

# Engineering Paradise the Musical

shortened version – 15/02/19

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

Keyboard Player	<b>17</b>
Guitarist	<b>18</b>
Percussionist	<b>19</b>

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. Also required are the Director and technical assistants to deal with sound, light, scenery etc. Approximately 25 total.

## 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 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 shot the lights cut dead to black.

## Scene 1

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 centre  
stage 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 Laverty?

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 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 lear?

DANNY Yes, Father.

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

*[Curtain]*



## Scene 2

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                    It's all right, Dad," Danny pleaded, "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        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 mother 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

At curtain-up: MRS GALLAGHER is slumped in an armchair at one side of an old fashioned TV. There is an empty armchair at the other side. An empty glass is balanced on the arm of the chair and there is an empty Irish whiskey bottle on the floor. A waste-bin is visible.

DANNY                                    [*Enters in school uniform and carrying a school satchel*]  
Oh lordy! Not again, surely...

MRS GALLAGHER                    [*Stirring*]  
Danny? What time is it?

DANNY                                    [*Lifting bottle and placing it in the waste bin*]  
It's nearly five, Ma. I'm home from school. Where's himself?

MRS GALLAGHER                    That's a daft question. How the hell should I know? And if he thinks he's coming back here he has another think coming.

DANNY                                    It's his house, Mammy. It's where he lives. Where else is there for him to go? [*Turns to leave*] I'll make the coffee.

MRS GALLAGHER                    Tea. I don't want coffee.

DANNY                                    I think coffee is what you need, Mammy.

MRS GALLAGHER                    You don't know anything about what I need. You're getting just like him.

DANNY                                    I'll do a bit of bacon and egg. Would you like that?

MRS GALLAGHER                    I don't know what food's in.

DANNY                                    [*Hesitates, turns back to his mother*]  
What was it you had words about this time?

MRS GALLAGHER                    You wouldn't understand.

DANNY                                    I'm not a kid, you know. I can understand more than you think.

MRS GALLAGHER                    You don't know what it's like to live with him.

DANNY                                    I thought I *did* live with him.

MRS GALLAGHER                    [*Sits up and turns to her son*]  
I hate his place, Danny.

DANNY                                    This road?

MRS GALLAGHER                    This city. This stinking country. I want to get away from here. Somewhere civilized, where a doctor and his wife have some kind of social standing. I had another letter from your Auntie Maud in Selly

Oak yesterday. She'd love us all to come over. Birmingham is a hundred years ahead of this place. Medicine is completely different over there. It's a proper profession.

DANNY

Was that what the row was about then? Moving to Birmingham?

MRS GALLAGHER

*[She hesitates]*

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 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. 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.  
*[Still holding Danny's hand, Dr Gallagher turns and looks at his wife. Slow fade of lighting.]*

*[Curtain]*

Scene 4

At curtain up: There is a bench on stage resembling some kind of park bench or public seating. 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, 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

For this scene the stage can be split and each half illuminated as required. At curtain-up we see the half which is Connor Lavery's bedroom. It contains a bed with a headboard facing the audience. The Irish flag (green, white and orange) is draped over the headboard. Other Irish Republican symbols or flags can be visible as available.

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 making him excessively innocent and cheerful. He might carry a large teddy bear or some other prop to suggest this)

DANNY    We shouldn't be in here, Hughie. Connor'll murder us if he comes back.

WEE HUGHIE                                    Ah, whisht. Sure weren't we revving up the engine of his motor bike a few minutes ago? If he was anywhere within miles he would have come back an' beat us around the head for touching it. He's working late tonight, won't be back until after dark. I know 'cause I had to promise him I would feed the pigeons. He doesn't let me go near them normally. That was good, wasn't it? Feeding them?

DANNY    It was all right. A bit smelly. Doesn't he ever clean them out?

PEDRO    He does it every now an' again. He gets me an' Wee Hughie to help him.

WEE HUGHIE                                    You can't get the smell out of them cages. It's all the stuff that's soaked into the wood. But you get used to it. I don't mind it at all now.

DANNY    I could get along without it. Anyway, why did you bring me up here?

WEE HUGHIE                                    Something else to show ye'. Something really good. He's only gone an' done it, you know. Joined the Volunteers!

DANNY    [*Looks a bit blank*]  
The Volunteers?

PEDRO    [*Taunts*] Danny doesn't know who the Volunteers are!

WEE HUGHIE                                    The IRA, for Chris's sake. I thought everybody knew that.

DANNY    Oh yes, of course. I knew that.

WEE HUGHIE                                    An he hasn't just joined them – wait till you see what he keeps under his pillow...

DANNY    I don't think we should be in here, Hughie. This is Connor's private bedroom...

WEE HUGHIE                                    [*Interrupts*]

Aw, quit worryin'. Connor's at work, he's miles away  
*[Makes his way over to the bed and rummages under the pillow.  
Produces a hand gun]*  
Get a load of this, Danny. It's real. An' there's bullets in it.  
*[The two boys inspect the gun, hand it from one to the other, remove  
and replace the magazine if the prop allows this]*

DANNY                                      What's he got it for? What's he going to do with it?

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 and all exit]*

*[The stage goes dark to allow WEE HUGHIE and PEDRO to EXIT and DANNY to cross to the other  
side of the set. Lights are brought up on Danny's bedroom.]*

Danny's bedroom. The bed itself need not appear. All that's needed is a desk bearing a pirate radio transmitter and assorted electronic equipment and beside it a chair. On the wall is a large colour poster of the offshore pirate radio vessel *MV Caroline*. As the lights come up Danny is seated at the desk wearing headphones and with a microphone in his hand.

