in the dark. You try to speak but you can’t. You try to move but you can’t. You try to cry out but you are unable to hear your own screams. You are entombed within your own body, howling with terror.

(pause)
Your parents stand around you. They have no way to communicate with you. They have no way to explain what has happened to you. Will you ever understand what has happened to you?

(MORE)
And that it will not end, that it will always be this way?

There is silence for a long moment.

LAVELLE
What the fuck? Why the fuck would you tell me a story like that?

HARTE
No reason.

LAVELLE rears up --

HARTE goes into a karate stance --

ASAMOAH and LYNCH look round --

HARTE steps back quickly and scoots off.

INT. LYNCH’S BAR – LATER

HOLD on LAVELLE as we JUMP-CUT through his night’s drinking, encompassing pints and shorts.

Only ASAMOAH left in the bar with LYNCH. They pass a spliff back and forth, glancing at LAVELLE.

LYNCH
Time to go. Come on.

LAVELLE looks round at ASAMOAH.

LAVELLE
He’s still drinking. Same again.

LYNCH
Time to go, I said.

LAVELLE
What’s that, an order?

ASAMOAH
You do not like taking orders, Father? You do not mind giving them.

LYNCH
Sure his kind are all alike.

LAVELLE
My “kind”.

(CONTINUED)
LYNCH
Yeah your “kind”. Your time has gone, and you don’t even fucking realise it.

LAVELLE
My time will never be gone.

LYNCH
You hear that? The arrogance of the man.

ASAMOAH
You need to be a little more humble, Father.

LYNCH
He needs taking down a peg or two, is what he needs.

LAVELLE looks at them both. He steps down from his stool, puts his hand into the pocket of his soutane, and withdraws the Webley revolver, aiming it at them --

LAVELLE
Take me down, then.

ASAMOAH steps back, but LYNCH doesn’t flinch. He looks coolly at LAVELLE --

LYNCH
Go on. I fucking dare ya.

LAVELLE looks blankly at him. Adjusts his aim and fires --

Into the ranks of spirits and the mirror behind the bar, shattering nearly everything --

EXT. LYNCH’S BAR - NIGHT

The blasts from the revolver lighting up the bar --

INT. LYNCH’S BAR - NIGHT

The gun clicks. Empty. All six shots fired.

LAVELLE looks at LYNCH and ASAMOAH, swaying slightly.

LYNCH reaches under the bar and produces a yellow baseball bat. ASAMOAH grins.

INT. RECTORY (BATHROOM) - NIGHT

LAVELLE washing his bloody hands in the sink. His bloody face reflected in the mirror.

LEARY, in pyjamas, passes by the open doorway --

(CONTINUED)
LEARY

Jesus Christ! What happened to you?

LAVELLE

Brendan Lynch.

LEARY

Brendan Lynch? Sure he’s a Buddhist.

LAVELLE

So what if he’s a fucking Buddhist? You think Buddhists don’t beat people up? You think Buddhists don’t fuck their kids just like everybody else?

LEARY

You’re obviously very upset--

LAVELLE

Tibetans spit on blind people in the street. They’re killing albinos in Africa. You are so fucking naive.

LEARY

Please don’t curse at me, Father. And I think it’d be best if we continue this conversation in the morning when you’re sober--

LAVELLE

Why are you a fucking priest at all? You should be a fucking accountant in a fucking insurance firm!

He slams shut the door.

INT. LAVELLE’S ROOM – MORNING

TITLE -- “Saturday”.

LAVELLE lying prone on his bed, bruises all over his body, still wearing his trousers and socks. His soutane in a black pile on the floor.

He awakens. Gives a wretched groan.

EXT. RECTORY – MORNING

LEARY hands a suitcase to a CABBIE --

LAVELLE (O.S.)

You’re leaving.

LEARY turns. LAVELLE is standing there, squinting in the sunlight. Wearing a horrible woollen V-neck sweater. Drinking from a pint-glass of water.

