

# **Young playwrights Cork 2023**

# **Content**

HowTo Raise a Dead Body 101

Bridie's List

Even Numbers

Love is like the wind

The Objection

Til Death Do Us Part

A Godless Place

Room Full of records

**How to Raise a dead body 101**  
**by**  
**Anna**

## Characters

**Phoenix** is a young necromancer in making. They are bossy, anxious, and nerdy.

**Kit** is a studying necromancer as well. They are the same age as Phoenix and have a rivalry-friendship. They are unserious, jealous, and independent.

**Stepania Tsepesh**, or **Mentor**, is a middle-aged professor who supervises students. She is confident, unorganised and out of touch with reality.

**A person** is a newly dead villager whom the main characters try to resurrect.

## Props and set

A gravestone, a boutonniere, a wristwatch, a bag of popcorn, candles, herbs, coins, cloaks, a white shirt, flowers on the grave, and chalk.

## Notes

/ is used when one character interrupts another or talks over them.

Cloaks don't necessarily mean old-looking pieces of fabric. It can be anything large with pockets.

Throughout the play sounds of crickets are playing in the background, except for the time of the rituals.

## How to raise a dead body 101

*Hazy white light slowly fills the stage, which resembles a graveyard. We hear the sounds of crickets, indicating it's nighttime. Two necromancers in cloaks come in talking. They stop next to the grave in the centre.*

Phoenix: *[looking around]* This is it?

Kit: Mh?

Phoenix: This is the place?

Kit: What's wrong with it?

Phoenix: It's... old. And filthy. I expected something more... or less. But I suppose *they* decided to give us a challenge.

Kit: Yeah, right.

Phoenix: Something funny?

Kit: You always think you will get everything served on the golden plate just because you are some governor's kid. It's more annoying than funny.

Phoenix: This is not about my family. It's about connections and... networking and/

Kit: *[mocking]* /Why, of course!

Phoenix: Oh, I beg your pardon for my family being respected people and not some... merchants! And this is not polite to/

Kit: /alright, calm down. We haven't even started yet.

Phoenix: Right. *[breathes in and out]* But you must agree this place is... diabolical! And not in a good way.

Kit: Somewhat, yeah. But we have like what? 15 minutes until midnight? We are not here for long.

Phoenix: I hope so. Besides, it's our first time *raising a body* without *anyone's* help. My informant and a really good friend of my family... Such a great person, in fact, I remember the time when we all went skiing, it was absolutely gorgeous/

Kit: /Cut the crap, what did they say?

Phoenix: They said we might get to see our mentor for the very first time! Isn't that exciting?

Kit: *[mocking]* Isn't that exciting? You are such a nerd. Let's just get it over with.

*Kit pulls out a plastic bag with tools. They take the contents out and start assembling them around the grave. When they are done, Kit throws the bag on the ground, but Phoenix immediately picks it up and folds it neatly. Kit rolls their eyes. They go around checking what they have.*

Phoenix: Gold and silver.

Kit: Candles.

Phoenix: And the herbs. Now the diagram. Step away.

Kit: Woah! Who died and put you in charge of the diagram?

Phoenix: Just let me do it. Don't embarrass yourself.

Kit: Why would I?

Phoenix: Because I am simply better than you at this in every way possible. No offence.

Kit: A lot of offence taken! My diagrams are great. They are innovative!

Phoenix: That's because you cannot remember the proper way to create one.

Kit: Nuh-uh. Move.

Phoenix: What do you mean "nuh-uh"?!

Kit: (draws)

Phoenix: Your lines are not straight.

Kit: Huh? Okay, let's do it.

Phoenix: One second. *[takes off the cloak and reveals a crisp white shirt and tie]* Now, let's go.

*Pause.*

Kit: ...What... What is that?

Phoenix: I was just thinking what if/

Kit: /What if this is Anna Wintour? Don't worry, mate, she is still with us.

Phoenix: What if the person we are about to raise is... was a respectable citizen? We are the first people they will see and... we must look presentable...

Kit: With your face, a shirt isn't much help. And since when do you care about your image in front of dead villagers?

Phoenix: I don't know what are you implying. I *always* care about my image. I have standards!

Kit: No-no, I know that face, Phoenix. You do it when you are hiding something. There you're doing it right now! Aaah! Is it the mentor thing?

Phoenix: Well, guilty... I thought it was only polite to dress accordingly, in case she will be here.

Kit: Ooooh, right! You wanna impress the poor lady! And in your imagination *accordingly* includes a rose?

Phoenix: *[mumbling]* It's a boutonniere.

Kit: Luckily, I have something to match you!

*Kit looks around, runs up to the grave to pick a flower, and then put it behind their ear. Phoenix looks mildly disgusted. Kit shows off their accessory with mocking flamboyancy.*

Kit: Maybe not as fancy as your Prince Charming outfit but/

Phoenix: /We have to move on past my appearances and to the ritual itself. After midnight nothing will work.

Kit: Alright, Cinderella, don't panic. It will go as planned.

*They hold hands as the light concentrates on the grave, tense music plays in the background, and they murmur something unintelligible. They raise their hands over the grave slowly. Lights start to come back to their previous state as the music fades away. They put their hands down. Nothing has happened.*

Kit: It did not go as planned.

Phoenix: It's the diagram. I told you I should've done it myself. Your skills are astonishingly amateur.

Kit: Oh, so it's my fault? Go ahead and try it yourself, so!

*[Phoenix goes to draw the diagram again]*

Kit: Your lines are not straight.

Phoenix: Yes, they are. *[ erases and starts over.]*

*When Phoenix is done, they attempt the ritual again. It is a little shorter this time. Nothing happens.*

Kit: Is it the diagram now?

Phoenix: Something else must be interfering – some higher power.

Kit: So, there is no chance you too are a shitty artist?

Phoenix: Well, naturally! I come from a family that is known for its... Did you hear that? It's our mentor!

*Phoenix turns around to Kit and sees them faking the footsteps. Kit finds it hilarious.*

Phoenix: Oh, come on, Kit. Don't play with me right now.

Kit: You should've seen your face!

Phoenix: Do you take this assignment seriously at all?

Kit: You are such a joy killer!

Phoenix: This is so childish it is not even insul... Wait, someone *is* coming.

Kit: Who? Jesus? Be for real now. I played a joke on you once, it's not gonna work again.

Phoenix: I am "for real", and I am "for real" saying that this time "for real" someone is coming.

Kit: I am not sure you know what "for real" means...

Phoenix: They are getting closer! What if it's a regular civilian? Quick! Hide the ritual!

*Phoenix runs to the grave and throws their cloak to hide it, meanwhile, Kit stands with their back to the grave facing the right curtain. They hold out the sides of their cloak to hide what's behind them. Both Phoenix and Kit stare at the right curtain as the footsteps approach.*

*Pause.*

*On the left side, a spotlight suddenly lights up revealing the mentor. She looks at the Phoenix's and Kit's backs for a*

*few seconds, then clears her throat. Necromancers jump up surprised and embarrassed. Phoenix lets out a short high-pitched scream.*

M: *[to Kit, pointing at Phoenix]* Okay, calm down your puppy.

Phoenix: Hello?... Ma'am?

M: Hi-i-i-i!

Kit: Who are you again?

M: Oh, yes, pardon me. I am your mentor. Steph~~a~~nia Tsepesh? You can call me Steph. Or Madam Tsepesh, if you are into hierarchy stuff. *[to Phoenix]* Which I assume you are, judging by the... outfit.

Phoenix: *[runs to shake her hand]* It is such an honour to have you here!

M: Thanks, kid. Anyways! How is your final test going?

*Pause. Phoenix and Kit stare at each other, then back at their mentor. They speak at the same time.*

Phoenix: Pardon me?

Kit: What test?

M: Your final test.

Kit: Final? Like the final final?

M: Are you thick or hard of hearing? *[to the audience]* Which, by the way, is not shameful at all!*[to them]* Yes, the final final.

Phoenix: I feel like I am going to be sick.

Kit: *[supporting Phoenix by the elbow]* What the hell is going on?

M: I am starting to feel like you weren't informed about this examination...

Kit: Starting? Starting?! Was it not your responsibility to tell us? *[to Phoenix]* C'mon, mate, get it together!

Phoenix: *[walking back and forth]* The final... The final...

M: Are they gonna be alright? They look... mental.

Kit: You are not the one to judge them, you know how important this is!

Phoenix: Our whole careers are on the line! On our first day, you wrote that the final exam is only to be performed once unless there is an extraordinary problem!

M: Oh, how sweet you remembered! And don't be dramatic, it's not the most important thing in life. You will figure it out!

Phoenix: It literally is, you... If we pass we shall be immortal. If we don't, we will be expelled!

M: I see your point, the stakes are high, but can you please stop shouting? I might or might not be a little hang-over.

Kit: Well. We do only have until midnight. And, since you are the root of our problems, you will help us.

M: Technically, I am not/

Kit: /I will report you if you don't. No one would care about me but *them*? [points at Phoenix] Phoenix, tell her who your mother is.

*Phoenix comes up to the mentor and whispers something to her. She makes a long face. But she didn't hear them.*

M: Who?

*They whisper again.*

M: Oh! Well! In this case, of course, I am delighted to help. Let's have a look at your setup.

*All of them go back to the grave and uncover it. The mentor goes around examining the grave. Kit suddenly remembers something.*

Kit: Actually, you know what? Let me just put it back like it was. It is all mixed up.

M: No, it's alright.

Kit: I just want to help, here, let me just... [grabs a candle]

M: Stop. Give me the candle.

Kit: It's a perfectly normal candle, take any other one.

*She snatches the candle out of Kit's hands and examines it.*

M: Now, this is interesting. What kind of candles are you kids supposed to use these days?

Phoenix: Transilvanian wax, exactly 5 inches tall and 3 inches wide.

M: Precisely.

Kit: Great, now can I have the candle back?

M: Of course, you can have your FAKE candle back!

*Pause. Stepania is clearly proud of her discovery. Everyone else is confused and nervous.*

Phoenix: What?

Kit: Phoenix, I ca- I can explain, I swear!

M: I hope you can! Sabotaging your own test, how wonderful!

Kit: I didn't mean to! I didn't know this is so important!

Phoenix: What did you do?...

Kit: God... I just wanted to mess with you, alright? Nothing criminal! I was going to let you fail a few times and then pull out the actual candle, no one's harmed! I didn't know this is our final, and, when she came, I got distracted. It's not my fault *she* failed to do her job and inform us about the exam, remember?

M: Wow! Blaming everything on me. Very mature!

Phoenix: You shut up! Oh, Lord, sorry... I mean... Give us a minute. Please.

*Stephanie stands aside. As things get more heated she pulls out a bag of popcorn.*

Phoenix:[to Kit] Why would you do this anyway? Seeing me nervous and failing is funny to you?

Kit: Ugh, don't do this. Not right now.

Phoenix: Do what?

Kit: Don't pretend you are so innocent! This is exactly why I did it!/  
Phoenix: /I don't...

Kit: /Because you go around acting so condescending and judgemental, and no one cares to tell you to shut up! And

the worst part is: you never fail. So there is nothing to bring down to earth a cocky, bossy, classist kid of a governor! I didn't mean to harm you. Just to teach you a lesson!

Phoenix: Really?! Do you even hear yourself? You don't care about anyone or anything! You frankly didn't even care about this assignment before Madame Tsepesh told us it was a final. What if she didn't? What if we fail because of you? What if/

M: Alright, enough. The shaky one is right, we don't have much time left. You will have literally all time in the world to sort out your personal problems later. Now, go set everything up again.

*Kit and Phoenix follow the order. They are still mad and try to ignore each other. Kit changes the fake candle for a real one from their pocket.*

M: Right. Lemme check. Good. Not bad. Nice diagram! *[Phoenix takes a pride pose]* Only a little uneven. *[Kit giggles]* Let's try all together.

*They stand around the grave. Kit extends their arm to link hands with Phoenix, but they jerk the hand back and switch places with the mentor.*

Kit: Oh, come on...

*When they settle, light concentrates on the grave and they sing along with a hymn. Nothing happens, the music dies off, and the lights come back to normal.*

M: What's wrong now?

Kit: This is not funny anymore.

Phoenix: To some of us, it never has been.

*Pause. All turn to Phoenix.*

Kit: *[tired]* Did you do it?

Phoenix: Did what?

Kit: Did you sabotage us this time just to piss me off?

M: Ooh, good lord...

Phoenix: Maybe I did! How does it feel, mh? To taste your own medicine?

Kit: Plain. Get over yourself, dude. You are making it worse for all of us.

Phoenix: So... you are *not* mad? Please tell me you are a little mad.

Kit: No, of course not. Look! I finally found something you suck at - driving me mad on purpose!

*Both chuckle.*

M: Wow. Beautiful. Reconciliation. Now can we get back to saving your careers? I've got places to be.

Phoenix: Let's try again, shall we?

*They gather around the grave yet again. This time Phoenix doesn't refuse to link hands with Kit. They perform a ritual, but in the middle of it, Stephania sneezes. The music stops, and the lights go back to normal.*

Kit: You gotta be kidding me!

Phoenix: Ma'am, are you alright?

M: Yes. Yes, I am, kid. [to Kit] It's dusty here, okay? We will try again.

*They start again but the music fades away even faster this time leaving them with nothing.*

M: I don't understand.

Kit: Really?

M: Well, yes. Everything seems to be okay. So I don't understand...

Kit: I personally don't understand how you have become a mentor with your skill set.

Phoenix: Don't be rude! But also, yes.

M: Well, you know. Laughed at my boss's jokes, pretended to be busy when he saw me, took credit for other people's work—the usual stuff.

Kit: How great! Our mentor is an incompetent suck-up!

Phoenix: Soo... you don't know how to help us?

Kit: Don't you see? She is horrible. Worse than me or you!

M: I wouldn't say I'm horrible. Rather mediocre. I am also humble and self-aware!

Kit: Don't give yourself too much credit. You haven't managed to perform the most basic ritual, even with our help.

Phoenix: Does this mean we are screwed?

Kit: What? Yes! Yes, we are screwed! I am glad you are finally coming around.

Phoenix: But I... I mean, we've worked so hard.

M: Well, that's what happens when you rely on other people, kid.

*Phoenix slowly turns to her in disbelief.*

Kit: Phoenix/

Phoenix: *[to M]*/YOU.

M: Jeez.

Phoenix: How dare you. How dare you give me life advice?

M: Well, I am your mentor... It's my job!

Phoenix: You failed us! You are an irresponsible, unreliable, unprofessional piss of... *[they are breathing heavily]*

Kit: Woah.

M: Watch what you say to a superior! *[aside]* Gen Z's...

Phoenix: WE HAVE LITERAL MINUTES LEFT AND YOU... AND YOU...

*They run to the mentor and try to hit her but Kit pulls them away by the arm.*

Kit: No!

M: My god... y'all are mental. Exams really stress people's brains out!

Phoenix: SHUT UP! SHUT UP AND GO AWAY! GO AWAY!

Kit: Phoenix, jeez!

M: You know what? I actually do have to go! Meetings and my-my dog... very ill, that poor thing! Chao!

*Stephania blows them and the audience an unsteady air kiss and rushes away, back first, still facing Phoenix. Phoenix escapes Kit's hands and follows her almost to the curtain, screaming.*

Phoenix: THAT'S RIGHT! GO AWAY YOU... NASTY WITCH! [to themselves] Is that even an insult in our situation?

Kit: She's gone, compose yourself.

*Phoenix exhales shakily, almost crying, and turns to Kit.*

Phoenix: We failed, Kit.

Kit: Not yet. Quickly, let's try again!

*They set up the ritual one last time and link hands. They start singing, and light concentrates on the grave but in the next second everything is back to normal. Phoenix is puzzled.*

*Kit checks their watch.*

Kit: It's midnight.

Phoenix: This is it.

Kit: I'm so sorry. We could've done it, if I didn't sabotage us in the first place.