*[Music: The opening of Duane Eddy's 'Ghost Riders in the Sky' is heard, fading down.]*

DANNY                                      This is a test transmission from Kingston Radio, Calico Jack speaking.  
Hello Hughie. I hope you're receiving this loud and clear. Tonight I  
want to do a level test on the modulator. I'm going to turn the audio  
level up in stages, then back down in stages, and I'll give a reference  
number for each setting. I want you to note down when the sound  
becomes distorted, and when it becomes too quiet for comfortable  
listening. I'll do it with the microphone setting first, then the setting  
for the music. While I'm testing the music I'll keep the microphone  
live and let you know what setting I'm using. This is Level 1 on the  
microphone. Testing – one, two, three at Level One. Level Two on the  
microphone. Testing – one, two, three at Level Two. Increasing to  
Level Three...  
*[During this speech the lights fade slowly down and Danny's voice  
trails off]*

*[Curtain]*

## Scene 6

The School Assembly Hall. At curtain-up we see a large cross at centre stage and in front of it a lectern. FATHER WALSH enters from the aisle, glaring at audience members as he passes them 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 McCrory's Year Five class, known to all of us 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 with the gun 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

*[Recorded voice]* 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 Lavery, known to all of us with deep affection as Wee Hughie... [Spotlight fades to darkness]

[Curtain]

## Scene 7

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 Lavery, 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 Lavery, 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 Lavery 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 Lavery'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 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 8

A queue of boys (two or three would be sufficient) wait to have their confession heard. All the boys wear black armbands. Dark stage, spotlight on the confession box, which can be merely a chair and a kneeler or cushion separated by a symbolic screen. At curtain-up the ENGLISH-SOUNDING PRIEST (not Father Walsh) is sitting in the chair and a boy is kneeling on the cushion on the other side of the screen. The PRIEST, who has a trace of an English accent, is in the act of delivering Absolution in Latin.

PRIEST                                 *[Making the sign of the cross in the air, mumbles]*  
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.

BOY   Thank you, Father.  
*[Stands up and exits. The next boy is DANNY, who walks up to the screen and kneels]*

DANNY                                     Bless me Father for I have sinned. It's one month since my last Confession.

PRIEST                                     And what sins have you committed, my son?

DANNY                                     I've taken the Lord's name in vain three times... and I've had impure thoughts six times...

PRIEST                                     Did you touch yourself when you had these thoughts?

DANNY                                     No, Father. And... *[Hesitates]*

PRIEST                                     Yes, my son?

DANNY                                     I don't know if it's a sin, Father, but I could have said something... to the police... about a gun... and I didn't... and...

PRIEST                                     Are you talking about the death of Hugh Lavery?

DANNY                                     Yes, Father.

PRIEST                                     There was something you knew about it, but you didn't say? Is that right?

DANNY                                     Yes, Father. Kind of. I knew that Connor had a gun... and I knew that Pedro had seen it...

PRIEST                                     Go on.

DANNY                                     Well, that's it, really. Hughie had been playing with the gun, which he should never have done, and Pedro had seen him do it. I knew about that, I'd seen it happen, and I didn't say anything.

PRIEST I see. And did you know where Connor got the gun?

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 is gone. DANNY is standing looking pensive. This is the school playground, which could be 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 You're looking a bit rough, Danny. Wee Hughie was your best friend at school, wasn't he?

DANNY Hello Bernie. 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.

DANNY You're having me on, Bernie. What would I know about the Volunteers? Who would I tell?

BERNIE *[Puts his finger to his lips]*

Leave it with me, Danny. I'll see that it gets to the right people. Not a word to anybody else now.

DANNY Catch yourself on, Bernie. That kind of big talk doesn't impress me.

BERNIE [*Finger to lips again*]  
Mind what I said, Danny. Not a word to anybody.

DANNY [*Scoffs*]  
Give it a rest, Bernie.  
[*Bernie puts a finger to his lips in the 'silence' gesture one more time and walks away. All the boys including Danny quietly exit*]

[*Curtain*]

## Scene 9

The first part of this scene can be acted in front of an inner curtain to hide the main set.  
At curtain-up: DANNY is walking home from school. Back-projected street scene optional.  
FINBAR, a tall dark-clad man with sunglasses, steps out in front of him and bars his way.

FINBAR Good afternoon, Danny.  
[*DANNY looks up in alarm*]

RORY There's nothing to worry about, Danny. Jim Harrison would just like to meet you and have a friendly word.

DANNY You mean... Jim Harrison the IRA man?

RORY I didn't say anything about Jim Harrison being an IRA man. [Pauses]  
So will you be able to spare a little time, Danny? We wouldn't want to put you out.

DANNY I... I'll be okay. I'll come.

RORY Good decision. Now we've got a car around the corner, but there is one little formality.  
[*Produces a strip of black cloth from a pocket*]  
We have to ask you to wear this for the journey. Then if anybody asks you where you've been, you'll be able to say with perfect honesty that you don't know. It's better for everybody that way. Don't you agree?  
[*Danny nods and RORY puts the blindfold over his eyes, ties it, and*



*leads him off stage. Back projection, if used, off]*

*[Inner curtain rises to reveal JIM Harrison seated at a low coffee table. He is a large genial-looking man. One other chair and drinks cabinet in the room. DANNY is led in by RORY and the blindfold removed. RORY exits]*

JIM Hello Danny. How are you doing? Have a seat.

DANNY *[sitting down nervously]* Are you really Big Jim Harrison?

JIM That's what they call me. What have you heard about me then?

DANNY That you're the head of the IRA.

JIM I'm the commander for Belfast. The high command is in Dublin. What are your thoughts about the Volunteers then, Danny?

