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SF PERUSALS

Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme

by Frank McGuinness

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUEL FRENCH

FOUNDED 1830

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OBSERVE THE SONS OF ULSTER MARCHING TOWARDS THE SOMME

***by* Frank McGuinness**

In memory of Michael Hayes

was first performed at the
Peacock Theatre, Dublin,
in February 1985.

Cast:

KENNETH PYPER, as an old man	Geoff Golden
KENNETH PYPER, as a young man	Bosco Hogan
DAVID CRAIG	Lorcan Cranitch
GEORGE ANDERSON	Oliver Maguire
NAT McILWAINE	Ian McElhinney
CHRISTOPHER ROULSTON	Tom Hickey
MARTIN CRAWFORD	Michael Ford
WILLIAM MOORE	Mark Lambert
JOHN MILLEN	Niall O'Brien

Directed by Patrick Mason

Designed by Frank Halliman Flood

OBSERVE THE SONS OF ULSTER MARCHING TOWARDS THE SOMME

subsequently opened at the
Hampstead Theatre
in July 1986.
It was directed by Michael Attenborough.

OBSERVE THE SONS OF ULSTER MARCHING TOWARDS THE SOMME

***by* Frank McGuinness**

opened in 2003 at
Lincoln Center Theatre
at the
Mitzi E. Newhouse
(Under the direction of André Bishop and Bernard Gersten)

Cast:

KENNETH PYPER (in his 80s)	Richard Easton
KENNETH PYPER (in his 20s)	Justin Theroux
DAVID CRAIG	Jason Butler Harner
JOHN MILLEN	Scott Wolf
WILLIAM MOORE	Dashiell Eaves
CHRISTOPHER ROULSTON	Jeremy Shamos
MARTIN CRAWFORD	Christopher Fitzgerald
GEORGE ANDERSON	Rod McLachlan
NATHANIEL McILWAINE	David Barry Gray

Directed by Nicholas Martin

Sets by Alexander Dodge *Costumes by* Michael Krass
Lighting by Donald Holder *Sound by* Jerry Yager
Original Music by Shaun Davey
Casting by Amy Christopher and Daniel Swee
Stage Manager Leila Knox
Director of Development Hattie K. Jutagir
Director of Marketing Andrew Flatt
General Manager Adam Siegel
Production Manager Jeff Hamlin

CHARACTERS

KENNETH PYPER, as an old man
KENNETH PYPER, in his thirties
DAVID CRAIG, in his late twenties
JOHN MILLEN, in his thirties
WILLIAM MOORE, in his thirties
CHRISTOPHER ROULSTON, in his thirties
MARTIN CRAWFORD, in his early twenties
GEORGE ANDERSON, in his thirties
NAT McILWAINE, in his thirties

PART I

REMEMBRANCE

(Low drumbeat. The elder PYPER wakes.)

PYPER. Again. Always again. Why does this persist? What more have we to tell each other? I remember nothing today. Absolutely nothing.

(Silence.)

I do not understand your insistence on my remembrance. I'm being too mild. I am angry at your demand that I continue to probe. Were you not there in all your dark glory? Have you no conception of the horror? Did it not touch you at all? A passion for horror disgusts me. I have seen horror. There is nothing to tell you. You are the creator, invent such details as suit your purpose best. Invention gives that slaughter shape. The scale of horror has no shape. Your actions that day were not, they are not acceptable. You have no right to excuse that suffering, parading it for the benefit of others.

(Silence.)

I will not apologize for that outburst before you. You know I am given to sudden fits like that. The shock you gave never left my

system entirely. I still see your ghosts. Ghosts. Those I belong to, those I have not forgotten, the irreplaceable ones, they kept their nerve, and they died.

(Silence.)

I enlisted in the hope of death. But mine was not the stuff of heroes. Those with me were heroes because they died without complaint for what they believed in. They taught me, by the very depth of their belief, to believe. To believe in you, I continued their work in this province. The freedom of faith they fought and died for would be maintained. There would be, and there will be no surrender. The sons of Ulster will rise and lay their enemy low, as they did at the Boyne, as they did at the Somme, against any invader who will trespass on to their homeland. Fenians claim a Cuchullian as their ancestor, but he is ours, for they lay down for centuries and wept in their sorrow, but we took up arms and fought against an ocean. An ocean of blood. His blood is our inheritance. Not theirs. Sinn Fein? Ourselves alone. It is we, the Protestant people, who have always stood alone. We have stood alone and triumphed, for we are God's chosen!