Phoenix: Don't be... But continue...

Kit: I mean... I know you've worked really hard. Because you are such a nerd.

Phoenix: Hey!

Kit: I can't be too nice to you.

*Pause.*

Phoenix: Let's go home, shall we?

*They pick up their stuff and head off.*

Kit: I guess we are not getting our dream body this summer.

*Phoenix hits them.*

Kit: Too soon?

*After they left there is complete silence for a few moments. A person rises from the grave looking somewhat puzzled. They look around.*

Person: Hello?

*Curtain.*

Bridie's List

by

Anna

**ACT I****SCENE 1**

*Scene opens in an empty church.*

*Up stage an old women (Doreen) with her back to the audience can be seen mumbling with rosary beads in her hands .*

*Down stage another old women (Bridie) talks directly to the audience .*

**BRIDIE:** Why hello there my sweethearts, lovely to see you. How's everyone been keeping? Good? Good. Now...you see Doreen McCarthy over there, blissfully unaware, the poor cratur. Sure anyway, as you may know I like to keep lists, lots and lots of lists. One for the shopping, another for the jobs around the house and some for people....people you may ask?, well, now and again I get a delivery of flowers and a little note, usually the note has something along the lines of "thinking of you, sending my love" etc..... etc..., and underneath there might be a name....a time...a place ... a date. And this morning, Doreen's name was attached to a bunch of beautiful pink peonies. Poor divil. So .....I had to get started on my jobs for the day, clean the sink (*she ticks something in her notebook*), feed the cat ( *ticks note book*) annnd

*Bridie waits patiently, watching and calmly lifts her left wrist to check the time, Doreen crumples to the ground. Bridie ticks off her little notebook.*

**BRIDIE:** Now then, that's me done for the day, and just in time for my Coronation Street. God bless.

*Bridi walks off stage .*

**ACT I****SCENE 2**

*Opens in the church, Fr. Murphy and Fr Smith each standing at the alter, mics in place. Fr. Murphy is the stalwart parish priest, old fashioned, traditional, Fr Smith , a young, eager and ambitious priest. Overtones of pious self importance badly hidden. Church bell rings. Funeral mass begins...*

*Fr Murphy is monotone*

**FR MURPHY:** I'd like to welcome you all to the church this morning to celebrate the life of Doreen McCarthy, we are gathered here, friends and neighbours for the repose of her soul and that she might be received by God our father.....

*Fr smith interrupts*

**FR. SMITH:** If I might interrupt... Fr. Yes, I'd like to share with you all, that this morning God came to me directly, it's hardly believable really, he brought his message to me through the radio.. there I was prepping my robes for the mass today and the dulcet tones of Stormzy ... *(sings)* **"I'm blinded by your grace..... by your grace..."** and then I knew, God himself, was reaching out to me with a message to share with you all, hard to believe but its a true story. Reminds me of another..

*Fr Murphy coughs loudly*

*Fr Smith looks affronted*

**FR MURPHY:** Bless you father, thank you, where was I....

God, our father, hear our prayers we offer for our departed sister, Doreen, cleanse her of her sins and grant her the fullness of redemption. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**ALL:** Amen

*The mass continues in the usual manner.. Lighting change to indicate passage of time.*

*Fr Smith quietly fuming, as communion begins, the music starts*

**FR MURPHY:** I now invite those of you who wish to receive communion to come forward

*(exasperated tone)* and those of you who are "gluten free", please come to the right hand side.

*Music starts playing*

*Fr Murphy starts mumbling along with the hymn*

*Fr Smith gets the audience singing, conducting a nice gentle rendition and then steals the limelight singing with full confidence and with the voice of ex-90s boyband member, complete with cringeworthy expressions and gestures..*

**FR. SMITH:** Céad míle fáilte romhat, (*gestures to the audience to start singing*) a Íosa, a Íosa. Céad míle fáilte romhat, a Íosa. (*Fr Murphy in full voice and flaunting his impressive voice*) Céad míle fáilte romhat a shlánaítheoir. Céad míle míle fáilte romhat, Íosa, a Íosa.

*FR Murphy side eyes fr Smith*

*Hymn ends, and father smith stands tall as if waiting for applause and for the next song.. Fr. Murphy whispering sternly...*

**FR MURPHY:** Thank you Fr.. If you wouldn't mind assisting with the communion.

*Fr smith looks offended by Fr Murphy "ruining" his moment, but bucks up and puts on his show face*

*Bridie walks onto stage - breaks the third wall*

**BRIDIE:** Oh excuse me, terrible rude to arrive late to a funeral I know, lets just say I was caught up with one of my jobs. "Cleaning up the community" you might say. Now don't confuse me with that Tidy Towns crowd ... no I'm more of a one woman show, taking care of more delicate matters. Right, I better keep quiet .....looks like the eulogy is about to start.

**FR MURPHY:** As Doreen doesn't have any family, it falls to me to say a few words.

**FR. SMITH:** (*interrupts*) I will be also be adding some words of solace for my flock, to bring comfort at this very difficult time. (*Gestures piously*)

*Both priests scowl at each other*

**FR. MURPHY** Doreen McCarthy was born and raised here in this village, spent her life here, dedicated to this church she was, at mass every morning. Doreen had a great faith in our Lord, she was a big fan of Our Lady. Always here tackling the day to day practical things, she felt it was her duty to show the younger people how things were done. She was fastidious in her cleanliness, the church was always sparkling. Yes indeed, a stalwart, a good and kind woman and she will be missed.

*Bridie speaks to audience*

**BRIDIE:** Oh we've started lying already, I see. You know I never quite understood why we lie about the dead ... "a good and kind woman" No, I've never in all my years seen Doreen express any human decency or kindness, (*Pause*)..... clean alright though, I'll give her that.

**FR MURPHY: :** We will finish here now and commence to the graveyard for the burial, anyone who might like a cup of tea afterwards is very welcome to join us in the presbytery.

*The congregations stands to leave when Fr Smith speaks,*

**FR. SMITH:** Indeed, I might add a few words .... I am so aware that in difficult times, you need the leadership and council of a trusted man of the cloth. I know this community has been rocked over the past few months, we've lost a number of our congregation suddenly. Today we remember them too, Anthony O' Shea, Margaret O' Sullivan and Padraig Clancy, all active members of the church. So please know that you are free to stay and talk with me, to seek guidance and any help I can give.

*Fr Smith is staring at Bridie, Bridie has her head bowed and is pretending to pray whilst keeping an eye on him.*

I'll be here for anyone who needs me and for anyone who wishes for time to reflect, there is a spot to the right hand side of the alter, near Our Lady.

The mass has ended, go in peace to love and serve the Lord (*arms outstretched and looking up the the heavens*)

*The congregation files out behind the coffin, nobody remains to talk with Fr Smith , who then calls Bridie.*

**FR. SMITH:** Bridie, Bridie, BRIDIE....

*Bridie turns reluctantly*

**FR. SMITH:** I might have a quick word with you..

**BRIDIE:** Yes Father, what can I do for you, I'm in a slight rush today..

**FR. SMITH:** I won't keep you long Bridie, it's just dawned on me, the coincidences. You seem to have been close by for many of these recent deaths. I hadn't twigged until today, I know you had mentioned you had just missed Doreen in the church that day, but Pascal happened to see you coming out of the church just before he found Doreen.

**BRIDIE:** Oh. Right, well you know Father, I don't like to be centre stage, I'm more of a behind the scenes lady. Sure we know Pascal only loves a bit of the limelight and I wouldn't be snatching that away from him. Sure if you're dead, you're dead. Isn't that it.

**FR. SMITH:** And your sure she was dead Bridie, no need to check a pulse or call the emergency services?.

**BRIDIE:** I was sure enough Father.

**FR. SMITH:** I was thinking that alright. Well we'll say no more about that Bridie for now. But sure, I might call.

**BRIDIE:** Right Father, mind yourself now.

**ACT I****SCENE 3**

*Scene opens up on old Irish living room and kitchen*

*Bridie walks in the back door , dressed in all black*

*She walks over to the fireplace to warm her hands, an image of the sacred heart can be seen over the fireplace. It has memorial cards tucked into the frame. Bridie takes a mass card out of her purse and tucks it into the sacred heart frame.*

**BRIDIE:**                    There you go Doreen, safe and sound.

*Bridie turns around and starts speaking to audience*

**BRIDIE:**                    Oh, fancy bumping into you again. Can I get anyone a cup of tea, something nice with it? No?, suit yourselves. I'm just back from Doreen McCarthy's funeral, t'was a desperate desperate loss. Actually I -

*Doorbell*

**BRIDIE:**                    One moment my dears

*Goes to open the door*

**BRIDIE:**                    *(forced enthusiastic voice)* Ah Fr. Smithhh, lovely to see you.....again  
*(brief look to audience)*

**FR. SMITH::**                *(upbeat)* Bridie, Birdie.... How are you keeping? I wanted to .... am check in with you, yes, after the funeral, and oh -

*Peeps past Bridie to see fresh scones on the table, leans closer as to walk past her, Bridie holds her place.*

**FR. SMITH:**                I see you've made your famous scones.. hmmm, you know Bridie, tis said you make the best scones in the parish and...

*Fr Smith inching his way through the door*

**BRIDIE:**                    Father?

**FR. SMITH:**                Yes Bridie?

*Bridie through gritted teeth*

**BRIDIE:**                    Would you like to come in?

*Fr Smith almost tramples her*

**FR. SMITH:**                Oh, well I'd be delighted, only if it's no trouble , I wouldn't want to impose, but I'm sure you could do with someone, a bit of support, that's why I'm here in fact! Yes, anything I can do for my parishioners,

I'll always be here, you know that. You might have something to get off your chest?

*Bridie shows Fr Smith in and taking a deep breath, shows him to the table*

**BRIDIE:** Tea Father?

**FR. SMITH:** Oh now I couldn't say no to that.

*Bridie sets about making the tea. Fr. Smith has a nose about the table while Bridie is making the tea, he smells the flowers, notices the card and opens it. He reads "Doreen" on the card and his eyebrows shoot up. He reaches for a small notebook and thumbs through it to see Bridie's list, Reading the names he begins to smile. This is his evidence..*

*Bridie gives Fr. Smith his tea*

**BRIDIE:** So Father, you were saying, you're awful cut up over poor Doreen, *(gets her own tea, while next lines are said. Her back is turned to Fr. Smith)* the poor old soul, at peace now, is the only way we can look at it.

*Fr Smith reads from the notebook, accusatory tone.*

**FR. SMITH::** Anthony O' Shea  
Margaret O' Sullivan  
Padraig Clancy  
Doreen McCarthy

*Bride turns around slowly*

**BRIDIE:** Terrible Father, just tragic, all those poor souls..

**FR. SMITH:** Bridie, Lets be frank, we both know these people were problematic in a various ways, Anthony O Shea was a violent man at home, a saint in church of course, and the others, a plethora of wickedness, Clancy couldn't be trusted around young women, Margaret was vicious beneath all that community work. I think we both know you're involved somehow.

**BRIDIE:** Father, I don't know what you're insinuating, I....

**FR. SMITH:** Bridie, let's say no more, you can count on me to leave sleeping dogs lie.

*Bridie steals herself to hear what's coming next.*

*Fr Smith is smiling now, tucking into a second scone and leaning forward.*

**FR. SMITH:** Do you know Bridie, I do believe you could help me out in return, we both know Doreen was bad to the bone, not a loss, no indeed. One

might see it as progress in fact. Protecting the parishioners really. There'll be no more bullying in the choir and that poor young girl, Brenda, tormented she was, a good girl really, doing her best on her own with that child, Doreen was relentless with her,.

Now.. I forget myself, really what I'm coming to is the parish, the church, our church, badly in need of a shake up, stuck in the old ways, ye need some young blood (*pause*) .....someone with a bit of vision to take things forward, bring back a bit of the pizzaz. Yes yes, I think it's time.

**BRIDIE:** Father.. I'm a bit lost, what is it exactly I can do for you. As I said, I'm a behind the scenes woman. I'm no young blood.

**FR. SMITH:** Bridie, me... I'm the young blood. Look Fr. Murphy, he's past his best, losing it really, not quite right in the head, losing the marbles honestly., It would be an ease to him. Look I'll say no more Bridie. (*Fr Smith stands to leave and gestures to the flowers*) Fond of the flowers I see, sure I might send on a bunch from the presbytery garden some day.

**BRIDIE:** Fr Murphy's garden?

*Fr Smith standing at the doorway*

**FR. SMITH::** Indeed.

*and closes door immediately after he says the final line*

**ACT I****SCENE 4**

*Scene opens on Bridie watching an episode of Coronation Street on the TV*

*Bridie yelling advice at the tv*

**BRIDIE:** Don't give him an inch girl..., mark my word..... I'd straighten him right out..

*Door bell rings*

*Bridie aggressively pauses the tv*

**BRIDIE:** Ahhh, just when Gail was about to spill the beans...

*Bridie walks over to door and opens it to fresh flowers on the door mat*

**BRIDIE:** Oh I see, another customer

*Bridie picks up flowers and smells them*

**BRIDIE:** Just lovely aren't they .. *(to audience)*

*Bridie's face drops as she reads the name on the card.*

**BRIDIE:** Fr. Murphy..

*She bring in the beautiful flowers, hydrangias from Fr, Murphy's own garden.*

*She puts them in a vase, replacing the old bouquet, removes the card and pops it into the range, watching it flame, and drops Doreen's flowers into the bin. Bridie is downcast.*

**ACT I****SCENE 5**

*Bridie enters the confessional box, the grid opens and Bridie begins ...*

**BRIDIE:** Bless me Father for I have sinned. Its been 63 years, 5 months and 2 days since my last confession.

**FR. SMITH:** Welcome my child, well now, that is quite some time, we may be here for awhile.

**BRIDIE:** No Father, this one will be quick enough. It's not quite a sin, not yet anyhow. Fr. I've been having some difficult thoughts. I have plans to do harm to a man of the cloth. He's standing in the way of the church, causing a nuisance and he's probably doing more harm than good but I'm conflicted.

**FR. SMITH:** Yes Br... I mean my child, I hear you, what is the nature of this conflict? Anything you tell me here is confidential, the seal of confession is absolute. I can absolve you of any sins going forward. That is essential to remember.

**BRIDIE:** Father, I'm acting for the good of the church but at a great cost to a man who wishes to remain here with us, he feels he has a lot to offer and he's doing his best.

**FR. SMITH:** Do what has to be done my child, follow your instructions, the church is mightier than any one man, the good of the church, the work of god is the righteous path. Remove this stain from our flock, make way for the chosen one, the new blood ... for your penance, continue your works on behalf of this church, support you brothers in the church and say a few Hail Marys.

**BRIDIE:** O my God, I'm heartily sorry for having offended thee. I detest my sins above every other evil, for they displease thee my God, who for thy infinite goodness art so deserving of all my love and I firmly resolve by thy holy grace, never more to offend thee. Amen

**FR. SMITH:** Go my child, you have been freed from your sin, go in peace, do your best and sin no-more.

**BRIDIE:** Thanks Father, Thanks be to God

**ACT I****SCENE 6**

*A knock is heard on the presbytery door, Fr. Murphy shuffles to the door and is delighted to see Bridie.*

**FR MURPHY:** Bridie, it's good to see you, do come in, I'm only delighted you called actually, I'm a bit rattled to be honest, a bit worried about the young fella.

**BRIDIE:** Fr, hello, Thank you, I'd love to come in, I've a bit of business to attend to in fact, something to check off the list.

**FR MURPHY:** Ah sure Bridie, come on in, that's what we are here for, come in and I'll get the kettle on.

**BRIDIE:** Do you know what Fr, let me do it, actually I brought over your favourite scones, something small for the cup of tea.

