

Engineering Paradise the Musical

Script & Lyrics: David Gardiner

shortened version with narration – 24/05/19

NOTE: If you are reading this script while online the song titles highlighted **IN YELLOW** are clickable and will take you to demo versions of the songs

Cast & Musicians	
“Sinister Man” in Overture Section (DOUBLE UP WITH BIG JIM HARRISON) 1	1
Danny Gallagher, schoolboy at St. Benedict’s Roman Catholic Grammar School, Belfast	2
Joyce, a schoolgirl at a Protestant Grammar School in Bangor, Co. Down	3
Dr. Kieran Gallagher, Danny’s father	4
Mrs Gallagher, Danny’s mother	5
Father Walsh, Headmaster of St. Benedict’s Roman Catholic Grammar School, Belfast	6
Hugh Laverty, known as ‘Wee Hughie’, schoolboy friend of Danny	7
Pedro, Hughie’s brother	8
Bernie, Danny’s school friend who is one year behind him at St. Benedict’s	9
Big Jim Harrison, Commander of the Belfast Brigade of the IRA (DOUBLE UP) 1	-
Finbar, Big Jim’s driver and bodyguard (DOUBLE UP WITH FIRST RUC MAN) 2	10
Terry Flannigan, Nationalist M.P. for West Belfast at Stormont	11
Mrs Flannagan, Terry’s wife	12
Shelagh Flannigan, their teenage daughter	13
British soldier (DOUBLE UP WITH ENGLISH-SOUNDING PRIEST) 3	14
First RUC man (DOUBLE UP) 2	-
Second RUC man	15
English-sounding priest (DOUBLE UP) 3	-
The Girl, an unnamed teenage runaway making a living from prostitution in Belfast	16

Keyboard Player	17
Guitarist	18
Percussionist	19

In addition to these nineteen there are a number of masked men and ‘extras’ in some of the scenes and very small non-speaking parts which could be played by members of the cast.

Overture section

Lights go right down. 'Overture' theme commences. Loud menacing music with high bass content.

Music plays for about two minutes. Lights come up slowly to reveal (at least three) men in dark clothing wearing Balaclavas and holding (replica) Kalashnikovs moving in from various parts of the theatre towards the central aisle, keeping the crowd covered with their guns.

At a point of high drama in the music (crescendo) single spot snaps on (no fade-up) to reveal tall menacing figure in aisle, facing audience. Dressed like an undertaker, dark conservative suit, white shirt, black tie, carrying microphone. Moves down the aisle as he sings, fixing various members with his eyes in an intimidating manner. Bass voice, slow delivery. Sings:

SONG 1

We dream of Eden's verdant fields
The present to the future yields
Our history hasn't yet begun
There's so much of our race to run

The old shall usher in the new
And we, the noble, eager few
Our privilege to pay the price
Of engineering paradise

It hovers slightly out of sight
We must not doubt that we are right
There can't be any compromise
We'll kill or die or trade in lies

The innocent are merely means
They decorate our battle scenes
Your principles you put on ice
While engineering paradise

Do what it takes to seize the day
And God will look the other way
Be ruthless for our cause is right
And nothing comes before this fight

A boil needs cutting – use the lance!
The time has come to take your chance
The Devil's here to roll the dice
For engineering paradise

This isn't work for feeble will
You cannot hesitate to kill
The way ahead is clear to see
And when we've won they'll all agree

There wasn't any other way

The priests, the Church, the *world* will say
How right we were to pay the price
For engineering paradise

On the last note of the music the men with the Kalashnikovs fire a synchronised volley into the air, which is actually a sound effect on a speaker at the rear of the theatre. With the sound of the shots the lights cut dead to black.

Scene 1

Curtain opens on a softly back-lit stage. Night time. On the stage is an army campsite with a camp fire. Minimum of three soldiers (uncertain allegiance) sitting around the fire wearing camouflage jackets, one playing a tune on a mouthorgan or guitar. Wide spot beam lights the back of the theatre where a sexily-dressed young GIRL strolls up the aisle singing to the melody and flirting outrageously with male members of the audience, sitting on knees etc. as appropriate. As the song progresses she walks onto stage and takes the hands of two soldiers who slowly walk off with her. Third soldier realises he is getting left behind and hurries off after them.

[*GIRL sings (A Girl Who Gets Around)*]

SONG 19

I'm a girl who gets around
Every corner of this town
And I know just how to please
These young men from overseas

Or if you're with the IRA
That is totally okay
For it's only night-time play
Just a different shade of grey
And I'm a girl who likes to get around

I'm a girl who gets around
In a very troubled town
Not a Catholic or a Prod
'Cause I don't believe in God
Which you may think rather odd

Convent school in sweet Tralee
But the sisters would agree
It just wasn't right for me
So to here I had to flee
I'm just a girl who likes to get around

I haven't any politics, don't cheer for any side
I haven't any hatred, my heart is open wide

I'm full of love for everyone
In this I take a pride
I'm just a girl who likes to get around

I'm a little like your mother
And a little like a priest,
So tell me what you've bottled-up that needs to be released
You can tell the girl that likes to get around

If you're lonely or unhappy you can always come to me
I can make your burden lighter for a very modest fee
You can tell the girl who likes to get around
Tell the girl who found a way to make her favourite hobby pay
You can tell the girl who likes to get around

Scene 2

At curtain up: FATHER WALSH is sitting at his desk, Sacred Heart picture on wall behind, old-fashioned telephone and address book on desk, waste-paper basket beside him, cane (for corporal punishment) leaning against desk. Chair in front of desk.

[Stands up, lifts cane, toys with it and swings it around as he sings]

SONG 2

I merely try to keep a sense of order
And always do my duties as a priest
Civilised behaviour has a border
Humans have to rise above the beast

All living things are feeble and are mortal
But we live in eternity as well
We stand as moral agents at a portal
We freely choose our heaven or our hell

And all the easy choices are illusions
And everything we see will pass away
And the cleverest of scientists' conclusions
Will not take away that burden on that day

We stand before the lord as fallen angels
The sin of Eve has marked us from our birth
We're here to prove our worthiness to serve him
That's why the lord has placed us on this earth

And nothing else shall matter when we meet him
But how we have fulfilled his sacred trust
How hard have we endeavoured to defeat sin
And most of all, have we avoided lust?

And in the execution of this duty
Fulfilling every detail of this trust
Pursuing all this goodness truth and beauty
If someone must get hurt – then so they must
If someone must get hurt then so they must.

FATHER WALSH [*Coming to centrestage and forward*] Danny Gallagher!

DANNY [*Speaking from the floor of the theatre*] Yes, Father.

FATHER WALSH What do you mean by coming in at this time of the day?

DANNY My mother had one of her turns, Father.

FATHER WALSH And that made you twenty-five minutes late?

DANNY Yes, Father.

FATHER WALSH Come into my office. I've been meaning to have a talk with you.
[*Danny walks up from floor of theatre and sits down*]
Did I ask you to sit down?

DANNY [*Stands up instantly*]
No, Father.

FATHER WALSH How long have you been with us now, Gallagher?

DANNY Three and a half years, Father.

FATHER WALSH So you're fifteen?

DANNY Very nearly, Father.

FATHER WALSH [*Looks him up and down*]
Is that a hole in the leg of your trousers?

DANNY [*Covering it up with his hand*]
Yes, Father. It got burned with a soldering iron.

FATHER WALSH And what's that on the shoulder of your jacket?

DANNY I think it's pigeon...

FATHER WALSH [*Interrupts*]
Pigeon guano. That's what it's called in polite society. Does your father keep pigeons?

DANNY No, Father. I think I got it at a friend's house.

FATHER WALSH Hugh Lavery?

DANNY Yes, Father.

FATHER WALSH *[continuing his inspection]*
What is the colour of the shirt that we wear at this school?"

DANNY White, Father.

FATHER WALSH And what is the colour of your shirt, young Mr Gallagher?

DANNY Blue, Father. I... couldn't find a white one when my mother took her bad turn...

FATHER WALSH I see. And would you like to give me your opinion of the shoes that you are presently wearing?

DANNY They're a bit dirty, Father.

FATHER WALSH I agree. In fact I would say, extremely dirty. Unacceptably dirty is a description that I might use. Do you by any chance have shoe polish in your house?

DANNY Yes, Father.

FATHER WALSH May I suggest that you apply some before you come to this school again?

DANNY Yes Father.

FATHER WALSH *[Rummages through address book. Dials a number on the phone. Speaks in a completely different, polite tone]*
Oh, good morning Dr Gallagher. Sorry to disturb you. It's Father Walsh at the School. I have your son here and he tells me that Mrs Gallagher is unwell this morning... oh, I'm very sorry to hear that... yes, I understand. We shall include her in our lunchtime prayers. Thank you, Doctor."
[Puts down the receiver]

DANNY May I go to Science now, Father?

FATHER WALSH Sit down, boy.
[Danny sits. Father Walsh speaks in a slow, preachy manner]
Your family background is somewhat different to that of the other boys at this school. You may see this as a burden. Perhaps the children of artisans victimise or tease you. I don't know. But having the background that you do is in fact an enormous opportunity and privilege. You come from a home where learning is respected and encouraged. You are surrounded by highly educated adults. You live in a world of books and newspapers, art, culture, intelligent conversation. Isn't that so?

DANNY Is it? ...I mean, yes, Father.

FATHER WALSH Your privileged life brings with it great responsibilities. To the other boys here, you represent a kind of role model. Education, after all, is the product on offer. You come from an educated and professional family. The boys look to you for an example. How you dress, how you speak, how you behave. These things matter more in your case than in the case of the other boys. Do you understand what I'm saying?

DANNY Yes, Father.

FATHER WALSH That is why I find it necessary to point out to you those areas in which you are not setting the example that you should be. What is that in your pocket, boy?

DANNY [*Starts.*] It's a valve, Father.
[*Stands to withdraw it from his pocket. Hands it over to Father Walsh.*]

FATHER WALSH One of those glass tubes out of a wireless set?

DANNY Yes. Father.

FATHER WALSH [*Examining it*] And what would this do if you had a fall in the playground?

DANNY Probably break, Father.

FATHER WALSH Exactly so. And then what would happen? Shards of glass in your leg. All kinds of sharp pieces of metal sticking into you. Heaven knows what chemicals injected deep down under your skin.

DANNY I don't think it contains any chemicals, Father.

FATHER WALSH Don't you, indeed?
[*The priest slips it into the side drawer of his desk*]
You may have it back when school is over. Why did you bring it to school anyway?

DANNY To give to somebody, Father. Somebody who's trying to make a radio set.

FATHER WALSH Ah, yes. Radio sets. Quite the radio expert, aren't you?

DANNY I read *Practical Wireless*, Father. I make radio sets as a hobby.

FATHER WALSH So I am informed.
[*opens another drawer and takes from it a small red lapel badge bearing the face of a Russian astronaut and places it on the desk*]
This was confiscated from a boy in Father McCormack's class. The boy said that he got it from you.

DANNY Yes, Father. It's a Yuri Gagarin badge. I got them from Radio Moscow. Yuri Gagarin was the first man in space...

FATHER WALSH *[Interrupts]*
I know who Yuri Gagarin is. But do you know what Russia is? What the Soviet Union stands for?
[Stands on the chair behind his desk and sings]
[This song is a parody of a Cossack 'prisyadka' (knee-bending) dance. It provides an opportunity for three or four uniformed schoolboys to come on and perform an appropriate dance routine]

SONG 3

Russia is a godless foreign country
Where Roman Catholic teaching has been banned
All instruments of mass communication
Are government controlled throughout the land

There isn't any freedom of assembly
And people watch each other night and day
And instant execution would await you
If from the party line you were to stray

Their atom bombs are trained on all our cities
Their rockets just await the button's press
And if we didn't have our own deterrent
The world would be one communistic mess

For Khrushchev is the servant of the Devil
The Anti-Christ incarnate, nothing less.

[Steps down from the chair]
Is that the kind of world you want to live in, young Mr Gallagher?

DANNY No, Father.

FATHER GALLAGHER Then why are you distributing the badges?

DANNY They're just about Yuri Gagarin, Father. About flying in space...

FATHER WALSH *[Interrupts]*
They're Communist propaganda, boy! An attempt to corrupt the minds of Ireland's young. Do you even know what the writing on the bottom says?

DANNY 'Hayuk za mir', Father.

FATHER WALSH I know what it says! But do you know what the words mean?

DANNY They have two meanings, Father. Like a kind of pun. 'Science for peace' and 'Science for the world'.

FATHER WALSH Are you trying to be a smart Alec?

DANNY No, Father.

FATHER WALSH [*Throws the badge into the waste-paper basket*]
I don't want to hear that you've been distributing anything like this
ever again. This is a liberal institution but the line has to be drawn
somewhere. If I hear about anything like this coming from you
again you're out of this school on your ear. I don't care who you
are or who your father is. A line has to be drawn. Do I make myself
clear?

DANNY Yes, Father.

FATHER WALSH Now, go and join your science class. And let that be an end to it.

 [*Curtain*]

Scene 3

The 'GIRL' walks on in front of the curtain. Stops at centre stage.

GIRL We have already met. I've told you about one of my
hobbies. My other hobby is story telling. I'm going to tell
you the story of Danny and his family, and his teachers,
and his girlfriends... oh, and his pirate radio station, and his
life... and how it all went wrong... and about Northern
Ireland and the armed uprising... and how that all went
wrong too. I won't charge anything for story telling. My
other hobby can subsidise this one.

Obviously that's quite a lot of story to tell. So I'm going to
leave out bits. You can think of it as an illustrated history
lesson. I'm sure you know what happens if you neglect
history.

You've met the headmaster of Danny's school. Now let's
meet Danny's father and his mother.

[*Walks across stage and EXITS. Curtain rises*]

Props required: a dining table, chairs and a telephone on a small table or stand nearby. At curtain up: DR GALLAGHER, MRS GALLAGHER and DANNY are sitting down to a meal. There is a telephone close to the table.

DR GALLAGHER He threatened our son with expulsion! That's what he did. That old fart Walsh, whose family runs the chip shop in Bundoran. And you want me to just sit back and take it

MRS GALLAGHER Let the boy alone, Kieran. Don't draw attention to him. If you go in there kicking up a fuss they'll crucify him in the playground. They do anyway, but it'll get ten times worse. Can't you remember when you were a teenager yourself?

DR GALLAGHER Kicking up a fuss? I should get the RUC onto that place. It's like something out of Dickens. It should be closed down. Common assault with a cane every five minutes. Science teachers that think the world was made in six days by an old man with a white beard. Indoctrination into fairy tales and superstition. Refusal to permit discussion of contrary views. Teaching lies about socialism and world politics. Teaching the boys to hate Protestants. That place is stuck in the Middle Ages, like the whole damned Catholic Church. There must be a Grammar School somewhere in Belfast that isn't run by mindless buffoons with crosses on strings around their necks.

DANNY [In a pleading voice] It's all right, Dad. I don't mind. It was only a dressing-down. I didn't get the cane. St. Benedict's isn't such a bad school... all my friends are there.

MRS GALLAGHER [Ignoring Danny] Now don't be silly, Kieran. This is a Catholic family whether we believe in God or not. You send the boy to a Protestant school and he'll like as not get his head kicked in. You know that as well as I do.