(Silence.)

Leave me. Do not possess me. I do not wish to be your chosen. Leave me. Must I remember? Yes, I remember. I remember details. I remember the sky was pink, extraordinarily pink. Someone said the sky is red today. David said it's pink. And I looked and I could see again. I saw the sky in him. I knew he would die, for he was turning from earth into air.

(Silence. As the light increases, PYPER sees the ghosts appear, CRAIG, ROULSTON and CRAWFORD.)

You look angry, David. Have I hurt you by speaking? I can't

understand your silence. Can you, Roulston, you, Crawford? I envy your happiness together. But you must call as and when you wish. This place is yours when you wish it to be. I want you here. I want you to stay with me. Where are the others? Is Moore still searching for John Millen? Will he never believe Millen cannot be found? If he were found, would he not return here? Moore must stop searching. It is time to rest. Where is Anderson? Still attending McIlwaine? I saw that, you know. Cut in two. Anderson falling on him as if his body could hold McIlwaine's body together. I looked and saw his blood was the same color as my blood. You were right, David. The last battle. I died that day with you.

(Silence)

The house has grown cold. Ulster has grown lonely. We discourage visitors. Security. Men my age have been burned in their beds. Fenian cowards. They won't burn me out with their fire. I have defeated fired before. And you will always defend me. You will always guard Ulster. I miss you. Each day that increases. Is that because I'm coming closer to you? Tell me.

(Silence.)

Tell me. I want to ask you something. I need your answer before I turn into air. Answer me why we did it. Why we let ourselves be led to extermination? In the end, we were not led, we led ourselves. We claimed we would die for each other in battle. To fulfill that claim we marched into the battle that killed us all. That is not loyalty. That is not love. That is hate. Deepest hate. Hate for one's self. We wished ourselves to die. I was born knowing there was something rotting in humanity. I tried to preserve that knowledge, David. To die willingly, to die clutching it, but you defied my death. I need defiance now, David. Ulster lies in rubble at our feet. Save it. Save me. Take me out of this war alive. Evil is come upon us. The temple of the Lord is

darkness. He has ransacked his dwelling. The Protestant gods die. *(Sings:)* 'Fare thee well, Enniskillen, fare thee well for a while, and when the war is over—'

(PYPER sees more ghosts rise, MOORE, MILLEN, McILWAINE, ANDERSON.)

You are here at last. Your rest begins. Moore, Millen, Anderson, McIlwaine. I have remarkably fine skin, Anderson. Remarkably fine for a man. Look, David, I've cut myself peeling an apple. Kiss it better.

(PYPER holds his arms to the ghosts.)

Dance in the deserted temple of the Lord. Dance unto death before the Lord.

(PYPER sees the ghost of the younger PYPER. As if introducing that younger self to the other ghosts, he beckons it towards them, invitingly.)

My soul, my self. Dance. Dance.

PART 2

INITIATION

(A makeshift barracks, bedclothes in heaps along the floor. The YOUNGER PYPER has already sorted some bedclothes. He sits, already in most of his uniform, peeling an apple. He cuts himself.)

PYPER. Damnation. Blood. *(PYPER sucks his thumb. DAVID CRAIG enters.)* Hate the sight of it.

CRAIG. Sorry?

PYPER. What for?

CRAIG. I thought you said something.

PYPER. I did.

CRAIG. To me?

PYPER. No, so don't apologize.

CRAIG. Ah, right.

PYPER. I was talking to my blood. *(PYPER shows CRAIG his bleeding thumb.)* I was telling it I hate the sight of it.

CRAIG. Never pleasant to see from man or beast. Lord this place hasn't much order about it. Do we have to sleep on the ground?

PYPER. It's the amount of volunteers from our beloved province. They can't keep up with us.

CRAIG. How will they train us all?

PYPER. They won't.

CRAIG. We can take any of these bedclothes?

PYPER. I did.
CRAIG. Right.

(CRAIG sorts out some bedclothes, starts to make up some sort of sleeping space.)

