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THE ALTERNATIVE

A Play for Ireland

by Michael Patrick and Oisín Kearney

|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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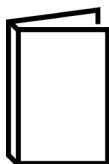
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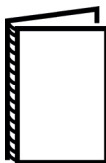


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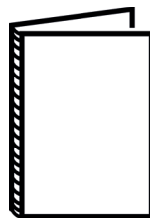
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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

MICHAEL PATRICK

Michael was born and raised in Belfast, where he still lives today. He originally studied Physics at the University of Cambridge, before training as an actor at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts. He still feels like a bit of a fraud when he calls himself a 'writer'. But he recently changed his twitter bio to read Actor / Writer. So that's progress.

OISÍN KEARNEY

Oisín is from Warrenpoint, Co. Down. He studied Politics at the University of Cambridge. He now lives in Belfast, where he works as a writer and director for stage and screen.

The pair met at Churchill College Cambridge, together they ran the University Ireland Society and created theatre. For the past number of years they've made theatre in Belfast with their company Pan Narrans Theatre; Michael acting and Oisín directing.

The Alternative is the second stage play they've written together.

CO-AUTHOR'S NOTE



When we applied to Fishamble's 'A Play for Ireland' scheme, the brief was to submit a single A4 page for a script idea. We thought we may as well send in something mad. We never thought we would get through the first round, never mind get selected as the final play.

We cannot thank Fishamble enough for believing in us. This play is so much bigger than our last one – in every sense of the word. It's never something we would have envisaged writing without the support of Fishamble backing us. They gave us the drive and the confidence to go a little bit crazy.

As Irish citizens living in Northern Ireland we've always had an interest in identity and what it means to be Irish. The ideas in this play have always existed in our heads, this is our attempt to try and corral them onto a page. 2021 marks 100 years since the partition of Ireland. The future of the relationship between Ireland and the United Kingdom is as uncertain as ever. In order to move forward we need to envisage many alternatives, and open our eyes to every possibility.

And it's always fun to try to offend as many people as we can.

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FIRST PRODUCTION

The Alternative was first previewed at The Everyman, Cork, before opening at the Pavilion Theatre, Dún Laoghaire, as part of the Dublin Theatre Festival, on 26 September 2019.

Cast

URSULA LYSAGHT	Karen Ardiff
RICHARD DEVLIN	Lorcan Cranitch
GRAINNE DEVLIN	Maeve Fitzgerald
PATRICK	Fionntán Larney
JOHN FITZGIBBON	Rory Nolan
HANNAH MURRAY	Rachel O'Byrne
PETER KEOGH	Arthur Riordan

Cast (on screen)

NIAMH	Bríd Ní Neachtain
REPORTER	Peter Daly
VOX POPS	Fionn Foley
	Patrick Martins
	Mary Murray
	Roseanna Purcell
	Gene Rooney

Cast (voiceovers)

Helen Norton
Nick Dunning

Production Team

Director Jim Culleton
Set Designer Maree Kearns
Lighting Designer Mark Galione
Sound Designer Denis Clohessy
Costume Designer Saileóg O'Halloran
Video Designer Oisín Kearney
Hair and Makeup Val Sherlock
Production Managers Marie Tierney & Sarah Keane
Stage Manager Fiona Keller
Assistant Stage Managers Sarah Purcell & Sean Walsh

Fight Director Bryan Burroughs
Vision Mixer Sean Walsh
Dramaturg Gavin Kostick
Choral Director Ruaidhrí Ó Dálaigh
Irish Translation by Fionn Foley & Siobhán Ní Chiobháin
Assistant Director* Martha Fitzgerald
Assistant Designer* KathyAnn Murphy
Production Coordinator Ronan Carey
Marketing Chandrika Narayanan-Mohan
Marketing Intern Niamh Ní Fhlatharta
PR O'Doherty Communications
Graphic Design Publicis Dublin
Producer Eva Scanlan

AV Director, Camera Oisín Kearney
AV Producer Ciara Elizabeth Smyth
Camera & Graphics Pete Graham
Camera Federico Rea
Campaign Poster Designer Naomi Sheehan
AV Graphic Designer Chris Scott

*Training placements as part of Fishamble's company-in-association status at UCD.