DR GALLAGHER Jesus Christ! Will the Middle Ages never come to an end in this place?
[Starts to eat. Phone rings]
 Bloody phone.
[Picks up the receiver]
 Gallagher speaking. What can I do for you?... I see. Yes, 'discharge' is exactly the right term... is that so?... Yes, you can get a discharge for a number of reasons... A green discharge, yes, that's one of the most popular colours. I was just about to eat my dinner, Mr Rice, how about you?... I see... Yes, I understand... Now let me stop you there, Mr Rice, because I have to confess to a disgraceful gap in the medical training provided by Trinity College Dublin. You see, they completely neglected to teach us how to diagnose on the telephone. I'm afraid you're going to have to come in to the surgery in the morning, or the evening session on Wednesday if you have to go to work... Yes, I think it would be safe to leave it until Wednesday... Yes, I've heard of that treatment before, but I'm afraid I have to inform you that I am aware of no evidence of the clinical benefit of contact with religious relics, apart, that is, from the placebo effect... Yes, that's when you fool yourself into believing that something's doing you good and so it does... Yes... No... If you want advice regarding the spiritual

realm you could consult my older brother, John Seamus Gallagher, DD, SJ. We call him ‘Witchdoctor Gallagher’ in the family, in order to distinguish him from myself... No, to the best of my knowledge he is presently in Ecuador, attempting to make the people there as ignorant and superstitious as himself... No, you were correct the first time, I did indeed mean to imply that the whole thing was a load of bullshit. You may quote that as my professional opinion, should the occasion arise... Yes, Mr Rice, a small Scotch is an excellent idea. You could drink to your own health and mine. Now, my dinner is getting cold. Will it be okay if I eat it?... Thank you. Goodbye, Mr Rice.”

[Under his breath]

Neanderthals.

MRS GALLAGHER

I never thought I’d hear you say that a small Scotch was a good idea.

DR GALLAGHER

There’s a difference between a small one and the tumblerfuls that you put down your throat.

MRS GALLAGHER

Don’t listen to him, Danny. All I ever take is a wee drop at night so that I can get some sleep.

DR GALLAGHER

You know, sometimes I wonder if I’m the only one in the whole rotten city of Belfast who lives in the real world.

MRS GALLAGHER

They say that when you think everybody’s mad except yourself you’re a prime candidate for the funny-farm.

[Phone rings again. Dr Gallagher lifts the receiver.]

DR GALLAGHER

Gallagher speaking. What can I do for you?... Your wife, Mr Conroy? Isn’t she able to come to the phone herself?... No, I’m sorry, I’m not at liberty to discuss anything to do with another patient... No, Mr Conroy, I can’t even confirm or deny whether or not she has been to see me... I do understand that she is your wife. I’m afraid that it doesn’t make any difference. In fact as far as I am concerned it wouldn’t make any difference if it was your conjoined twin that you were talking about. It’s exactly the same as the seal of the confessional, Mr Conroy. It’s something that doctors don’t do. Full stop. No need to even think about it. That makes life a lot simpler... You are exactly right, it is indeed part of the Hypocratic oath. Solemn declaration, in my case. I can quote you the relevant section if you like, in Greek, Latin or English ... Yes, Mr Conroy. I’m sorry that I wasn’t able to help you on this occasion. Goodbye.

[Replaces the receiver]

DANNY

[Thoughtfully]

But you don’t believe in God, do you Dad? So even if you took the oath, you wouldn’t have to keep it...

DR GALLAGHER

[Addressing his wife]

Now that's a good example of what I was talking about just now. They put the idea into the boys' heads that the only reason to keep your word is so that you don't end up as the main course at some kind of supernatural barbecue in Middle Earth. Do you think I'm someone who goes around telling lies and breaking my promises, Danny?

DANNY

No, Dad. The opposite. You never do anything like that.

DR GALLAGHER

And why do you think I don't?

DANNY

[*After a moment's thought*]

Is it for my sake? To give me a good example?

DR GALLAGHER

No Danny. It's not for your sake. Or for your mother's sake. It's for my sake. For my sake and nobody else's. Does that make it any clearer?

MRS GALLAGHER

I think what your father means...

DR GALLAGHER

[*Interrupting*]

Let the boy think it out himself. He's old enough to understand things like that now. He'll never learn to think for himself if you don't let him have a try.

DANNY

[*Putting down his knife and fork*]

I suppose...that if you tell lies and don't keep your promises you end up not liking yourself very much, or respecting yourself ...

DR GALLAGHER

What did I tell you? That boy's a son of mine all right!

[*Danny looks pleased*]

And that's why I want you to wear that Yuri Gagarin badge all the time, except when you're at school. They can control what you do to some extent when you're within the walls of that institution, and as your mother says, it would be stupid to get yourself victimised by the prehistoric types that inhabit that place, but once you're outside those school gates your life is your own and there isn't a damned thing they can do to you. Let them try it and they'll have me and the RUC to contend with.

DANNY

I don't mind, Dad. It's only a badge. It's no big deal.

DR GALLAGHER

You'll wear the badge when I tell you to. And have you got a spare one – for me?

MRS GALLAGHER

You're daft, Kieran. You can't do that. It'll get into the *Irish News*. They'll say we're Communists and burn us out.

DR GALLAGHER

I'm not ashamed for people to know that I'm a socialist. What do you think I went to Spain for when I was young?

MRS GALLAGHER

That was different. That was fighting the Fascists. Everybody

agreed with that.

DR GALLAGHER

But it's wrong to fight the intellectual Fascists of the Catholic Church? If we don't take a stand, what happens when the next person with a mind gets into that school? Let them get away with it once and they'll be twice as quick to stamp down on the next person, and the one after that. We don't have thought control just yet in Catholic schools, and I'm not going to do anything to make it easier for them to achieve it. Will you get me that badge, Danny?

DANNY

I wasn't trying to do anything political, Dad. I was just interested in Yuri Gagarin and space travel. I just wrote to Radio Moscow...

DR GALLAGHER

The badge, son. Where is the badge?
[Danny produces a badge and hands it to his father who puts it on, rises, and moves to centre stage. Dining room scene darkens to allow DANNY and MRS GALLAGHER to exit. Sings:]

SONG 4

Engineering solutions are the answer
To the miseries that human kind surround.
You can always find the way to move things forward
If you'll only keep your feet upon the ground.

You've simply got to state the problem clearly
And adopt an analytic frame of mind.
A decision made in haste will cost you dearly
It's through reason the solutions you will find.

Nature speaks the language of mathematics
And religions are where lazy people hide.
Electronics, laws of motion, hydrostatics
When you've quantified things – then you can decide

Is the world the joke of some capricious being
Or the product of inexorable laws?
When it's innards we have found new ways of seeing
Will we understand its fundamental cause?

Are there reasons underlying every process?
Are there rules that hold the universe in check?
Or are spirits hiding out in every recess?
Has some demon been around to stack the deck?

I see no need of any hidden mover
The world is so much bigger than their god
There's a universe that's out there to discover
And I'm the blind man, tapping with his rod.

[Curtain]

Scene 3

The GIRL walks on again in front of the curtain and stops at centre stage.

GIRL Danny's father is an atheist, just like me. That's very unusual in 1960s Belfast. He and I may be the only two. Apart from Danny himself of course. It's like not supporting any football team. It leaves you not knowing who to hate.

 He doesn't get on too well with his wife because he has a very special patient, a former lover that he never expected to meet again. They met when they tended wounded soldiers together years before in Spain, as members of the International Brigade, trying to keep General Franco out of power. That was something else that went very badly.
 Belfast is a very small place.

[Walks on and exits opposite side of stage. Curtain rises]

The interior of Danny's house. The same set as Scene 3 will be adequate, with a sofa or two easy chairs replacing the dinner table. DANNY is sitting down. MRS GALLAGHER enters.

MRS GALLAGHER Your da got a phone call last night. Mrs Whittaker has died.

DANNY Died?

[Mrs Gallagher EXITS. Danny walks to centre stage and Sings:]

SONG 5

My father had a very special patient
I think she was a very special friend
I often wondered what they did together
And how their special friendship was to end

My father is a conscientious doctor
A model of connubial fair play
Unthinkable the smallest hint of scandal
Impossible that he could ever stray

And yet I wonder what they did together
He seemed to visit every single day
I often asked if she was getting better
He'd sadden – but of course he wouldn't say

I know they met before she was a patient
The civil war when Franco conquered Spain
I know they tended wounded troops together

I know they thought they'd never meet again

I know she had a family and children
I guess they must have known about Dad
And all the extra visits that were needed
To control whatever illness that she had

And now it seems the battles all are over
And victory has slipped away once more
My father's special patient didn't make it
And I know that it will cut him to the core

And yet I wonder what they did together
He seemed to visit every single day
I wonder if he managed to be with her
I wonder if I'll find the words to say
I wonder when his pain will pass away

[Sound of car arriving and door slamming]

MRS GALLAGHER *[Re-enters hastily]* Jesus, it's himself. What do I look like, Danny?

DANNY Your hair could do with a brush.

MRS GALLAGHER Right. I'll do it.
[Exit]

DR GALLAGHER *[Enters and sits down]*
Hello Danny. Where's your mother?

DANNY I think she went upstairs.
[Goes to stand near his father]
I heard about Mrs Whittaker.

DR GALLAGHER The funeral's on next Thursday. Would you like to come with me?

DANNY To the funeral? But I didn't know Mrs Whittaker...

DR GALLAGHER No, of course not. You're right. Stupid idea.
[Pause. Reaches up and takes Danny's hand. Danny looks surprised]
I feel a terrible fraud, Danny. My job is supposed to be the preservation of life, and there wasn't a damn thing I could do for her. Not a damned thing. A gentle, intelligent woman, who put all her trust in me. And I let her down.

DANNY *[After a pause, mimicking his father's voice]*
Quite right. It's disgraceful that you can't make your patients live forever.

DR GALLAGHER *[Smiles faintly]*
If there really is a God up there, I don't know how he sleeps at night.

DANNY Actually, I've changed my mind, Dad. I do want to go to the funeral.

DR GALLAGHER *[Taps the back of Danny's hand]*
I'd better write a note for Father Walsh.

MRS GALLAGHER *[Enters quietly, now somewhat spruced-up. Pauses as the couple look at one another. Speaks in a gentle voice]*
I'll put sheets on the big bed. I don't think you'll want to sleep on your own tonight.
[Dr Gallagher goes on holding Danny's hand and looking at his wife as lighting slowly fades.]

[Curtain]

Scene 4

A two-seat park bench is placed at centre stage in front of the curtain. Any other prop such as a bus stop or traffic cone to suggest that this is a public road. DR GALLAGHER and DANNY stroll on together as though they are in the middle of a long walk. They are wearing dark funeral clothing.

DR GALLAGHER Will we sit down for a minute?
[They sit together on the bench. Pause.]

DANNY I never knew that Mrs Whittaker and her husband were so young. Her eldest boy can't be long out of Primary School.

DR GALLAGHER Niall is twelve, but he's small for his age.

DANNY Their dad, Mr Whittaker, he kept looking at you during the service. Did you notice?

DR GALLAGHER Not really. He's a good man – always treated her well. That's why she couldn't... why she never... Well, anyway, I always thought he was a good man. I didn't expect that nonsense he was talking today though.

DANNY I saw him taking you to one side during the wake. It looked like the two of you were arguing.

DR GALLAGHER We were. He wanted to give me her violin. The most precious thing she possessed. She used to play in the Ulster Orchestra. That fiddle is worth a fortune. Worth more than the house they were living in, she told me once.

DANNY Really? And did you take it?

DR GALLAGHER I told him he was mad, that nobody in my family was even musical, that his own children should have the fiddle, but he wouldn't hear of it. He said it was her ...
[Chokes up slightly]
Her dying wish that I should have it. I couldn't talk him out of it.

DANNY So you took the violin?
[Dr Gallagher nods]
Was that what she used to do when you went over? Play music for you?

DR GALLAGHER [After a pause] It's time we were getting home, son. [Both exit]

[Curtain]

Scene 5

As the props are removed the GIRL walks on.

GIRL It's becoming a bit confusing for Danny. It's almost as if his dad has been listening to those Flower Power people in California with their Free Love ideas. Confusing for somebody who's led such a sheltered life.

I must make it clear though that I'm not in favour of free love myself ... Well, a girl's got to make a living, hasn't she?

We're going to meet one of Danny's school friends next, known as Wee Hughie because he's... well, wee. He's in the same year as Danny but in the bottom stream. Danny's somewhere toward the top of the middle stream. I hope you're taking notes, because these streams are highly significant. The 11+ has just reached Northern Ireland, so for the first time the less privileged section of society, which for simplicity we can call the Catholics, have been granted a pathway of social mobility. Pretty soon there's going to be a whole bunch of Catholic doctors and lawyers and all kinds of professionals coming out at the other end and talking about social justice and civil rights. But that's still a little bit in the future. Right now we've just got Wee Hughie and his brother Pedro, who isn't in any stream at all, and they've sneaked into Wee Hughie's older brother Connor's bedroom ... [she glances around furtively] to take a look at his gun. [EXITS]

The curtain opens on Connor's bedroom. Minimum props are something to represent the bed, seen from the foot end, and a large Republic of Ireland flag (green, white and orange) pinned to the wall above it. Additional Republican posters or emblems would be an advantage.

Enter nervously DANNY, WEE HUGHIE and his younger brother PEDRO (In the original script Pedro is aged about 7, but the use of a child actor creates child protection and chaperone issues. I would suggest that Pedro instead be represented as a teenager with a mild learning disability

WEE HUGHIE Everybody in the Volunteers gets one. It's for personal protection. Connor says, now that he's joined, the Protestants will be after him. They might come around and try to shoot him in his sleep.
[Suddenly points the gun at the centre of Danny's forehead]
Bang!

DANNY [Shaken] for Christ's sake, Hughie. That thing's real – and it's loaded.
[Pedro laughs at Danny's discomfiture and jumps up and down in delight]
That's not funny. Anyway, it's time I went home. This IRA business isn't my scene.
[Turns to Wee Hughie]
Don't forget, Hughie, seven o'clock this evening. I'll be doing another test of the radio station.

WEE HUGHIE No problem. I'll be listening and I'll let you know how it goes.
[Wee Hughie replaces the gun under the pillow]

[WEE HUGHIE plus PEDRO and DANNY EXIT]

[Curtain]

Scene 5

As the curtain comes down the GIRL comes back on stage. In the background we hear Danny testing his radio transmitter;

DANNY This is Kingston Radio, Calico Jack speaking. Testing, one two, three, four... I hope you can hear me nice and clearly Hughie...
[fades out]

GIRL Now that was something I forgot to tell you about. Danny has a hobby too. He's been a bit of a wee swat all his life, and the only child of a doctor who keeps moving from one town to another, so that he doesn't stay in any one school for very long. Wee Hughie was nearly the only friend he made at the Grammar School in Belfast, him and a boy in the year below him named Bernie, who we'll meet by and by. But the thing is, ever since he was eight or nine, Danny has been fascinated by ham radio and electronics. He built his own medium wave broadcast transmitter and right now he's at the stage of adjusting it for peak performance. He wants to use it to run a pirate radio station, like Radio Caroline in the North Sea. But his isn't in a ship. As a matter of fact it's in Danny's upstairs bedroom at the rear of the house he's living in off the Antrim Road. He doesn't really know what he wants to broadcast, it's the technical side that he loves.

I don't think it's as much fun as my hobby, and you don't meet so many people either. But each to their own.

I've got to go now, it's nine in the morning, my bedtime ...
and school assembly time.. [EXITS]

The Curtain rises. The theatre has become the School Assembly Hall. there is a large cross at centre stage and in front of it a lectern. FATHER WALSH enters slowly, glaring at audience members, and ascends to the lectern.