PYPER. It won't stop for hours now.
CRAIG. It's only a cut, man. You're not in your grave.
PYPER. You're making yours.
CRAIG. What?
PYPER. I could have taken the finger off myself.
CRAIG. But you didn't.
PYPER. That's not the point. I could have. And why? For the sake of peeling an apple. I was hungry. I had an apple. I wanted to eat it. I had to peel it. I almost cut my thumb off. You have to take risks in this life.
CRAIG. You find peeling an apple's a risk?
PYPER. I cut my finger, didn't I?
CRAIG. Thumb.
PYPER. Thumb, finger, it's all the same. Kiss it better, will you?
CRAIG. Get away home out of that.
PYPER. I can't go home. I've signed up. The army has me now. Once you're in, there's no getting out.
CRAIG. Well, you'll see a lot more than a bleeding thumb before you're out.

(PYPER screams.)

PYPER. Now look what you've done. You've really scared me.
CRAIG. Who the hell are you?
PYPER. Pyper, sir, Kenneth Pyper.
CRAIG. Are you sure Pyper—
PYPER. Call me Kenneth.
CRAIG. Kenneth, are you a fit man for this life?

PYPER. Yes, sir, I wish to serve, sir.

CRAIG. I'm not sir. I'm the same rank as you. I'm Craig. David Craig.

PYPER. David—

CRAIG. Call me Craig.

PYPER I prefer sir.

CRAIG. You're a bit of a mocker, aren't you, Pyper?

PYPER. Me, sir?

CRAIG. They'll soon knock that out of you.

PYPER. I sincerely hope so.

CRAIG. So do I.

PYPER. Like a piece of apple?

CRAIG. I've work to do.

PYPER. I can't tempt you?

CRAIG. Get on with your business and stop this foolishness.

PYPER. Have you ever looked at an apple?

CRAIG. Yes.

PYPER. What did you see?

CRAIG. An apple.

PYPER. I don't. I see through it.

CRAIG. The skin, you mean?

PYPER. The flesh. The flesh. The flesh.

CRAIG. What about it?

PYPER. Beautiful. Hard. White.

CRAIG. Not if it's rotten.

PYPER. What?

CRAIG. The apple. You know the saying. One bad apple spoils the barrel.

PYPER. You forgot your shirt, son.

(PYPER leaps off his bed, races to CRAIG carrying a shirt.)

CRAIG. I did not forget my shirt.

PYPER. Yes, you did. Here.

CRAIG. My shirt is here.
PYPER Then whose is this?
CRAIG. It must be your own.
PYPER No, not mine. I'm wearing mine.
CRAIG. Take your shirt, take yourself and get out of my sight.
PYPER. You don't want your shirt.
CRAIG. I don't want your shirt.
PYPER. Please yourself.

(CRAIG begins to undress, PYPER watching him intently. CRAIG glares at PYPER. PYPER shrugs, turns his back. When CRAIG is undressed, PYPER turns rapidly. CRAIG starts.)

CRAIG. Will you for God's sake—
PYPER. You're as scared of me as I am of blood.
CRAIG. I am not scared of you.
PYPER. Then what are you doing here?
CRAIG. My country's at war. I—
PYPER. Did you not join up to die for me?
CRAIG. For you?
PYPER. It'll be good sport.
CRAIG. You're a madman, Pyper.
PYPER. Am I, David?
CRAIG. Well, you're a rare buckcat anyroad.
PYPER. Funny word that.
CRAIG. Buckcat? It's a—
PYPER. No. Rare. Are you rare, David?
CRAIG. When I want to be. Army's no place for rareness though.
PYPER. Why not? It takes all sorts to make an army.
CRAIG. True enough. You never know. We could end up dying for each other.
PYPER. No, we couldn't. I won't anyway. *(PYPER throws CRAIG the shirt.)* A little gift, don't argue. There's plenty more where they come from. Get into uniform, David. You'll catch your death.

Then I'll have to follow suit.

(CRAIG gets into uniform. WILLIAM MOORE and JOHN MILLEN enter, MOORE punching MILLEN forward playfully.)

MILLEN. You never laid a hand on her.

MOORE. Think what you like.

MILLEN. You wouldn't know where to put it if I wasn't there to tell you.