(CONTINUED)
LEARY
I think it’s for the best.

LAVELLE
Because of last night?

LEARY
Because of a lot of things. Not just
last night, or what’s happened here.
I’ve been having doubts...about my
sexuality, if you must know.

LAVELLE
You’re not gay, Father. You’re not
interesting enough to be gay.

LEARY is taken aback yet again.

LAVELLE
Listen, I’m sorry about what I said
last night.

LEARY
You said what you said with such
venom. I didn’t realise you hated
me that much.

LAVELLE
I don’t hate you at all.

LEARY
Then why...

LAVELLE
It’s just that you have no integrity.
And that’s the worst thing I can say
about anybody.

LEARY
Well that’s...That’s just...

He heads for the car.

LAVELLE
I hope you find what you’re looking
for. Good luck.

LEARY gets into the cab. It drives away.
EXT. CHURCH - DAY

HIGH-ANGLE SHOT -- LAVELLE appears and stands amid the ruins of the church. Finds a blackened and burnt hymnal. Flicks through it. Tosses it aside.

INT. LAVELLE'S ROOM - DAY

LAVELLE in smart civilian clothes. He tosses the copy of *Moby Dick* into a packed suitcase.

EXT. EASKEY - DAY

He drives through the town. Past the fields. The castle. Then --

MILO HERLIHY zooms up alongside on his motorcycle. Looks across at him. At the suitcase on the passenger seat.

LAVELLE looks back at him.

HERLIHY accelerates, speeding on ahead, disappearing out of sight.

EXT. SLIGO AIRPORT - EVENING

An Aer Arann plane is on the runway.

INT. SLIGO AIRPORT - EVENING

LAVELLE is looking out at the airplane, waiting for the announcement to board.

    TERESA (O.S.)
    Father.

LAVELLE turns to find TERESA ROBERT standing next to him.

    TERESA
    You are going to Dublin?

    LAVELLE
    Yes.
    (pause)
    Just getting away for a while, y’know.

    TERESA
    I heard about your church.
    A terrible thing.
LAVELLE
Yes.

TERESA
You must be very upset.

LAVELLE
Yes I am.

LAVELLE glances out the window --

LAVELLE’s POV -- a coffin is being escorted to the plane by TWO BAGGAGE HANDLERS.

LAVELLE turns back to TERESA. She is watching the coffin.

TERESA
I am bringing him home to his family in Italy. Dublin and then Rome.

LAVELLE
How have you been?

TERESA
People here have been very kind.

LAVELLE
I mean...

TERESA
Some times I think I cannot go on. (turning to look at him) But I will go on.

EXT. AIRPLANE - EVENING

PASSENGERS climb the steps of the airplane, LAVELLE and TERESA among them. LAVELLE pauses at the top, waiting his turn to enter the plane. He looks down --

LAVELLE’s POV -- the coffin has not yet been loaded. The TWO BAGGAGE HANDLERS are leaning against it. They laugh.

EXT. SLIGO AIRPORT - EVENING

The Aer Arann plane traverses the sky.

EXT. EASKY -- NIGHT

LAVELLE in his sports car, speeding back to Easkey.

INT. RECTORY (LAVELLE’S ROOM) - DAWN

TITLE -- “Sunday”.

A light breeze is blowing through the open window and gently lifting the lace curtains.

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE is lying in bed, idly watching the curtains. His soutane is hanging on the wall.

**INT. LAVELLE’S ROOM – DAWN**

He buttons up the soutane. Fixes his collar. Kneels in front of the crucifix and says a prayer. Blesses himself.

**EXT. DOG’S-HOLE – MORNING**

CLOSE on the Webley Revolver. LAVELLE weighs it in his hand. Then tosses it out into the crashing waves.

A wide crack in the cliff-face, the sea rushing in and smashing upon the rocks. The spume shooting up to where LAVELLE is standing, his soutane fluttering in the wind, an almost mythic figure looking out over the Atlantic.