FATHER WALSH

[*In thunderous voice*] May I have total silence and your complete attention if you please. Vincent Hannigan, put away that chewing gum and don't let me see you chewing it in here again. Sit up straight, Liam Connery, and button your shirt sleeves.

[*Scans the audience with a severe expression. Makes the sign of the cross.*]

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Boys, I have stood here many times in the years that I have been Head Teacher of this school to announce proud and happy events. The examination successes of our senior pupils. The successes in life of old boys of the school. The honours awarded to our athletics team and our hurlers. The vocations to the priesthood of boys I have known and taught.

Today, I stand here to make what I think is the saddest announcement it has ever been my misfortune to have to make, to you or to anyone else. Today, I have to inform you of the death of one of your fellow pupils. Not as a result of an illness or any normal misadventure that we might all understand, like a road accident or a fall, dreadful though such a thing would be. Today, I have to tell you that Hugh Lavery in Father McCFINBAR's Year Four class, known to all of us affectionately as Wee Hughie, was killed in a tragic accident involving a firearm at his home. [*Pauses*]

It is natural that you should be thirsty for details of this terrible event. I will pass on to you as much as I know. The weapon, I have been informed, was a semi-automatic hand gun illegally held by Hugh's older brother Connor. The accident happened early this morning, before Hugh's mother was out of bed. Connor had left the house early for some reason, and was not involved in the incident. There were only two people in the room when it happened, Hugh and his younger brother Pedro.

[*The spotlight on the priest dims, and behind appears a still tableau of the scene in Connor's bedroom, the gun, which is in Wee Hughie's hand and pointed at an unseen target being the only prop*]

WEE HUGHIE

[*off stage*] Everybody in the Volunteers gets one. It's for personal protection. Connor says, now that he's joined, the Protestants'll be after him. They might come around and try to shoot him in his sleep.

Bang!

[*Spotlight comes up on the priest once again*]

FATHER WALSH

...The school will not be opening tomorrow or any day next week. We're not sure yet when Hugh's funeral is going to be, but there is

a requiem Mass planned for this Saturday, the sixteenth, and you shall assemble here on Friday morning at nine o'clock in neat and clean school uniform ready to walk in line to St. Mary's Church where your confessions will be heard, ready to receive Holy Communion on the following morning.

We will now stand to say a prayer for the repose of the soul of your friend and fellow pupil Hugh Laverty.
[*Spotlight fades to darkness*]

Scene 6

Danny's sitting room, with old-fashioned TV, back of cabinet to audience, and DANNY and DR GALLAGHER sitting further back looking at TV and facing audience.

[*Recorded sound*]

In a tragic accident today, Hugh Laverty, a fourteen-year-old pupil at this Roman Catholic Boys' Grammar School in West Belfast, was shot dead in his home by a handgun that his seven-year-old brother was playing with. The younger boy can not be named for legal reasons. Police have arrested the boys' older brother Connor Laverty, who is an apprentice motor mechanic with the British Leyland Central Service Department in York Street, Belfast. The arrested man is not thought to have been involved directly in the incident, but has been charged with possession of an unlicensed firearm and ammunition, and also with membership of an illegal organisation. In a bizarre written statement, handed to newsmen outside his house as he was taken away, Connor Laverty said that his brother had not died in vain, but was the first casualty in something that he called 'the Second Irish War of Liberation'.

It's not yet clear whether the authorities intend to invoke the controversial Northern Ireland Special Powers Act, under which anyone accused of a terrorist offence can be kept in prison indefinitely without trial. This legislation is still in force, but has not been used by the Northern Ireland Government since April 1962.

Connor's mother, who has asked that we respect her privacy, said through her lawyer that she considers her son misguided and irrational, and that she had no idea that he had been concealing firearms in the house or was a member of any illegal organisation. The dead boy's younger brother was today admitted to the children's ward of the Mater Hospital in Crumlin Road, Belfast, suffering from what was described as 'shock and psychological trauma'. No date for Mr Laverty's trial, if indeed there is to be one, has been announced as yet.

This is Liam Flynn, reporting for BBC Television, in West Belfast.

DR GALLAGHER [*Stands up and switches off the TV set*]
Wee Hughie was a friend of yours, wasn't he?

DANNY Yes. I was in his house only last Tuesday.

DR GALLAGHER Did you know anything about this gun business?

DANNY No. Well, not really. Connor used to boast about being in the Republican movement. Used to sing rebel songs, and put up posters of IRA heroes. That kind of thing.

DR GALLAGHER

We've never come this close to The Troubles before.
Guns, Danny, are machines designed to cause death. If you'd seen
as many of them as I did in Spain, and the results of their use,
you'd know what obscene things they are. There is nothing good to
be said about them. They have no redeeming features. Anybody
who would allow a seven-year-old to play with a loaded gun
deserves locking-up forever. I hope that's what he gets.
[Exits]

[Stands up, walks to front centre of stage and sings in a quiet reflective manner. This can be sung
in front of the curtain to facilitate set change.]

SONG 7

It's way beyond what I should have to cope with
I don't know what to say or who to tell
Should I speak at Connor's trial as a witness
Should I talk to Pedro's family as well?

What would it change if I should make a statement,
Explain the lead-up to the dark event?
Can anything be learned from how it happened,
That similar disasters might prevent?

Would I be seen as seeking out the limelight
Pretending there was something that I knew?
Would I be making mountains out of mole-hills
My story adding nothing that was new?

I need to talk to someone more impartial
My father's mind is firmly made up.
I need to get perspective and some distance
To know if I've been served a poison cup.

It's way beyond what I should have to cope with
I don't know what to say or who to tell
There must be someone wise that I can turn to
With guidance he can offer me as well.
Someone who can help me to unburden
Someone I can trust to never tell...

[Lights fade down]

[Curtain]

Scene 7

A queue of boys (If available. Two or three would be sufficient) sit on chairs and wait to have
their confessions heard. All the boys wear black armbands. The confession box can be

DANNY From the Volunteers. The IRA, like he said when he got caught.

PRIEST Do you know the name of the person in the IRA who gave him the gun?

DANNY *[after a longish silence]*
No, Father.

PRIEST Did Connor tell you the names of any of the people he was involved with?
[Long pause. Danny does not respond]
Say five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys.
[As the lights fade the priest repeats the mumbled Latin Absolution]
Dominus noster Jesus Christus te absolvat, et ego auctoritate ipsius te absolvo ab omni vinculo excommunicationis et interdicti in quantum possum et tu indiges. Deinde, ego te absolvo a peccatis tuis, in nomine Patris, et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.
[Lights fade down]

[Lights come up. The set for the Confessional may be rremoved. DANNY is standing looking pensive. The setting need not be defined but could be the school playground, represented by back projection or in some other way. Some other boys are also standing around chatting quietly. All still wear black armbands. BERNIE comes up to DANNY and addresses him]

BERNIE Hello Danny. I'm surprised you went to confession. You don't believe in it, do you?

DANNY Hello Bernie. I just wanted to talk to somebody.

BERNIE Wee Hughie was your best friend at school, wasn't he?

DANNY Yes, I suppose he was. At least he was the first person who spoke to me when I came to the school from Drumallen.

BERNIE You must be pretty cut up about it.

DANNY Well yes, but to be honest, it was something else I was thinking about just now. Did you get that new priest, the one with the English accent?

BERNIE Aye. What about him?

DANNY He asked me questions that seemed a bit out of line. Questions about who Connor knew in the IRA. Things that had nothing to do with my Confession. I thought it was a bit odd, that was all.

BERNIE Odd? You're not kidding. You need to tell someone.

DANNY One of the teachers?

BERNIE Don't be daft. The Volunteers. You need to let them know.

I've got a lot to explain.

DANNY Do you know my father then?

JIM Used to know him very well. I knew him in Spain. And years before that too, when he was chairman of the debating society at Trinity College Dublin. Old times. Did he ever mention me?

DANNY I don't think so.

JIM How is he getting along?

DANNY He's very well, Mr... Jim.

JIM That's another of the reasons I got you out here. I wanted to take a look at Kieran Gallagher's son. He's a very exceptional man, your father. I always admired him. To tell you the truth, I was always a bit jealous of him.

DANNY Oh? Why?

JIM I think most people who knew him were. There seemed to be no limits to what the man knew and what he could do. He made the rest of us feel like eejits. Even his professors in Trinity were scared that he'd show them up.

[Danny smiles]

Has he talked to you about his family? About how he got into Trinity?

DANNY No, never.

JIM He and I were exactly the same age. Students at the same time, him in Dublin and me in Belfast, but we often ran into one another at the debates. We were on the same circuit. He was the one I could never beat, whatever the subject, whatever the motion, for or against, if he was on the other team I knew I was beaten before I started.

I was a law student. My family paid part of the fees and the rest came from a trade union scholarship. There was no free University and fat grant cheques back then. But his education never cost his family a penny. He got what they called a State Exhibition. There were only four or five of them for the whole of County Donegal. The family had spent every penny they could afford on the first son, John – they put him through Maynooth Seminary in County Kildare to become a priest, and then the Jesuits got hold of him and paid for him to go to The National and do a Doctor of Divinity. The parents thought the sun shone out of his arse, but the truth was, the younger son, your father, was three times as bright. But inside the family, John was always the blue-eyed boy, no matter what your father did. I think that put him off his own family and probably off religion too. But who knows? I don't suppose you're interested in this auld stuff at all. It's all water long under the

bridge.

DANNY No, it's very interesting actually. I never knew any of that.

JIM You've got big shoes to fill, young Danny.

Now, back to our deal. You report to Bernie. He'll report to somebody else, and that somebody else will report to me. That's how it works. There's always a chain. The less each individual knows, the less they can let slip. Oh, and nothing is too trivial to report. I really mean nothing.

Somebody gives you a funny look, asks you a funny question, does something you wouldn't have expected – tell Bernie. Let other people decide whether it's significant or not. There's no such thing as too much information. Is that clear?

[*Danny nods*]

Now. Is there anything we can do for you? Anything at all?

DANNY [*Thinks for a moment*]

I've got kind of interested in pirate radio lately. I've built a transmitter ... I've been wondering if I could get away with broadcasting ... maybe one programme a week. An hour on a Sunday afternoon – a DJ show. Something like that. But of course it isn't entirely legal...

JIM We've got people in the Post Office hierarchy. They're the ones supposed to stop radio piracy. What will your radio station be called?

DANNY Well, I've been calling it Kingston Radio. The *Kingston* was a pirate ship. Calico Jack was the captain.

JIM Okay. Kingston Radio is never going to be investigated or closed down. You have my word.

DANNY Really? Are you certain? Is it as simple as that?

JIM Yes, Danny. It's as simple as that.

DANNY [*Hesitates*]

If it's as simple as that, couldn't you have got Connor off that firearms charge?

JIM Ah yes. Connor Lavery. He's a good boy, but not the sharpest tool in the box. Did you hear what he said about his dead brother being the first casualty in the Second Irish War of Independence or something? What kind of twisted logic is that? Beats me. But believe it or not, Connor got exactly what he wanted, and so did we, in a way.

DANNY But they say they might use the Special Powers Act against him. He might never get out.

JIM

Connor Lavery will get out when Northern Ireland gets its freedom, and that isn't as far away as you might think. To tell you the truth, I hope they do use the Act against him. A young boy like that held without trial would be worth a hundred recruits a day to the Volunteers. What matters in the modern world, Danny, is how things come across in the media. A good-looking young martyr is a gift to the movement. It's all a matter of the way the public perceives things. Hearts and minds, Danny. Connor is doing more for the movement now than he could in three lifetimes on the outside. And if we can get somebody to write a song about him he'll be as happy as a puppy with a pound of sausages. Make no mistake, Danny. I've been through all this before. I know what I'm doing. Our day is going to come. And it won't be very long. When it comes, you'll be glad that you and your dad are with us.

DANNY

With you? Well, I don't know about that. Dad won't have anything to do with a movement that uses guns. And I think your brand of socialism isn't the same as his...

JIM

Danny, let me quote you something that Fidel Castro said about a different revolution. He said that there are many sides to every question, but there are only two sides to a barricade. He was right. When the crunch comes, the niceties won't matter. We'll all be on the same side then.

Now I'm afraid I'll have to say goodbye. And you'll have to wear the blindfold again. It's for everybody's protection, yours included. I've enjoyed our little chat. And if ever you need to talk to me again – I mean to me personally – tell Bernie and it will be arranged.

[Rises]

And I'd like to say remember me to your father, but that wouldn't do, I'm afraid. You can't talk to anybody about this meeting. This meeting didn't happen. Look after yourself, Danny.
[FINBAR returns, replaces the blindfold and leads Danny off]

[JIM looks troubled. He thumbs through some newspapers and glances at their headlines while the intro to the song plays, then gets up and strolls thoughtfully to centre stage and sings]

SONG 8

Circumstances gave me this position,
Put the steering wheel of history in my hands
The barricades are rising in this city
And the rival groups are taking up their stands.

In a little while the taunting and the shouting
Will turn to something nastier by far
Bullets will replace the broken bottles,

Just watch them as they ratchet up the bar.

Once more the IRA will spring to action,
Once more the cause of freedom to the fore
Another chance for Irish liberation,
A united land to last for ever more.

And even if we fail in our objective,
Our heroes and their exploits will be sung
And future generations will revere us,
When the bell of freedom finally is rung.

Once more the fertile soil of chaos beckons
For revolution's seed is well prepared
The young are more than willing to come forward
I pray to god that some of them are spared
I pray to god that some of them are spared

[*Curtain*]

Scene 9

The stage is again divided into two halves with lighting to pick out which half is in use. One half is a section of an examination hall where at curtain-up we see DANNY sitting at a desk crouched over his examination paper, writing. A PRIEST (menacing black-robed figure) is walking slowly up and down watching to make sure that Danny and the other candidates (who can be unseen) are not cheating.

PRIEST

[*Looking at his watch*]

Your time is now up. Stop writing, close and seal your answer booklet, make sure that your name and the name of this Examination Centre are on the cover and hand the booklet to me when I come around. As soon as you hand in your booklet you are free to go.

DANNY

[*Hands his booklet to the priest and stands to leave. PRIEST and any other students leave. Walks to centre stage. If desired, Danny could have a cheerful Irish Dance routine here. Sings*]

SONG 9

That's the last examination I'll be sitting for a while
I wish I could believe that I might go the extra mile
Sail through to University and make my father proud
But I know I'm nothing special, just a face amongst the crowd.

My father says that talent isn't handed down intact
It's diluted and diminished when the genome is unpacked
And what's left is never quite as good as what it might have been
If we hadn't all been saddled with 'Regression to the Mean'.

MRS GALLAGHER Well at least it's only a few hours to get home on the ferry if you get into a pickle.

DANNY I'm not going to get into a pickle. I'm not a kid any more. I can look after myself, Ma.

MRS GALLAGHER Well I can't say I've noticed it. Tell you what though – you could bring me back a couple of bottles of Old Bushmills if you like. I'll give you the money. It's cheaper on the ferry...

[*Curtain*]

Scene 10

The main deck of the TSS Manxman, a rusting ferry that plied between Belfast and Douglas, Isle of Man, in the 1960s. The bow of the ship can be represented by a railing and back projection or whatever other props are available as well as sounds (seagulls? Ship's engine? Horn?) to make it clear that this is a ship. The ship's name should be visible somewhere if convenient.