**FR MURPHY:** Bless you Bridie, ya know, the young fella would love one, he's a pain in the arse, but ah, he's down in himself, something not quite right about him the past few days. The bottom line is.... He's being nice to me. So enough said, there's something wrong with one of us (*pause*) and it isn't me. Probably all the pressure of the fancy sermons or the "messages from God". (*Fr Murphy gestures the inverted commas and looks up to heaven*) Look, I hate to speak badly of him, he has great faith, but even I recognise when enough is enough, we can't be witnessing daily miracles and have god talking through us for every mass, God's a busy man Bridie.

*Bridie to the audience - not heard by Fr Murphy*

**BRIDIE:** She is...

**FR MURPHY:** I'd say a bit of a holiday, a bit of a break, that's what's needed.

*The door opens and Fr. Smith rushes in,...*

**FR. SMITH:** Bridie, Jesus Christ.... Oh hello Fr Murphy, you're still...you're here.

*Fr Murphy whispers to Bridie only*

**FR MURPHY:** See what I mean, something off there.

*Loudly to Fr. Smith*

**FR MURPHY:** Fr Smith, how are you keeping, look just on time, Bridie has landed with the famous scones, sit down young man, grab a pew as they say, join us for some tea and a scone. You've been under pressure, take a bit of time out now and I'll look after the mass later on. Take your ease for the day. You're in the for the long haul young fella, a long life of service ahead. Its a marathon as they say.

**FR. SMITH:** Fr, I, I, I'm not sure... I don't really have the time, I thought you might be gone... out I mean

*Wiping his forehead with the back of his hand, he steals a meaningful look at Bridie*

**BRIDIE:** Fr Smith, sit, down, Fr Murphy is right, take a break there, look, why don't you get that special

jam I made for you, (*gives him a meaningful look*) from the bag. Myself and Fr Murphy are going for the blackcurrant, its our favourite, grab the jar there yourself and you can enjoy the .....gooseberry.

**FR. SMITH:** Ah, yes, I see, of course, Bridie, thank you.

**FR MURPHY:** That's the good man.

**BRIDIE:** While I have you both here Fathers, I have a bit of business to mention, I have some money I've acquired to donate to the church. I don't need the money myself, perhaps it would offer some comfort to a few of the spouses and children of the recently deceased. They are likely struggling financially, we might get the money back to them.... I mean **to** them.

**FR. SMITH:** (*Stuttering*) Righttttt Bridie, that's an incredible gesture..

**FR MURPHY:** Bridie, are you sure you don't need that money yourself?

**BRIDIE:** I'm very sure Fr., now, let's tuck in to the scones.....

*Fr Smith looks up to heaven and blesses himself*

*Bridie pours the tea and sets out the scones, Fr Smith is watching carefully as Bridie offers a scone to Fr. Murphy, she then takes one herself before offering one to Fr. Smith. Fr. Smith grabs for the gooseberry jam and offers the Blackcurrant to Fr. Murphy. Bridie declines the jam and butters her scone.*

**FR MURPHY:** Thanks my boy, this would heal the soul.

**FR. SMITH. :** *Bless us O Lord and these, thy gifts, which we are about to receive from thy bounty. Through Jesus Christ our lord. Amen*

**ALL: :** Amen

*Fr Murphy and Fr. Smith bite into the scones and Bridie has a nibble at hers, she pours a hot drop for the men, Fr. Smith can't take his eyes off of Fr. Murphy, he devours the scone nervously.*

*Bridie puts a hand out for the jam*

**FR MURPHY:** Bridie, go on, have the jam, t's heavenly altogether.

*Fr. Smith reaches out, getting to his feet*

**FR. SMITH:**            \*spluttering out crumbs\* ah Bridie, watch out..

*Bridie spoons the blackcurrant jam on to the scone and brings it to her mouth... pausing*

*Fr. Smith keels over*

**BRIDIE:**                I really shouldn't Fr, the sugar'd kill you.....but it's divine.

**The End**

Bridie: 70- 80, elderly lady, Irish, rural, lives alone, quick witted, clever, easy going and keeps things simple. Kind in general but also a hit woman.

Fr. Smith: Priest, suspiciously young, delusional, pious, makes up miracles and signs, “cool” - down the kids, the killer singing voice is his secret weapon. feud with the older parish priest (Fr Murphy) . Ends up being Bridie’s next customer.

Fr. Murphy: priest, Old, traditional, kind, stuck in his ways, he is the fly in the ointment of Fr Smith, loves to be minded, fond of Bridie, hasn’t a note in his head

Doreen McCarthy: Dead. Holy, oblivious to the threat, a do-gooder on the outside but nasty to anyone she does not approve of, biggoted, spiteful, clean.

# Even Numbers

By Eimear

*The three friends: Mia, Jack and Daniel are all going on a train from Cork to Dublin. Mia and Daniel are sitting next to each other and Jack is sitting across from them.*

JACK: Here lads I'm actually buzzed to see them live, uh it's gonna be so good.

DANIEL: Ye have yer tickets yeah?

MIA: Yeah I do.

JACK: Obviously I have my ticket, could you be excited for once?

*He pushes his shoulder.*

DANIEL: No I am really, it will be fun...yeah. A good atmosphere y'know.

JACK: YEAAH! Now that's the spirit.

*Beat*

JACK: Y'know what I think?

*He doesn't wait for a response.*

JACK: This will be a good break for us.

DANIEL: What do you mean a break?

*Jack throws his hands in the air sarcastically as if to say it was obvious.*

JACK: I think we have all worked really hard this year and we need a bit of a reward to keep us going.

MIA: We did fuck all this year.

JACK: Ok then, a reward for doing the Junior Cert.

MIA: You haven't opened a book since Christmas of first year.

JACK: Bit unnecessary Mia, I won't lie- that hurt.

*He touches his heart sarcastically.*

JACK: Ok what about this: this is like our final hurrah before digging into the Leaving.

*Beat.*

JACK: I mean like before the summer, like this is our last big thing before the Leaving not counting this summer.

*Beat*

JACK: Well apart from summer after fifth year either, or like anything else we do in the meantime.

*Beat*

JACK: Ok then, despite yer bad moods for no reason, even though I'm so uplifting, I will not let ye bog me down. I've been looking forward to this since January.

MIA: I'm not in a bad mood, I'm looking forward to it.

JACK: Alright, alright. I'll believe it when I see it.

*Beat*

JACK: Guys I have a great idea but it's too late now.

MIA: What?

JACK: We could have made t-shirts with a letter on each to spell out a word so that they could read the word from the stage. Ugh I wish I thought of it earlier.

DANIEL: That's so stupid, you could only use three letters. And no one would see it.

JACK: Yea so?

*Jack becomes quite defensive.*

MIA: What brilliant word could we have chosen?

JACK: Well I dunno, something cool.

MIA: Hmm, like 'the'.

JACK: No not like/

MIA: / 'and', 'man', 'cat'?

JACK: Ok ok I/

MIA: / maybe something a bit more modern? 'Zap', 'wig', 'bam'. Or maybe just the word 'gay'. Hmm? Ruffle a few feathers. Really catch out those homophobes.

JACK: You're so mean, I have a nice idea and you all just...

*Jack throws his hands up in exasperation.*

*The lights fade and then re appear to signify time has passed.*

*Mia looks up all of a sudden as if something has occurred to her.*

MIA: You said you'd sort out drink for tonight Jack.

JACK: Yes and don't worry I have things sorted.

DANIEL: Where is it then?

*Daniel says this in an accusatory tone.*

JACK: I said I'd sort it and what have I done? Sorted it. Do ye have no faith in me?

MIA: Ok but like where is it?

JACK: I'll buy it when we get up there. Conor left his wallet lying around and I nabbed his student ID card.

*Beat*

JACK: Well I'll give it back like... after we /

MIA: That's not the fucking issue.

DANIEL: Have you seen your brother?

JACK: Yes, I've seen my brother.

DANIEL: Hang on, hang on, have you seen yourself in like a mirror or a photo or /

MIA: / I actually wonder about you sometimes Jack.

JACK: Yea, I know that's what you're doing, thinking about me all day every day.

*Jack blows a kiss mockingly*

*Mia and Jack both laugh.*

JACK: Alright, alright have a look.

*He produces the card and hands it to them.*

*They both laugh.*

JACK: Like I know it's not perfect but maybe if you squint or like if I change my hair a bit.

MIA: It's more likely a toddler would get served than you.

JACK: Alright I'll admit it, I might have fucked it up.

DANIEL: What about your sister Mia, could she get it for us?

MIA: She'd have to remove the stick from her hole first.

DANIEL: Nice of her to let us stay though.

MIA: My mom practically begged her, nah if we're getting it we'll have to find another way.

JACK: Dan, didn't your dad buy you Smirnoff for Mia's birthday?

DANIEL: Yea so?

MIA: Well that's not really gonna help us now we have already left so let's just move /

JACK: / Ok it was just out of interest, anyway we should have thought of a plan B, we'd never run out of drink in your house!

*Mia shoots Jack a warning look*

JACK: Lighten up, it was a joke. You can laugh at them and once in a while even make them.

MIA: Jack leave it.

DANIEL: Well maybe I would if /

*All of a sudden a ticket inspector walks up to them.*

TICKET INSPECTOR: Tickets please.

*Mia gets her ticket out from her bag and Daniel gets it out of his pocket and they both hand it to him.*

*Beat*

TICKET INSPECTOR: Yours son?

*Jack is rooting through his pockets.*

JACK: Uhh.

DANIEL: Come on, where is it?

JACK: It must have fell on the floor or something.

*He looks down under his seat but doesn't find it.*

TICKET INSPECTOR: If you don't have your ticket you have to get off at the next stop.

JACK: Look I have it alright, I just can't seem to find it.

DANIEL: Check your pockets.

JACK: I've CHECKED my pockets.

DANIEL: Well check them again for Christ's sake.

*He finally pulls the ticket from his pocket and hands it to the inspector, the inspector walks away.*

DANIEL: Jesus Jack you could have gotten yourself kicked off the train.

JACK: Yeah well I didn't so it's all grand.

DANIEL: Yeah well that's not the /

JACK: Do you have any more chocolate?

*The lights fade to signify more time passing.*

MIA: If you could only watch either like, films or TV shows, which would it be?

JACK: Easy...films.

MIA: Really?

JACK: Yea there are more great films then there are great TV shows.

MIA: Nah, there are loads of great TV shows and you get way more of them.

JACK: What do you think?

*Jack looks at Daniel*

*Danail Looks at them and sighs.*

DANIEL: I'm going to the bathroom.

*He gets up and leaves.*

JACK: Is he odd with me or something?

MIA: No he isn't.

JACK: Well... there's something...definitely something up with him.

MIA: Well no shit!

JACK: Well can you tell me what it is?

*She stays quiet.*

JACK: What did he say to you?

MIA: Nothing.

JACK: Mia, if you know something you have to tell me.

MIA: I don't.

JACK: Come on.

MIA: Ok even if I do, its personal to Daniel and if he didn't tell you himself then maybe /

JACK: / Maybe what?

MIA: Maybe take a hint.

JACK: What do you mean?

MIA: Just be a bit more sensitive about what you say around him that's all like.

*Beat*

JACK: Is this about the thing that happened with you and me?

MIA: What?

JACK: At your birthday?

MIA: Of course it's not about that, Jesus.

JACK: Ok ok.

*Beat*

JACK: I was just wondering if he like felt left out or something.

MIA: Why would you even think that? There is nothing to be left out from. We talked about it and you said // Did you find them?

*In her last statement she addresses Daniel who has just come back.*

DANIEL: *(sarcastically)* Nah, I wandered around for a while just for fun.

*The lights dim and reappear signifying more time has passed.*

*Mia looks at her watch.*

MIA: Not long left, about half an hour.

DANIEL: Thank God, I feel a bit sick.

JACK: Well maybe chatting will take your mind off it.

*Daniel glares at him.*

MIA: Isn't it weird that like six months ago we didn't even speak to each other, and now look at us.

JACK: Feeling sentimental?

MIA: Ah you know what I mean.

JACK: Yea, yea. Well ye're stuck with me now so, tough luck.

*Mia speaks directly to Daniel who is looking out the window.*

MIA: There's no losing him now.

DANIEL: I suppose not.

*Jack bursts out into intense fake laughter and then stops abruptly.*

JACK: Alright, alright I'm a bit chatty sometimes.

MIA: Oh well that's putting it lightly. *(She laughs)*

JACK: You're very funny. But at the end of the day, I go to bed and I didn't date Sean O'Brien, for what was it? Like half a year.

MIA: *(laughing)* That one cut deep, we all make mistakes, like your haircut.

JACK: What do you mean my haircut? It's cool.

DANIEL: It is not cool, it's a mullet.

JACK: It's sexy.

DANIEL: My mom had one in the 80s.

JACK: You're proving my point there Dan...sexy. That's one thing me and your mom have in common.

*Beat*

JACK: What? He can dish it but he can't take it.

*Beat*

JACK: That actually reminds me, I haven't seen her around in a while, can you invite us over for dinner one of the days?

*Beat*

JACK: She's like a chef or baker or something is it? Here why are ye both just looking at me, I'm not being funny or anything, I'm genuinely asking.

*Daniel sighs.*

JACK: Has someone like chopped off yeer tongues?

DANIEL: Well the /

MIA: / You don't have to, if you don't want to.

JACK: Have to what?

DANIEL: It's grand. So you might as well know Jack.

JACK: Is this to do with what you were on about earlier Mia?

DANIEL: Well the thing is with my mam, is that she moved out.

JACK: What? Where?

DANIEL: I don't know, I got home from school last week and she was gone.

JACK: Did your dad go with her?

DANIEL: No, no they're uh separated now actually.

JACK: Oh God, I'm so sorry.

*Beat*

JACK: To be honest I'm a little relieved.

MIA: What did you just say?!

JACK: Ah here, you know I'm not relieved that it's happening I'm just glad there's nothing up with us or anything.

MIA: I can't believe you, you are so /

DANIEL: Leave it.

*Mia turns towards Daniel, a little shocked.*

MIA: What? I'm on your side.

JACK: I'm on your side as well.

MIA: Oh shut up, he doesn't want /

DANIEL: / I don't need you to speak for me.

MIA: Why are you getting mad at me... I'm defending you 'cause you're too scared to do it yourself.

*Daniel raises his voice to match the others. He turns towards Mia.*

DANIEL: Just because I don't want to bother myself with unnecessary arguments doesn't mean I'm all scared.

JACK: Yea, exactly. He can speak for himself.

*He directs himself towards Jack.*

DANIEL: Fuck off. You're being so selfish. I have a real issue but everything's all about you. Well I'm so fucking tired of it.

*Beat*

JACK: I shouldn't have said all those stupid things. Here -I'm really sorry.

DANIEL: It's grand, don't worry.

MIA: Yea I'm sorry as well.

*Mia gives Daniel a hug.*

DANIEL: That's ok.

*They all sit in silence for a while.*

JACK: Here, I'm sorry you like felt that you couldn't say this sorta thing to me, like I know I can be all // or sometimes say things that are // but I'm here.

*The doors of the train close at the second last stop before their final destination.*

DANIEL: Yea, thanks.

*A small old man walks by them. He looks at the open seat next to Jack.*

OLD MAN: Do ye mind if I sit here?

MIA: No, not at all.

*They all adjust themselves and Mia moves her bag off the seat.*

*The old man sits down and lets out a sigh of relief.*

*Beat.*

*He speaks towards Jack*

OLD MAN: You're looking very smart son, I like your haircut. My wife had that same one when we first started dating

*They all laugh a bit.*

‘LOVE IS LIKE THE WIND’

Kellie-Anne

Characters:

ELSIE (*female, elderly*)

SCARLETT (*female, in her thirties*)

LARRY (*male, in his thirties*)

*This is the living room of a very untidy house. There are photos of a very obese ginger cat on the wall. There is also a photo of SCARLETT and her husband. There is a small coffee table and a sofa in centrestage. ELSIE sits on the couch next to SCARLETT.*

*The scene opens mid-conversation. SCARLETT's husband left her a couple of weeks ago, and she's sharing her feelings with ELSIE.*

SCARLETT: I guess I just miss him, you know? I can't believe I could just wake up one day to a note on the pillow, and that's it. He's gone off with another woman.