DANNY I don't really know anything about them.

JIM You were right to tell us about that priest. The first thing I want to do is say thanks.

DANNY I didn't know I was telling you. I thought I was just telling Bernie, Mr Harrison.

JIM Please call me Jim. We don't stand on formality in the movement. That's very honest of you. Bernie is a friend of ours. We have a lot of friends. We'd like to be able to think of you as a friend too. That's one of the reasons I wanted to meet you.

DANNY *[After a pause]* What does that entail... Mr... Jim?

JIM Nothing much. Just keeping your eyes and ears open like you did today. Letting us know if you come across anything suspicious. Maybe doing the odd little favour if the occasion arises. Most of all, keeping your mouth shut. I'm sure I don't have to emphasise how important that is. You're a bright lad.  
*[He waits but Danny makes no comment]*  
In return, we would be happy to do the odd favour for you. You'd be surprised at all the different ways we could help – how influential our network can be. We owe you one right now, Danny. We don't forget our friends – or our enemies.  
*[He waits but again Danny remains silent]*  
Is it a deal, then?

DANNY I'm not clear, Mr... Jim. What exactly is the deal?

JIM You're a cautious little bastard, aren't you? I like that. You're quite right. I'm not making myself clear. All I'm saying is, you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours. At the moment people seem to think that you know something about the Volunteers. In fact you know nothing, any more than Connor does. That's good. That's what we want people to think. Every time somebody approaches you, they give themselves

away. You pass on the fact that they approached you, we've nailed another informer. That's all we want. Simple, isn't it?

DANNY

So... that priest was an informer?

JIM

Who could be better placed to ferret out information?

DANNY

You know who he is then?

JIM

We know who he says he is. And now we know what he's up to. We've had our eye on him for a while. We're pretty sure he's not what he pretends to be. If you had Absolution from him you'd better go to Confession again somewhere else. I'm pretty sure that man's no priest.

DANNY

That's okay. I don't believe in any of that stuff anyway.

JIM

Oh, of course not. Your father's still an auld atheist, is he?

DANNY

He is, but that's not why I don't believe in it. I've thought it out for myself. It's not scientific.

JIM

*[Amused]*

Well, I'm no great theologian myself, and no great scientist either. I just say my prayers morning and night and hope that the man upstairs isn't watching me too closely. I'll have to book a double appointment when my time comes to give an account of myself. 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. 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.  
[*RORY 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 10

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'.

So I never try to kid myself I'll rise above the pack  
I'm aiming at the middle, not completely at the back  
I only want to struggle through, avoiding a disgrace  
Enough to keep my dignity, enough to save my face

But now it's summer holidays and freedom of a kind  
I can go and seek adventure, take it easy and unwind  
I can try to be an adult making choices of my own  
Or even find a girlfriend so I needn't be alone

Growing up is scary and I mustn't get it wrong  
It's not as if I hadn't seen it coming all along  
But I wish that they had told me what it's really all about  
Is there some elusive secret that I haven't yet found out?

*[Lighting shifts to illuminate the opposite side of the stage, which is the sitting room in Danny's house. DANNY lifts his stuffed satchel and crosses to there]*

DANNY                                  Hello Ma! I'm back! Are you there?

MRS GALLAGHER                      *[Enters]* Oh you're back. And I see you've brought all your things back with you. Is it all over then?

DANNY                                  All over for this year.  
*[He does a little skip]*  
Six weeks of heaven before I have to go back.

MRS GALLAGHER                      So, was the last one okay?

DANNY                                  The last one was a nightmare. I hate Irish. And French. And Geography... and R.E.

MRS GALLAGHER So I suppose you're going to be under my feet here for six weeks now, are you?

DANNY Charming! No, this summer I've got a plan.

MRS GALLAGHER Which is?

DANNY I want to take the tent and go away somewhere on my own. You remember that time we all went to the Isle of Man – I think I was about ten?  
[*His mother nods*]  
I think I'd like to go back there – on my own. Maybe stay for a while. Get a summer job.

MRS GALLAGHER And who in their right mind is going to give *you* a job?

DANNY I could work in a shop... or I could do an office job... or work in a hotel...

MRS GALLAGHER You need skills for all those things. You need to be able to add up and work the till in a shop, and give the right change. You need to be able to type to work in an office. I suppose you could answer the phone in a hotel, but I don't know what else you'd be any good at. I can't see you sticking any of those things very long either, even if you could find somebody who'd employ you. A seaside place in the summer will be flooded with students looking for a wee job and a free holiday. You'll be right down at the bottom of the list.

DANNY Thanks for the vote of confidence, Ma. The Isle of Man isn't all seaside. They have farms there, and ordinary villages, with post offices and pubs and everything. And a couple of museums and things.

MRS GALLAGHER Farms? What would you know about farming? Or museums, for that matter. You'll run out of money and be back home within a week.

DANNY My mind's made up, Ma. I'm going to give it a try.

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 11

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 as available to make it clear that this is a ship. The ship's name should be visible if convenient and sound effects used to reinforce the feeling of a sea voyage. A back projection of the Refuge Tower at Douglas, off to one side, would be an added bonus. 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 12

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 13

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 ONE  
ACT TWO

#### Scene 14

Danny's house in Belfast. One side of the stage contains a dining table and chairs. The other side (in darkness) contains Danny's mother's sickbed. There is a shape in the bed.

DANNY enters, dining table side, wearing his rucksack and carrying a 'Duty Free' bag containing two bottles of Irish Whiskey.

DANNY                                Hello, Ma! It's Danny! I'm back a bit early. Where are you?  
*[Looks around]*  
Ma? Are you in the bedroom? It's Danny.