FITZGERALD appears and approaches, unheard. Eventually LAVELLE turns, flinching at FITZGERALD’s proximity.

FITZGERALD
Thinking of throwing yourself in? They say it’s the easy way out.

LAVELLE
Nothing easy about it, I wouldn’t have thought.

They look out at the ocean.

FITZGERALD
I’m in a bad way, Father.

LAVELLE looks at him.

FITZGERALD
I’m not putting you on. I’ve been in a bad way for a long time.

LAVELLE
Have you spoken to a psychia--

FITZGERALD
Ah they just load you up on pills. Ask you about your feelings for your mother. Same auld shite since the ’20s.

LAVELLE
How does this...this feeling down... How does it manifest itself?

(Continued)
FITZGERALD

LAVELLE
You have a lot to be thankful for, objectively.

FITZGERALD
I had a wife and kids and they meant nothing to me. I have money and it means nothing to me. I have life and it means nothing to me.

LAVELLE
Where do you think this sense of detachment comes from?

FITZGERALD
From nowhere.  
(pause) 
From nowhere.

LAVELLE studies FITZGERALD as FITZGERALD looks out to sea. He is obviously sincere, and in a lot of pain.

LAVELLE
I have to meet someone now, but I’ll call up to the house after. We’ll talk. Get you back on track. Okay?

FITZGERALD
Thank you, Father. Thank you.

LAVELLE puts an arm around his shoulders. FITZGERALD leans into him, resting his head in the crook of LAVELLE’s neck.

EXT. HOTEL BALCONY – MORNING

FIONA on her cellphone. Coffee beside her. Dublin skyline.

FIONA
Y’know, you changed the subject, the other day when we were talking.

EXT. PAYPHONE – MORNING

LAVELLE on the payphone.

LAVELLE
What was the subject?

EXT/INT. EASKY – MORNING

As they speak, we see images of the locations where they spent time together, these locations now deserted --

FIONA (V.O.)
You know what the subject was.
I think you committed a sin of omission there, if truth be told.

LAVELLE (V.O.)
Sure there are worse sins than sins of omission.

FIONA (V.O.)
Well now you’d be the expert in that department, Father.

LAVELLE (V.O.)
You’ll have to defer to me, so.

FIONA (V.O.)
I suppose I will.

LAVELLE (V.O.)
I think there’s too much talk about sins, to be honest, and not enough talk about virtues.

FIONA (V.O.)
You might be right. What would be your number one?

LAVELLE (V.O.)
I think forgiveness has been highly underrated.

FIONA (V.O.)
(after a pause)
I forgive you. Do you forgive me?

LAVELLE (V.O.)
Always.

EXT. EASKEY — MORNING

SLOW-MOTION TRACKING SHOT following LAVELLE as he walks through the town. It is still early. He sees no one.

Suddenly, GERALD RYAN appears in front of him —

RYAN
Father.

LAVELLE
Little early for Mass.

(CONTINUED)
RYAN
Doctor Harte was out fishing at the crack of dawn. He begrudgingly gave me a ride. He’s a wonderful doctor, but a completely appalling human being. Where are you headed?

LAVELLE
Just down to the beach there.

RYAN
Want some company?

LAVELLE
Not really, no. Maybe later.

RYAN
Fair enough. I won’t keep you.

He starts to move off, leaning on his shillelagh.

LAVELLE
Did you finish your book?

RYAN
I did. Not sure how good it is...

LAVELLE
I’m sure it’ll be grand. You’re a fine writer.

RYAN
(moved)
Thank you, James.

LAVELLE nods and walks on.

EXT. BEACH — MORNING

LAVELLE comes down onto the beach. Looks around --

LAVELLE’s POV -- there is no one to be seen on the beach. But far off, some SURFERS are riding the waves.

He strides out, a lone figure out for a Sunday stroll. The surf rolling in.