ELSIE: I know how empty you must be feeling. I felt the same way when your father died. (*She pats SCARLETT's arm sympathetically*).

SCARLETT: But it was different for you. You and Dad loved each other dearly. He never would've left you. I just can't understand how suddenly it all happened. My time with Paul seems like a flash, like as if one moment we hooked up -

ELSIE (*interrupting*): Don't use that awful phrase!

SCARLETT (*sheepishly*): Sorry. What I mean is that one moment we were happy in love, and I thought it'd last forever. I really, really did Mum.

ELSIE: I know, love.

SCARLETT: And maybe, if I'd done things differently -

ELSIE (*cutting across her*): Don't think like that!

SCARLETT: But if I had, then maybe -

ELSIE (*sympathetically*): Paul was never a long-term guy. He never would have settled down, no matter what you did.

SCARLETT (*sadly*): I guess. It's just that...well...

ELSIE: Yes?

SCARLETT: I don't know how to go on. Every memory in that house - our house...every time I walk in the front door, I'm waiting for him to say "hello" and ask me how my day was. The house used to be so warm and now...now it's just cold. Silent. Empty. It's lonely, Mum. I'm lonely.

*Beat.*

ELSIE (*thoughtfully*): Do you remember that book of French proverbs I used to read to you as a child?

SCARLETT (*confused*): Yeah, I - I think so.

ELSIE (*sighing blissfully*): Out of all those proverbs, one always stood out to me. Do you remember what it was?

SCARLETT: Um...(*She thinks for a moment*). Yes. It was 'l'amour est comme le vent, nous ne savons pas d'où il vient.' But what does that have to do with me and Paul?

ELSIE: That proverb translates to 'love is like the wind, we never know where it will come from.' What I mean is that love can come from the unlikeliest of places, from people we never imagined cared for us.

SCARLETT (*strained*): Look, Mum. That's nice and all. But life isn't like that. We're not living in a fairytale. There's no handsome suitor coming to my rescue. (*Throws her head back against the couch*). And I think I just need to accept that.

ELSIE (*mysteriously*): I don't know about that, love. I think you'll find someone else soon. (*Pause. ELSIE smiles to herself*). Maybe sooner than you think.

*Beat.*

SCARLETT (*blinking*): Wait. What?

ELSIE (*getting up, dismissively*): Never you mind. Would you like some tea?

*SCARLETT is confused but brushes it off. ELSIE exits. SCARLETT glances at the table and sees that there are three mugs on it.*

SCARLETT: Wait - why are there three mugs out?

ELSIE (*from offstage*): What was that, love?

*The doorbell rings.*

SCARLETT (*loud enough for ELSIE to hear offstage*): Nothing - er Mum, who's that?

*The audience can hear the sound of a door being opened.*

ELSIE (*ushering someone inside from offstage*): Come in before you die of the cold!

SCARLETT (*calling*): Mum, were you expecting someone? I can go if you want.

*SCARLETT starts to get up. The sound of ELSIE's footsteps can be heard approaching the living room door alongside the thudding of boots. ELSIE enters with LARRY, who is wearing a pair of dirt-encrusted overalls. SCARLETT gives ELSIE a questioning look but sits back down. ELSIE merely smiles. Her face is bright.*

ELSIE (*pleased*): Scarlett, this is Larry, my plumber.

SCARLETT (*blinking*): Your plumber?

LARRY (*grinning*): Hello, lovely to meet you!

SCARLETT (*utterly bewildered*): Uh...hello?

*SCARLETT gives ELSIE a strange look, to which ELSIE smiles mysteriously.*

LARRY (*brightly*): So where's this leaking pipe?

SCARLETT (*baffled*): Leaking pipe?

ELSIE (*dismissively*): Don't you mind that now. (*To LARRY*) Sit yourself down there. I'll go and put the kettle on. I just made a fresh batch of chocolate chip cookies!

*SCARLETT is struck dumb as ELSIE leaves. LARRY smiles and sits. The two sit a little apart from each other on the couch. There's an awkward silence for a moment until ELSIE returns with a teapot in one hand and a plate of cookies in the other.*

ELSIE: Scarlett, give me a hand there, good girl.

*SCARLETT gets up and crosses the room so that she's standing between LARRY and ELSIE. She takes the plate of cookies from ELSIE. On seeing her return, LARRY stands.*

LARRY: They look positively scrumptious Elsie, but I'd better pop off to fix this leaking pipe or you'll have a small flood on your hands!

*SCARLETT glances at ELSIE, looking confused and a little nervous.*

ELSIE (*faking confusion*): What pipe?

LARRY (*brightly*): The pipe you called me to fix.

ELSIE (*thoughtfully*): Did I call you? Must've slipped my memory. I'm getting old, dear. (*SCARLETT gives ELSIE a mortified look. ELSIE takes the cookies from SCARLETT and hands them to LARRY*). Would you put those on the table there, love?

*LARRY takes the cookies away, looking a bit confused but happy nonetheless. SCARLETT pulls ELSIE aside.*

SCARLETT (*nervously*): Mum, why did you call your plumber? The pipes are fine.

ELSIE (*trying to look innocent*): Larry's a nice guy.

*There's a short pause. The truth dawns on SCARLETT.*

SCARLETT (*panicked*): Mum, are you trying to hook me up with your plumber?!

ELSIE (*tutting*): I told you to stop using that phrase.

*SCARLETT gives her an incredulous look.*

LARRY: Would you just look at these cookies! You've done it again, Elsie. You're a genius baker!

ELSIE (*pleased*): Why thank you! (*She crosses the room and sits down on his left*). I always loved when my husband used to make them, so I held onto the recipe. You can try one now if you like, but be careful in case they're hot!

LARRY (*reaches for a cookie*): Lovely stuff, thanks!

SCARLETT *is still standing by the door, frozen in shock.*

ELSIE (*smiling brightly*): Come over and try a cookie, Scarlett.

SCARLETT *comes over and sits on ELSIE's left, shaking her head in bewilderment. LARRY eats his cookie during the next few lines of dialogue.*

ELSIE (*to LARRY*): Chocolate chip cookies were always Scarlett's favourite, even when she was tiny! She used to steal them from the tray when she thought I wasn't looking. (*Tutting*). She was such a naughty child!

SCARLETT (*mortified*): Mum!

ELSIE (*turning to SCARLETT in surprise*): What? You were! (*Turning back to LARRY*). Though I'm not one to criticise. I was far worse. (*Laughs*). The stuff Scarlett's father and I used to get up to in our youth!

SCARLETT (*dying of embarrassment*): MUM!

ELSIE (*shrugging*): That's life, Scarlett. I'm sure you and that husband of yours did the same sort of stuff. (*Ignoring Scarlett's furious blushing, ELSIE turns to LARRY*). Though she's not with him any more. She's single as a pringle. And ready to minnnngggle!!

SCARLETT (*putting her head in her hands*): MUM!!!

LARRY *swallows the last of his cookie.*

LARRY (*interestedly*): You left your husband?

SCARLETT: Well, not exact-

ELSIE (*cutting across SCARLETT*): She did. Tragic, isn't it? But she's over him now, aren't you Scarlett?

SCARLETT *looks as if she's about to protest but LARRY gets there first.*

LARRY (*sympathetically*): I'm so sorry to hear that. I hope you're alright.

SCARLETT (*smiling weakly*): Thanks.

ELSIE (*pointing to one of the pictures hanging on the wall*): That's Paul and Scarlett there, in the silver frame.

*ELSIE gets up and passes SCARLETT, making her way over to the picture. In the picture, she's holding a very obese ginger cat. ELSIE points to it and speaks to LARRY.*

ELSIE: This was my cat, Mr. Tibbles. He went everywhere with me when I was younger. Oh, there's one of him on the beach!

*SCARLETT peeks out through the gaps between her fingers.*

SCARLETT (*mortified*): Mum, I don't think Larry wants to hear about your dead cat!

*ELSIE looks wounded.*

LARRY (*trying to make ELSIE feel better*): No, no - I do. I actually think he looks very...um (*he struggles to compliment the dead cat*)...cool.

*ELSIE's eyes light up.*

ELSIE (*pleased*): Thank you, Larry. You really are the loveliest guy.

*ELSIE shoots SCARLETT a triumphant smile on the word "loveliest", to which SCARLETT rolls her eyes. LARRY is glowing from the compliment. ELSIE gets up.*

ELSIE: I must pop off to the loo - don't you two be getting any ideas while I'm gone!

*ELSIE laughs and playfully slaps SCARLETT's knee. SCARLETT looks mortified.*

LARRY (*confused*): Ideas?

ELSIE (*mysteriously*): Just saying!

*ELSIE exits. LARRY smiles at SCARLETT.*

LARRY: You're so lucky to have a mother like Elsie. She's so wonderful.

SCARLETT: I know. She's really sweet, but sometimes she's just a bit (*she gestures into the air, searching for words*)...much.

LARRY (*surprised*): Do you really think so? I'd give anything to have had a mother who talked about me as proudly as Elsie talks about you.

SCARLETT: I guess.

LARRY: She talks about you like you're in the centre of her world.

SCARLETT: Well, I am all she has.

LARRY (*clearing his throat*): Speaking of, actually - there's something I've been meaning to do - well, to ask.

SCARLETT (*confused*): Yeah?

*LARRY rubs the back of his neck awkwardly. SCARLETT gives him a strange look.*

LARRY: So I know this might seem kinda odd, and I know we only met today and everything, and I don't really know you...

SCARLETT (*nervously*): Uh huh...

*LARRY scoots closer to SCARLETT.*

LARRY (*taking SCARLETT's hand*): After today, I know I have to do this. It's what my heart wants. And no matter how afraid I am, I have to take a leap of faith.

*SCARLETT gasps as LARRY takes out a small box from his pocket and opens it, revealing a diamond encrusted ring.*

LARRY (*taking a deep breath*): It's been so hard to work up the courage, but I need to do this. Scarlett Elwood, would you allow me to -

SCARLETT (*standing up*): No! No, I'm sorry. I can't.

*LARRY looks hurt. He gets up and stands beside SCARLETT, pulling her gaze away from the audience.*

LARRY: The heart wants what the heart wants, Scarlett. I need someone to tell me that I'm not crazy; that I can have a shot at love the same as anyone else.

SCARLETT (*mortified*): Look, I'm sorry but I really can't.

LARRY: I really need your support with this.

SCARLETT (*blinking*): My...support?

*Beat. LARRY prepares to say something big.*

LARRY: I'm in love..... (*SCARLETT braces herself*)....with Elsie!

*SCARLETT blinks. Then she blinks again. She can't believe what she's hearing.*

SCARLETT: You - you want to propose to my mother?

LARRY (*nodding seriously*): Yes. But I'm nervous, and well...I need to know: what do you think of the idea?

*SCARLETT looks at him pitifully.*

SCARLETT: Look, you're so sweet, but if there's one thing I know about my mother, it's that -

*ELSIE returns, smiling cheerily. She has another plate of cookies in her hand.*

ELSIE: I'm back, and I come bearing more cookies! You two seem to be getting on like a house on - (*ELSIE breaks off, seeing the ring in LARRY's hand for the first time. She gasps and drops the tin serving plate full of cookies*). Oh my!

*ELSIE grabs SCARLETT's arm excitedly. SCARLETT realises that ELSIE thinks the ring is meant for her and rushes to clear up the confusion.*

SCARLETT (*quickly*): Oh, he's not - we're not -

ELSIE (*dismissively*): Hush now, Scarlett, you're clearly speechless! (*She speaks to LARRY*). Her answer is 'yes' by the way.

*SCARLETT is appalled at this whole scene and again tries to explain the truth to ELSIE.*

SCARLETT: Mum, you really don't understand -

ELSIE (*cheerily*): I understand the mysteries of love, darling!

SCARLETT: But Mum, that's not what he -

ELSIE: Shh, Scar, you're ruining the moment. (*She claps excitedly*). I'll run and get my camera. This is a moment you two love birds will never forget. Back in a tick!

*ELSIE disappears through the door and SCARLETT turns on LARRY, silently demanding to know why he didn't help her explain the situation to ELSIE.*

LARRY (*biting his lip*): I - uh - I probably should've said something, shouldn't I?

SCARLETT (*raising her eyebrows*): Oh, you think, do you?

*LARRY has the decency to look guilty.*

LARRY (*defensively*): Look, it's not exactly easy to propose your love to someone, alright? You have to work at it. And - and I'm not sure I'm ready.

*SCARLETT looks uncomfortable again.*

SCARLETT (*hesitantly*): Just how many times have you brought that ring with you when you came here to clean the pipes?

*LARRY goes red.*

LARRY (*mumbling indistinctly*): Seven.

SCARLETT: Sorry?

*LARRY coughs, looking awkward, and takes a moment before speaking.*

LARRY: Seven.

*SCARLETT looks shocked and LARRY quickly stuffs a cookie from the plate on the table into his mouth.*

SCARLETT (*horrified*): You've tried to propose to my mother seven times?

*LARRY splutters on the cookie and quickly finishes, then takes a long gulp of tea. When he has finished, he wipes his mouth on the back of his sleeve. During all of this, SCARLETT sits down beside him on the couch.*

LARRY (*honestly*): I bring the ring with me whenever I come to clean the pipes. But I haven't been able to work up the courage. (*SCARLETT looks shocked; LARRY becomes defensive*). It's not an easy thing to work into conversation, alright? What am I supposed to do, just go up to her and say, "hey Elsie, I've been fixing your pipes for two years now, and I've come to really enjoy your company. I really like you, and I was wondering...would you marry me?"

*LARRY leans back into the couch defeatedly. The ring box is still open in his hand. SCARLETT leans forward and gently closes the lid.*

SCARLETT (*awkwardly*): Larry, in all honesty...I just don't think Mom wants to remarry.

*LARRY immediately leans up again.*

LARRY: But - but she's always so kind to me. She treats me like I'm more than just her plumber. (*He gestures to the plate of cookies*). She bakes me cookies, for goodness sake!

SCARLETT (*slowly*): Well...she does the same thing for her electrician. It's a kind of repayment. Mum always says that cash doesn't count half as much as a -

LARRY: - kind act or a kind word. See, I do know her, just as well as you do!

SCARLETT (*gently*): Have you two ever met up, outside of when you visit to clean the pipes?

*Beat.*

LARRY (*defensively*): Well, not exactly. But still -

SCARLETT (*interrupting*): Have you even tried asking her out before trying to marry her?

LARRY (*spluttering*): You know Elsie! She likes things to be spontaneous and (*he leans towards SCARLETT and waggles his eyebrows in an attempt to seem cool*) romantic.

SCARLETT (*pushing him away*): OK, Larry. First of all, please don't ever do...whatever that was...ever again. And second, it's sweet - if a little weird - that you've got the hots for my mum. (*She takes his hand*). But you have to understand that Mum never got over my dad's death.

*LARRY shrugs SCARLETT off and stands.*

LARRY: No...I don't think so. She's never regretful when she talks about him, and that was so many years ago.

*SCARLETT gets up and takes his shoulder.*

SCARLETT: If there's one thing I know about my mother, it's that she's a hopeless romantic. You've seen the way she reacted when she thought you proposed to me! *(She sits down and gently drags LARRY down too so that they're sitting side by side on the couch)*. She still loves my dad. It doesn't matter how many years it's been. To her, love lasts forever, like in a fairytale.

LARRY *(desperately)*: But she called me here today for a social visit! There was no leaking pipe, remember? So she must see me as more than just a face-less plumber. And all those compliments she was giving me, calling me the 'loveliest guy' she knew and all.

SCARLETT *(pitifully, smiling sadly)*: Oh, Larry! She wasn't flirting with you, she was trying to get me to like you. She actually called you here because she was trying to hook the two of us up!