The production runs for approximately two hours, including an interval.

The Alternative was chosen for production at the end of *A Play for Ireland*, a two-year artist development initiative in 2018/19, to mark Fishamble's 30th year.

BIOGRAPHIES

Michael Patrick (actor & writer from Belfast) and **Oisín Kearney** (director & writer from Warrenpoint) work as a writing pair. In 2017 they co-wrote the award-winning *My Left Nut*, which was developed through the Show in a Bag programme run by Fishamble, ITI and Dublin Fringe. It was nominated for the best show under one hour at the Dublin Fringe awards and won a Summerhall Lustrum Award at the Edinburgh Fringe. Michael and Oisín have since adapted *My Left Nut* into a three-part series for BBC Three. They are also a part of the BBC Belfast Voices screenwriting scheme and have written for BBC NI's *Soft Border Patrol*.

Oisín has localised Willy Russell's scripts of *Educating Rita* and *Shirley Valentine* to 1980s Belfast for The Lyric Theatre. He is currently resident Assistant Director for the Lyric Theatre and previously has assisted on *Educating Rita* and *Good Vibrations*. On the latter, he worked closely with Colin Carberry and Glenn Patterson on their translation of the story from screen to stage. Theatre directing credits include *My Left Nut*, *How These Desperate Men Talk* and *I, Banquo*. Documentary directing credits include *All For Show* (BBC NI True North), *Bbeyond* (BBC Arts Show), *Borderlands* and *Unfinished Revolution* (De Correspondent, NPO2), and *BOJAYÁ: Caught In The Crossfire* (Hot Docs Film Festival 2019).

As an actor, Michael has worked with The Abbey Theatre, The Lyric Theatre, Tinderbox, NI Opera and has appeared on *Game of Thrones*, *Death and Nightingales*, *Krypton*, *Soft Border Patrol* and *My Left Nut*. At time of publishing he is acting in the Royal Shakespeare Company's 2019/20 season.

Jim Culleton is the artistic director of Fishamble, for which he has directed productions in Ireland, UK, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the US. His productions for Fishamble have won many Irish and international awards, including an Olivier Award for *Silent* by Pat Kinevane. He has also directed for the Abbey Theatre, Woodpecker/Gaiety, 7:84 (Scotland), Project, Amharclann de hÍde, Tinderbox, Passion Machine, the Ark, Second Age, RTÉ Radio 1, the Belgrade, TNL Canada, Dundee Rep, Draíocht, TCD, Frontline Defenders, Amnesty International, Fighting Words, CoisCéim/Crash Ensemble/

GIAF, RTÉ lyric FM, APA and Vessel (Australia), Solas Nua and Kennedy Center (Washington DC), Odyssey (LA), and Irish Arts Center, Origin/1st Irish, 59E59 and IAC/Symphony Space Broadway (New York). Jim has taught for NYU, NUIM, GSA, University, the Lir, Notre Dame, UM, Villanova, UMD, TCD and UCD.

Karen Ardiffe was born in Dublin and graduated from the Samuel Beckett Centre in TCD. Karen's previous work with Fishamble includes *Inside the GPO* (2016) and *Rathmines Road* by Deirdre Kinahan (2018). Karen's most recent screen appearances include the Oscar-nominated *Brooklyn* directed by John Crowley as well as RTE's *Acceptable Risk*. Other previous film/TV includes *The Bookshop* (Isabel Coixet), *Noble* (nominated for several international awards and 3 IFTAs), *A Terrible Beauty...* (Tile Films) as well as *Evelyn*. Karen most recently appeared on stage in the highly successful show *The Unmanageable Sisters* on the Abbey Stage in the leading role of Rose. Other recent stage credits include: *Normal* (Maisie Lee, WeGetHighonthisCollective), *Angela's Ashes* (Thom Sutherland, Bord Gáis Energy Theatre), *Oedipus* (Wayne Jordan, The Abbey Theatre), *Peer Gynt* (Lynne Parker, Rough Magic – Irish Times Best Supporting Actress nomination), *Threepenny Opera* (Wayne Jordan, The Gate Theatre) *Steel Magnolias* (The Gaiety Theatre), and *Love in the Title* (Abbey/International tour – ESB/Irish Times Best Actress Award). Work with other companies includes: *The Colleen Bawn* (Bedrock – Irish Times Best Supporting Actress nomination), *The Stuff of Myth* (Crazy Dog Audio Theatre & Lane Productions) and Helene Hannf in *84 Charing Cross Road* (Andrews Lane Theatre – Irish Times Best Actress nomination for both). Karen has also performed in numerous radio dramas including *Duet* (Newstalk), *Tempting Faith* and *Greed is Good* (BBC4).