EXT. SAND DUNES — MORNING

MICHEÁL is painting with oils. A canvas set up on an easel. He pauses --

MICHEÁL’s POV -- LAVELLE looking out to sea. And then a second MAN, approaching from the right.

EXT. BEACH — MORNING

LAVELLE turns and sees the MAN approaching --

(CONTINUED)
LAVELLE’s POV -- the MAN gradually defines himself as JACK BRENnan. Wearing a plain white shirt, the cuffs turned up, ordinary black trousers, black shoes.

As BRENnan nears LAVELLE, he takes a gun from a trouser pocket and holds it loosely at his side.

BRENnan
Take your hands out of your pockets.
Slowly.

LAVELLE
Why?

BRENnan
I heard you had a gun.

LAVELLE slowly removes his hands from the pockets of his soutane and turns them palms up.

BRENnan
Have to say I’m surprised. Thought I’d have to go looking for you.

LAVELLE
Just because I’m here, doesn’t mean you have to go through with it.

BRENnan
Yes it does. It’s one of those... self-fulfilling prophecies. Did you really think it’d come to this, though, hah?

LAVELLE
I was hoping it wouldn’t. I thought you were a friend of mine.

BRENnan
Ah sure, a friend is just an enemy you haven’t made yet.

LAVELLE
Cheap cynicism.

BRENnan
No, not cheap, now. That’s a cynicism that was hard-won. That’s a cynicism that was earned after a hell of a lot of psychological and physical torture.

LAVELLE
I take it back, then. But it’s cynicism all the same. That’s the difference between us, I suppose.

BRENnan
That’s not the only difference.
EXT. BEACH - MORNING

BRENNAN looks out over the waves. LAVELLE appraising him.

BRENNAN
Any regrets?

LAVELLE
Yeah. I never got to finish *Moby Dick*.

BRENNAN
The whale kills Ahab.

LAVELLE
Is that right?

BRENNAN
Then he destroys the rest of the ship and the crew along with it. All except for Ishmael. He alone escapes to tell thee.

They look at each other for a long moment.

LAVELLE
The burning of the church I understand. But you didn’t have to kill my dog.

BRENNAN
I didn’t kill your dog. Why would I do a thing like that?

LAVELLE
I found him. Out in the field. His throat had been cut.

BRENNAN
Nothing to do with me. I am wholly innocent of that crime.

(pause)

I did give Veronica a shove that

one time, though. I admit that and

I’m sorry for it.

(pause)

Did it upset you? The dog?

LAVELLE
Yes it did.

(CONTINUED)
BRENNAN
Did you cry?

LAVELLE
Yes I did.

BRENNAN
That’s nice. And when you read about what your fellow priests did to all those poor children down all those years, did you cry then?

LAVELLE looks blankly at him.

BRENNAN
I asked you a question. Did you cry then?

LAVELLE
No.

BRENNAN
That’s right.

LAVELLE
No, I suppose--

BRENNAN
Yeah?

LAVELLE
I suppose I felt detached from it. The way you are when you read anything in a newspaper or see it on televis--

BRENNAN raises the gun and fires --

LAVELLE is hit in the lower left side and staggers back, collapsing onto the sand.

BRENNAN
Detach yourself from that.

EXT. SAND DUNES - MORNING

MICHEÁL sees BRENNAN fire the shot and LAVELLE go down. He takes a step back, stunned.
EXT. BEACH - MORNING

LAVELLE touches his wound, his hand coming away bloody.

BRENNAN
We were the lucky ones, though.
There are bodies buried back there.
Buried like dogs.

LAVELLE puts his hand over the wound once more, feeling the blood pulsing out. He looks around --

LAVELLE’s POV -- the beach. The SURFERS. BRENNAN. The sky.
BRENNAN approaches LAVELLE and aims the gun at his head.

EXT. SAND DUNES - MORNING

MICHEÁL drops his brush and runs down through the dunes --

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

LAVELLE looks up at BRENNAN.