LARRY *(bewildered)*: She - what?

SCARLETT *(gently)*: So if she was trying to put the two of us together, she probably doesn't have feelings for you. I'm sorry, but...she doesn't love you.

*LARRY looks hurt and shocked. There's silence for a moment while he takes in the full gravity of SCARLETT's words.*

LARRY: Please...don't say that.

SCARLETT: But Larry, you needed to hear it. And I think - I think that might be the reason you haven't proposed even though you carry the ring around. Because deep down, you know I'm right.

LARRY *(strained)*: Please, stop. I can't take any more rejection, alright?

*Pause.*

SCARLETT: What do you mean, "any more"?

*Pause. LARRY sighs.*

LARRY (*pained*): Look...I've never told anyone this, but when I was younger, my dad told me to toughen up. To be manly. My mum went to hospital, but he didn't cry, even as she had all her surgeries. And every time I cried, Dad told me that I shouldn't. Because it would make things harder. He told me to hold in my emotions. But I cried anyway. Because when I feel something - sadness, joy, love - I have to express it. I believed that love was something that shouldn't be a secret, that it should be felt in the heart and expressed with the soul. And over time, my dad came to resent me for it. For still being cheerful. He thought I was carrying on like nothing had ever happened. He didn't stop to think that maybe I was expressing my grief through humour to make it easier. And just when I needed him most, my dad abandoned me.

SCARLETT: Larry...I...That's so...horrible.

LARRY: And you'll never understand what it was like for me. When your father died, I bet Elsie held you every night, and wiped your tears when you cried.

SCARLETT (*guiltily*): Yes. She did.

LARRY: Elsie is kind and caring and honest. I bet she loved you all the more after your dad died. It was different for me. When my mum died, it drove my dad and I apart. You can't understand the pain of losing one parent, only to be rejected by the other. I'm afraid of rejection, Scarlett.

SCARLETT: Larry...my experiences with my parents might not be the same as yours, but that doesn't mean I've never experienced rejection. I feel rejected now, because of Paul. I always told him I loved him, but he never said it back. Ever. And I ignored that. I gave him time. (*Scoffs and walks away from LARRY, towards the couch*). Too much time, apparently. Until he realised what we both always knew deep down; he didn't love me. And then he just...left. (*Flops down onto the couch*).

LARRY (*surprised*): But - but Elsie said *you* left *him*!

SCARLETT (*wiping an invisible speck of dust off herself to avoid looking at LARRY*): Yeah, well. Mum likes to pretend I'm "independent" and "strong."

LARRY (*sitting down beside her and taking her hand*): You are strong! You gave him Paul a chance, a chance clearly longer than he deserved. The fact that you waited for those three little words makes you strong. Stronger than you know.

*Pause.*

SCARLETT (*smiling, shaking her head*): Look at us - we're pathetic! Reminiscing about the people who never loved us. They don't matter, OK? We need to focus on the here and now.

*Beat. The two stare at each other for a moment.*

LARRY (*softly, squeezing SCARLETT's fingers*): Yeah, I think we should. Maybe without Elsie...without Paul...there's still a chance that love can come from somewhere. '*L'amour est comme le vent*', as Elsie once said to me. It translates to -

*SCARLETT recognises the proverb and says the translation at the same time as LARRY.*

SCARLETT & LARRY (*smiling, holding hands*): Love is like the wind.

*ELSIE re-enters, clutching the book of French proverbs she discussed with SCARLETT earlier to her heart. SCARLETT and LARRY are too absorbed in each other's gaze to notice her. ELSIE turns to the audience and tilts her head in SCARLETT and LARRY's direction, smiling smugly.*

# The Objection

## Scene 1

*Kathryn is helping Beth get ready for her wedding and they can both feel something off in the air*

**Kathryn-** Up or down ? I think up-

**Beth-** I think be blessed I'm letting you do my hair instead of getting a professional-

**Kathryn -** Shut up , I'm as good as professional-

*Beth hums*

**Beth -** Up I think, I'm having a good side profile day-

*Kathryn rolls her eyes knowing even if this was her wedding all eyes would still be glued to Beth*

**Kathryn-** you always have a good profile and you know it-

**Beth-** I Know but - it's nice hearing people say it again-

*Kathryn tugs playfully at her hair*

**Kathryn-** I think I saw Jacks plus one-

**Beth-** He wasn't joking?

**Kathryn-** Obviously not , she looks .... well-

*Beth tries to compose her laughter in a very indiscreet way*

**Beth-** Stop, seriously-

**Kathryn-** Okay okay , sorry , this is your day, I'll give you this-

**Beth -** Good good-

*Kathryn continues doing her hair concentrating and Beth lets out a shaky sigh*

**Kathryn-** Hes going to love everything Beth, Jesus how could he not-

**Beth-**No I know I know-

**Kathryn-** He better cry-

**Beth-** I can bet you he won't-

**Kathryn-** I owe abbie a fiver-

*Beth brings her hand behind her as she's still getting her hair done to pinch whatever of Kathryn is available to her*

**Kathryn-** Fuck off-

*Kathryn wants to but can't drop her hands to pinch her right back and Beth smiles with satisfaction*

*The room is silent for some time, both of them preparing for the event to come*

**Kathryn-** Do we think he got you anything nice ?-

**Beth-** Nice ?-

**Kathryn-** Like a gift .. or something-

**Beth-** He doesn't think about things like that ..-

**Kathryn-** Oh come on he'll get you something-

**Beth-** He won't-

**Kathryn-** Will-

**Beth-** Wont-

**Kathryn-** Will-

**Beth -** Can we stop-

**Kathryn-** .... Stop what ?-

*Beth ducks from under Kathryn's arms as she was just fixing her veil , and heads for the door*

**Kathryn-** Where are you going ? Beth ?-

**Beth-** I'm leaving - I suppose-

**Kathryn** - You suppose ? You suppose he might have something to say ? He won't let you take off. He likes you way too much for that runaway bride shit-.

**Beth**- What do you expect me to do-

**Kathryn**- I dunno?, get married...you love him don't you ?-

*Beth looks to the floor in deafening silence and Kathryn takes her veil of*

**Kathryn**- Go then.-

*She gestures to the door*

**Beth**- What will you tell him ?-

**Kathryn** - Nothing at all , your job to explain

**Beth** - I can't-

**Kathryn** - Can but won't-

*Beth waits in the doorway leaning back and forth toward being in the room or out*

**Beth**-Tell me I'm being reasonable-

**Kathryn**-Mom says never to tell lies-

**Beth**- Not the time-

*Silence , Kathryn waits for Beth to leave but she doesn't , as if Beth is waiting for her to physically push her.*

**Kathryn**- Do you love him-

**Beth** - Yes ?-

**Kathryn**- Are you asking me or telling me , Jesus Christ , you can't be serious .-

**Beth**- Of ,of course I do-

**Kathryn**- Then why-

**Beth**- This isn't my trial-

**Kathryn-** It might as well be , Brian is not a bad man for better or for worse with-

**Beth-** I guess-

**Kathryn -** No . No you can't guess , weddings aren't where people GUESS . Do you love him, yes or no ?-

**Beth -** No-

*Beth's voice makes the noise nobody's should make on a day like today*

**Kathryn-**But I've seen you two , Beth I've seen you , your -

**Beth -** Perfect ? Our kids will be stunning and I'll be able to like all the old Facebook moms comments saying " just like her mother " , and we'll have a little puppy that will shit on my books and his shoes and he'll end up sending the dog to the butchers or something and, and -

**Kathryn-** Oh fuck off , properly fuck off .-

**Beth -** Sorry ?-

**Kathryn -** Loving or not , how do you know you'll find somebody else-

**Beth -** It's not enough .-

**Kathryn -** Not, how is that NOT enough ?-

**Beth -** I don't feel with him-

**Kathryn -** Feel ? Elaborate ?-

**Beth -** Look I Just don't , I don't wait for him to come home asking him what time he calls this , he isn't sad when I am , we don't laugh until we fall to the floor , we don't go on long walks- it's like I want to , feel with him-

*Kathryn looks as if she just ate something three decades old*

**Kathryn-** Beth this isn't a movie .-

*Moves closer*

**Kathryn -** This isn't one of your fucking novels you read instead of talking to him , he talks to me more than he talks to you for god sake he doesn't deserve this utter shit .-  
*A new form of silence comes*

**Beth-** Oh .-

*Kathryn moves to Beth and Beth finally steps outside the door*

**Beth** - I'll go . I'll go into the forest and live with the Fairies and birds that plait my hair , you can stay here with your beloved-

*Beth exits*

## Scene 2

*Beth finds herself running in a forest thats near the Church and collides into somebody heel digging into their ankle*

*She's pushed off fairly unkindly and they both separate sat in the grass the stranger clutching his ankle*

**Francis-** Shit sorry but what are you up to running out of a Church?-

*Beth sits still face stone cold , dress puffing all around her*

**Beth-**What are you doing in the middle of a random field?-

**Francis-** Are you alright?-

*Silence*

**Francis-** No - yeah of course not...also my ankles fine if you were going to ask-

*Beth cracks a smile*

*Francis smiles*

*Beth chuckles*

*Francis smiles wider*

*Beth laughs*

*Francis laughs*

*Beth cries*

*Francis stops*

*silence*

**Francis-** Uh, was the reception food that horrible-

*He waits for a name*

**Beth-** Beth and no we had a good line up honestly horse meat to die for -

**Francis-**Francis and how do you go from sobbing to making such a horrible joke-

*Beth remembers where she is after a fleeting second of forgetfulness and sinks further into the grass beneath her*

**Beth-** My sister thinks I have multiple personalities sometimes-

**Francis-** Your sister seems ill informed , if i can say that-

**Beth-** You've seen me snot cry in a wedding dress .. what are boundaries-

**Francis** - Yeah-

*Silence*

**Francis**- Was he ugly-

**Beth**- What-

**Francis**- On a scale of dogs dinner to cats pajamas how ugly was he then-

**Beth**- What are you , Mr tumble? who says cats pajamas?-

*Francis smiles gets up and holds out his hand*

**Francis**- In the least Ted Bundy way ever , do you want to go somewhere-

**Beth**-No-

*The suggestion of truly escaping jolts Beth awake and she begins to head towards the church  
Francis gets up quickly*

**Francis**-Course not , sorry that was a stupid-

**Beth**- No I take the cake for stupidity I'd say but I should go back-

**Francis**- Boundaries unclear, but what are you going back to?-

*Beth keeps walking*

*Francis gets the hint and walks the other way*

**Beth**-Thank you though, I'll be alright maybe somebody will object-

*Francis nods keeps walking*

*Beth turns around*

**Beth**-YOU CAN-

**Fancis**-.... I can do what ?

*Beth rolls her eyes*

**Francis**-Sorry for not getting the meaning behind two words?-

**Beth-**You can object-

**Francis-** No I fucking cannot-

**Beth-**.... Please-

**Francis-** No?-

**Beth-**He is ... the worst-

*Francis becomes minorly alarmed*

**Beth-**He's so so , boring-

**Francis-** That's it ? I'm not doing anything to help you escape eternal boredom-

**Beth-**My sister said something along the lines of that too-

**Francis-**She's right-

*Silence*

**Beth-**Yeah you think that... hope she's happy with him-

*Beth sighs dramatically*

**Francis-**What?-

**Beth-** I - caught them last week and .. I didn't know,I didn't know what to really do, I didn't want to just break off the wedding myself I couldn't -

**Francis-** Fuck-

**Beth-**Yeah,that's sisters for you ..-

**Francis-**Do you prefer 'I DO OBJECT' , or the more approachable 'Can I respectfully object.. please' ?-

*Beth hugs francis suddenly*

**Beth-**WAIT REALLY? THANK YOU-

*Francis begins to walk and Beth trails behind him*

**Beth-** You don't know where you're going-

**Francis-** You didn't either-

### **Scene 3**

*Beth and Francis arrive outside the hotel where the reception was supposed to be held in anxious spirits*

**Beth-** I can't believe she left, and the, oh god the altar boy, I saw him swallow a laugh-

*Francis listens to her chatter animatedly as he's been doing since they left the church  
Beth's face drops*

**Beth-** Did we do the right thing, shit. I'm going to be disowned, or like .. they might send me to America-

*Francis lets out a laugh*

**Francis-** Sorry sorry... America is your biggest fear?-

*Beth stares and Francis nods in agreement*

**Francis**-What's done is done now,and was that your nan that booed me?-

**Beth**- Lovely Tereasa-

*Beth looks to the hotel entrance*

**Francis**-I'll wait outside yeah?-

**Beth**-Yeah, I mean yes if you can, Kathryn, the bookings just ...-

**Francis**-I can Beth -

*He half smiles thinking it too early to give away the whole grin*

*Beth rushes into the hotel after her sister*

*She then emerges*

**Beth**- She .. she wasn't elated-

**Francis**-Weird-

**Beth**-Hmm?-

**Francis**-You know .... If i wasn't caught out in the end for what she did I'd be just that-

*Beth forgets her lie for a second ,Francis shakes his head realizing just in time*

**Beth**- I-

**Francis**-No , no all me , I'm a dunce-

*Beth makes a reach to pat him on the shoulder and he shrugs her off weakly*

**Beth**-She .. she won't , she wouldn't have cared that I.. lied ,are you going to go now?-

*Francis stares at Beth again a thing she'd like to have a reprisal of even in rubbish situations like this*

**Francis**-No-

**Beth**-No,why not ?-

**Francis**-In all honesty as shit as this sounds . This is what rich people deserve, a shit show like this,happy I got to take part.-

*Beth feigns upset*

**Beth**-We aren't all like Brian , stuffy and insufferable-

*Francis stares at her blankly*

**Francis**-Alright your not stuffy-

*Kathryn interrupts them*

**Kathryn**-I'm asking you to do one productive thing, find Brian.-

*Kathryn eyes Francis up , coming to the conclusion he has nothing either her or Beth need*

**Beth**-What ?-

**Kathryn**-You're going to apologize to him I saw him yelling on the phone by the flower potts , just wait around there.-

*Beth looks at the ground*

**Kathryn**- I called mom and dad-

**Beth**-How, how did that go ?-

**Kathryn**-Fine , we have to pay the band still alright -

**Beth**-Thanks for this Kit-

*Kathryn strokes Beth's arm and walks back inside*

**Francis**-Marriage is a shit heap anyways-

*He turns and points in the direction of the hotel gardens and Beth follows behind beginning their search for Brian*

**Beth**-How so?-

**Francis**-The clothes are ridiculous and love is the most selfish thing I've ever had the luxury of not encountering-

**Beth**-Is this your way of saying you can't find a date?And my dress is fabulous , shit my dress -

**Francis**- You can go back and change I can wait out here ... again-

*Beth tilts her head and imitates him*

**Beth**-Again, it's fine, I like the attention-

*Francis notices the eyes on her as if he blames them*

**Francis**-It's not, the most harrowing dress-

**Beth**-Wow thank you , I love your ensemble too, where did you actually source that.-

*She points her ringed finger at him, his eyes drift to the ring but meet hers again soon after*

**Francis**-I feel like your judging-

**Beth**-No no , I'm jealous, I could never pull off -

*Beth's laughter cuts off the rest of her sentence  
Francis speeds up his pace and Beth tries to follow*

**Beth**-Christ, are you a runner or something?-

*They stop having reached the flowers*

**Francis**-Kind of , I run with my college team

**Beth**-Oh for what collage?-

*Francis keeps looking out for Brian*

**Beth**-Rich people deserve this shit hmm ? Trinity?-

*Beth studies the side of his face*

**Francis**-Cambridge-

*Beth bursts out laughing her mascara close to running  
Francis shoulders her playfully*