DR GALLAGHER                    *[Enters and 'shushes' him]*  
She's not well, Danny. Sit down, we've got to talk.  
*[They sit at the dining table]*  
What have you got in the bag?

DANNY                                *[Looks embarrassed]*  
It's for Ma. She wanted me to bring her back a couple of bottles.

DR GALLAGHER                    We've got to have a talk about that.  
*[He motions Danny to sit down]*  
Listen, Danny, I'm going to have to ask you to grow up very quickly. I  
have to tell you this straight, it's no good beating about the bush. Your  
mother's in a bad way. She's been in the Mater Hospital for the last  
few days – they've just discharged her. They did a liver biopsy this  
time – in plain English, she's got a very simple choice. Stop drinking  
or die. There's no third option. I'm sorry to have to tell you this as  
soon as you walk in the door.

DANNY

If she does stop... will she get better?

DR GALLAGHER

Not entirely. Some of the damage is irreversible. She'll have to take things very easy. But most of it is treatable. I've seen people in her condition hang on for years. But her lifestyle is going to have to change. I don't mean she has to cut down, I mean she has to stop. Right now. Not tomorrow or the day after. Now I'm going to have to ask you to help me, Danny. She won't listen to a word I say. As soon as she's back on her feet she'll be back on the bottle. I can't keep her prisoner and watch over her every second of the day. If she wants to kill herself I can't stop her. Maybe she'll listen to you. I know you get on a lot better 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]*



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.

## Scene 16

There is a scene change on the darkened side of the stage while Joyce is singing her song. As the lights go down on Joyce's side and up on the opposite side DANNY is seated at a small table containing the pirate radio transmitter and he has a microphone in his hand.

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 Paddy 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.

*[As Joyce finishes the song 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.  
*[They kiss passionately]*

*[Curtain]*

## Scene 17

One half of the stage is Big Jim Harrison's lounge. There are two easy chairs with a small coffee table between them. There is a whiskey bottle, glasses and some papers on the table. In the other (darkened) half of the stage JOYCE sits with her guitar and microphone, ready to record a song. She is again writing on her pad.

In the lighted half JIM is sitting in one of the chairs reading a newspaper. DANNY enters, blindfolded, guided by RORY, who undoes the blindfold and indicates the chair. Danny sits down.

JIM

*[Puts down his paper]*  
Thanks, Rory.  
*[Rory exits]*  
So, Danny. You wanted to see me?

DANNY

*[Nervously]*  
Yes mister... I mean Jim. I need to ask you about the radio station.

JIM

I understand it's going very well. I saw a little piece about it in the Belfast Telegraph. They're listening to it all over the city. And that new girlfriend of yours has become a local celebrity. I've heard her myself – she's got a fine voice.

DANNY

Yes. It's Joyce that I need to talk to you about. You see Joyce... isn't a

Catholic. Her father is a Church of Ireland minister. And... she's sent me a Protestant song to play on the radio station. It's called 'The Orange Maid of Sligo'.

JOYCE

*The lighting switches over to JOYCE, who sings 'The Orange Maid of Sligo'. NOTE: This is a pre-existing traditional song and does not form part of the new material created for this musical.]*

### SONG 15

Ben Bulben's wild and lofty height  
Where evening setting sun was bright  
Bestowed a flood of golden light  
Across the Bay of Sligo

A bonny barque with glancing oar  
And swelling sail was seen before  
The waves that pound that lofty shore  
Around the Bay of Sligo

And at the prow there sat a girl  
With rosy lips and flaxen curl  
And simple beauty like a pearl  
The Orange maid of Sligo

And glancing o'er the vessel's side  
She saw upon the waters glide  
An orange lily, her golden pride  
Upon the Bay of Sligo

Make haste, make haste, oh save that flower  
I prize it more than rose or bower  
No traitor must take it within his power  
Around the Bay of Sligo

An Orange youth dived o'er the prow,  
Brought back that flower and with a bow  
Bestowed it on the gentle brow  
Of the orange maid of Sligo

And soon she was his bonny bride  
And oft they spoke at even tide  
About that lily's golden pride  
Around the Bay of Sligo

Come all true blues and fill your glass  
A brighter toast will never pass  
We'll drink unto that bonny lass  
The Orange Maid of Sligo

*[Lighting switches back to Big Jim's lounge]*

JIM It's a fine song. I know it well.

DANNY But it's an Orange song. A Protestant song...

JIM *[Fills a glass from the whiskey bottle and offers the bottle to Danny, who shakes his head]*

You're asking me if it's all right to play music from the Protestant Irish tradition on your radio station. A station under IRA protection. Am I right?

*[Danny nods]*

Let me explain something to you, Danny. The Republican movement is not the enemy of the Protestant people of Northern Ireland. Did you know that most of the earliest founders of the Irish Republic Movement were Protestants? Wolf Tone, Charles Stewart Parnell, Henry Joy McCracken, Napper Tandy – half the heroes that they sing the songs about. And when Ireland becomes one nation the Protestant people of the North are still going to be here, and there has to be a place for them, under justice and with all their rights and traditions fully respected. Irish Protestants are Irish too.

The Republican movement is not a sectarian organisation. If we have enemies they are class enemies – the people who would keep the poor in their place and the power in their own hands. There are Protestant people in Northern Ireland who are every bit as much victims of the British ruling class as any Catholic.

So the answer to your question: play whatever music you want to play. Go out with girls of any religion you like. Help us to show them by our example that they've nothing to fear from the new Ireland that's just around the corner. Get them on side, Danny. Show them we're not monsters or bigots. Your instincts in this matter are absolutely spot on. Remember we're trying to build a society that'll be fair and just for every Irish person, regardless of which tradition they come from. More power to you and your radio station and your girlfriend too.