DANNY (wearing a large rucksack) and JOYCE as well as Joyce's FATHER are standing looking out to sea, i.e. straight at the audience, as the ship comes into port in Douglas. Her father is wearing a clerical dog-collar. Joyce's mother and other passengers can be included if available.

JOYCE Look Daddy! There's a fairy castle in the bay!

FATHER No, it's not a fairy castle, sweetheart. They call it the Tower of Refuge. The man who started the Lifeboat Institution built it about a hundred and fifty years ago. It's supposed to give you a safe refuge in the bay if you get shipwrecked. It's all got to do with marine safety.

JOYCE But it looks just like a fairy castle on a rock. It's beautiful!

FATHER Even more beautiful if you've been shipwrecked and run out of energy and can't make it to the land.
[Danny begins to pay attention to their conversation, particularly to Joyce]

JOYCE It makes you think of a magic place though, doesn't it. A place that's always just that little bit out of reach...

FATHER Nothing's out of reach to you girl. Nothing in the whole world. Don't ever think that.
[Danny is beginning to stare now. Joyce notices this and, out of sight of her parents, sticks her tongue out at him. Acutely embarrassed he draws off to one side]
We're nearly in now. Would you like to go and bring the bag down from the other deck?

JOYCE *[Moves off and discreetly beckons Danny to follow. He looks terrified but follows]* Hello. I'm Joyce. Don't look so terrified. I don't bite. Honest.

DANNY *[Tongue-tied]* I didn't mean... I wasn't trying...

JOYCE I'm glad you weren't trying, because you certainly weren't succeeding. Have you got a name then?

DANNY I'm Danny. My name is Danny.

JOYCE Ah! It speaks. Fancy a swim on the beach a bit later when we've got unpacked?

DANNY A swim. You mean with you?

JOYCE *[Shakes her head in disbelief]*
Yes, as it happens, I did mean with me.

DANNY But that's... wonderful...

JOYCE I'm glad you think so. Will we meet by the candyfloss stall in about an hour then?

DANNY Yes! Oh my god yes!

JOYCE Nothing like a bit of enthusiasm.
Touches his rucksack
What have you got in there then? A body?

DANNY No. A tent.

JOYCE Oh. That could come in useful.
[She pulls him down and gives him a peck on the cheek. He is so shocked he reels backwards and with the weight of the rucksack almost falls over]

JOYCE *[Laughs]*
Sorry. I didn't mean to sweep you off your feet.
[He looks at her, opens his mouth but is unable to speak. She comes in close, speaks almost into his ear]
We'll be a long time in our graves, you know. Life is precious. Don't waste it.
[Danny watches, transfixed, as she exits]

[Curtain]

Scene 11

A tent on the beach somewhere near Douglas, Isle of Man. The flap opens and JOYCE emerges, tying up the lace of her bikini top. Danny follows, adjusting his swimming trunks. She tries to walk away but he embraces her and holds her back.

DANNY Please! Stay with me for a while. Don't walk away. Let me hold you.

JOYCE

[Turns to face him and kisses him]
I can't stay. They'll be wondering where I am.

DANNY

[Totally besotted]
Just another five minutes. Please. Nothing like this has ever happened to me before. I just want to hold you for a while. Please.
[He draws her close and holds her in an embrace]

JOYCE

[Amused and pleased by his show of affection] Was that your very first time?

DANNY

Couldn't you tell?

JOYCE

Well, yes, I suppose I could really. But you were good. It was nice for me too.

DANNY

Nice? How can you use a word like 'nice' about something like that? It was... miraculous. Unbelievable. I've never felt like this before in my life. Was it your first time too?

JOYCE

[Giggles] Are you kidding?

DANNY

[Frowns]
I just never knew I could feel as good as this. I think if I died right now I wouldn't have missed out on anything.

JOYCE

That's a lovely thing to say. You're sweet.
[Kisses him lightly on the lips]

DANNY

I don't care if you get pregnant, I would marry you. I would look after you and your baby. I would stay with you forever...

JOYCE

[Wriggles around in his arms]
Hey! Lighten up! Who said anything about babies? I'm not a fool you know.

DANNY

But, we didn't use any protection, did we?

JOYCE

You didn't but I did. Haven't you heard of the birth control pill?

DANNY The Pill. Yes, of course, my dad's a doctor. But I thought you had to be grown-up. And married...

JOYCE You don't have to be anything, Danny. Just female. This is 1964, not the Dark Ages. Don't you read the newspapers? Don't you know anything?

DANNY [*Looks crushed*] Oh.

JOYCE Relax, Danny. We can have fun together. We've got a whole week before my family goes back. But I'm not your wife – or your wife-to-be. Just be cool. Don't try to lay things on me. Okay?

DANNY We can meet up again after we go back, can't we? Where do you live?

JOYCE Bangor. You?

DANNY Belfast. Just off the Antrim Road. But I've got a bike. I could cycle to Bangor in a couple of hours. Maybe less.

JOYCE Maybe. Okay? Just stay cool. Take it easy. There are other things going on in my life, you know.

DANNY Other things. You mean, other boys?

JOYCE That's my business. We don't belong to one another. That's not what I want. I have a very busy time, apart altogether from boys. I'm doing a lot of extra classes – singing lessons, dancing lessons, acting lessons... I want to get into RADA. Do you know what RADA is?

DANNY It's a school for actors and actresses, isn't it?

JOYCE Just the number one school on the planet for actors and actresses. I know I look good, and I know I've got talent. I don't intend to settle for second best. I intend to have a great career. In the movies or on the West End stage. Or maybe singing, I'm not sure yet. But the world is going to know about me, one way or another.

DANNY You're amazing.

JOYCE I like you.
 [*Kisses him again*]
But I'm never going to be owned, by anybody. Women have lived like that for thousands of years. But my generation has a chance to do things differently. We don't have to depend on men, or be pushed around by men. We're going to have our own lives and decide what to do with our own bodies. You'd better get used to it.

DANNY I can do better than that. I can help. You're obviously right. I don't want to push you around or own you. I want to help you. I want to... be on your side. Life can be really wonderful. You showed me that, just

now. Like the heaven that the priests talk about, but real, and right here on earth. People loving one another, being close to one another, caring about one another. Maybe that doesn't have to be just one boy and one girl. Maybe... it could be a whole network of people. A whole society... a whole human race. Do you know what I mean?

JOYCE Of course I do. 'The Times They Are A'Changin'. Ask Bob Dylan.
What kind of music are you into?

DANNY *[Hesitates]*
I like folk music. All kinds of folk music.

JOYCE You mean rebel songs? I don't care. I know you're family is Catholic.
I don't believe in any of that stuff.

DANNY Really? Me neither.

JOYCE I wish I'd brought my guitar. I could sing for you.

DANNY Could you? Really? God, that would be fantastic. Can you sing
anyway? Unaccompanied?

JOYCE *[Stands up and sings to Danny. Note: this is a pre-existing traditional
song: 'The Wagoner's Lad' - this version recorded by Joan Baez]*

SONG 10

Oh hard is the fortune of all woman kind.
She's always controlled. She's always confined.
Controlled by her parents until she's a wife,
A slave to her husband the rest of her life.

Oh, I'm just a poor girl my fortune is sad.
I've always been courted by the wagoner's lad.
He's courted me daily, by night and by day
And now he is loading and going away.

Oh, my parents don't like him because he is poor.
They say he's not worthy of entering my door.
He works for a living, his money's his own
And if they don't like it they can leave him alone.

Oh, your horses are hungry go feed them some hay,
And sit down here by me as long as you may.
My horses ain't hungry they won't eat your hay,
So fare thee well darlin', I'll be on my way.

Oh, your wagon needs greasing your whip is to mend,
And sit down here by me as long as you can.

My wagon is greasy, my whip's in my hand.
So fare thee well darling, no longer to stand.

DANNY [*Embraces Joyce*]
You're laughing at me, but I don't care. It was beautiful. You're the
best folk singer I've ever heard.

JOYCE And you're the best bullshitter I've ever heard. I've got a week before
I go back. Let's make the most of it. Same place same time tomorrow?

DANNY What do you think? All the tomorrows I've got, if I only could...
 [*They kiss*]

[*Curtain*]

Scene 12

The same spot, but later in the evening. If possible, back projection of the Tower of Refuge at sunset and a passenger ship at anchor. In the darkened area, opposite side to the tent, a small newspaper-selling stall is erected but unmanned. JOYCE emerges from the tent, buttoning up her dress and holding a coat over her arm. DANNY follows.

JOYCE I'm sorry Danny, they're starting to board. I can't stay any longer.

DANNY I promised myself I wouldn't ask you this, but is there somebody else?
Somebody you're going back to?

JOYCE Why do you ask if you don't want to know? What difference does it
make anyway?

DANNY [*Hesitantly*]
You're right. It doesn't make any difference. So long as... well, so
long as you're not thinking of leaving me for someone else.

JOYCE Leaving you? What does that mean? When did I arrive at you, to be
able to leave?

DANNY Please don't force me to say it, Joyce. You know exactly what I mean.
I want to spend time with you again. Like we've done this last week.

JOYCE Go on. Say it. You want sex with me again. That's okay. It's not an
insult. I want it with you again too. Now that I've got you so nicely
trained, I don't want some other girl getting all the benefit.

DANNY You never take anything seriously, do you?

JOYCE And you need to lighten up a bit. What do you say we meet each other half way?

DANNY Okay. Just so long as you do want me again. So long as I'm still somewhere on your list. I don't need the top position.

JOYCE Now you're talking my language.
[Starts to put on her coat]
This radio station you were talking about. How many people will be able to hear it?

DANNY Well, the signal strength's pretty good all over Belfast. The city is in a bowl basically, a bay surrounded by mountains. It's strongest towards the south west, but I can cover just about the whole of that bowl in the daytime. At night you get a lot of strong transmissions coming in from England and continental Europe. It's not so easy then.

JOYCE How about I do a programme for you. Sing a few songs, maybe, play a few records. Do a bit of flirting with the boys. I could tape it and send it to you. What do you think?

DANNY That sounds like a fantastic idea. All except the flirting anyway.

JOYCE I doubt if you would even realise I was doing it. I'm not always quite as direct as I was with you.

DANNY I'm really grateful that you were. I don't know if I'd ever have had the courage to make the first move myself.

JOYCE I thought exactly the same thing. And I knew I only had a week. It's up to you, of course, but if you never make the first move, you're always going to end up with girls like me.

DANNY I wouldn't have any complaints about that.
[Ship's horn sounds. She starts to move off but he holds her hand]

JOYCE You've got my address, Danny. You've got my parents' phone number. It isn't goodbye.
[She kisses him and walks off stage]

DANNY [Shouts after her]
No. Of course this isn't goodbye. It never will be.
[turns to face the audience and sings. As he sings, a man enters from the darkened side of the stage and starts to set up the newspaper stall for the day's business. He writes on large sheets of paper and displays them on boards at the front of the stand]

SONG 11

The frightened little boy who came from Belfast
Has grown up in only seven days
The child whose worried eyes were always downcast
Has left behind those awkward childish ways

Like one who has uncovered hidden treasure
The point of my existence now is clear
Happiness exceeding mortal measure
Is mine whenever Joyce is standing near

Will this feeling really stay with me forever?
Is true love as eternal as they say?
Can those poets and those writers who are clever
Really promise it will never pass away?

I know what Joyce would say if I should ask her
She'd tell me not to analyse the dream
Love doesn't visit so we might unmask her
Accept that things are just the way they seem.

I've got to give our love affair a chance
This isn't just a holiday romance.

[Danny walks slowly past the newspaper stall. As he does the seller starts to shout out]

PAPER SELLER Belfast Telegraph! Evening edition! All the news, foreign and local!
South African terrorist Nelson Mandela starts his jail sentence!
President Johnson set to invade Vietnam! Murdered priest found
floating in the River Lagan!

DANNY *[Stops in his tracks]*
What was that? A murdered priest?
[Rushes over and grabs a newspaper. Starts to read]

PAPER SELLER That'll be fourpence to you, young man.

[Curtain]

End of Act 1

with her than I do. You're the last chance we've got. See if there's anything you can do.

[Exits]

[Walks slowly across the stage, pauses by the small table at centre stage. Sings]

SONG 12

It's way beyond what I should have to cope with
I don't know how to make her understand
If only she had something more to live for
A vision of some golden promised land

What picture of the future can I show her,
To make her want to turn her life around?
To cut through all her festering self pity
And give her strength to fight another round?

If I was lying there in that condition
Not caring if I lived or if I died
Would anything be strong enough to reach me
Awaken some small vestige of my pride?

It's way beyond what I should have to cope with
I don't know how to make her understand
But perhaps I have the germ of an idea
The answer might be simple and to hand
A future I already have imagined
The one that in my daydreams I have planned

[He picks up some items from the small table in the centre. Lighting changes to illuminate the sick bed. As Danny approaches, his mother tries to pull herself into a sitting position, but can't quite do it. She looks very ill]

DANNY

I know you can't talk very much at the moment. It doesn't matter. What I want you to do is listen.

I can see perfectly well why you're doing this. If that's your choice, then so be it. I'll respect it. But one thing I do resent, and that's the way you've involved me in it. All the bottles you've sent me out for since I started to look old enough to buy it, all the empties you've got me to hide, all the lies you've got me to tell Dad. If you want to kill yourself, then kill yourself, but don't involve me. Okay?

The other thing is, I want a proper suicide note. I've brought you the pen and paper and I want you to write it as soon as you're fit enough, and seal it inside this envelope. It isn't for me, it's for your grandchildren.

[Places pen, paper and envelope on the bed]

It's only fair that they get to hear your side of the story as well as mine. Mine won't be very flattering.

[She tries to speak, but Danny refuses to be interrupted]

Yes, Ma. Grandchildren. Why not? Have you thought about that? That's my news. I've met a girl. A beautiful girl. I mean film-star beautiful. And we've started a relationship. It probably won't come to anything, she's completely out of my class in every way, but I'm going to give it my best shot, and if she won't have me... well, I know I'm no great catch, but I think there's going to be somebody out there who will. Because you see I know what kind of life I want now. I don't want to be a priest like Uncle John and I don't want to grow old on my own like Auntie Maud. I want a family. Not a sham marriage like you and Dad. I want to live with a pretty girl who'll sleep in the same bed and give me a hug when I come home from work and ask me what kind of day I've had. I want her to hold my hand when we walk down the road and I want us to do a whole lot of things together, like going on holiday and going to the pictures... silly, slushy, boring, ordinary things. That's what I want. The same things that ninety per cent of the human race wants. And I want to be a father, and I want to watch my children grow up, and I want them to love their parents and see how happy we are together. Straight out of some trashy Barbara Cartland novel. I'm sorry that it isn't unusual or exciting, and I'm sorry that you don't want to have any part in it, but fair enough. That's your decision.

And that's why I want the note. Because I'm telling you right now that if I have a daughter I'm not going to give her your name and I don't want her to be anything like you. But I don't want my children to hate you just because I probably will. I want them to hear your side of the story and make up their own minds. I want to be fair. So you write that note and seal that envelope and I'll give it to your first grandchild as soon as it's old enough to understand. That's not too much to ask, is it?

Goodbye, Ma.

[Exits]

MRS. GALLAGHER

[Tries to sit up. Manages to lift her head. Reaches out and picks up the pen and paper. Tries to speak but can't.]