**Beth**-.What do you study then?-

**Francis**-Theology, do you know what that is ?-

*Beth frowns*

**Beth**- Don't do that-

**Francis**-Do what-

**Beth**-Say those things with that face-

**Francis**-What face-

**Beth**- The face like you know everything and i know nothing-

*Francis looks taken aback never having been called out so plainly before*

**Beth**- Are you on Holidays here then?-

**Francis**-Yeah , visiting my dad, while your in your golden bath im shoveling actual shit.-

**Beth**-Farmer Francis-

**Francis**-Have you ever seen a pigs foot up close

*He reaches into his pocket and Beth stands back*

**Francis**-You think I carry animal body parts around?

*He pulls out a snickers*

**Beth**- The first encounter we had you mentioned Ted Bundy-

*Francis bites into his bar*

**Francis**-Fair enough , do you want some-

*Beth shakes her head*

**Beth**- Don't like nuts-

Francis laughs

**Beth**- The one ounce of merriment out of you all day and because I said nuts-

**Francis**-Breaking off a marriage isn't the merriest-

**Beth**-You said he deserves it-

**Francis**-Not him in particular Beth-

**Beth**-Dont say my name-

**Francis**-Is there something wrong with your name-

*Beth pauses and pulls at his hand so she can take a bite out of his bar to avoid further questioning*

**Francis:** You don't even like it , thats low-

*He stills noticing her hand still on his wrist and she lets go*

**Beth-** We both know how low i can go-

**Francis:**Okay Batman-

**Beth:**Batman?-

**Francis**-You haven't seen Batman?-

*Beth shakes her head*

**Beth-** Brian tried to make me sit through it in the cinema, I fell asleep-

**Francis**-Thank god your beautiful-

**Beth-** Sorry?, repeat that in my good ear-

*Beth points to her right ear with her middle finger and Francis leans into her ear*

**Francis**-Thank god your-

*Beth cuts him off by kicking his ankle*

**Francis**-What will you say to handsome when you see him-

**Beth-** Seriously, his dad is going to kill is he is ten times worse than any average Cambridge student-

**Francis**-Not your problem Beth-

*After some silence Beth speaks quieter than before as if telling a secret*

**Beth**- Thank you-

**Francis**-We haven't found him yet-

**Beth**- People have , cared obviously , about me , and things but, doing this , not even for your own , gain is stupidly kind-

**Francis**-I'm a bored bored man,Im not aiming to be helpful, anything to ruin romance-

**Francis**-I'll never believe that-

**Francis**-What ?Love just isn't real-

**Beth**- For such a smart person your thick-

**Francis**-Enlighten me-

**Beth**- Love is obviously real, If you've seen Love actually-

*Francis cuts her off*

**Beth**-Do you hate anyone?-

*Francis nods*

**Beth** -It's the same thing ,that uncontrollable sick feeling , love hate same thing-

**Francis**-Your wrong-

**Beth**- Then so are you-

**Francis**-So am I -

**Beth**-But I've read enough books to know men of all people don't do things like is out of a need to fill a day-

**Francis**-And what do you mean by that-

**Beth**-You study theological - whatever the fuck so you tell me-

*Francis brushes against her arm*

**Francis**-I don't gain anything like I said I was bored-

*Beth stops and turns to face Francis knowing he wasn't just bored*

**Francis**-Believe me, I believed you-

**Beth**-Until you didn't -

*Beth steps closer to him*

**Francis**-Why did you do it?-

**Beth**-I was bored too-

*Beth's eyes drift to a familiar figure*

End

**ACT [N]**

**SCENE [N]**

*Kitchen-cum-dining-cum-living room. Matty and Edith sit at the kitchen table, centre stage, eating dinner. Edith considers the food on her plate deeply. She swirls her fork around the food, lightly scraping the plate.*

**MATTY:** Those greens won't eat themselves a leanbh.

**EDITH:** (*exaggerated distress*) Feck off... I'm warming myself up to it.

**MATTY:** It's a miracle you made it to 18 on your diet. Energy drinks and cigarettes... full of your five a day!

**EDITH:** What do you mean cig-

**MATTY:** Ah go on away out of that. Your room smells like Fr. O Keeffe's fecking cassock, like the back of O'Malley's after cards night. Whatever way you're leaning out the window, it's coming right back in on top of you. I thought you'd have had more sense than that, but then again you're half your mother.

**EDITH:** (*irritated*) Your daughter is actually 19 by the way.

**MATTY:** Worse again. You will eat every last leaf of cabbage in front of ya. Face on you, swear it was fecking rat poison I was feeding you. God almighty.

**EDITH:** Cabbages are definitive proof of the absence of God.

**MATTY:** You're the definitive proof of the absence of God, you wee fecking heathen you.

**EDITH:** Now that's one that'll really stump the old prune. Fr. O'Keeffe, if God really is really real, explain cabbage? That might just send him over. Have you seen him recently? Forget knocking on death's door. Kid is prying it open with a crowbar. He's closer to a half sentient raisin than anything human.

**MATTY:** You can mock people for being old when your room stops smelling like the 1960's. And if you keep up the smoking and you'll look no better than Fr. Raisin. If your mother knew she would have your arse like. Though she must know at this point... she probably just decided it wasn't worth the hassle. Yet here I am playing the fool, letting you run riot.

**EDITH:** I'll be gone in six months and ye can do whatever ye want then. You can watch Top Gear and drink whiskey and play that awful fecking instrument all day long for all I care.

**MATTY:** Yeah and then you can eat arsenic instead of cabbage and (*he winces*) smoke joints into your fecking eyeballs.

## ***A Godless Place***

***By Shiv***

*Our four character are lying face down on the floor of an abandoned building, with no door and windows blocked out with boards, a small glimmer of light peeking through one*  
*After a moment Naomi begins to stir*  
*She sits up, holding her head and groaning*  
*She looks around*

**Naomi:** What the hell. Where are we?

*Slowly she stands up and looks down at the others*

**Naomi:** What happened to us?

*She shakes her head trying to remember, holding her face in her hands. She notices the crack in the boarded up window and peeks through it.*

**Naomi:** Um ok. We were out in the woods by this abandoned house. We were looking for “crown- like” brambles or unripe blackberries or something outside the house for one of Enoch’s stupid fucking art projects and I was looking by the corner of the house when... that shadow... then darkness. Hmm.

*She looks down at the group*

**Naomi:** I still don’t know why the hell I decided to follow you guys. If it hadn’t been for Claude insisting I come along with you people I’d be at home watching a movie or reading or something other than being trapped in an abandoned building. Stupid house. Stupid project. Stupid Enoch. Enoch...

*She looks down at Enoch then angrily kicks him, he wakes up with a yelp*

**Enoch:** What the fuck!

*Enoch awkwardly pulls himself into a standing position*

**Naomi:** OF COURSE this is your fault. What did you do?? WHY are we in here?

**Enoch:** Stop yelling and let me think for a second.

*Beat*

**Enoch:** God you’re insufferable

**Naomi:** (mockingly) Oh *I'm* insufferable? I'm not the one who decided it was a good idea to go out to an abandoned house in the middle of the night for some stupid project. Of course this is all your fault. If you hadn't been such a pretentious ass, making us head to the middle of nowhere for the "atmosphere" and the "right growing conditions" we'd all be fine right now.

*Claude groans and sits up holding his head*

**Claude:** I... guys where are we? What happened?

**Naomi:** Inside the abandoned house Claude. You know the one with boarded up windows, no front door and clearly no doors inside either? Yeah that one. And I have no idea why we're here, just that it's Enoch's fault.

**Enoch:** How is any of this my fault

**Naomi:** *You* dragged *us* here.

**Claude:** Um... guys?

*Naomi and Enoch turn to him simultaneously and both say*

**Naomi:** What?

**Enoch:** What?

**Claude:** Am I the only one who's noticed that Jasper isn't moving? And that he's face down on the floor? It's a bit weird.

**Naomi:** Yeah... that's a bit concerning I will say.

*Naomi pokes Jasper with her foot*

*He doesn't move*

*She pokes him again*

*And again he doesn't move*

*Finally, she bends down to force him to turn over*

*Enoch screams*

**Enoch:** EW what fuck EW ew ew NO I ah I'm going to be sick

*Claude stares in disbelief as Naomi glares at Enoch*

**Claude:** (*whispering*) Oh my god. His eyes they're...

**Naomi:** They're gone. Okay, everyone stay calm, don't freak out.

**Enoch:** Don't freak out?? Our friend is DEAD and his EYES are missing from his head!!

**Naomi:** Friend is a strong word. There's nothing we can do about it now anyway. We need to focus on how to avoid being next.

**Claude:** Oh god oh no-

**Enoch:** How? How can I not freak out Naomi? How can I focus please tell me, as you seem to be completely unfamiliar with the concept of fear and panic.

**Claude:** (*quietly*) Can you both please stop yelling.

**Naomi:** Claude might actually be right this time. Whoever or whatever did this might come back and we don't want that to be sooner rather than later.

**Enoch:** What do you propose we do then, since clearly you're a genius with much more experience in handling such horrific situations.

**Naomi:** Maybe I could if you would let me actually think for five minutes you mindless excuse for a human being. I can't believe I keep letting you talk me into these things.

**Enoch:** Oh do not start with me Naomi, you really want to start this right now? I've been working on this project for months, almost a year now just for a chance at finally getting into a good college so I can finally escape this backwards town for good and all you do is make fun of it. FOR Go- Claude are you crying?

*Claude sniffs, covering his face with his hands.*

**Claude:** It's fine I'm fine.

*Naomi puts a hand on his shoulder*

**Naomi:** Um... okay Claude. I didn't think you were close with Jasper. But then again, given the situation at hand I don't blame you for crying.

**Claude:** (*sniffs*) It's not that. Well, it is but... what about Sam? I can't stop thinking about his poor little face if he found them like this. What's the poor thing going to think? He's going to think he's been abandoned.

**Naomi:** *(sighs)* If Sam found Jasper dead, he wouldn't hesitate to eat him. Starting with the eyes funnily enough.

**Claude:** No, Sam could never

**Naomi:** Claude. Sam is a cat. He could and he would.

**Enoch:** As much as I love our discussion of cats eating our dear friend's face, I feel like we have bigger things to deal with as of right now.

**Naomi:** In another first of tonight, I agree with you.

*Enoch sighs shakily*

**Naomi:** Please tell me you're not about to start crying too. For god's sake Enoch, will you act your age for once?

*Enoch sighs in disbelief, almost laughing.*

**Enoch:** Wow. Just wow. I knew you were a heartless bitch Naomi but this, this is a new low for you. I actually can't anymore.

**Naomi:** Oh please, it's not my fault none of you think rationally, that's not heartless that's intelligent. All you can do is panic and scream you never think and it's exhausting.

*While Enoch and Naomi argue, a bloody clawed hand emerges from the darkness and drags Jasper's body out of the spotlight  
Nobody notices*

**Enoch:** Oh please, you care about no one but yourself and your own interests. It doesn't matter how we feel no no no. The only person you've ever looked out for is yourself and that's why no one likes you.

**Naomi:** That is not true. If anyone is self centered here it's you. It's because of you we were somehow unconscious inside an abandoned building with no way out.

*Claude turns to see Jasper missing and the clawed hand lingering just at the edge of the darkness*

**Claude:** *(panicked)* Did either of you just-

**Naomi:** Shut up Claude, we're a little busy here. Explain it to me, Enoch. How am I the selfish person in this situation?

*Claude tries to scream but another clawed hand covers his mouth and he's dragged away into the darkness*

**Enoch:** Oh please, stop trying to gaslight me into thinking this is all my fault. In your mind there's no possible way you can be in the wrong, it's always everyone else who is the problem. I know it isn't and Claude does too, right Claude?

*Naomi and Enoch turn to the spot where Claude and Jasper once were to find them missing*

**Naomi:** Claude? CLAUDE?

*As she screams, Enoch behind her is dragged off into the darkness by the same hand that took the others*

*Naomi turns around to find him missing too.*

*She is now completely alone.*

*Her spotlight goes out.*

**EDITH:** What's arsenic?

**MATTY:** (*mock serious*) When did you start smoking joints?

**EDITH:** (*baffled*) What?

**MATTY:** (*fast, accusing*) I said there about smoking joints from your eye lids, joints like, and you didn't object.

**EDITH:** Because I was caught up on arse whatever the feck its called.

**MATTY:** *Arsenic* is rat poison.

**EDITH:** What's the obsession with rat poison all of a sudden?

*Matty looks around.*

**MATTY:** We've a new tenant. Don't tell your mother.

*Edith brings her feet up onto the chair.*

**EDITH:** (*defeated*) Ah for Christ's sake.

**MATTY:** So what are we talking. Blunts spliffs, doobies.

**EDITH:** (*head in hands*) Stop. God you did not just say doobie.

**MATTY:** (*leaning across the table*) Show me your eyes!

*Edith grabs a tea towel and whips Matty with it.*

**EDITH:** (*annoyed*) Feck off. I know you're only trying to wind me up. It's not working.

**MATTY:** The tea towel proves otherwise. (PAUSE) Hmph! Top Gear, whiskey and the banjo hah? That does sound lovely now, but unrealistic all the same... unless of course you're planning on taking the Wicked Witch with you. Which if you are then by all means, don't let me stop you.

*Two beats.*

**EDITH:** (*suddenly serious*) Don't you think it's sad talking like that?

**MATTY:** Like what?

**EDITH:** About Mam. About your wife.

**MATTY:** Ah it's only banter, a leanbh.

**EDITH:** I mean... I can hardly study with the noise of ye, and it's not banter ye're having. Bickering and biting at eachother like toddlers over toys -

**MATTY:** Ah well I don't think -

**EDITH:** I mean, aren't you afraid that's gonna be the rest of your life? Do you not want something else? Someone else?

**MATTY:** (*getting annoyed*) Jesus Christ Edy. Sometimes people just aren't right for each other. It's nobody's fault.

**EDITH:** Then why stay together?

**MATTY:** We had you! What were we supposed to do?

**EDITH:** (*reserved emotion*) Do you know how fucking shit that makes me feel?

**MATTY:** Ah Edy...

*Matty stares forward in thought. He does not react to Edith's following actions in any way.*

*Edith stands up and flings her plate against the wall, smashing it. She opens the cabinets above the counter and furiously grabs packets of rice and pasta, knocking them over on the island and letting them spill everywhere. She moves now to the bin, from which she pulls beer bottles and yellow takeaway cartons. She flings these around the room, smashing some of the bottles. She finally storms over to the fridge, where she takes out a case of cider. She places it on the kitchen table beside her father. She reaches for his glass of water and empties it over her shoulder. Setting the glass back down, she opens a can of cider and pours it into the glass. She leaves the empty can on the table and walks off.*

*All the while, the ceiling light in the room slowly comes up, filling the room with a dirty orange glow. The light from the window fades out. It is night.*

*When all of this is done, Matty looks around himself, breathing heavily. He grips the glass of cider in front of him and drinks from it viciously.*

*Black-out*

**ACT [N]                      SCENE [N]**

*Matty stands confused.*

**MATTY:**                      Sliced pan, yes. Tonic, yes. Cheese, yes. Custard, yes.

*He palms his forehead.*

**MATTY:**                      *(to himself)* Why couldn't you bring a list you useless fucking bastard.  
(PAUSE) Toilet roll! *(muttering)* Toilet roll-Toilet roll-Toilet roll.

**OONAGH:**                      Matthew?

*Matty turns around and looks at the woman in front of him .*

**OONAGH:**                      My god. How are you?

*Matty turns around. Turns back.*

**MATTY:**                      I'm sorry I don't...

**OONAGH:**                      Oonagh. Oonagh Hayes.

*Matty stares at her, frozen, before taking a half step back.*

I thought it was you.

**MATTY:**                      Christ. Oonagh. Yes. I have you now. Sorry.

**OONAGH:**                      *(laughing)* You're alright. Sure how many years is it?

**MATTY:**                      Donkeys. What are you doing here?

**OONAGH:**                      Oh... well.. Kinda embarrassing but I'm actually just on my way back from improv class. Had to get milk. You?