*[He stands and raises his glass in a toast]*

To the Protestant people of Northern Ireland and their place in the new Irish nation!

DANNY That's great. Thanks very much. I was really worried about that.

JIM And you did exactly the right thing. You came and spoke to me first. You kept me informed. That's all I've ever asked, isn't it?

*[Danny nods]*

But I do have a slightly bigger favour to ask of you. In fact I was going to need to talk to you very soon anyway. It's a job that I think you're going to enjoy.

*[Rifles through the papers on the table to find the one that he wants and hands it to Danny]*

This is the frequency used by the police car radios in Belfast. It doesn't mean a lot to me but it will to you.

*[Danny looks up]*

You see Danny, we need to make a withdrawal from one of the Royal Avenue banks, and we feel that we would have more... privacy if the police car radio system wasn't working at the time.

*[Danny smiles – giggles involuntarily]*

I know, it's like something out of a 'B' movie, isn't it. But I thought it might be the kind of challenge you would like.

DANNY *[Almost laughing]*  
It's great! I love it!

JIM And can you do it?

DANNY Yes. Definitely.

JIM I don't have to stress – we'll only get one shot at this. It has to work first time.

DANNY It'll work. Believe me. This is my thing. You're talking my 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 18

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.

*[Pauses. Danny starts to leave.]*

And Danny, think about what I said. It's too late for me, but it may not be for you.

*[Curtain]*

## Scene 19

Basic version of Big Jim Harrison's lounge, as Scene 3. A desk or table and two chairs are all that are required. JIM is sitting opposite DANNY, who holds a small metal box from which four telescopic rod aerials sprout. It resembles a tiny box-shaped satellite.

JIM

...And you say that's all we need. To block a big powerful police transmitter up on Divis mountain?

DANNY

We can't do it with sheer power. That police transmitter is always going to be stronger than anything I can put together. We might cause a bit of interference but the chances are that at least some of their messages would get through. So we have to be a bit more clever. The idea came to me when I was watching a programme about judo on the TV. They were saying that strength isn't what matters in judo because what you're really doing is using your opponent's strength against himself. The harder he tries, the more force he puts on, the more he hurts himself. You're using science, knowledge of how the human body works, not strength. That was the key.

The way the police system works is that it receives on one frequency and relays everything at high power on another. Every time a car comes on its transmission is re-broadcast at high power on the 'listening' frequency so that everybody in the whole network hears it. But it can only relay one signal at a time. While one car is talking, no other car can be heard. If two try to talk at the same time you get blockage. A high-pitched whistle called a heterodyne. You can't hear either of them properly. The system is paralysed.

JIM

I see. So all we have to do is transmit on the car frequency and messages from the actual cars can't be heard?

DANNY

That's right, but if that was all we did they would soon find our blocking transmitter and destroy it. We need to be a bit more subtle. What we need to do is use the power of the big transmitter to run our little one. Position it right up on Divis mountain, close enough to the police transmitter that it can power itself from the signal the big

transmitter puts out. Radio waves are a form of energy, you can trap it and use it to do things. As soon as the police transmitter comes on, so does our little one, and that locks the big one in the 'on' mode. The cars can't get through. When the big one goes off, the little one does too, so now there's no signal for them to trace. And while the big transmitter is on, the little one is so close to it physically that its tiny signal is swamped by the big one. The engineers will have no idea what's causing the big transmitter to lock in the 'on' mode every time they try to use it. It's a radio engineer's nightmare. They won't know they're looking for a physical object, from their point of view it'll look like a fault in their own equipment. I think it'll take them hours to work out what's happening.

JIM It sounds brilliant. Are you really sure it's going to work?

DANNY [Smiles]  
I've tried it. It works.

JIM You're going to go down in the history of the Irish nation, Danny. It looks like we owe you another big one.

*[Jim gets up and exits. Danny moves to centre stage and toys with the piece of equipment he has made as he sings a song which is an echo of his father's song in Act 1]*

DANNY [Sings]

### **SONG 16**

Engineering solutions are the answer  
To the problems that the keenest minds confound.  
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.

There had to be an engineering weakness  
I knew that I could beat them if I tried  
This isn't either arrogance or meekness  
In this I've every right to take a pride.

And really I'm doing them a favour  
In pointing out their soft Achilles' heel  
This never caused my confidence to waver  
It just remains my victory to seal

The problem had an elegant solution  
I cracked it very easily and in time  
I've cleared the way for wealth redistribution  
It's safe to carry out the perfect crime.

*[Danny EXITS & Curtain]*

## Scene 20

Danny's bedroom. Minimal props needed – bed and single chair. Transmitter on bedside table. DANNY is lounging on the bed reading a book. BERNIE knocks and enters.