MOORE. Would I not? *(MILLEN goes to attack MOORE. MOORE dodges by greeting PYPER and CRAIG.)* Good morning, chaps. My name is Moore, Willy Moore. This specimen is Millen, John Millen.

CRAIG. Hello.

(CRAIG goes to shake hands. PYPER abruptly intervenes.)

PYPER. Mr. Moore? Mr. Millen?

MILLEN. Yes?

PYPER. You know where you are, I take it?

MILLEN. Supposed to be an army barracks.

PYPER. It is such. And why are you here?

MILLEN. Who are you?

PYPER. I asked you why you are here, Mr. John Millen. I see I had better tell you. You are here as a volunteer in the army of your king and empire. You are here to train to meet that empire's foe. You are here as a loyal son of Ulster, for the empire's foe is Ulster's foe. You are here to learn, Mr. Millen. Learn to defend yourself and your comrades, and while you are here, you will learn to conduct yourself with respect, and respect for this army, respect for your position in this army, and respect for all other positions above you. Since there are no ranks beneath you, you will never be at ease again until you leave this army. Do you understand that clearly?

MILLEN. Yes.

PYPER. At ease, man.

(PYPER salutes and leaves them. MOORE and MILLEN stare at him. PYPER sits cross-legged on the bedclothes, motionless, ignoring their stare. MILLEN and MOORE take bedclothes, start to unpack kit. MILLEN goes to CRAIG, mouths the question, Who is he?, nodding to PYPER. CRAIG shrugs ignorance.)

MOORE. You boys just volunteered?
CRAIG. Aye, I have anyway.
MOORE. Where are you from?
CRAIG. Enniskillen. Fermanagh.
MILLEN. Know a family Rushton there?
CRAIG. Can't say I do. Where to they live?
MILLEN. A bit outside your own. Tempo.
CRAIG. Should know them.
MOORE. We're Coleraine men.
CRAIG. None better. I'm Craig. David Craig.

(MOORE and CRAIG shake hands. MILLEN goes towards PYPER.)

PYPER. David's the name, David Craig.
MOORE. That's a funny thing. Two boys with the same name.
CRAIG. His name's Pyper.
MOORE. Then why does he call himself—
PYPER. I have remarkably fine skin, don't I? For a man, remarkably fine.

(CRAIG and MOORE rapidly start getting their beds together.)

MILLEN. Have you indeed?

(MILLEN notices the others at work. He does so also.)

PYPER. Quite remarkably fine. Soft. I've never done a day's work in my life.

MOORE. Lucky man. This is a desperate kip to house us in. Will we have to make these up every morning?

MILLEN. Where do you think we are? Home? Have you never made up a makeshift bed in your life.

MOORE. Woman's work. You don't join the army to do woman's work.

PYPER. No, not a single day. I once nearly starved rather than do a day's work. In fact I did starve. You wouldn't think that to look at me, would you?

MILLEN. Indeed you wouldn't. Willy, do you sleep on your left side or right?

MOORE. Why?

MILLEN. Your ma warned me you snored. I'm wondering if I should change places.

MOORE. I don't snore.

MILLEN. How do you know?

MOORE. I know.

MILLEN. How could anyone know if they snored?

MOORE. My ma never told me I snored. How come she tells you?

PYPER. I remember that time in France.

CRAIG. What?

PYPER. In France. I nearly starved there.

CRAIG. You've been there?

MOORE. When were you there?

MILLEN. What's it like?

PYPER. That time I thought my end had come. Well-deserved bad end. Absolutely friendless. It was a Friday. I hadn't eaten for two weeks or so. I kept seeing things. Maybe they were there. I felt miles away from everybody. I thought I was dying. Not just in the way we're all dying, but suddenly and unprepared. I thought I was growing wings. But I made a vow I wouldn't die. I vowed that if I

survived, I would never go back to France. If I did go back, I asked that I be struck blind. I made a covenant, and I survived.

MOORE. You had no money at all or people to pull you through?

PYPER. None.

MILLEN. How did you make it home from France without money.

PYPER. Remember I thought I was growing wings? Well, I flew.

MOORE. Can I ask you something?

PYPER. Anything.

MOORE. What's a rare boyo like you doing in an army?

PYPER. What's a rare boyo like you doing in an army?