**MATTY:**                      Ah, just the weekly shop.

**OONAGH:**                      Do you always do the weekly shop at eleven o clock on a Wednesday night?

**MATTY:**                      *(straight)* It's how I avoid the breathalyser.

*Oonagh stands awkwardly, before laughing.*

**OONAGH:**                      *(exaggerated laughing)* Oh god haha! I thought you were serious! And are you still teaching Matthew?

**MATTY:**                      No. I, uh, took an early retirement. I'd heard you went to England.

**OONAGH:**                      *(shyer)* That I did. Chased my heart right over. (PAUSE) But now I'm back.

**MATTY:** Ah.

**OONAGH:** (PAUSE) Been back a while actually.

**MATTY:** Oh?

**OONAGH:** (PAUSE) Three years.

**MATTY:** I see.

*Oonagh holds up her hand.*

**OONAGH:** (*embarrassed*) Divorced.

**MATTY:** Bad one.

**OONAGH:** (PAUSE) It was my choice, and I'm the happiest I've ever been.

**MATTY:** That's good.

**OONAGH:** (PAUSE) I was so sorry to hear about-

**MATTY:** (*urgent*) Thank you. No. Really. You don't have to... please. No.

**OONAGH:** (PAUSE) How are you doing, Matthew?

**MATTY:** Flying it.

**OONAGH:** That's good. It's a pity I've never seen you out. We're due a right good catch-up. Where do you go dancing?

**MATTY:** (*amused by assumption*) Oh I don't be... I don't be going dancing.

**OONAGH:** Ah why not Matthew? They're great. I go with my friend Vicky. They do a brilliant one out in Rocksavage. Bit of a drive but I tell ya its worth it for the craic. You should catch a spin with us sometime. You still playing the banjo?

**MATTY:** You've a good memory on you.

**OONAGH:** Ah you'll have to come out with us sometime! They'll love ya out there. (PAUSE) Lots of lovely women out there too, not just meself like.

**MATTY:** Ah, well I'm up the walls at the moment... very busy yeah... with... stuff.

**OONAGH:** Are you with someone Matthew?

**MATTY:** Ah... not really. No. It's-

**OONAGH:** And are you happy on your own?

**MATTY:** I'm doing fine.

**OONAGH:** (PAUSE) I was very lonely when I came back. It's kinda silly... but I came back nearly expecting everything to be the same as when I was twenty one. *(She smiles briefly)* But no. I'm fifty three, and my mother's dying and my father's dead... and I'm... and I'm on my own.

**MATTY:** Yeah. Yeah that is fairly silly.

**OONAGH:** But Vicky is a great friend to me. All you need is one friend, I think. A good friend.

**MATTY:** *(holding up his shopping bag)* I'll add it to the list.

*Marty begins to walk away.*

It was lovely seeing you Oo-

**OONAGH:** Would you like to get a pint sometime? (PAUSE) Or a coffee?

**MATTY:** Ah, I don't know.

**OONAGH:** Are you on Facebook?

**MATTY:** No. No. Not on any of those. I have to run Oonagh.

**OONAGH:** We'll go for a drink some night. Just for a laugh. Wherever. Whenever. Just for a laugh.

**MATTY:** *(leaving)* I'm very busy. I'll see you Oonagh.

**OONAGH:** *(to herself)* In another lifetime.

## **ACT [N]                      SCENE [N]**

*The house is as it was left, except now the door to Edith's room (stage left) is open and her shadow is shot onto the back of the kitchen wall. She is hanging from a noose.*

*Matty enters the house and leaves the shopping bag up on the table. He stares into Edith's room for more than a few seconds, before he rushes to the fridge for a can of cider. He sits at the table and starts dialing frantically on his phone. He glances over to Edith's room while the phone tones, before shifting his chair to face the opposite wall.*

**MATTY:** *(on the phone)* Hello there, my name is Matty, Matty McBride. I would like to book one of your free callouts. I've a rat... I think... yeah... or a very big mouse. (PAUSE) No I've not seen him but I can hear him scurrying about all the time. I say scurrying but this fucker, sorry, excuse me, he's a big one is all. Thumping around. Like there's a rave next door you know... BOM-BOM-BOM. Fuckers must be blind the way he's charging into the walls, you know *(laughing hard)* (PAUSE) *(stops laughing suddenly)* Matthew McBride. (PAUSE) *(slightly*

*irritated*) Yes, I did, but your fella didn't find anything so... (PAUSE) Eighty euros? But you didn't do anything the first time! That smug prick ye sent last time just twiddled his thumbs, poked his crooked nose in a few rooms and said the place was clear. You'd know he's not the one losing sleep every night. (PAUSE) (*incredulous*) Well then all the necessary tests are a load of bollocks! They clearly don't work. (PAUSE) (*agitated*) Then what's in my fucking walls? Hah? What's keeping me up at night? Am I crazy? Have I just gone fucking nutzo? Gimme an answer! Please! (PAUSE) No I don't live next to a fucking rave!

*He hangs up the phone and flings it onto the table. He stands up and paces around.*

Thinks he's smart. Thinks he's so funny.

*He stands in front of Edith's door.*

**RAT:** (off) Psst!

*Matty turns around.*

**RAT:** (off) I give up. I surrender. Come get me.

*Matty begins to walk over to the other side of the room.*

**RAT:** (off) I'm in the cabinet under the sink.

*Matty gets on his knees and opens the cabinet, climbing halfway inside.*

**RAT:** (*laughing*)

**MATTY:** What's so fucking funny?

**RAT:** (off) How many times you fall for it!

**MATTY:** Go fuck yourself.

*Matty starts crawling back out of the cabinet.*

**RAT:** (off) Don't hit your-

*Matty wallops his head off the edge of the cabinet coming out. He recoils, holding his head in pain., muttering expletives.*

**MATTY:** You're the bane of my existence, you vermin fucker.

*Beat.*

**RAT:** (off) I have a name, you know.

**MATTY:** (*baffled*) What?

**RAT:** (off) All these years and you never ask my name. Insensitive I think.

Maybe I just won't tell you now.

**MATTY:** Stop being a baby and let on.

**RAT:** (off) Frank.

**MATTY:** Frank? You're joking. A rat named Frank.

**RAT:** (off) Sure you know yourself. Francach is the Irish for rat. Francach... Frank!

**MATTY:** What an inspired little shit-eater you are. Well done.

**RAT:** (off) Get back on those cans before I start getting rowdy. A hit of the good stuff wouldn't go awry either you know?

**MATTY:** You know I haven't a lick of cash to be at that anymore.

**RAT:** (off) Well then get to the cans so before I get rowdy. Before I get pure fucking rats with you? You get it? Rats with you.

**MATTY:** Good man. Enough now.

**RAT:** (off) I'll have a snooze if you pick up the can.

*Matty walks over and grabs the can at the table and makes a show around the room of him drinking it. He is alone again. A moment of drinking.*

*Then, he grabs his behind and rushes to the toilet. A few seconds.*

**MATTY:** (off) Aw fuck!

*He bursts out of the toilet, belt undone, holding his pants up. He rushes to the shopping bag and empties it with one hand onto the table. Sliced pan, tonic, cheese, custard. No toilet roll.*

*He repeatedly punches his head and winces in anger.*

*A calming beat.*

*He runs his free hand through his hair.*

*A defeated beat.*

*His gaze lands on the sliced pan. He thinks about it, still, as if a sudden movement might scare it away. He grabs it and runs back to the toilet. A few seconds.*

*The hitherto still shadow of Edith hanging from a noose comes to life. Edith's shadow takes the noose off her neck. Edith appears at her bedroom door and looks out with an incredulous expression. She stands waiting, eyes fixed on the toilet door.*

*The toilet flushes. Matty enters the room again, doesn't acknowledge Edith, and sits down at the table, planting half a loaf of sliced pan on the table.*

*Beat.*

**EDITH:** Did you just... did you just wipe your arse with sliced pan? With Pat the Baker?

*Matty goes to drink his cider.*

*(raising an imaginary glass)* Sláinte! (PAUSE) Era it's silly of me to be asking questions of you... sure I'm not even real. The real me probably has maggot eggs for eyes right now. You never did look up how long coffins actually last... 'spose anything less than forever is not enough really... nobody wants maggots for eyes... not even me... and sure I was suicidal! *(laughing)* (PAUSE) Christ, she really left a spell on you that one. Oonagh was it? Before my time I suppose, when you still had a bit of life to ya. *(elbowing him)* Quite the spell, yes. *(peeks behind table)* Don't stand up anyway... ya wee pervert. You know you had me fooled, with what the whole hopeless bereaved act... Oscar worthy. And yet, now.... you're thinking about fucking her over the table, ruthlessly, like an animal. That's one for Father O' Keeffe I reckon. If God really is really real, why is my father such a despicable swine? Why are men such awful creatures? So sad... and to think-

*Matty stands up, holding his head, distressed. Spotlight on Matty. Music begins. Once the first bom-bom-bom hits, lights come back up. Matty paces around the room while the music slowly swells. He looks for the rat, getting more violent as the music grows. He cringes painfully at every bom-bom-bom. All the while Edith censures him.*

**EDITH:** I thought you'd have followed me on at this stage. I had you cut out to be a more decisive, more willful man than you actually are. I underestimated just how much you like the smell of your own stink, the comfort of your own grime, the salt and snot of your teary weary excuse of an existence. Wallowing in half truths, in shoe-shined memories where you always come out reasonable, loving. Remember how we used to laugh! To joke around! I don't. I remember the silent nights. I remember crying in my room, loud enough, because I wanted, *needed* one of ye to open that door and ask me what was going on. But ye never did. And now ye'll never know. A note? Ye wanted a note? The least she could've done was leave a note? The least you could've done was knock on the fucking door. The least you could've done was say those words 'I love you'. Something. Anything. The least. You couldn't do the least. I owed you nattin. When I kicked the stool out from under myself, wrenching myself up like a gutted pig, I regretted it instantly. Not because it was painful, and it was *(laughing)* mind you. No... not because it was painful. Not because I wanted some second chance at life. No. I regretted it, because I wasn't going to leave enough of a mess. Because I had made it too easy on you.

*Silence.*

Are you going to do it so? Have I riled you up enough? There's nothing here for you, *Matty*. Nobody wants you here, *Matty*. How many visited

after you left work, *Matty?* Phoned? Do you have any dignity, *Matty?* Any morsel of decency left, *Matty?* Or are you just going to keep running in circles, chasing your tail, living off the scraps of better peoples lives? Like a... like a rat. Like a RAT!

**MATTY:** WHY CAN'T YOU JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!

*Matty swings at the stereo and a stack of CDs plummet to the floor. Matty himself slowly falls to the ground, covering his head, fetal. Music cuts out. There is only the sound of whimpering.*

**EDITH:** (softly) I did.

*Whimpers.*

**EDITH:** (emotionless) You'd want to start cleaning up. She'll be home soon.

*Edith walks off.*

**MATTY:** (somber, completely disarmed) I didn't know what I was doing. I'm sorry. Neither of us did. I'm sorry!

*But he is alone.*

*Silence for a long moment.*

*Matty picks up some of the rubbish off the ground, bins it. He picks up the sliced pan, looks at it, thinks, puts it back down.*

**MATTY:** I mean... technically... it didn't...

*On a second thought he picks it up and curtly bins it.*

*He spots the CDs he knocked down, goes to pick them up, but fixates on one in particular, opening it's case and placing it into the stereo. An Irish reel comes on. He listens for a moment. Oonagh walks on stage right. She smiles, curtsies and extends a hand.*

**OONAGH:** Are you as good as you used to be?

*Matty walks towards her.*

**MATTY:** Are you?

*Oonagh shakes her head.*

**MATTY:** That's alright so.

*Matty takes her hand. They dance to the tune briefly. Slowly the lights come down and they are in a spotlight, swaying, holding eachother. It is almost a happy moment. Oonagh pulls out graciously, backs out of the spotlight. Matty is left alone. The music stops. A quieter BOM-BOM-BOM replaces it. Matty watches her leave before turning to face the audience. We see him cycle through emotions. Confusion. Disbelief. Sadness. He almost laughs. The lights come up. He moves very slowly, grabs a can from the fridge and sits down at the*

*kitchen table, picking up the TV remote.*

**MATTY:** She'll be home soon. (*amused*) My wife, she will be home soon. She will take off her jacket. She will ask if there's any messages, and she will go into the bedroom to cry. Listen.

*Sound of woman crying grows from offstage.*

And I'll turn on the TV (*pointing remote at audience, slapping it and jabbing it until it turns on*) and watch a bit of Top Gear, turn it right up till the revving cancels out the cries, and I'll drink. And I'll hope that she's drinking too, abusing some of that gin she keeps in her dresser drawer, so that we have an excuse to fuck later, to fuck dryly on the mattress for two minutes. And when that's done we'll crawl off of each other, turn in to face our respective walls, and pretend to fall asleep faster than we do. The middle of our bed is cold, unwrinkled, a no-man's land. An unencroachable rift, an insurmountable mountain range of blame and guilt and cowardice. All the while, the white walls we bore our eyes into hold a projection, a vision of what could've been. (PAUSE) Maybe it could be saved. Maybe a brave hand reaching across the cold, touching the skin, warm. Maybe an apology, 'I'm sorry', something. Maybe just a knock on that door. (*snapped out of it, shaking his head, amused*) I kid myself. There's no saving this. This is our burden, our punishment, our penance. This is our life. (*pained laughter*) Till death do us part.

*Matty drinks his cider. Cacophony of television and crying and BOM-BOM-BOM.*

*A rat runs across the stage.*

*Sudden silence. Blackout.*

## *Room full of Records*

**Note:** *The play cuts between two locations, the bedroom where Enya and Liadhan are most of the time and the kitchen where Sadhbh and Marie are most of the time.*

The scene opens in a cluttered, untidy bedroom. “*Landslide*” by Fleetwood Mac plays from a record player. The room is full of boxes, vinyls, books and cds. A sixteen year old girl sits sniffing on the bed, covered in boxes, books and trinkets. Another teenage girl enters, tiredly dropping another box onto the floor.

**Enya:** I think that's it.

**Liadhan** (*subtly wiping her tears*): Yeah, I think so.

*Enya notices Liadhan upset and walks over to the bed. She holds Liadhan and they sit quietly. Some time passes. Enya absentmindedly plays with Liadhan's plaits.*

**Enya:** I'd put some money that every book and record ever is in here.

**Liadhan** (*standing up and putting a record onto the turntable*): If it had words he owned it. *beat* Some part of me fully believes he'll walk through the door any second now and warn me not to scratch this. “Jesus Christ Liadhan” (*Liadhan puts on an over-exaggerated eep voice*) “That's a first print”.

*Both girls laugh.*

*Sadhbh, Liadhan's mother enters the room.*

**Sadhbh:** Some chips for my finest women. Jesus Liadhan, would you clear some space.

*Liadhan rolls her eyes. Sadhbh moves some things off the bed and puts down the chips. She pats Liadhan on the shoulder, gives a small smile and leaves the room.*

**Enya:** Nothing like the smell of Murphy's.

**Liadhan:** Except for the taste.

**Enya** (*opening up the package*): And the heart-attack inducing fat levels.

**Liadhan** (*in mock-shock*): You can't say that. My brother had a heart attack.

**Enya** (*in mock-hysterics*): Please forgive me Liadhan, my best friend, twin flame, mother of my two children.

*Both girls erupt into hysterical laughter.*

**Marie:** Do you not think the girl should be with her family today? (*Marie is a well-dressed, posh woman. She was raised quite different from Liadhan and Enya*)

**Sadhbh:** (*as if she's daring Marie to pick a fight*) No.

**Marie:** Well I do.

**Sadhbh:** I'm her mother, mother, not you.

*Marie lets out a disgruntled sigh.*

**Sadhbh:** It's not easy, you know, being on your own. I'm on my own, Séamus helped, but he was only a boy himself. Still, it's near fucking impossible to do this on my own. So if having her friend here helps, I'm not taking it away from her.