- BERNIE                   Have ye' seen the news, Danny? The bank job went like clockwork! More than half a million pounds! It must be some kind of a record.
- DANNY                   *[Sits up and swings his legs on to the floor]*  
I understand somebody got shot. I don't call that going like clockwork.
- BERNIE                   It was a silly wee clerk. She tried to go for the silent alarm. We got her in the hand. Fantastic bit of shooting.
- DANNY                   Well I feel sick when I think about it. How is she now?
- BERNIE                   She'll be fine. Don't be such a baby, Danny. This is armed revolution. This is another war for Irish freedom.
- DANNY                   Like what Connor said when Pedro shot Wee Hughie?
- BERNIE                   You think too much, Danny. Smarter heads than ours have this all planned. Quit worrying. *[pauses]* Are you all set to take Joyce out to buy her birthday present?
- DANNY                   *[Gets up and puts on his shoes]* I am. It's a pity it isn't going to be a surprise, but you say you can't buy a guitar for somebody else?
- BERNIE                   Definitely not. A guitar is as personal as – those shoes of yours. You have try it out. Make sure it fits. Make sure you're able to talk to it, and able to hear what it has to say to you back.
- DANNY                   Well, I've been looking forward to this. Is she downstairs?
- BERNIE                   She's over at my place, actually. We've been meeting up now and again to record a demo tape. You must have a demo tape if you're serious about a career in music. Can't do anything without that.
- DANNY                   *[surprised]* I didn't know about that. Joyce never told me. That's very good of you, Bernie.
- BERNIE                   Maybe that was to be your surprise? She's bloody good, isn't she? What will she be like with a decent guitar? You might have the next Marianne Faithful or Mary Hopkin there.
- DANNY                   She's better than them.
- BERNIE                   *[As they prepare to leave]* We had a talk about the guitar. You said money was no object, so we wondered about a Martin. There's one dealer in Belfast...

DANNY                                      Come on then. Let's pick her up and go there... [*they leave*]

[*Curtain*]

## Scene 21

DANNY is in his bedroom, (same set as previous scene) sitting on the bed. There is a gentle tap on the door. He admits JOYCE, who is carrying her new guitar. They kiss.

JOYCE                                      This new guitar is absolutely fantastic. It's the best guitar I've ever heard let alone played. That man who sold it to us was really nice. When we jammed together he said I was better than him, and he earns money as a session musician. Did you hear him say that? He's really sweet. We met up again at the weekend and did a set together at a folk club in Castlereagh. And guess what, they'd heard Kingston Radio. They knew who I was. We got standing ovations. Encores. I wish you could have been there. It was fantastic!

DANNY                                      Castlereagh? That's a long way from Bangor.

JOYCE                                      He has a car.

DANNY                                      With a back seat that goes down?

JOYCE                                      Don't be such a prude. A little quickie in the back seat never hurt anybody. I told you the day we met I'm not proper girlfriend material. If you want one of those you'll need to look elsewhere. You know that. I'm the kind of girl that boys call rude names. Girls even ruder ones. I don't care. I don't have to please them. I'm me. What you see is what you get. Take it or leave it.

DANNY                                      Thanks. I'll take it. Bernie too if I'm not mistaken?

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 22

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. 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 23

Basic version of Big Jim Harrison's lounge, as Scene 3 and Scene 19. 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*]

#### Scene 24

The transmission room of Radio Free Belfast. A table at centre stage is set up with the transmitter and some microphones and electrical equipment. There are people both seated and standing, two of whom are DANNY and BERNIE, and 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.]

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 engages with them. 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 25

A park bench. 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. Curtain]*

## Scene 26

The Gallagher's sitting room. Old-fashioned radio on the table. DR GALLAGHER is sitting with a newspaper. The RADIO is switched on.

RADIO

This is Radio Free Belfast on two-hundred-and-two metres in the Medium Wave. Reports are still coming in about the riots in Derry following the ambush of the peaceful Civil Rights march at Burntollet. *[Volume lowers but speaker continues. Occasional phrases audible]*  
Angry mobs in Belfast...  
Advised to stay indoors...  
Barricading off certain streets...  
Army will be called in if ...

DANNY

*[Enters and sits on another chair]*  
I finished my homework, Da. Do you mind if I watch Top of the Pops on the TV until Ma gets in?

DR GALLAGHER

I'm listening to Radio Free Belfast. Have you heard about this business in Derry? And it's already spread to the back streets here.

DANNY

Yeah. I was listening to a little bit of it upstairs. It's pretty bad, isn't it?

DR GALLAGHER

It's the worst it's been since this family came to Belfast. Your mother's coming home any minute, Danny. For god's sake don't tell her about the police raid the other night. She would go off her head. The whole city's boiling over. Why now? What's different to before? Damned if I know.

DANNY

It's always on the brink. It just takes one tiny little thing to tip it over the edge. It was the Civil Rights march this time. People were beaten unconscious – and they say it was off-duty RUC men that did it. It's just tribalism really. Like football crowds...

DR GALLAGHER

Oh, I nearly forgot. Your wee girlfriend in Bangor phoned. Wants you to phone her back.

DANNY                            [*Jumps to his feet*]  
Joyce! Did she say what it was about?

DR GALLAGHER                No. She just wanted you to phone her back.

*[Danny hurries off to make the call. Dr Gallagher turns the radio up again.]*

RADIO                            Windows were broken in Jarvis Street last night by a six-or-eight strong gang of masked youths who ran through the street at about eleven-fifteen shouting sectarian abuse and throwing bottles and other missiles. We have in the studio Mrs Joseph Corrigan, a resident of the street, to tell us more about the incident. Would you like to tell us in your own words exactly what these hooligans did, Mrs Corrigan?

*[As Mrs Corrigan begins to tell her story Danny comes back, looking pale and distressed. Dr Gallagher turns the radio down again.]*

DR GALLAGHER                Is it bad news, son?

DANNY                            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...

*[Sounds of MRS GALLAGHER's arrival off stage. She enters and walks over to her son.]*

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 shocked me into taking a good hard look at myself and my life, and I've done that now, and I realise 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. 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 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.

*[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 27

Big Jim's lounge. Table with a bottle of whiskey and two glasses. JIM is sitting when DANNY 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 Newry and so on until all the radio stations are talking at once and their message is unintelligible]

END OF ACT TWO  
ACT THREE

Scene 28

Curtain opens on a softly back-lit stage. Night time. It 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. Wide spot beam lights the back of the theatre where a sexily-dressed young GIRL strolls up the aisle singing to the melody of the mouthorgan 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 29

Danny's bedroom. DANNY is in bed and SHELAGH is sitting at Danny's bedside table rummaging through some of his things, wearing a towel or gown that suggests she has just left the same bed.