MOORE. If I'm rare, what does that make you?

PYPER. Cigarette?

MOORE. If you have one to spare.

PYPER. I don't smoke.

MILLEN. Is this a barracks or an asylum.

(PYPER begins to whoop.)

PYPER. Sorry. Don't worry. I'm certified as fit and sane for work as any of you in this army.

(MILLEN and MOORE start to change into uniform. CRAIG goes to PYPER.)

CRAIG. Why did you enlist, Pyper?

PYPER. The name is Kenneth, David.

CRAIG. If you don't want to answer—

PYPER. I enlisted because I'd nothing better to do. No, that's wrong. I'd nothing else to do. I enlisted because I'm dying anyway. I want it over quickly.

CRAIG. I thought you said you were certified fit.

PYPER. Fit for dying. Fit for the grave. Fit for pushing up the daisies. Point proved.

MILLEN. Look, we're going to have to share this place for the training time, Pyper. I've only met you. And I don't like you already. Now I don't care what you're going on about, but no more chat about dying. It'll be looking at us straight in the face soon enough.

PYPER. I'm looking at you straight in the face.

MILLEN. And I don't care much for what I see.

MOORE. We won't argue for the first day, Millen.

MILLEN. That silly chat has no place here. Get enough of it at home. It's more fit coming from crying women. You should have heard them on the stairs this morning. All the superstitions of the day. A red sky in the morning. A warning. We should wait.

MOORE. Where did that saying come from about red skies?

CRAIG. Shepherds.

PYPER. Lambs to the slaughter. Baaaa. OK, Millen. That's French for sky.

CRAIG. It's not. *(Silence.)* Ceil. Le ciel. Right?

PYPER. Right. Le ciel rose.

CRAIG. Rose? Pink! Are the skies in France pink?

MOORE. How do you get a pink sky?

MILLEN. Shut your mouth. I often saw a pink sky in Coleraine. So must you.

MOORE. Red maybe, but not pink.

MILLEN. He's blind as a bat anyroad.

MOORE. What's wrong with my eyes?

MILLEN. You've eyes like your granny.

MOORE. That woman could see as well at eighty as she could at twenty.

MILLEN. Did you see the old witch at twenty?

MOORE. Respect that woman's memory.

MILLEN. What have I said against her exactly?

MOORE. You said plenty.

MILLEN. I just said you've eyes like your granny. It's only a saying. Eyes like your granny. Feet like your granny, brains like your granny.

MOORE. That woman could buy and sell you up to her dying day. She has brains in her boots. You've some neck—

MILLEN. Will somebody take that thick horse outside and—

MOORE. I don't need to be taken outside. You might want to be taken outside and taught manners. Have I ever upcasted your family at you?

MILLEN. You have nothing to upcast.

MOORE. I might have plenty, but that's not the point. Have I ever done it?

MILLEN. No.

MOORE. Exactly.

(Silence.)

PYPER. To answer your interesting question, David, yes, you get pink skies in France. Not as pink as Coleraine, but still pink.

MILLEN. Give it a rest. I've lived there all my life and I doubt if I've seen one pink sky in the hole.

MOORE. Then why say you did and start this bother?

MILLEN. I was only sticking up for my place.

MOORE. I was only sticking up for my family.

MILLEN. I know. Your granny was a decent old woman.

MOORE. A stupid old bitch and an old rip. Well rid of her. Do you want a cigarette?

MILLEN. Have you enough?

MOORE. Aye.

MILLEN. Right.

MOORE. What about you boys?

CRAIG. Yes.

MILLEN. Pyper, you'll recall, doesn't smoke.

PYPER. Why not? In celebration.

MOORE. Celebrate what?

PYPER. Peace. Perfect peace.

MOORE. Pay no heed to fights like that.