[Curtain]

GIRL

[Walks on in front of curtain] Did I mention that both Danny and I are only children? I think that makes you grow up faster, because you spend so much more of your life in the adult world. It's why I have such good psychological counselling skills, even though I'm completely self taught. Danny's got sound instincts too.

Danny's mother didn't write a suicide note. Instead she wrote a letter to her husband asking him to pour all her liquor down the sink, take away her money so that she couldn't buy any more, and book her in to an alcohol rehabilitation clinic, which he did.

So, did Danny and his family live happily ever after? No, I'm

afraid they didn't. There were still one or two minor things needing attention, such as the arrival of all-out civil war.

But we mustn't race ahead. One part of Danny's life that became very happy for a while was his relationship with Joyce. I have a lot in common with her too. We both like to enjoy ourselves, and we both know the sure-fire way to a boy's heart.

[Exits]

Scene 14

The curtain opens on a stage that is still divided down the centre. One half is still lighted and the other in shadow but the scenery in each half has been changed. In the shaded half the dining room scene has been replaced by the rudimentary furnishings of Danny's bedroom, including a small table containing the radio transmitter prop where DANNY is sitting in silence, toying with the microphone and an old-fashioned reel-to-reel tape recorder. In the lighted half JOYCE is sitting with her guitar and a similar tape recorder talking into another microphone, which for convenience should be on a floor stand.

JOYCE

This is my first tape for the radio station, as promised. I'll be listening for it this Sunday on the big radiogram with the outside aerial. I'm going to put a few songs on this for you. I can't really do the links because you need to be able to fade the microphone up and down on top of the music and I don't know how to do that. Maybe you could edit all the bits together for me? It's just me singing and playing the guitar. I'm going to include one song that I wrote myself. It's the first one.

Is there any way that we could get the listeners to write in? We can't give out our addresses, can we? Can you think of a way to do it?

If you want to come out to Bangor to see me on Saturday week I think the house will be empty. My mum will be away and Daddy has a big wedding so he'll be out of the house from about 10 in the morning to at least 4 in the afternoon. You know the address.

Phone me before you set out to be on the safe side.

This is one of the first songs I ever wrote. It's about my little sister who only lived a few hours. It's a sad song. It's called 'Living for Two'.

[Lifts the guitar and accompanies herself as she sings]

SONG 13

Mother's home from hospital and hasn't said a word
And all of them are whispering but still I overheard
How will they ever tell me and just how will I react?
I'm not old enough to understand a very simple fact

That death can come to anyone on any night or day
That nothing is forever and we all must pass away
That some will have a century and some will have an hour
And to right this great injustice is beyond our human power

I'll never know you, sister, and I'll never hear you cry
I'll never take you walking and you'll never ask me why
We'll never share a secret or a pleasure or a pain
Or go playing when it's sunny or sit in and watch the rain

And I won't be a big sister or an auntie or a friend
For a little sis to turn to when some love affair will end
And we won't grow old together and we'll never have a fight
About how to bring up children or which politician's right

And for ever more I'll wonder what you might have been to me
The adventures that we might have had that never now can be
But I always will be grateful for what I have learned from you,
How to treasure every moment, try to live enough for two.

When Joyce finishes her song the lights go down on her side of the stage and up on the opposite side. We start to hear what Danny is saying into the microphone.

DANNY

[In his best announcer's voice]

That was a song called 'Living for Two', written and performed by Joyce, Kingston Radio's brilliant and beautiful resident singing and songwriting star. Before we hear something else from Joyce I would like to tell you how you can ask for a request on Kingston Radio's regular Sunday lunchtime broadcasts. To get in touch with Kingston Radio, all you have to do is send a postcard with your message and a postal order for two shillings to Paddy O'Neill's newsagent on Lansdowne Road, Belfast 15. Mr O'Neill will display the card in the shop window for one week and some time during that week an agent of the radio station will view it and write down the details, and provided we've got the record you'll hear your request played on the next Sunday's show. Don't forget that for another two shillings you can have a signed photograph of singing-star Joyce, and a personal on-air message from her to go with your record request.

[Joyce crosses to Danny's side of the stage as he finishes talking and he turns around and is amazed to see her]

DANNY

Joyce! What are you doing here?

JOYCE

A slight change of plan. I thought I would save you the bus fare to Bangor. Your father let me in. I can stay until tea time. I've brought my guitar – in case you get bored. Happy birthday, Danny.

DANNY

[Rendered momentarily speechless, stands up, gently takes her guitar and leans it on the table. Takes her in his arms]

The best birthday present anybody's ever had... ever.

language now. Just give me a little bit of time.

JIM And a little bit of money, I think, for the necessary materials. How much would you estimate?

DANNY It's hard to say. I'll need a good quality receiver that covers the frequency. A few components. A specially cut quartz crystal. Some of the new HF transistors... I think a hundred pounds should cover it easily.

JIM Let's make it two hundred.
[Takes cash notes from his inside pocket and starts to count them out]
And whatever's left over, you keep.

DANNY [Wide-eyed with amazement]
Really?

JIM Buy something for Joyce. When's her birthday?

DANNY Are you serious?
[Takes the notes]

JIM I think you'll find that I usually am.

[Curtain]

Scene 16

The ideal scenery for this scene would be a back-projected image on a screen containing a genuine door in a free-standing frame near its centre. The projection shows the outside wall of a small Belfast terrace house with crude graffiti spray-painted across it. The Graffiti reads: IRA SKUM, FUCK OFF OR DIE, BURN THE POPISH SKUM and / or similar messages. DANNY enters, walks up to the door and knocks. MRS LAVERTY opens the door and puts her finger to her mouth to 'shush' Danny. She steps outside.

MRS LAVERTY Keep it down, Danny. Himself's in there.

DANNY You mean Mr Laverty? I thought he was on the run.

MRS LAVERTY He's here to try to defend me an' the house. Look at what those bastards done to the place. Murderin' Orange bastards. They did that in broad daylight, an this a Catholic road.

DANNY That's terrible, Mrs Laverty. Awful. I just came to say how sorry I was about Wee Hughie, because I haven't seen anybody from the

family since...

MRS LAVERTY No point saying nothin'. What's done's done – can't be changed. Pedro's in that special unit, Connor's in gaol, their da's still on the run... except that he's back here with his gun waitin' for them bastards to make a move. We can't let our guard down, not with Connor comin' back.

DANNY Coming back? I thought he pleaded guilty.

MRS LAVERTY Haven't ye seen the 'Irish News'?
[*Danny shakes his head*]
Some shite of an English lawyer's got him off. He'll be out in a few days.

DANNY But he didn't deny being an IRA member. He made a statement...

MRS LAVERTY Doesn't matter a fart what he said. They appointed a lawyer of their own – wouldn't let Connor take the stand. The bugger got him off! Insufficient proof. They said it was his da's gun an' he was talkin' shite about bein' in the Volunteers. Said he found the gun somewhere in the house from the time his da was in the Border Campaign in 1962. There wasn't no evidence worth fuck. You've got to prove things beyond reasonable doubt. An' the worst part of it is, they're right. He was no more an IRA man than you're a pirate. It was all in the wee bugger's head. Fuckin' fantasy! But now when he gets out the Prods'll hunt him down an' kill him. He'll be on the run for the rest of his life, just like his da. Not a titter o' wit between the two o' them. At least he would've stayed alive in jail, an' he could've bided his time. Now he hasn't a hope in hell. They'll gun him down, an' he'll like as not take the rest of us with him. Silly little bugger. He's grown up with all that auld Republican shite from his father an' everybody else an' now he thinks he's a bloody Irish hero out of a story book.

DANNY But won't the Volunteers protect him when he gets out?

MRS LAVERTY You're joking. Why should they? He's not one of them. Just a silly wee bugger playing with his da's gun.

DANNY He may not be one of them but he's a sympathiser. He's made that clear enough. And this is an IRA family, with the head of the household still on the run. And what about the shots fired over Wee Hughie's coffin? Connor's been in the news too. Why should they desert him now?

MRS LAVERTY Ye' don't understand nothin', do ye? Because he's not a martyr any more. I know how these buggers' minds work. He was found innocent. He's nobody now.

DANNY [*Thinks for a moment*]
Mrs Laverty, I'm not supposed to tell you this, but I do know

somebody in the IRA. I can try to get Connor protection. At least I can put a word in. What day does he get out?

MRS LAVERTY Don't give me any more talkin' big like that. I've heard it all my life. Give me credit for a bit of sense. I didn't come down the Lagan on a bubble.

MR LAVERTY [*From inside the house*]
Who are you talking to out there, Moira?
[*He comes to the door holding what's obviously a gun hidden under his coat*]

MRS LAVERTY Och, it's just a friend of Wee Hughie's from St. Benedict's.

MR LAVERTY [*Advancing further and pointing the gun straight at Danny*]
My arse it is. You're Danny Gallagher, aren't you? What's your business here?

DANNY [*Stammers*]
I just wanted to offer my sympathy...

MR LAVERTY Keep those hands where I can see them. Did they send you to kill Connor?

DANNY Kill Connor? That's crazy. Why would they want to do that?

MR LAVERTY [*Coldly*] Frisk him.

MRS LAVERTY Don't be daft, Liam. He's not in the Volunteers. He's a schoolboy. One of Hughie's wee friends.
[*Frisks Danny for a gun in a perfunctory way*]

MR LAVERTY My arse. He's Big Jim's blue-eyed boy. Harrison's got big plans for this wee bugger. Thinks he's the most useful person in the whole Belfast organization.

DANNY But I'm not *in* the Belfast organisation. I'm not in the IRA at all. I'm just... I suppose you would call me a sympathiser. Or just a friend. Jim asked me to help out on the technical side. That's all. I'm not a member of anything.

MR LAVERTY And you agreed? You agreed to help out on the technical side?

DANNY Yes.

MR LAVERTY Why?

DANNY [*Hesitantly*] Why... ?

MR LAVERTY The crazy thing is, I believe you. I don't think you have any notion why you've got involved. You think this is some kind of game, don't you?

[Danny doesn't answer]

They ask you to jump, you jump. Don't you realise who these people are? Don't you realise that you're a member now as far as the police or anybody else is concerned, no matter what happens? The IRA doesn't issue membership cards like a trade union, you know. Don't you understand that the RUC could lift you off the street and put you in jail and throw away the key any time they want to?

[Danny doesn't respond].

Get out of it, Danny. Stop while you still can. This isn't your fight. You're not even from around here. If you stay in they'll destroy you, like they destroy everybody. Big Jim isn't even the worst of them. There's new youngsters rising up through the ranks in Dublin who'd shoot their own mothers to get Jim Harrison's job. There's a whole new generation of them coming along that's even worse than the present lot, and that's pretty bad. They'll use you and when they're finished with you, you'll be found floating in the Lagan with a bullet in the back of your head.

MRS LAVERTY

Don't frighten the boy, Liam. He's only young.

DANNY

[After a long pause]

Why do you think there's an IRA hit man coming to kill Connor? Surely it would be the Protestant paramilitaries. I don't understand.

MR LAVERTY

Use your head, Danny. Because they need him to get murdered. He's been great publicity for the movement. His face has been all over the TV and the newspapers, both in the North and in the South. If he doesn't get murdered they lose their martyr. That would never do now, would it?

DANNY

You're bound to feel bitter... I mean hurt about what happened to Wee Hughie. But I think you're wrong about Big Jim. He fought against the Fascists in Spain alongside my dad. He wants to make Northern Ireland better for everybody. Even the Protestants. He's an idealist. He offered Connor a safe house. He told me so.

MR LAVERTY

You're the same as all the others. You see what you want to see. I was like you too, you know. Believed everything the movement told me. Thought we were building some kind of paradise on earth for the Irish people. It's all bollocks, Danny. That's not what they're in it for at all. But believe them if you want to. Not my problem. More fool you.

DANNY

So, what are you going to do, Mr Lavery? If you're right, Connor can't stay here.

MR LAVERTY

Damn right he can't. I've got a car over there with his things packed in the boot. Nobody's going to find us where we're going. Let them try all they want.

[Uses the end of the hidden gun as a pointer]

Go on. Get out of here. Don't tell them you've been.

JOYCE Bernie's sweet. A real gentleman. I had to pull his trousers down before he would do anything. Not an easy boy to seduce. But I got there in the end.
[Pauses]
 You seem a bit down. What's the matter?

DANNY *[Leads her to the bed where they sit]*
 I've just been to Paddy O'Neill's paper shop. He showed me the article in the 'Belfast Telegraph' about your going to England. Why didn't you tell me? Why didn't you say anything?

JOYCE The Hammond School? I've applied, that's all. I haven't a hope in hell really.

DANNY No? It doesn't sound like that here.
[Produces a newspaper and starts to read]
 Belfast Hears Pirate Radio Station...

JOYCE *[Interrupts]*
 That's good, isn't it? Hundreds of people have heard our programmes. Maybe thousands.

DANNY *[Reads on]*
 For the past several weeks a pirate radio station calling itself 'Kingston Radio' has been heard by Belfast residents on Sunday afternoons, broadcasting pop and folk music, and songs composed and sung by this young lady who simply calls herself 'Joyce'. Listeners are invited to write to Paddy O'Neill's, a newsagents shop on Lansdowne Road, Belfast... Yeah, we know all that...*[mutters]*
 ...The Telegraph's investigative reporter, Will Calvin, managed to get an interview. 'I'm almost fifteen,' said Joyce, 'and I've been playing the guitar and writing songs since I was 11. I want to be an actress or a professional singer when I grow up.'
 Joyce has applied for a place as a boarder at the famous Hammond School in Chester, one of the world's finest theatre schools for children and young people, after which she intends to apply to RADA, the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London.

JOYCE You knew all that. The first time I met you I told you I would be an actress, or a singer. You can't do that by hanging around in Belfast. The Hammond School is the best there is for somebody my age. You have to pass an audition to get in. They get applications from America, Japan, Europe... all over the world. I know I won't get in but I have to try...

DANNY Don't be ridiculous. Of course you'll get in. They're not fools, are they?

JOYCE *[Puts her arms around him]*

That's very sweet of you but really, I haven't one chance in a thousand...

DANNY

Wrong. You *are* one in a thousand. One in a million. I know that and Bernie knows it, even the man who sold us the guitar knew it – and so will they.

JOYCE

Even if it doesn't happen this time, there will be a time when I have to go away, and I want you to know that nothing is going to change between us when I do. I've written a song for you, for when it happens.

[Stands, puts the guitar strap around her neck and sings her song directly to Danny]

SONG 17

Thank you for the moments when you walked a while with me
Full of joy and understanding when we gave our love for free
And you never tried to make me what I didn't want to be.

In a world that's ever circling round a slowly dying sun
The past alone is constant and can never be undone.
Every living person changes every moment of the day
But the past is always present, it can never go away
And we'll always be together now, no matter where we stray

All the people who have held me help to make me who I am
I remember every gentle touch, the passion and the calm.
We'll always have these moments that we've shared so tenderly
Though we may be separated by a mountain or a sea
We're a part of one another now – for all eternity.

Ever growing, ever learning, ever striving to be free
To create the man and woman that will soon be you and me.
There's a world beyond that's waiting, we're too young to settle down
It's our time to find our bearings, test the water, look around
But there's nothing that can take away the friendship that we've found.

There's no clause of limitation on the love I share with you
It will always be there waiting, ever eager, ever new.
The deepest love we'll ever find is love without demands
That doesn't ask for promises or bind with wedding bands
That can celebrate the freedom that the other one commands.