SHELAGH                      She's prettier than me, isn't she?

DANNY                         I don't make comparisons.

SHELAGH                      [*Exasperated*] You might at least deny it! It's not fair, trying to compete with somebody like that. I'm not special. I'm not a musical genius. I don't win scholarships to world famous schools. I'm not beautiful.

DANNY                         It isn't a competition. I wish you would accept that. There's enough of me to go around. And Joyce isn't here, is she?

SHELAGH                      I wish you would be serious sometimes.

DANNY                         And I wish you wouldn't be sometimes. Will we agree to meet each other half way?

SHELAGH                      [*after a moment toying with some item of makeup she has found on Danny's table*]  
Do your parents know you're in the Volunteers?

DANNY                         Are you kidding? They'd go through the roof.

SHELAGH                      But how do you hide it from them? Don't you have to go to training and that kind of thing?

DANNY                         I'm not supposed to talk about what I do. You know that.

SHELAGH But... it's nothing dangerous, is it?

DANNY [*After a longish pause*]  
This was something I used to hate with Joyce. I could never tell her anything. Not the smallest hint, or I know it would have been the end. She was so anti-violence it just wasn't true. Like my dad on that one. And deep down I knew she was right, I knew that, but it would have been too complicated to explain. I don't think she would have understood. There was always this big chunk of my life that I couldn't even mention.

SHELAGH There is something, isn't there? And you want to tell me but you can't?

DANNY [*Nodding*] As much for your sake as for mine. When you know things it puts you in danger. The less you know the safer you are. The less you can let slip.

SHELAGH [*Sighing*] Well there aren't any secrets in my family. Except you, that is. My parents haven't much time for the IRA. Why don't you come and hear my father speak this Saturday? He's meeting with his constituents to discuss the situation – and the new situation with the British soldiers here. You could just meet him again casually, not as my boyfriend. Get to know each other a bit. I think he would like you. Especially after the 'guardian angel' thing.

DANNY Would you like me to do that? Do you think it would be a good idea?

SHELAGH I can't see how it could do any harm.

DANNY [*Shrugs*] Okay. Saturday.

SHELAGH Two-thirty at St. Jude's Church Hall.

DANNY St. Jude! The patron saint of lost causes!

SHELAGH He isn't, is he?

DANNY Honest injin.

[*Shelagh playfully throws a makeup sponge at him*]

[*Curtain*]

[*During change of scene Radio Free Belfast is heard*]

[*Music, followed by:*] This is radio Free Belfast on two-hundred-and-two metres, Medium Wave. Mob violence by gangs of intruders continued for most of the night on the New Barnsley Estate, where four families were driven from their homes before the buildings were set on fire by armed youths carrying petrol bombs. Soldiers of the Irish Republican Army opened fire on the attackers

and three attackers were killed with approximately ten more wounded and dragged away by fellow gang members. None of the dead were residents of the estate. No local people were injured in the course of this defensive action. At first light this morning the streets were calm and a public meeting was held between IRA officials and local residents to determine the best way to insure the future security of the area.

It was formally announced at Stormont this afternoon that the first battalion of so-called peace-keeping troops from England will be arriving in Belfast during the course of the next two days, initially to protect affected areas of the Falls Road, Ardoyne and the Upper Crumlin Road which are the main areas that have come under attack by rampaging gangs of armed and vicious Protestant youths. The advice of the Irish Republican Army is to ignore the presence of the British troops and continue to put your faith in the Republican forces for the protection of your lives and property. We will not be deserting you now or at any time in the future.

And now a round-up of news from Derry and the border regions of the Six Counties...

### Scene 30

Curtain up on SHELAGH's father TERRY, standing at a lectern or high desk with a microphone and holding a bunch of papers. He addresses the audience magisterially.

TERRY

In case you don't know who I am, my name is Terry Flannigan, and I am proud and honoured to represent the people of this constituency at Stormont. I've asked you to come here today because our community has come under a terrifying threat of violence and victimisation by criminals using religion and politics as an excuse to threaten the lives and property of their fellow Irishmen.

Now, I know as well as you do the organisation that some have turned to, believing that only they can provide the kind of protection that these thugs actually understand, but I want to explain to you why I don't believe that to be our best course of action, and I want to tell you about the other alternatives that are open to us...

*[A loud gunshot is heard from the back of the theatre and Terry falls to the floor, pulling the lectern down with him. Men rush to his assistance from both wings, one carrying a medical bag. SHELAGH also runs towards the prone figure but is held back by DANNY]*

SHELAGH

Daddy! Jesus Christ! What have they done to you?

DANNY

*[Restraining her]*

There's nothing you can do. Let the ambulance men do their work. He's still moving. I don't think he's dead. Give them room. Let them help him.

*[Curtain]*

Scene 31

Jim Harrison's sitting room (as in previous scenes but with a few more chairs.) DANNY, SHELAGH and RORY the armed bodyguard are standing to one side in a group while JIM speaks quietly into a telephone.

RORY   He'll talk to you in just a second, comrades. He's on the phone to Dublin. I hope you didn't mind the blindfold, Shelagh. You understand the reason for it.

SHELAGH                                     I think you might give it a wash, or get a new bit of rag. It stinks.

RORY   Sorry. I didn't realise. I'll do that.

JIM    *[Putting the phone down]*  
Friends! Come in! Sit down. Can I pour you a drink?