MILLEN. We have then all the time.
MOORE. Over in a minute.
MILLEN. All forgotten then.
CRAIG. Best way to have fights.
MOORE. Far the best. No grudges.
PYPER. What way do you fight, Craig?
CRAIG. Fight?
PYPER. Fight. Flare up, get it all out, then forget about it. Or are you a grudger?
CRAIG. What makes you ask?
MILLEN. I'd say he's a grudger, that boy.
CRAIG. Why?
MOORE. Quiet boy. Still waters run deep, right?
MILLEN. Worst men in a fight.
MOORE. Depends on the fight.
CRAIG. I don't have many fights.
PYPER. You should be at home here.
CRAIG. Give me time.
PYPER. Why spend your time here?
CRAIG. It goes without saying.
PYPER. Say it.
CRAIG. I'm in this for Ulster.
MOORE. Like ourselves.
MILLEN. For the glory of his majesty the king and all his people.
MOORE. Exactly.
PYPER. For your religion?
CRAIG. Yes.
PYPER. My religion too.

(PYPER offers CRAIG his hand. They shake.)

MILLEN. You haven't told us yet, Craig, what you're like in a fight.
CRAIG. Good.

MILLEN. Say so. Strong-looking boy. What are you working at?

CRAIG. The father works a forge. I've been working with him since I was a child. He's getting no younger. I've taken a fair share of the heavier work.

MOORE. Sore work that.

MILLEN. When you're used to it, no.

CRAIG. It's a dying skill. I've been at him to get into the motor business. This pal of mine, he's been learning about engines and the rest of it outside Belfast. That's where the future lies. If I'd money, I'd start up with him. But you know what it's like working for your own people. Once they get to a certain age it's all clinging to whatever's there in their time. Nothing else. Father lives for the place as it is. That and his greyhounds.

PYPER. Greyhounds?

CRAIG. You know about dogs?

PYPER. We bred, the family bred greyhounds.

MOORE. You wouldn't have struck me as a greyhound man.

PYPER. Beautiful animals. Precise. Lethal.

CRAIG. You should meet the father. My ma often says he should have married a greyhound. He tells us behind her back he married a bitch, so she got her wish.

MILLEN. And you think that blacksmiths have had their day?

CRAIG. Not yet. But soon.

MOORE. How soon?

CRAIG. Twenty years at most.

PYPER. Will there be twenty more years?

MOORE. My heart goes out to the horses.

MILLEN. What?

MOORE. What's going to happen to all the horses?

MILLEN. They'll line them up and run motors over them.

MOORE. Could never kill a horse.

CRAIG. You might soon kill a man.

MOORE. I'll face that as soon as I have to.

CRAIG. Sooner than you think maybe.

(Silence.)

MOORE. I saw a horse being killed once.

PYPER. Why?

MOORE. It was blind.

MILLEN. Who did it?

MOORE. Who else? Brewster, the boss of the factory I worked in. Decent enough if you keep to the right side of him and give him his money's worth, but one sign of slackening and bang, that's you out.

CRAIG. What did you work at?

MOORE. Weaving. Well, I'm a dyer.

MILLEN. For a man half-blind he's great eye for color.

MOORE. Funny that, isn't it?

PYPER. No.

MOORE. I always thought it was.

PYPER. And you, Millen?

MILLEN. I'm in flour mills.

MOORE. He's a baker.

MILLEN. I'm a miller.

MOORE. He bakes cakes. Wee buns. He's a pastry chef. That's what his wife calls him when she's getting swanky.

MILLEN. Give it a rest.

MOORE. Give him a skirt and he'll run you up a four-course dinner.

MILLEN. Enough of that.

(MOORE laughs.)

CRAIG. And you breed greyhounds, Kenneth?

PYPER. My family did. Like yours, for pastime.

CRAIG. They don't any more?

PYPER. I don't know.

MILLEN. What do you turn your hand at?

PYPER. I work with stone.
MILLEN. Were you some kind of laborer?
PYPER. You could say that.
MILLEN. Casual work.
PYPER. Yes, a sculptor.
MILLEN. Of course.
CRAIG. I'd say you're a dangerous man in a fight, Kenneth.
PYPER. Would you, David?
CRAIG. I'd say so.
MOORE. How do you fight, Pyper?
PYPER. Dirty.
MILLEN. I think I hear someone coming.
MOORE. Top brass maybe. Move.

(They stand attention by their sleeping spaces with the exception of PYPER, who reclines on his.)

MILLEN. Get yourself covered. Pyper. You'll land yourself in it on your first day.

(PYPER remains motionless.)