Love that asks for nothing but is given like a song
Love that doesn't wonder if it's right or if it's wrong
Love that doesn't stifle, doesn't limit, doesn't scold
Doesn't ask for grim assurances or suddenly run cold

Love that never judges, and resentment will not hold.

Thank you for the moments when you walked a while with me
Full of joy and understanding when we gave our love for free
And you never tried to make me what I didn't want to be.
No you never tried to make me what I didn't want to be.

[She takes the guitar strap from around her neck, lays the instrument on the bed, and embraces Danny, who is close to tears]

[Curtain]

Scene 19

Danny's bedroom (same set). Night time. There is a small chest of drawers and a table containing some radio equipment. Danny is in his bed asleep. Loud noises, sound of a door being kicked in somewhere nearby. Two armed RUC men (policemen) burst into his bedroom. They can be plain clothes or uniformed depending on available costumes. Danny sits up terrified.

FIRST RUC MAN *[Holding a drawn revolver which he points at Danny]*
Keep your hands where we can see them. State your name.

DANNY *[Terrified]*
I'm Danny Gallagher. What is...
[Starts to get out of bed]

SECOND RUC MAN Stay where you are. Hands in front of you on the bed.
[The first RUC man keeps Danny covered with the gun while the second one ignores him and searches the drawers violently, throwing clothing on the floor. He goes to the table, lifts up a piece of radio equipment]
What's this?

DANNY It's a short wave radio, sir. I'm a licensed Radio Amateur.

SECOND RUC MAN I know that. You're also a pirate radio broadcaster, which is a civil offence in this country. But we're not interested in that.
[Returns to the bed and fixes Danny with a stare]
A robbery was committed two days ago at the Ulster Bank in Royal Avenue. A sophisticated radio device was used to jam the police car radio frequency. I'll only ask you this once and I would advise you to tell me the truth. Did you have any involvement in that crime?

DANNY Me? I'm not involved in anything, sir. I'm fifteen. I'm still at school...

SECOND RUC MAN If we discover you are, you won't be seeing your family or your school chums for a long time to come. But if you have information that might be useful to the police, we may be able to come to an arrangement. Do I make myself clear?

DANNY I'm sorry sir, I don't know what you mean.

SECOND RUC MAN Don't you? I suggest you think about it. Come on, Barry. There's nothing here.
[*The two men exit*]

[*Curtain*]

Scene 20

Basic version of Big Jim Harrison's lounge, as Scene 8 and Scene 15. A desk or table and two chairs are all that are required. JIM is sitting opposite DANNY.

JIM [*calmly*] What Bernie told you is perfectly right. If they're going to lift someone they do it straight away. You don't get a warning. They're fishing. You don't need to do anything. They even said they weren't interested in Kingston Radio so you may as well go on with that.

DANNY No, I'm sorry, I don't want to. That was what put them on to me. It's not worth it. That box is going in the Lagan.

JIM No, no. Don't do that. If you don't want it we'll have it. Is Bernie able to operate it?

DANNY Yes, I think so. Or if he isn't he could soon learn. Why do you ask?

JIM It's an idea I've had at the back of my head for a while. Have you heard of this new Civil Rights movement at Queens University?
[*Danny shakes his head*] It's a peaceful movement aimed at righting a lot of political wrongs in Northern Ireland. Nothing directly to do with the Republican Movement but we're watching it closely. I thought it might be a nice gesture if we set them up with a radio station. We would keep overall control of course, but for the moment they could do whatever they liked with it. Our name would never be mentioned. And it's a movement that holds the moral high ground in most people's estimation, so you and Bernie could even be openly involved if you wanted to be. It would draw attention away from your IRA link. The day may well come when

the Republican Movement needs a local radio station, and if that happened we would be all set up and ready.

DANNY If you want it it's yours. And you can have the police radio receiver as well. If they find that in my bedroom I'm probably sunk too.

JIM Anything that might link you with the bank job has to go. Papers, diagrams, maps... You don't need me to tell you that.

DANNY No. I did that straight away.

JIM Then there's no way you can ever be linked to it. Unless somebody talks, and people know that isn't good for their health.

Relax, Danny. It's all right. You've done a great job. In fact...

[stands up and fetches something from a drawer]

I needed to see you anyway. I've had a word with Dublin. We've put you on the payroll. It's a special account. You'll need to write down the details.

[hands him a bank book]

DANNY The payroll? I don't understand.

JIM Thanks in no small measure to your good self the movement is now able to look after the living expenses of a few more of its friends. There aren't any strings attached. You just carry on as before, keeping your eyes and ears open, maybe doing us the occasional little favour. But in recognition of your contribution, the movement pays you something towards your living expenses. Currently £25 a week. That's about £1,300 a year.

DANNY *[taken aback]* I think that's more than some of my teachers earn.

JIM We have to have one or two little perks for putting our freedom and sometimes even our lives on the line.

[Danny opens the bank book and starts to read it avidly. Jim interrupts his reading by taking his hand and shaking it] Comrade Danny Gallagher, welcome to the Irish Republican Army!

[Curtain]

End of Act 2

Act 3

Scene 21

In front of the curtain a dimly lit night time street scene has been set up. A single street light would be enough to suggest this. The two-seat bench used in Scene 4 is at centre stage, facing the audience.

The GIRL walks on, arm in arm with two paramilitary SOLDIERS in camouflage jackets or T shirts. They kiss her good night, one of them whispers in her ear, and they both exit.

She sits down.

GIRL

You've heard about Danny's school life now, about his home life, and about his love life. I think it's about time I told you something about the organisation he's accidentally joined. It was just called the IRA at the time but it came to be called the 'Official IRA'. The Provisional IRA came a bit later and was even more vicious and unpleasant. At least that's how a lot of people see them. I see them all as young men suffering from personality disorders. But with guns, of course.

Boys love playing soldiers, don't they? I know I shouldn't really complain because it's been very good for business, but everywhere you look now there's somebody in a half-cocked attempt at a military uniform pretending to be dangerous and mysterious. They may not be too bright but you don't need a lot of brains to pull a trigger, do you?

It's a pity Danny had to get involved, isn't it? We all know it isn't going to end well.

I do try to do my bit of course. Try to make them feel better and take their minds off it all for an hour or two. What more can a girl do?

It's another thing that's helped to make me the great psychological counselor that I am, like being an only child. Working in Belfast has given me a superb opportunity to study the whole gamut of human mental disorder.

If only the boys playing soldiers would come and see me more often they would be so much better human beings.

The stage hands remove the bench and street light and the curtain rises to reveal the improvised transmission studio of Radio Free Belfast. A table at centre stage is set up with the same transmitter that we have seen in Danny's bedroom, as well as a microphone and some electrical equipment. There are people both seated and standing, two of whom are DANNY and BERNIE. Seated at the radio table are SHELAGH, a girl of about Danny's age, and her father TERRY Flanagan, the Nationalist MP for West Belfast.

TERRY

Okay lads, it's just coming up to the hour. Keep it down. The microphone is going live.

[Harp music sounds for a few moments and fades down to allow SHELAGH to speak]

SHELAGH

[with pride and confidence]

This is Radio Free Belfast, the voice of the disenfranchised and exploited people of Northern Ireland, coming to you for the first time on two hundred and two metres, Medium Wave. This radio station exists to keep the people of Belfast and of the whole world informed about the true situation regarding the oppression of the minority community in this city and this six-county region of Ireland.

Free Belfast is a non-sectarian radio station free from any form of censorship or state, political or corporate control. The opinions you will hear expressed on Radio Free Belfast will be those of the people expressing them or of the organizations for which they speak. No editorial control of any kind will be exercised by the station itself. This is something new in the history of mass media. This is people's radio. We are committed to providing a voice for all the people of Northern Ireland, particularly the weak and marginalized whose voice is never heard on any other radio station.

Today, freedom of speech has finally reached Northern Ireland. Use it well.

[harp music fades back up. Hubub returns to the room.]

DANNY

[to SHELAGH] That was brilliant. You're a real pro.

SHELAGH

[coldly] Thank you.

[stands up to allow her father to take the seat by the microphone]

DANNY

I'm Danny.

SHELAGH

I know. And you're not allowed to tell me your second name. Am I right?

[They walk towards the front of the stage and the lighting on the radio room dims. Harp music fades down and continues at low volume.]

DANNY

I know. It's daft, isn't it, when we're all on the same side.

SHELAGH

Are we? My father is the democratically elected Nationalist MP for West Belfast. We don't use guns to get the changes we want. We use the ballot box. We're nothing like you.

DANNY

Guns? I've never fired a gun in my life. But we have to have them. The Protestant paramilitaries have them, and the RUC, and the British Army. If all the guns are on one side who's going to defend the Catholic people? Would you just stand by and let them massacre us all?

SHELAGH

Same old story. Always the same. You think force is the answer to everything.

DANNY

You're wrong there, Shelagh. I build radio transmitters. Radio doesn't force anybody to do anything. It doesn't hurt anybody. It

talks to people. It reaches their minds. But it won't save us when the men with petrol bombs come to burn us out of our homes and murder us. Thank god there'll be a few guns on our side when that starts to happen. And I don't think we'll have to wait very long.

SHELAGH The bottom line is you're in the IRA. An army ready to attack the people we're trying to make peace with, trying to negotiate with and live alongside. It's an army, for Christ sake! When they say kill you're going to have to kill. The bottom line is, you're a crowd of gunmen under the command of some big cheese a hundred miles away. Don't you even see it?

DANNY I'm not a gunman, Shelagh. I don't want you to think of me like that.

SHELAGH What's it to you how I think of you? My god, you're not trying to ask me out, are you?
[Danny doesn't reply. She pauses for a moment and runs back into the radio room, where the lights come up. Bernie is no longer visible.]

TERRY *[Into microphone]*
Assembling in Divis Street at this moment is the single biggest non-sectarian march that has ever taken place in Northern Ireland. Our single banner bears the words 'Civil Rights', a cause that unites every progressive party, trade union, student body, church body and fair-minded individual in this city. As I speak to you those carrying the banner at the head of the march are beginning to move off in the direction of the Falls Road, and behind them, in orderly rows, more than five thousand people are...
[His words are cut off by the sound of two loud bangs that could be a vehicle back-firing or gunshots.]
What in god's name was that?
[There is absolute silence in the studio, followed by the sound of commotion in the street below]

BERNIE *[Rushing in from the side]*
Somebody's been shot out there. The crowd's stampeding! Come and see!

[Bernie, Danny and Sheila move forward and look down in amazement at the audience. Sound of commotion continues]

TERRY *[in a completely calm and measured voice]*
There has been a shooting incident on Divis Street but it is now over. The Civil Rights march has been postponed. There is no longer any danger except the risk of people being crushed or trampled in their haste to get away. It is vital that you leave Divis Street in a calm, orderly fashion. I repeat, the shooting incident is now over. Proceed to your homes calmly and stay tuned to this wavelength to hear further details of the incident, which I repeat is

now over...

DANNY

[Pointing out at the floor of the theatre]

There's a man down there with blood pouring out of him and there's nobody near him. Shelagh, tell your father to call for an ambulance. I'm going down there. Follow me with a sheet, or any clean piece of cloth you can get. Right now!

SHELAGH

We'll get shot ourselves! What if the gunman's still around?

DANNY

All right. Just give me the sheet. I'll take it myself.

SHELAGH

No, no, I'm coming. I'm coming!

[They both run off as an ambulance siren is heard off stage. Bernie continues to look out towards the audience as the Curtain falls]

Scene 22

The first part of the scene takes place in front of the curtain. It's outdoors and the park bench is centre stage again. SHELAGH and DANNY, both wearing outdoor clothing, approach from opposite sides of the stage and sit together.

SHELAGH

Isn't this a bit childish? Secret meetings and all that?

DANNY

It's just more comfortable for me. For you too, I think.

SHELAGH

I suppose so. *[pauses]* So, how does it feel to be a hero?

DANNY

We're both heroes according to the Irish News. You shouldn't have to ask.

SHELAGH

All I did was carry a sheet.

DANNY

All I did was put pressure on a wound for a few minutes. Not exactly brain surgery. But my dad was pleased. He said I did exactly the right thing, and the man's going to pull through.

SHELAGH

But we both could have been shot, couldn't we? That was what people meant about us being brave.

DANNY

Well, when I saw the wound, I didn't think so. That wasn't a rifle wound. It was a ragged hole and there was no exit wound. It was a lucky shot – I don't know why they call it that, but they do – from a fairly crude hand gun with a plain bore. It wouldn't have been accurate beyond a few yards.

SHELAGH

So it was just a random shooting?

DANNY I think so. And we heard two shots, didn't we? The second one didn't hit anybody at all. It was just somebody firing into the crowd. Designed to do exactly what it did do. Cause panic. Stir up trouble. Anyway, that's what I think.

SHELAGH I want to take back something I said about you. You're not a mindless gunman. You really are on the side of the angels.

DANNY [*Laughing*] I know. It's official. The Irish News says I'm a 'guardian angel'. I always thought they looked a bit more like you.

SHELAGH No. They look exactly like you.
[*Kisses him on the cheek. Danny looks surprised but doesn't comment. There is a pause*]
You've got a girlfriend, haven't you? Joyce. I've seen her picture. And heard her singing. She's really beautiful.

DANNY She would make good angel material. Well, in some respects anyway. Wouldn't take her long to pick up the harp. She won't be around much longer though. She's off to England to this boarding school for young singers and performers. Once she goes I doubt if I'll ever see her again. Belfast isn't big enough for Joyce. I can't say that I blame her.

What about you? Don't you have somebody?

SHELAGH That's a bit... direct.

DANNY I suppose that's one thing that Joyce taught me. That this life is too short to waste a single second of it playing games. Say what you mean, mean what you say. Don't beat around the bush. I'm interested. Very much so. And I'm available. And according to Joyce, I'm very little trouble.

SHELAGH [*Laughing*]
Sounds like she's written you a reference.

DANNY She'll be happy to if you want one. I guarantee it.

[*They kiss. As they separate and walk off in opposite directions the curtain rises to reveal the Gallagher's sitting room where DR GALLAGHER is sitting with a newspaper listening to an old fashioned RADIO. Danny enters, still wearing his outdoor coat which he starts to take off.*]

RADIO This is Radio Free Belfast on two-hundred-and-two metres in the Medium Waveband. Reports are still coming in about the riots in Derry following the ambush of the peaceful Civil Rights march at Burntollet Bridge...
[*Volume lowers but speaker continues. Occasional phrases audible*]
Angry mobs in Belfast...

DANNY [voice breaking] For me, very bad. Even though I knew it was coming. She got into that posh theatre school in England. She's leaving at the weekend.

DR GALLAGHER It's not the end of the world. It's only a boarding school. She'll be back at Half Term. And in the summer holidays. You should be very proud of her. I hear only one in a thousand gets in there.

DANNY She won't be back. She wanted the Music Department and she's got the Music Department. They were so keen to have her they even told her she could have a bursary if her parents couldn't afford the fees. You know as well as I do she won't be on her own for more than ten minutes over there. She'll find someone else – a pop singer or something – and she'll tour with him, and sing in his group, and go solo when she's ready, and... and she'll never bother with the likes of me again. She says it won't happen but I know Joyce. [*Danny begins to choke up*] Joyce has a list. She jokes about it but it's true. And now I've slipped right down to the bottom of it and fallen off...

[*Sound of front door slamming as MRS GALLAGHER arrives home. Hearing the distress in her son's voice she follows him into the room.*]

MRS GALLAGHER You're a sorry picture [*She nods to her husband, who returns the greeting*] A national hero can't be going around with a face like that!