DANNY                                        *Danny and Shelagh step forward and sit. Rory exits]*  
Not for me thanks. Shelagh?  
*[Declines with a nod]*

JIM   Okay. I know why you're here. First, let me say how appalled I was to hear about your father. Is he still in the wheelchair?

SHELAGH                                     I think he's in it for life, Mr Harrison.

JIM   Please, it's Jim. No formality here. All I can say is, if we find out who the gunman was we'll liquidise him quicker than you would stamp on a cockroach. That's a promise.

SHELAGH                                     Thank you. I know now... that you're right about a lot of things. There's a limit to what you can put up with and turn the other cheek. There's really only one language that these people understand.

JIM   Right on. Well said!

DANNY                                        I've told her that she doesn't have to get involved herself. The movement is there for this kind of thing. She's only a schoolgirl. I know I'm young too, and I didn't think about what I was doing either, and maybe if I had my time over I wouldn't be so quick to wade in. There's a lot more to IRA membership than people realise. It shouldn't be something you just do in anger, after some terrible injustice.

JIM   You're right, Danny. I hope you're listening, Shelagh. The Volunteers will move heaven and earth to get justice for you and avenge this crime. There's no need for you to lift a finger. You have your studies to attend to, and surely your father needs a lot of help at home?

SHELAGH                                     I have thought about it, Mr... Jim. I've thought about little else for the



last few weeks. I want to hit back at the people who did this to my father in any way I can. That's all I want to do.

JIM

Well, I don't know how you imagined things but let me explain what we're actually doing at the moment.

The city's crawling with British Army now as you well know. That makes it difficult for us to patrol openly, even in the Free areas behind the barricades. So we're concealing men in various houses and picking-off attackers as soon as we see them. But that makes the British Army fire on us, and people can get caught in the crossfire. We've had to scale down our protective role, it can't be 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 32

Park bench, as Scene 26. 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 33

Back projection of a section of a Belfast main road, circa 1966. 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 34

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.  
*[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 judgement 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 35

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

JIM                            *[To Rory]*  
Would you wait for me in the car for a couple of moments please?  
*[Rory 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 job. 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 up her domination of Northern Ireland, the RUC and the British Army. There's a big split developing in the Republican movement. If things get really bad we could end up with two IRAs gunning for one another, while the English sit back and laugh. It would set the cause back twenty years. That's where my work's going to have to be concentrated for a while

to come. Holding the IRA together and keeping our guns trained on the right target. So wish me well, Danny. And good night.

DANNY

*[Nods]*  
Thanks Jim.

*[Jim walks away slowly & exits. Danny begins to walk equally slowly along the road. The GIRL appears from a side alley, still sexily clad]*

GIRL

*[Cheerily]*  
Hello young man! All on your own are you?

DANNY

*[Stops, pauses and looks at her]*  
Yes. Exactly. All on my own.

GIRL

Me too. Can I walk with you?  
*[He shrugs. She takes his hand and cuddles up to him. Hesitantly he returns her embrace.]*

DANNY

I don't think I'll be very good company tonight.

GIRL

Don't worry about it. I'm good at cheering people up. In fact it's what I do best. I'm a kind of social worker in the field of depression.

DANNY

Really? My speciality is causing it.

*[They walk off slowly together]*

*[Curtain]*

## Scene 36

DANNY is walking down the road near the bench that has been used in previous scenes. From the opposite direction RORY appears and motions him to sit down. He is surprised but sits and Rory joins him.

RORY

Hello Danny. We haven't seen you for a while. How have you been?

DANNY

Not too bad. Look Rory, I'm not on duty any more. I'm on a long term break. Didn't Jim tell you?

RORY

No, I'm afraid he didn't. And we need you again. Right now.



DANNY No, really, you don't understand. He told me to take a break until my time at school was over. He said it was an order.

RORY We can't discuss business here, Danny. It's too public. But you have to come with us. I'm sorry, but that's how it is.

DANNY You don't understand, Rory. I'm not on active duty any more. You need to talk to Big Jim.

RORY [*Glancing around furtively*]  
I don't know what you're playing at Danny. Do I need to remind you that I out-rank you? And I'm telling you that we need you right now.

DANNY There's nobody listening. The street is deserted. You can tell me. What am I needed for?

RORY [*Angrily*]  
You have to assemble a device. The biggest one we've ever used. About five times the usual size. And it's urgent. Now for god's sake get in the car and don't force me to report this.

DANNY No, Rory. I'm not doing it. What do you need me for anyway? You can assemble your own goddamn devices. Go and talk to Big Jim. I'm not on duty.

[*Rory sits motionless for a few moments, then gets up and walks away. When he has gone Danny buries his head in his hands and remains seated.*]

[*Enters – walks up to Danny, stands behind his seat and embraces him gently. He stands and they walk to centre stage hand in hand. They sing:*]

## **SONG 21**

Duet ~ Danny and the Girl

DANNY It was just a childish game that I was playing  
An engineering problem to be solved  
I could rise above the hatred and the slaying  
Technicians are from any guilt absolved

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.

[Curtain]

## Scene 37

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 just had a weird encounter with Rory 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? Poppycock. 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 England 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. et your things. Hurry up. If any of the Volunteers show up 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 sounds of rummaging through drawers and packing are heard. 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 listeners to Kingston Radio. 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 38

Final song. A spot beam follows the GIRL as she emerges from the centre slit of the curtain and sings as she slowly walks down from the stage and along the aisle. She is still sexily dressed but now carries a large bouquet of white flowers. As she walks she hands them out to random members of the audience. Sings (acapella).

[This song was written and originally recorded by Leon Rosselson and is used with his permission]

### 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]*