MOORE. On his own head be it. *(CHRISTOPHER ROULSTON enters. They relax. He ignores them, gathers bedclothes, starts to unpack kit.)* You give us all a shock there, boy.
ROULSTON. Shock?
MOORE. We thought you might be top brass.
ROULSTON. I'm not in the habit of lying about my rank.
MOORE. Who accused you of lying?
PYPER. Aren't you speaking to the poor, Christopher? You don't remember me, Roulston? Look hard.
ROULSTON. Pyper?
PYPER. I hoped you'd never forget my face.
CRAIG. Yous two know each other?

MOORE. Must often happen with the amount of volunteering.

ROULSTON. We schooled together.

PYPER. But we never shared together. Roulston's best friends were always much younger.

ROULSTON. You've kept your tongue.

PYPER. Are you asking to see it?

ROULSTON. I've heard little of you.

PYPER. Impossible. You've heard everything.

ROULSTON. I try to avoid scandal.

PYPER. Then what do you preach against?

ROULSTON. I no longer preach.

PYPER. That's why you're here?

ROULSTON. Pyper.

CRAIG. I've met you too, Mr. Roulston. Well, I've seen you before.

ROULSTON. Where?

CRAIG. Our meeting house. I heard you preach in the kirk.

MOORE. Funny the way paths cross?

MILLEN. I'm Millen, Roulston. John—

ROULSTON. Where did you hear my sermon?

CRAIG. Enniskillen.

ROULSTON. Yes. I remember my few occasions there, Mr.—

CRAIG. Craig, David Craig. You certainly shocked us into changing our ways.

ROULSTON. I thought I had tempered that sermon well.

CRAIG. Yes, indeed. You've left off the collar, I take it.

ROULSTON. Yes, I— You thought me too impulsive that day?

CRAIG. Not that, I didn't mean that.

PYPER. What was his subject? Pride?

ROULSTON. A vice you are sick with.

CRAIG. No. Sin.

MOORE. Just sin?

CRAIG. Yes.

MOORE. Sorry I missed it.

ROULSTON. Enniskillen is a beautiful town.

CRAIG. It is. Did you manage to get on any of the islands in Lough Erne?

ROULSTON. Unfortunately no, but I have happy memories of your homeplace.

CRAIG, So have I.

ROULSTON. To be expected. To be expected.

PYPER. Well done, Christopher. You're developing a good line in polite clerical nonsense. *(ROULSTON returns to his unpacking. He takes out a Bible.)* Sorry, Roulston. I didn't mean it. Don't cry. We have to be big boys here. Tough men on the training ground.

MOORE. Can't wait to get on it.

MILLEN. I'm sure they'll start us with the guns.

CRAIG. Doubt it.

MOORE. Why?

CRAIG. We've just arrived and all that. Might not trust—

MOORE. We're no strangers to guns.

MILLEN. Your mouth is going to get you into trouble.

MOORE. Why? We're all the same here. Even Pyper has admitted he's one of our own kind.

CRAIG. You boys are Carson's men?

MOORE. Too true we are.

CRAIG. Who were yous under?

MILLEN. You're looking at one of them.

MOORE. Best soldier for fifty mile.

(ROULSTON has gone to PYPER.)

ROULSTON. *(Sotto.)* Are you going to keep up this attack?

PYPER. Do you want me to?

(ROULSTON leaves.)

MOORE. Getting a bit too big for their boots everywhere. Tell

him about the pup we had to deal with.

MILLEN. We went out one morning, himself and myself, one Saturday, not that long ago, early morning training session, near Bushmills.

MOORE. The smoke from a Papist chimney will never darken the skies of Bushmills.

MILLEN. Am I telling the story or you? Gathering near the lodge, first thing we saw, painted on the left wall, would you credit this, a tricolor.

MOORE. A tricolor painted on an orange lodge.

MILLEN. Green, white and gold.

MOORE. Green, shite and gold. It wasn't there for long.

MILLEN. You listening?

PYPER. Every word.

MILLEN. We tracked down the artist. Sixteen years old. Wanted to die for Ireland.

MOORE. The mother a widow woman, decent enough creature for a Papist.

MILLEN. We rounded him out. Her crying not to shoot him, he was only a wain.

MOORE. Did better than shoot him.

PYPER. What?

MILLEN. Battered him down the streets of Coleraine.

MOORE. Shaved every hair of his head.