DR GALLAGHER It's that wee girl from Bangor. She's going away to boarding school.

MRS GALLAGHER Och, I'm sorry to hear that. Sure youngsters are bound to have their own lives. Kieran told me about that school. Isn't it wonderful that they took her? Did you congratulate her?

DANNY [*Coldly*] No, Ma, I did not congratulate her.

MRS GALLAGHER You know Danny, loving somebody means being happy that they're happy. Happy for them when they get the things they want.

DANNY Oh yeah. You would know about that.
[*Realises what he has just said and puts his arms around his mother*] Sorry Ma. I didn't mean that. I didn't think.

MRS GALLAGHER [*Softly, returning his embrace*] Well, I'm going to say something that may surprise you. You and Joyce shocked me into taking a good hard look at myself and my life, and I realise now that I was completely wrong about Kieran and Mrs Whittaker.
[*Dr Gallagher turns and listens intently*]
He never replaced one of us with the other. Real life isn't like it's supposed to be in the story books. Some People's hearts are bigger than others'. There was room in Kieran's for the two of us. And I

think your Joyce has the biggest heart I've ever come across. But Kieran's isn't far behind. Do you get what I'm trying to say?
[Dr Gallagher stands and come across to hold her hand]

DANNY *[After a pause]* You understand Joyce better than I do, don't you?

MRS GALLAGHER The reason that she's so hard to understand is that she isn't complicated. Most of us are and she isn't. At least that's what I think. Just listen to what she says and accept it. There's no hidden agenda. She hasn't rejected you, and I don't think she ever will.

[Danny and his mother draw back from one another still holding hands and sing a duet. As they start singing Dr Gallagher exits]

SONG 18

MRS G No one ever told me there was any other way
You find your one and only and you mustn't ever stray
You find the man or woman who will mean the world to you
And if ever you are tempted, well you know what you must do
Yes, pretend it isn't happening, pretend it isn't true

DANNY And if your heart should flutter at the sight of someone's smile
You're a monster and a villain that it's proper to revile
They tell you what to wish for and the way you ought to feel
Fidelity, monogamy, the matrimonial seal
And all of your affection is included in the deal

MRS G Surrender to temptation and you'll pay a heavy price
To act as nature tells you is abominable vice
Your passion is a lion that you have to hold in check
Put shackles on its legs and put a chain around its neck
And if you kiss another it must only be a peck

DANNY But if you're overflowing with a love you want to share
Does it matter, is it evil, should your partner even care?
To deny our human nature, such a heavy price to pay
To fit in with others' notions of the one and only way
When everything within you says: Be happy! Love is play!

MRS G No one ever told me, but my teacher was my life
And I wish I'd learned it sooner, I'd have been a better wife
I'd have been a better mother, better lover, better friend
I'd have learned be accepting of whatever fate might send
I would not have needed alcohol reality to mend.

DANNY Are you hurting anybody, will you look back on each day
And regret the love you shared with those you met along the way?
Or as your life is ending will you smile and will you say:
When I look at how I lived and the alternatives I weigh
I wouldn't change a bit of it convention to obey

TOGETHER No I wouldn't change a bit of it, that's all I've got to say.
I wouldn't change a bit of it, that's all I've got to say.

[As they finish they turn to face one another and Danny looks into his mother's eyes]

MRS GALLAGHER What is it, son? What are you thinking?

DANNY What am I thinking? I suppose I'm thinking that with parents like you it's no wonder I'm as weird as I am.

[Curtain]

Scene 23

Big Jim's lounge. Table with a bottle of whiskey and two glasses. JIM is sitting when DANNY knocks and walks in. He stands up and shakes Danny's hand.

JIM Well done Danny! I knew you were headed for great things in the movement and I was right! I'm beginning to think you're the only one in the Belfast Brigade worth a damn. I'm sorry I wasn't here to congratulate you sooner – I was down in Dublin at a staff meeting when it all happened. But I saw you on the Northern Ireland News that evening. We all did. And everybody knew it was one of our men, although of course that wasn't public knowledge and never will be. I was as proud as punch. I'm the one who's always telling them to recruit younger people and get a bit of fresh blood into the movement. I believe in the young. A few more like you and the North could have her freedom tomorrow!

DANNY I just put a bit of pressure on a wound, like my father taught me to.

JIM No, you've done a lot more than that. You've no idea what you achieved for the public relations end of things.

DANNY I didn't do it for the cameras. I did it for the man.

JIM Of course you did. I was speaking metaphorically there. But look at the fine work you did on the radio station. And that's what I need to talk to you about. Sit down. *[Motions toward the chair]* Won't ye have a wee tot of good Irish Whiskey?

DANNY *[Sitting down]* I'll pass on that. Good Irish Whiskey hasn't exactly done any favours for my family.

JIM Oh, yes, of course. Your mother. How is her treatment going?

DANNY She's more or less cured. Just goes in for a couple of sessions each week. Of course they say you're never really cured. You can always fall off the wagon again.

JIM Yes indeed, that's what they say. But your mother is a sensible woman.

DANNY Yes, I think she is actually.

JIM Anyway. To business. You know they're about to call the Army in. Everybody knows that. The Bogside in Derry is a no-go area for the RUC. They've got barricades across a lot of streets in West Belfast too, and they're beginning to call it Free Belfast. Armagh is likely to be next. Then Newry. God knows where after that. Normality is gone, Danny. Something new and amazing is taking its place. The worm is starting to turn. I think your friend Connor may have been right after all. The second Irish War of Liberation. The end for the English overlord. It doesn't have to be a dream. We've got to act right now! Another chance like this may not come along in our lifetimes.

[He pours himself a drink]

The plain truth is, England doesn't give a damn about this place. Neither the British government nor the British people. Most of them wouldn't be able to point it out on a map. It's just a drain on their resources. All the industries here are in decline – shipbuilding, aircraft, linen, Gallagher's Tobacco, clothing – you name it. The big new growth industry is drawing the dole. Sending in the Army is going to cost the British taxpayer a fortune. If we make it expensive enough, and we can, the pressure on the government over there to make a settlement will be overwhelming. Their own electorate will make them pull out.

So what am I saying? I'm saying that we have to keep up the pressure – sabotage and destruction of infrastructure like that guy Mandela in South Africa – and we have to be able to defend our own neighbourhoods and coordinate our efforts. And for that we need good communications.

One Radio Free Belfast isn't enough, Danny. We need one in Derry, one in Newry, one in Armagh... To put it simply, we need a radio transmitter kit that anyone with a few basic tools can assemble for us wherever it's needed. It has to be simple and reliable. No special skills needed. Can it be done?

DANNY *[Thinks for a moment before he replies]*
How soon do you need it?

[A smile spreads across Big Jim's face]

[Curtain]

[While the curtain is down a recording is played which begins with a station announcement from Radio Free Belfast which is quickly overlaid by one from Radio Free Derry, then Radio Free

helped. But what we are doing is attacking British interests in Northern Ireland, and military targets like Army barracks, police stations, roads, bridges, that kind of thing. This is the best chance we've had in fifty years to get the British out of our country. Our status as a British colony is the root of it all. Fix that and everything else falls into place. When it's *Sinn Féin*, ourselves alone, we'll be able to deal with these murderous scum the way they deserve.

So if you come in with us we won't be handing you a gun to go out and shoot Protestants. That isn't how it works. You're young, female, innocent-looking. So if you come in with us we'll probably use you as a bomb courier. It's dangerous work but it isn't the most dangerous thing we do. But you have to understand that things can go wrong. You would be putting your freedom and your life on the line. I want to make that absolutely clear.

SHELAGH

Thanks for the honesty. Now, when can I start?

JIM

[Pouring himself a drink]

I think I need one even if you don't.

[Takes a sip and puts the glass down. Reaches across and shake's Shelagh's hand]

Comrade Shelagh Flanagan, welcome to the Irish Republican Army!

[Curtain]

Scene 26

Park bench, as previous scenes. SHELAGH and DANNY are seated, both wearing outdoor clothes. Shelagh is trembling and Danny is embracing and comforting her.

SHELAGH

You think I've done the wrong thing, don't you? But I don't understand. Those bombs were designed by you. weren't they? And you gave them the training course in how to make them and how to use them. But you said you just built radio transmitters. That you weren't part of the muscle-end of the movement? You lied to me!

DANNY

No, no, I didn't lie. I said I had nothing to do with guns. The bombs aren't weapons. They're sabotage devices. And anybody can connect up a timer and a detonator. All I did was to come up with an easy and fool-proof way to make them, and seal them into the pipes so that once they've been armed they can't be disarmed by anybody. They aren't used to hurt people. There's always a warning. It's part of Big Jim's Rules of Engagement.

SHELAGH Are you saying that the Rules of Engagement can't change?

DANNY Look, Shelagh, there's so much that I couldn't tell you until you were a member. But I didn't want you to become a member. I mean, you realise there's no way out now, don't you? And you're right, the rules keep changing. Everything keeps changing and you just have to go along with it. I still don't know what to think about it all. Whether the aim of it all, whatever dream Big Jim and the rest of them are supposed to be chasing, is worth what's happening now. Everything we do just seems to stir up more murder and suffering and hatred. I think it's even meant to. Like bringing a fever to a head. I find it harder and harder to convince myself that I'm doing the right thing. Something worth doing. And now you're trapped in it as well as me. Neither of us has any control any more. Can't you see that?

SHELAGH I'm not chasing any dream. I'm chasing whoever maimed my father. That's all I care about.

DANNY I know, and that's why you shouldn't... oh, what's the use of talking about it?
[He pauses]
Do you have to go home now or can you come back to my house for a while?

SHELAGH I'd like to come back. But just hold me. No more than that.
[They walk off together]

[Curtain]

Scene 27

If possible, back projection of a section of a Belfast main road, circa 1960s. SHELAGH, dressed in school uniform and wearing a shoulder bag, rides her bicycle on to the stage. The bicycle has large panniers at the back and seems heavily loaded. A British SOLDIER, in full assault outfit and carrying a rifle, rushes out and stops her.

SOLDIER Steady on there, young Missy. Where exactly do you think you're going?

SHELAGH Home. I live in Divis Street.

SOLDIER Divis Street? That's an IRA scum area. My mate got shot down there a couple of days ago. Get off the bike.
[Shelagh obeys and balances the bike on its stand. Looks very nervous. The Soldier takes her shoulder bag and goes through it]

roughly, tossing some items out on the road. He finds a crumpled brochure and reads it.]

What have we got here then?

[Reads]

SHELAGH

Just old election pamphlets. My father's Nationalist MP at Stormont.

SOLDIER

This here is subversive literature, Miss. Going to have to take you in for questioning.

SHELAGH

Subversive literature? What are you talking about? They're election pamphlets. My father is a Stormont MP. He's also on the local Council. Those are...

SOLDIER

I've just told you what those are. Now shut up while I make a call.
[Unhitches a field two-way radio from his shoulder strap and speaks into it.]

Kilo-Seven-Two to Kilo-One. I'm on North Street, just opposite Church Street. I've apprehended a female with anti-government literature on her person. Request female officer to collect her and take her to the Interrogation Centre. Over.

[There is an unintelligible squawk in reply]

You stay put, Miss. Somebody'll be here to talk to you in a few minutes.

SHELAGH

But this is ridiculous. Those aren't anti-government literature. My da is *in* the government. The Stormont one. He's a Nationalist MP. It's a perfectly normal, respectable political party.

SOLDIER

Is that so? Well...it says here: 'We look forward to the day when this country will sever all ties with the United Kingdom and become part of a new republic of all Ireland.' That's called 'Republicanism', that is. As in 'Irish Republican Army.' I ain't thick, you know.

SHELAGH

We have nothing to do with the Irish Republican Army. We're an ordinary constitutional political party...

SOLDIER

Sweetheart, I ain't interested in arguing the toss with you. I've got a job to do an' I'm doing it. Now stand over by your bike and wait. I ain't asking, I'm telling.

[They stand beside the bike together. Time passes. Shelagh keeps looking nervously at her watch.]

SHELAGH

I need to go home. I need to go to the bathroom.

[She tries to move off but the soldier grabs her wrist]

SOLDIER

You just ain't listening, are you, sweetheart?

[He twists her arm behind her and lifts it just enough to hurt]

Now you'd better learn to do what you're told or you'll be in worse

trouble than you are already.

SHELAGH *[Soldier releases her. She looks at her watch one more time]*
Please listen to me. You're in terrible danger. We both are. Jesus, there's almost no time left. You have to believe me. We've got to get away from here, right now. In God's name, we've got to start running. Please! I beg you! In God's name!

SOLDIER *[Smiling]*
In danger, are we? Is that so? What's that? Some kind of threat? You got a stick of dynamite up your jacksy, maybe?

SHELAGH *[In terror]*
My bicycle... My bicycle is... going to explode.

SOLDIER
What did you say?

SHELAGH
I said my bicycle is going to explode, for Christ sake! You've got to believe me! My bicycle is going to explode!

SOLDIER *[Doubled up with laughter]* Your bicycle is going to explode? Did I hear that right? Your bicycle is going to explode! Bugger me, that's the funniest thing I've heard since I came to Ireland!

[There is the sound of an enormous explosion and at the same instant the theatre lights cut to black]

[Curtain]

Scene 28

TERRY Flanagan's home. Terry is in a wheelchair (or sitting with crutches leaning against his chair if wheelchair unavailable) and his wife MRS FLANAGAN is also present, together with other family members as extras if available. All are wearing dark clothes. If a coffin is available as a prop it can be on trestles in the middle of the stage. There is a knock on the door and MRS FLANAGAN opens it to admit JIM and DANNY, similarly attired, plus, who is armed.

JIM
Please don't be alarmed, Mrs Flannigan. We've come to offer our deepest sympathy at your great loss. We have a Mass Card from the men and women of the Republican movement. And the other bit of paper is a receipt. The funeral expenses have been settled up.
[Hands her an envelope]

TERRY *[Turning to face them]*
Don't youse bastards have any human feelings? Don't you know when to give it a rest?

JIM You have the right to be angry, and it's possible that my judgement wasn't sound in allowing your daughter to take part in the operation that ended so tragically. I accept responsibility for that error of judgement, if that's what it was. But your daughter practically begged me to allow her to do anything that was within her power to help free Northern Ireland from British domination. And to be perfectly frank, I don't feel that I have the right to turn away any Irish person who wants to play their part in the struggle for the liberation of this country.

Your daughter was a patriot and a heroine, and I respected her decision then, as I do now. That's the kind of person that she was, the kind of inspiring young person that makes the struggle for Irish nationhood worthwhile.

TERRY Platitudes. I can make those up for myself. What I want is my daughter back. Not a load of drivel like that. You're talking about decisions freely made by adults who understand all the facts. My daughter was sixteen years old – she wasn't old enough to join any army. She wasn't old enough to vote, or to buy a glass of Guinness in a pub. And you think she was old enough to lay down her life for some daft pipe dream of a United Ireland brought about by the bomb and the gun?

JIM Yes, Mr Flannigan, I made that decision, and I've welcomed other young people into the movement as well. I'm known for it. One of them is standing beside me right now. I believe in the young – I trust them more than I trust my own generation. I'm inspired by their idealism, and their energy, and their loyalty and dedication to the movement. But I am only a man, only a human being, and my judgment may have been wrong. And I've come here tonight to talk to the two of you, and to admit that I may have been wrong, and to apologise and ask for your forgiveness if I was.