BRENNAN
Don’t look at me.

LAVELLE holds his gaze.

BRENNAN
Don’t look at me. Turn your face to the side.

LAVELLE holds his gaze.

BRENNAN hesitates. Hears a sound and turns --

MICHEÁL appears, running and tumbling down from the dunes and out onto the beach --

BRENNAN turns his aim on MICHEÁL --

LAVELLE
No!

MICHEÁL pauses, looking from BRENNAN to LAVELLE --

LAVELLE
Run, Micheál!

MICHEÁL
I’ll get Stanton, Father!

HELICOPTER SHOT -- MICHEÁL retreats and runs towards the town. BRENNAN turns back to LAVELLE.

BRENNAN
He reminds me of me.

(CONTINUED)
He starts to sob. He moves off towards the surf, trying to regain his composure.

LAVELLE watches him, his face turning pale as the life ebbs from him.

LAVELLE
It’s not too late, Jack.

BRENNAN
(still sobbing)
Yes it is. Yes it is.

He turns back, wiping his tears with his gun-hand. He takes a deep breath, then aims the gun at LAVELLE again.

BRENNAN
Say your prayers.

LAVELLE
I’ve already said them.

BRENNAN fires, point-blank.

OMITTED

EXT. EASKEY - MORNING
RYAN on a bench, eating an ice cream.

INT. ASAMOAH’S HOUSE (BEDROOM) - MORNING
VERONICA astride ASAMOAH. He rubs the bruise on her face with his thumb.

INT. MANSION - MORNING
FITZGERALD sitting at a large oak table, dishevelled. A whiskey in front of him. He glances at his watch.

INT. STANTON’S HOUSE - MORNING
STANTON looking through a magnifying glass, examining a bank note taken from a stack in front of him. He grins.

EXT. PRISON YARD - MORNING
FREDDIE JOYCE being stomped on, the legs of OTHER PRISONERS kicking at him. He tries to protect himself, but does not cry out.

INT. BOOKSTORE - MORNING
LEARY in the “Philosophy & Religion” section, flicking through Richard Dawkins’ The God Delusion.
EXT. PHOENIX PARK - MORNING
FIONA walking with a HANDSOME MAN. Her hands in gloves. Laughing at something he has said.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING
LEO sitting naked at the edge of a bed. Thinking. A crucifix on a chain around his neck. A MAN's form glimpsed under the bedclothes.

INT. IRISH ARMY RECRUITMENT OFFICE - MORNING
MILO signing up. He passes the form back across to the RECRUITMENT OFFICER.

INT. HOSPITAL OPERATING THEATRE - MORNING
DOCTOR HARTE puffing on a cigarette, then putting it out on a diseased heart in a steel dish, the butt sticking up.

INT. LYNCH'S BAR - MORNING
LYNCH putting a glass to the optic of a lone intact whiskey bottle. His face bruised, his lip split.

INT. AIRPLANE - MORNING
TERESA ROBERT in business-class, looking out a window. Vodka-and-tonic in front of her. She blesses herself.

EXT. BEACH - MORNING
HELICOPTER SHOT -- BRENnan walks away from the body of LAVELLE.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. PRISON - DAY
FADE IN on a line of cubicles -- TRACK ALONG the VISITORS speaking with PRISONERS on telephones, separated by glass --

Coming to rest on FIONA. She is obviously devastated, but is sitting calmly, waiting.

On the other side of the glass, a door opens --

JACK BRENnan appears with the GUARD seen earlier. He looks devastated also. He sees FIONA.

FIONA looks blankly at him. Picks up her telephone.

BRENnan stands for a moment longer. Then hesitantly approaches the cubicle and sits down.
FIONA waits. Tears in her eyes.

BRENAN looks at her. Looks at the telephone. Looks back at her. CUT TO BLACK.

The CLOSING TITLES play. Then the image of LAVELLE at the dog’s-hole appears, his back to us, his soutane fluttering in the wind.

THE END