MILLEN. Cut the backside out of his trousers.

MOORE. Painted his arse green, white and gold.

MILLEN. That cured him of tricolors.

(PYPER roars with laughter. MARTIN CRAWFORD enters. He stops at the pile of bedclothes.)

CRAWFORD. Is this where we're supposed to be?

CRAIG. What?

CRAWFORD. This is where we sleep?

MILLEN. Looks like it, doesn't it?
MOORE. Better grab what's going.
CRAWFORD. Thanks.
MILLEN. Who are you, son?
CRAWFORD. I'm Crawford. Martin Crawford from Derry Town, sir.
MILLEN. Whereabouts?
CRAWFORD. Foyle Street.
MILLEN. What number?
CRAWFORD. Number 27, sir.
MILLEN. Do you sleep on your right side or your left?
CRAWFORD. Sorry?
MILLEN. Nothing.

(CRAIG has gone to PYPER. CRAWFORD gets bedclothes, tries to unpack kit and make up a bed at the same time. MOORE and MILLEN watch his efforts.)

CRAIG. So you didn't enjoy France?
PYPER. Didn't I?
CRAIG. You said you nearly starved there.
PYPER. Yes, I'd forgotten that.
CRAIG. What part were you in?
PYPER. Paris, I think.
CRAIG. You don't know?
PYPER. Let me think about it.
MILLEN. You're not making much of a fist with that bed.
CRAWFORD. I'm not.
MILLEN. Might be handier if you tired one thing at a time.
CRAWFORD. Yes.

(MILLEN takes bedclothes.)

MILLEN. Show us them. Watch me.

CRAWFORD. Yes, sir.

CRAIG. What were the women like?

PYPER. French women?

CRAIG. Aye.

PYPER. Whores. Every one of them. Whores. Wonderful whores.

MOORE. Go on, Pyper.

PYPER. I married one.

MOORE. A French woman?

PYPER. Yes, a whore. A Papist whore. I married her out of curiosity.

ROULSTON. Do we need details of your foul life here?

MOORE. Don't listen if you don't want to.

ROULSTON. There's a fellow here no more than a lad.

MOORE. Crawford?

PYPER. He means himself.

ROULSTON. I mean—

MOORE. Shut your mouth. What were you curious about, Pyper?

PYPER. What they're like when they're naked. Papists.

ROULSTON. Turn your mind away from this evil, young man.

CRAWFORD. I've enough to do without listening to that.

MOORE. If she was a whore, you could have seen her naked without marrying her.

PYPER. What do you take me for? Do you think I have no respect? I married her to make an honest Protestant out of her.

MOORE. Of course, of course. Go on. What was she like?

PYPER. Unusual.

MOORE. How?

PYPER. You've heard the rumors?

MOORE. Every one. Wait, are you listening to this, Millen?

MILLEN. I'm coming over. Now Crawford, have you got the hang of it?

CRAWFORD. I think so.

(MILLEN thoroughly unmakes the bed.)

MILLEN. Then make it yourself now, right? *(MILLEN goes towards the others.)* Go on. I've been listening.

MOORE. Right, Pyper.

PYPER. She started to take off her clothes very slowly, but very shyly. Well, I imagined it was very shy for a woman of her experience. When she was down to her petticoat, she stopped.

MOORE. Why?

PYPER. She asked me if I'd ever been alone with a woman like this before. A standard question for one of her profession, so I lied and said, yes, but never a Papist. When she heard this she told me I had a surprise coming. She took off her petticoat and there they were.

MOORE. What?

PYPER. Three legs.

MOORE. What?

PYPER. She had three legs. The middle one shorter than the normal two.

(CRAIG and MILLEN start to laugh.)

MOORE. Don't laugh. That's the truth.

MILLEN. You believe that?

MOORE. I've heard that three-legged rumor before, but only in relation to nuns. There's this big convent in Portstewart—

PYPER. She could have started out as a nun. I don't know. I never got a chance to find out about her. She died on our wedding night.

MOORE. What happened?

PYPER. She bled to death.

MOORE. How?

PYPER. I sawed her middle leg off.

MOORE. Why?

PYPER. My duty as a Protestant.

MOORE. Where did you get a saw on your wedding night?

PYPER. I've heard the same rumor as you, Moore. In France I

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