MRS FLANAGAN Terry, Mr Harrison has come around to apologise and to say that he may have made an error of judgement. I think it takes a pretty brave man to do that. Nothing's going to bring Shelagh back. Wouldn't it be more fitting for us to kneel down and say a few prayers for her soul, and our own?

TERRY [*Turning to Danny*]
And you. What have you got to say for yourself? Do you think I'm so stupid I can't see who put her up to it? Shelagh wouldn't have touched the IRA with a ten foot pole before she met you. Do you think I'm bloody blind as well as crippled that I can't see what you did to her?

JIM [*Answering for Danny*]
There I have to put you straight, Mr Flannigan. Danny didn't want Shelagh to go into the IRA. He did everything in his power to stop her, offered every argument against it under the sun. I swear to that on my mother's grave. I tried to get her to reconsider as well, but obviously I didn't succeed. You may not believe any of that, but

it's the God's honest truth nevertheless. The only person who thought it was a good idea for Shelagh to join the Volunteers was Shelagh. That's the truth of it, so help me God.

MRS FLANAGAN

[In a calm tone]

I believe you, Mr Harrison Neither of you needed to come here tonight. It was the right thing to do, but it wasn't the easy thing to do. I think you deserve credit for that.

[Turns to her husband]

Mr Harrison has said that he may have got it wrong. He's said that he's sorry if that was what happened. What more can the man say? What more can anybody say? Ask these people to sit down, Terry. I'm going to put the kettle on.

JIM

That's very kind of you, Mrs Flannigan, but we can't stay. We're putting the two of you in danger by being here at all. If it's all right with you we'll just conclude our business and go. We have a favour to ask of you.

TERRY

[Angrily] A favour!

JIM

We would like your permission to fire a volley over your daughter's coffin. The boys have asked me especially if they could have that honour. They want to give her the proper respect due to a fallen comrade. It means a lot to them.

TERRY

You want to fire a volley over my daughter's coffin? And what in God's name do you think the world's going to make of that? Don't you know perfectly well I've been working day and night to try to stop the people I represent from turning to the gun? And you want me to advertise to the whole world that my daughter got herself killed on some kind of botched IRA bombing mission? That my own daughter was in the Volunteers?

JIM

Nobody knows the exact circumstances in which Shelagh lost her life, including us. You can deny that she was ever in the Volunteers. Say that it was some kind of political move on our part, trying to claim her as a martyr. Say you don't know anything about it. We'll neither confirm nor deny – not until Northern Ireland gets her freedom. Your daughter will have her place in history. She'll be remembered by the Irish people long after the two of us have been forgotten, and rightfully so. May God grant her the highest place in heaven, where she can pray for us all, and ask the Almighty to forgive us for our sins and our honest mistakes and all our lapses of judgement. Will the two of you say amen to that, and tell me that you don't harbour any hatred in your hearts for myself or the other members of the Irish Republican movement?

[The people on stage remain motionless for a moment in tableau as the Curtain comes down]

Scene 29

Night time. A dimly lit street scene in back projection if available. DANNY, JIM and FINBAR, still in their sombre clothing, are standing in a group.

JIM [*To Finbar*]
Would you wait for me in the car for a couple of moments please?
[*Finbar leaves. Jim turns to Danny*]
Are you sure you're all right, Danny? You don't look very well and you didn't say a word in the car.

DANNY I can't believe that I didn't say a single word to Shelagh's parents. Not even that I was sorry. Or that I'd made an error of judgement too. What about my error? I designed those bombs so that once the timer was set it couldn't be unset. I could have left some kind of little switch or something, for emergencies. But no. The judgement I made was that the courier's life was less important than the possibility that somebody from the police or the Army might be able to disarm one of our bombs before it went off. And I didn't even realise that that was what I was doing. I didn't give it a moment's thought. I played god while I was sleepwalking. And you were the one who said you might have made an error of judgement?

JIM As you rise up in the movement you'll realise that that kind of thing comes with the territory. It's the hardest part of all.

DANNY I don't want to rise up. I know it can't be done, but to tell you the truth what I really want right now is to get out of the movement entirely.

JIM You're bound to feel like that right now, Danny. I can't count the number of times I've felt that way myself. So I'm giving you a direct order. I'm telling you to take indefinite leave until you've finished your time at school. You've done a great job for us. You've given us the police car jammer, the radio stations, the bomb design, and even the training course so that anybody can assemble them. You've done more than enough for the time being. The school holidays will be here in a couple of months. Take a good solid break from all this. Go over to England and pay Joyce a visit. Become a sixteen-year-old again. That's the best thing you can do for yourself and the movement right now. And it's an order.
[*Jim sighs heavily*]

And now I have another battle to attend to. Inside the Republican movement itself. There are a lot of people who think that what Shelagh did by accident is what the movement should be doing by design. Targeting the forces of British imperialism directly. The institutions and personnel that England uses to prop

I wanted to believe like all the others
In the fairytale of setting Ireland free
Secure within this company of brothers
incapable of any wrong were we.

GIRL I know exactly what you need
These dismal thoughts you mustn't feed
From the past you must be freed
To the future must pay heed – and smile with me.

DANNY I'm the killer of my lover and rejected by my friends
For what I've done I know that I can never make amends
I've listened to their council and I've taken their advice
And we're further now than ever from that shining Paradise

GIRL Come on and hold me very tight
I can be anyone tonight
If you just turn off the light
I'll make everything all right – that's what I do.

DANNY I wasn't just a failure, I was rudderless and dumb
Keen to follow any leader to the beating of a drum
All I needed was some flattery, a puzzle I could solve
And my common sense and conscience were so easy to dissolve

GIRL Share a little love with me
And there won't be any fee
I'm a loner too you see
Let the two of us agree – some love for free.

DANNY The dream is almost over and we haven't learned a thing
All the shooting and the killing, just what progress did it bring?
All the people that we've murdered, all the lives that we've destroyed
Could we not have used our reason, our humanity employed?

BOTH Let us hold each other tight
We can be who we like tonight
When we just turn out the light
and make everything all right – you and me.

[The song ends with an embrace. Curtain]

Scene 31

The hallway area of DANNY's house. BERNIE is sitting in a chair toying with a revolver, clearly waiting for something or someone.

DANNY *[Opens the front door and walks in casually. Gets a fright when he sees Bernie in the chair.]*
God alive, Bernie you gave me a start. I'd forgotten you had your own key. How long have you been here?

BERNIE
Not very long. I knocked first but your folks weren't in. Are they away somewhere?

DANNY
They're over visiting my aunt in Birmingham. They'll be back tomorrow.
[Takes off his coat and hangs it up]
I had a weird encounter with Finbar yesterday. I went for a long walk to think things through.

BERNIE
Maybe you should have thought things through sooner.

DANNY *[Turns around and looks at Bernie curiously]*
What do you mean by that?

BERNIE
The boys are a bit disappointed with you. We never expected you to turn into a loose cannon. What's going on, Danny?

DANNY
Going on? Nothing's going on. I've had enough for now. That's all. No more playing soldiers until I've left school. Big Jim's orders. You know about that.

BERNIE
I'm afraid Big Jim's orders don't count for very much any more. Big Jim is no longer the Commander for Belfast.

DANNY *[Sits down, visibly stunned]* You mean... he's gone?

BERNIE
Two days ago. Accidental discharge of a firearm.

DANNY *[In complete shock]* My god.

BERNIE
I was sorry to see him go. Really. I liked Big Jim. We all did. He was a very popular commander. But he was a dinosaur. Nothing could move forward while he was still there. The new commander of the Belfast Brigade isn't much older than us.

DANNY
Are you serious, Bernie? They've shot Big Jim and appointed a new Commander for Belfast?

BERNIE
A Dublin man. Not university like Jim, very working class. Hot on discipline. More of a soldier than a politician, I would say.

DANNY *[Slowly beginning to make sense of the situation]*
What did you mean when you said nothing could move forward?

BERNIE
I think you know what I meant. I would have asked you to come with us, but I knew you wouldn't. You're just a younger version of Jim Harrison, aren't you? All that bullshit about ethics and media

image and rules of engagement. Do you really think you can win this contest playing by Queensbury rules? Do you think England's going to give us our freedom because we blow up an empty building on some deserted high street? Bullshit. Not in a million years. The English are laughing at the IRA, we've given them no reason to take us seriously. If you want the Brits to make concessions your campaign has to be hurting them. Bodies and funerals – widows and mothers on TV crying their eyes out. Real hurt. And if you haven't got the stomach for it, then you shouldn't be in the Volunteers. That's all there is to it.

DANNY

So you're part of this split, this alternative IRA that Jim talked about. And you have been all along, haven't you? Right back to that priest they found floating in the Lagan. And the shots fired into the crowd on Divis Street. And the shot that crippled Shelagh's dad. And now Big Jim. That was all you. And most of the time your orders didn't come from Big Jim, did they? You were working for two masters. Stirring things up in Belfast.

BERNIE

You would have worked it out eventually. I know that. You're a clever little bastard. We call ourselves the Provisional IRA inside the family, by the way. Not 'alternative'.

We're going to win, Danny, and when we do nobody's going to give a damn how we did it – what the rules of engagement were or how much blood got spilled. Those kind of things will never be mentioned again. Not once we've won. We'll be terrorists one minute and ministers and foreign secretaries and god-knows-what the next. The red carpets will be rolled out for us, the same as when the old IRA became the government in the South in 1922. That's how it works. If you want to win you've got to play by the real rules, not the ones you would like to apply.

But none of it affects you, does it? You won't be around to see the changes.

DANNY

You've come here to kill me, haven't you?

BERNIE

You were stupid in the end. You made it easy for us. Did you think you could disobey a direct order and there would be no consequences? You're almost the last of the old guard that's left now. They don't need you any more and they don't want you around any more. They gave you a loyalty test and you failed miserably. You walked straight into it.

DANNY

So that's it. The end. You're just going to shoot me down and forget all about me.

BERNIE

That's what I should do. What I've been sent to do. But I won't do it. I'm going to tell them that you were gone before I got here. They won't know any different.

This is the only chance you're going to get, Danny. You need to pack the essentials – your passport, the Bank of Ireland pass book that Big Jim gave you, enough clothes and toiletries to last a

few days. Then go somewhere very far away and buy yourself a new identity. Don't go back to Joyce or any of her new friends that she sneaks out to visit over there. The Volunteers know all about them. That's the first place they're going to look. And never think for one moment that you're off the hook. They're going to come after you, and they're not going to stop until they find you. It's up to you to make sure that they never do. Empty that Bank of Ireland account straight away. The people in Dublin are going to stop it as soon as they get my report. This is the end of Danny Gallagher's life. And the birth of somebody else.

DANNY

[After a long pause]
I owe you one, Bernie. A big one.

BERNIE

Aren't you going to ask me why?

DANNY

I assumed it was out of friendship.

BERNIE

I may as well tell you why. It doesn't change anything. The real reason is that if I pull this trigger
[Lifts the gun and looks down at it]
I'm going to break Joyce's heart. And I don't want to do that. You've always been her favourite. So it's Joyce you have to thank that you're going to go on walking around on the surface of this miserable little planet for a bit longer.

DANNY

Her favourite? Do you really think so? You know that's all I've ever really wanted since the first moment I saw her. Absolutely all.

BERNIE

Yeah. There's something a bit magic about her. We both know that. Pack up your things, Danny. You haven't got very long. If any of the Volunteers show up here before you've gone I'll have no alternative but to pull this trigger.

[While Bernie toys with his gun Danny disappears off the set for a while and we hear the sounds of rummaging through drawers and packing. He reappears wearing a rucksack and carrying a shoulder bag over one shoulder, a violin case with a strap over the other and a framed photograph of Joyce in his hand. It's the one that they once sold to Kingston Radio's listeners. He hesitates at the external door and puts the bag and the violin case on the floor while he searches for his keys. When he speaks he is close to tears.]

DANNY

I suppose this is it then. Please tell Joyce that I love her, will you? That's the one thing I'm really sorry about. That I'll never see her again.

BERNIE

I'll tell her you're dead. That's what everyone needs to believe if you don't want it to be true. Now for god's sake go!

[Danny disappears through the door, closes it behind him and we

hear the sound of a lock being secured. Bernie, suddenly suspicious, runs over and tries to open the door.]

Danny! You've locked this thing! Where are you? What do you think you're doing? I haven't got a key for the mortise lock!
Danny! Danny!

[Bernie realizes that Danny has left the shoulder bag behind. He reaches down and from it produces a black cylinder exactly like the bomb that killed Shelagh. He freezes and stares at it dumbly.]

[Massive explosion sound effect and lights cut to black]

[Curtain]

[For a few moments, while the house lights are down and the stage is curtained off the voice of Radio Free Belfast is heard on the theatre PA system,]

This is Radio Free Belfast on two-hundred-and-two metres, Medium Wave. We would like to make it clear that the alleged bomb factory explosion inside a house on the Antrim Road last night was in no way connected with any activities of the Irish Republican Army. One body has been recovered from the scene of the explosion but has not yet been identified. The owners of the house are believed to be visiting relations in Birmingham and have not yet returned to Belfast.

The body of a middle aged man, believed to be that of Jim Harrison, a high-ranking member of the Irish Republican Army, was recovered from the Lagan this morning near the Lagan Weir. We have no information as to how this well-known figure met his death. The RUC have said that they are investigating.

And now for some reports from around the Six Counties. The streets of Derry are said to be calm again this morning after a night of riots that saw three deaths and many injuries in streets bordering the Bogside. Despite the intervention of RUC and British Army snatch squads, only seven arrests were made from an estimated crowd of...

[Voice fades out]

Scene 32

Final song. A spot beam follows the GIRL as she emerges from the stage and slowly walks down into the hall and along the aisle. She is still sexily dressed but now carries a large bouquet or basket of white flowers. As she walks she hands them out to random members of the audience. Sings (acapella) Song 22. (This song was written and originally recorded by Leon Rosselson and is used with his kind permission).

During the song a succession of press photographs from the 'Troubles' could be back projected on the stage.

Song 22

History lesson, it's time to remember,
Time to remember the deeds of the great.
Please pay attention, don't let your minds wander,
Daydreams and playtime can wait.
Black the minnows that swarm in the water,
White the butterfly flits in the sun,
Red the blossom and pink the magnolia,
History lesson's begun.

Joan of Arc ended up as a cinder,
Henry VIII did for two of his wives.
Wish I could dive in the pond where the ducks are
Having the time of their lives.
Red the blood on the axe of the headsman,
Black the stake and the bodies that burn,
White the face of the priest and the hangman.
These are the facts you must learn.

Pitt paid a packet to patch out an empire,
Drake bowled the Spaniards out the first ball.
Just want to lie in the sun by the water
Down where the rushes grow tall.
Red the lines of Wellington's army,
White the ensign where Nelson held sway,
Crimson the cavalry Marlborough commanded.
History's heroes are they.

Which scrap of paper began the big bundle?
Which umbrella brought peace in our time?
Questions and answers dissolve in the sunshine,
Wait for the school bell to chime.
Green the gas as it gutters the trenches,
Black the smell of the smoke from a gun,
White the pain of a bombshell exploding.
History lesson's begun.

History lesson, please try to remember,
Try to remember the deeds of the great.
Theirs was the power, the glory, the honour,
They were the chosen of fate.
Black the minnows that swarm in the water,
White the butterfly flits in the sun,
Red the blossom and pink the magnolia.
History lesson is done.

[*Final Curtain*]