**Marie:** (*hesitantly, not making eye contact*): You have me.

*Sadhbh ignores her comment.*

**Sadhbh:** I could never make her laugh on a day like this, but listen. (*she cranes her neck towards the room the girls are in. Both women go silent and hear their laughter*). She's fecking laughing. Isn't that beautiful? He was her hero and he's dead now and she's still able to laugh. *Beat.* I can't make her laugh but by Christ if that girl can, I will not keep them apart.

**Liadhan:** I can't wait until we're in college and we can do this every day.

**Enya:** What? Clear out your brother's house?

**Liadhan:** Shut up. *(Liadhan rolls her eyes and smirks)* *(beat)* I think you're the only person I could tolerate house sharing with.

**Enya:** The feeling is mutual pal.

*Liadhan rests her head on Enya's shoulder. A lot goes unsaid between the pair. They don't often talk about Liadhan's brother, but his presence and influence always hovers over their interactions like some kind of spirit.*

**Liadhan:** Would you rather drown or burn to death?

**Enya:** Could I choose where I drown?

**Liadhan:** Shur gowan.

**Enya:** I'd rather drown as long as it's in the Lee.

**Liadhan** *(horrified)*: In that manky water!

**Enya:** Maybe I'd go all out and go to Gougane Barra. It would be a pretty big event to be fair.

**Liadhan** *(rolls her eyes and laughs)*: It would be.

*Pause*

**Enya:** You know when we're older? Will you cover my rent sometimes?

**Liadhan:** Why would I do that?

**Enya:** Because you'll be a doctor and I'll be a poet. Do the maths.

**Liadhan:** I'll be about thirty five by the time I'm a surgeon, and no offence but I hope I'll have enough money not to need a roommate by then.

**Enya** *(laughs)*: Well I might not.

**Liadhan:** Touché. *(beat)* Seriously though, I don't ever want to be further away from you than a hundred steps.

**Enya:** Even a hundred gammy steps?

**Liadhan:** Even a hundred of the gammiest steps in the country.

*Enya gets up and starts poking through a box of records.*

**Enya:** What's going to happen with all the records now?

**Liadhan:** We'll keep the sentimental ones, and sell the rest I suppose.

*Beat*

**Liadhan:** I wish I could keep them all, but where would we put them? Besides, we need the money.

**Enya:** Maybe when you're rich you can buy a house big enough to fit them all and buy them all back.

**Liadhan** *(playing along with Enya's unfaltering positivity):* Maybe.

**Enya** *(listening to the song playing on the record player and nodding her head along to the beat):* This is my favourite song.

**Liadhan:** I thought your favourite song was *Shitlist*.

**Enya:** Yes, well that was last week and I had just gotten 74% on my Irish essay, which I slavvedddd at for weeks.

**Liadhan:** I vividly remember you frantically calling me the night before it was due saying you hadn't even started.

**Enya:** That's not the point. Last week Mr Twomey was on my shitlist. This week I don't have a shitlist and *Songbird* is my favourite song.

**Liadhan** (*laughing*): I find you hard to tolerate.

*Both girls hug. There's silence as the song plays out.*

**Liadhan:** He was too tall to fit in the coffin, you know? Him dying didn't fit. It just was not meant to happen.

**Enya:** It wasn't.

**Liadhan:** And now he's just dust. How the fuck does that happen? Like, he was six foot five and alive last year, and now he's just dust in a jar. How am I ever supposed to wrap my head around that?

**Enya:** I don't think you are meant to. Any miserable fecker who can understand death probably doesn't have much of a life anyway. I mean (*Enya re-adjusts her position in the way she does before saying something philosophical*), you shouldn't torture yourself trying to understand what you never will. Don't bother when there's something much more understandable in front of you.

**Liadhan:** Like what?

**Enya:** Life. His life. You can understand the way he lived, what he lived for, how he loved you. I dunno.

**Liadhan:** Always you with the dmc.

**Enya:** Dmc?

**Liadhan:** Deep meaningful chats.

**Enya:** Fuck off.

**Liadhan:** You're right though. (*breath*) Thank you.

*Liadhan rests her head on Enya's shoulder.*

**Enya:** *(pulling at the skin around her nails)* I know all those cringy quotes on plaques say how you carry someone with you always, even if they're dead, but it's true. He's literally in you. He's in your shiny hair, and your height, your music. He's your brother. He's in every one of your cells. All of them.

*Marie enters and begins to tidy up the chipper wrappers.*

**Liadhan** *(passive aggressively):* Thank you grandmother.

*Enya laughs. Marie rolls her eyes at her.*

**Marie:** Like two kittens in a fecking basket.

**Liadhan** *(sings):* Two kittens in a basket, older brother in a casket.

*Marie opens the window to let out the smell of chips.*

**Enya** *(to the same melody as Liadhan's song):* Liadhan's sheets smell like chips. Marie is trying to mask it.

**Marie** *(horrified):* The vulgarity! The disrespect!

*She exits the scene and smiles quietly to herself as she leaves the girls.*

**Sadhbh:** Her friends make her happy Mam, don't forget that.

**Marie** *(filling up the kettle):* Yes *(impatiently)* I know. You were the same when you were her age.

**Sadhbh** *(somewhat passive aggressively):* And I suppose you were too.

**Marie** *(reminiscing):* I suppose I was, but me and Sally Martin were refined young women. *(laughing)* You'd never catch us eating those greasy chips, not to mind eating them on a bed! Christ my mother would've had a heart attack.

**Liadhan:** Séamus and Nana used to fight like cats and dogs. He hated how rigid she was about everything and he was the opposite. She could never understand why he didn't go

to college and *(sarcastically)* “make something of himself”. She didn’t understand the whole music thing. Right up until the day he died she was convinced it was a phase. She was always onto him about getting married. Thought the right kind of woman would straighten him out. Can you imagine? Séamus being married at twenty five? Séamus married full stop?

*Enya laughs at the thought.*

**Liadhan:** He probably would’ve settled down eventually. He’d never say it out loud but he was the soppiest romantic ever. I found his notebook when I was eight and it was full of the most disgusting songs about our old neighbour Leah.

*Liadhan grimaces at the thought*

**Enya:** Can I tell you something?

**Liadhan:** I don’t know, can you?

**Enya:** *(laughs and rolls her eyes)*

**Liadhan:** Tell me.

**Enya:** I had the biggest crush on Séamus when we were younger.

**Liadhan:** *(appalled)* You did not.

**Enya:** Come on, don’t pretend you didn’t realise.

**Liadhan:** Of course I realised. *(laughs)* You weren’t exactly the most subtle about it.

**Enya:** I used to write poems about my ‘forbidden love’ in first year.

**Liadhan:** *(visibly cringing)* You did not!

**Enya:** *(hiding under a pillow)* Please don’t make it any more embarrassing than it already is.

**Liadhan:** And you know you were his favourite one of my friends.

**Enya** (*surprised and flattered*): I was.

**Liadhan** (*sorting through his records*): Don't get too excited.

**Enya:** I wonder if he knew.

**Liadhan:** Well yeah, you weren't the best at hiding it. Do you remember when we were twelve and you had a major Oasis phase because he mentioned them literally once in passing at dinner.

**Enya:** Do NOT remind me. I hated them secretly too. Thought they were a load of pricks. The things twelve year olds do for love.

**Liadhan:** And remember when he got his first girlfriend and she had a load of piercings, so you went home and shoved five safety pins up your left ear.

**Enya:** I still have the keloids. (*pause*) I used to have this dream that one day when I would be twenty, and nine years wasn't the end of the world, and I'd have long model legs and my braces would be off and I would be a vegetarian that I'd go to one of his gigs and he'd suddenly stop seeing me as a gangly twelve year old and fall in love with me on the spot

**Liadhan:**(*bluntly*) You read too much.

*Pause*

**Liadhan:**(*absentmindedly flicking through the records*) Nana might've had a point though. You'd wonder if he'd still be here if he had a bit of stability in his life. He loved music and I never regret encouraging him, but it was tough watching him work so hard and never get any real security out of it. Whenever I stayed at his we'd have pot noodles for dinner. He always said it was a rare treat, our little tradition, but we both secretly knew it was all he could afford.

**Enya:** I know, but can you imagine how miserable he'd be in a 'normal' job. Being miserable is worse for your health than being poor and happy.

*Liadhan pauses looking for the record and goes silent, as if she's coming to a realisation.*

**Liadhan:** He would've ended up dead either way.

*Long beat. Liadhan goes back to looking for the record*

*(Liadhan lets out a triumphant shout and lifts up a record)* Yes! I found it.

**Enya:** What is it?

**Liadhan:** The copy of 'Heroes' I bought him for his eighteenth. It was his favourite album and I saved up for months to buy a signed copy off EBay. I think I paid around 150 euros for it. I'd say I was more excited about it than he was.

*Enya takes the record and looks at it, she realises it's not an authentic signature but says nothing.*

*Sadhbh and Marie are at the kitchen table sipping their tea. Sadhbh is in the middle of a story.*

**Sadhbh:** I remember when she went off to the library to use their computer to buy it. She skipped the whole way there and the whole way back. When it came she hid it in the shed and went to check that the rats hadn't got at it every day. I told him I'd fecking kill him if he ever told her the signature was fake, not that he'd ever dream of upsetting her.

*Pause. The women keep drinking their tea. Sadhbh takes one big gulp. Marie fills her cup back up. A few seconds pass.*

**Sadhbh:** *(sighs)* I don't have time to cry, I've still got one of my babies and I can't leave her just so I can grieve. I'll grieve when she's grown up, but until then I'll just push it deep.

**Marie:** That's not the best of ideas.

**Sadhbh:** Give me a better one then. I can't afford to fall apart and leave Liadhan on her own. I can't afford to lose two children. I always put my children first, that's not going to change just because I only have one now.

**Marie:** I know.

*Pause*

**Sadhbh:** Thank you for being here Mam.

**Marie:** I wasn't much help with my fecking back.

*Marie rubs her lower back.*

**Sadhbh:** You know what I mean.

**Marie:** Of course. *(pause)* You're my daughter, she's my granddaughter. He was my only grandson. *(long pause)* He was my grandson.

*Long pause*

**Marie** *(sighs):* Would you like something stronger? *(she lets out another sigh as she slowly gets up and reaches into the cupboard, pulling out a bottle of whiskey)*

**Sadhbh:** Please.

*Marie moves the tea cups and lays down two glasses, pouring in some drink. She sits down. The women give each other a look, as if to silently thank each other, and begin to drink.*

**Enya:** I'd love a drink.

**Liadhan:** You'd be drinking one right now if those two Betty's weren't next door. Can you imagine if they saw us even near a drink. They'd go ballistic.

**Enya:** Well, we have Séam's DVDS. They'll have to do.

**Liadhan:** He was the coolest person I've ever met. He was more of a dad than a brother. He was so many things En.

**Enya:** I know.

*Liadhan rests her head on Enya's shoulder again.*

**Enya:** You know what my favourite one of Newton's laws is?

**Liadhan:** Funnily enough we've never discussed Newton's laws to great length before.

*Enya is well used to Liadhan's sarcasm and can tune it out completely.*

**Enya:** Energy can't be created or destroyed. Only converted from one form to another.

**Liadhan:** I don't believe in ghosts if that's what you're saying.

**Enya:** It's not.

**Liadhan:** Well what are you saying then.

**Enya:** I'm not fully sure. But isn't it comforting to know that his energy went somewhere. I know you don't believe in heaven, but this is science. He didn't just disappear.

**Liadhan:** He probably just turned into soil.

**Enya:** Flowers grow on soil.

**Liadhan (smiles):** You are sickeningly cringe.

*Enya takes her hand.*

**Enya (excitedly):** But can't you see how incredible that is.

**Liadhan:** I suppose it is.

**Enya:** I don't know why anyone bothers believing in heaven when Newton existed. This whole energy thing is a much more beautiful idea.

**Liadhan:** I don't think the law of conservation of energy is a comment about the afterlife.

**Enya:** It might be.

**Liadhan:** Probably not.

**Enya** (*poking Liadhans arm jokingly*): Possibly not.

**Liadhan:** The last time I went to his grave there were daisies growing on top.

**Enya:** They're your favourite flower.

**Liadhan:** Yeah, (*pause*) they are.

**Marie:** Your father was seventy seven when he died.

**Sadhbh** (*rolling her eyes, unsure of what point her mother is trying to make*): Yes, funnily enough I remember it quite well.

**Marie:** And he was a miserable fucker for seventy six of them. I don't know Sadhbh, but Séamus was a happy boy. I know that makes it harder sometimes, when you remember how much he loved life, but I don't think age is a fair measure of life. Age says he was twenty five, but I don't think that's a fair measure of how much he really lived. By Christ he lived. (*Marie pauses, embarrassed by her attempt at sounding wise*) I'm talking shite, I shouldn't drink whiskey.

**Sadhbh** (*encouragingly*) : No, go on.

**Marie:** Well, your father was fifty two years older, but Séamus lived for twenty five years longer than him. I know he had his fair share of troubles, and it wasn't a straight path for him, but he loved people, and people loved him from the second he was born. He had twenty five good years. I'd trade that for seventy six miserable years any day of the week.

**Sadhbh** (*subtly rubbing away the tears in her eyes, she is surprised by her mothers wisdom and vulnerability*): You'll make a poet yet Mam.

*Marie scoffs.*

**Marie** (*sarcastically*): I will yeah.

*Both women sip on their drinks at the same time.*

**Liadhan**: I wonder if Mam ever feels alone in this.

**Enya**: I doubt it. She has you.

**Liadhan**: She has me to take care of. And she has herself to mind too, not that she does much of that. There's not one person on the planet who is there solely to take care of her. Maybe every mother is a bit alone in this. I dunno, I just remember at the funeral so many people came up to her and took her hand and told her that they were there to help with whatever she needed. Some of them were to some extent. Most weren't. But at the end of the day she had to make me dinner, make sure I ate it, wipe away my tears and tuck me into bed. If she wanted to cry she had to do it between the hours of eleven and twelve.

**Enya**: It's a lot for her, but you understand she's your mother, she can't just stop being your mother because Séamus died and you shouldn't feel guilty about it. Shit is an understatement, but she has to put you first.

**Liadhan**: Exactly.

**Sadhbh**: The sun's hardly going down this early! It's only nine.

**Marie**: The days are closing in.

**Sadhbh** (*wistfully*): They are.

**Marie**: Nothing more beautiful than a nice sunset.

**Sadhbh**: Another day is done.

**Marie** (*in an unusually tender voice*): Exactly, another day survived.

**Sadhbh**: When will I start living again Mam? I'm sick of just surviving.

**Marie**: I couldn't tell you, but I do know that it'll come. Eventually.

*Sadhbh sighs.*

**Marie**: Another drink?

**Sadhbh**: Another drink.

*Both girls burst into the room.*

**Enya**: Jesus Sadhbh (*gesturing towards the drink*), you're going wild.

**Sadhbh** (*more upbeat than before, joking*): Watch yourself child.

**Liadhan** (*purposefully annoying her grandmother*): Will you give us one Nanny?

**Marie**: Just because you're mother let Séamus do whatever he wanted doesn't mean I'll let you run wild.

*Enya and Liadhan awkwardly look at Sadhbh, unsure of what to say.*

**Sadhbh**: Nothing you love more than a low blow Mam. (*she quickly directs her attention to Liadhan before Marie has the chance to interrupt*) Everything tidy up there?

**Liadhan**: (*Liadhan glances at Enya and raises her eyebrows*) More or less.

**Sadhbh**: You're lying.

**Liadhan**: (*trying to act shocked*) I am not!

**Marie**: I'll put the kettle on.

*Marie slowly stands up, putting the glasses of whiskey into the sink and filling the kettle. With her back to the others she takes one deep breath. Sadhbh pulls Liadhan onto her lap and runs her hands through her daughter's hair. Enya smiles quietly to herself. Everyone except Marie is on the brink of tears. Life goes on.*