Lorcan Cranitch began working in the early 1980s in theatre in the UK. He has been busy on both sides of the Irish Sea ever since. In Dublin, he has worked mainly at the Abbey and Gate theatres, in plays by Tom Murphy, Brian Friel, Frank McGuinness, Arthur Miller, Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde and Chekhov. In the UK, he has worked with major repertory companies, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre and the West End. His film and television work includes,

The Dig, Dancing at Lughnasa, Ballykissangel, Waking the Dead, Spooks, Omagh, ROME, Shackleton, and Cracker.

Maeve Fitzgerald is a graduate of the Bachelor in Acting Studies at the Samuel Beckett Centre, Trinity College. Maeve most recently appeared as Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* for Rough Magic at the Kilkenny Arts Festival (2019). Other recent theatre includes: *The Thing About December* and *The Mai* (Decadent Theatre), *Wringer* (Bewley's Cafe Theatre), *On Raftery's Hill* (Abbey Theatre – nominee Best Actress Irish Times Theatre Awards 2019), *Holy Mary* (Breda Cashe Productions), *Bailegangaire* (Livin' Dred/Nomad). Maeve has also appeared in various productions for The Gate Theatre, Verdant Productions, Tron Theatre, ANU, Tall Tales, Second Age and many others. She won the Best Supporting Actress award for *Basin* and was nominated as Best Actress for *After Miss Julie*, both at the Irish Times Theatre Awards 2010.

Fionntán Larney is a writer and performer from Dublin. Last year, Fionntán graduated from The Lir Academy and wrote *beat*, which premiered at the Dublin Fringe Festival, before transferring to the Samuel Beckett Theatre for an extended run, and receiving a Fishamble New Writing Award nomination. Acting credits include: *Travesty* (The New Theatre), *The Lost O'Casey* (ANU/Abbey/Gate Theatre) and *The Metals* (Dublin Theatre Festival).

Rory Nolan's previous work with Fishamble includes *GPO 1818*. His theatre credits include *DruidShakespeare: Richard III*, *Shelter*, *Waiting for Godot*, *DruidShakespeare: Richard II*, *Henry IV (Pts 1&2)*, *Henry V*, *The Colleen Bawn*, *DruidMurphy – Plays by Tom Murphy* (Druid); *Northern Star*, *The Critic*, *Peer Gynt*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Don Carlos*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Improbable Frequency*, *Is This About Sex?* (Rough Magic); *Chekhov's First Play* (Dead Centre); *Postcards from the Ledge*, *Breaking Dad*, *Between Foxrock and a Hard Place*, *The Last Days of the Celtic Tiger*, *Sleeping Beauty* (Landmark Productions); *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Bedroom Farce*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Death of a Salesman* (Gate Theatre); *She Stoops to Conquer*, *Aristocrats*, *The Government Inspector*, *Translations*, *Arrah Na Pogue*, *Macbeth*, *The Rivals*, *Last Days of a Reluctant Tyrant*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Heavenly Bodies*, *Big Love* (Abbey Theatre); *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching*

Towards the Somme (Livin' Dred/Nomad); *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (Corn Exchange); *The Evils of Tobacco* (Mangiare Theatre). Film & television includes: *Acceptable Risk*, *The Delinquent Season*, *WILD*, *Charlie*, *Fair City*, *A Thousand Times Goodnight*, *The Baker Street Irregulars*, *Trouble in Paradise*, *Nothing Personal*. Awards: Irish Times Irish Theatre Award for Best Supporting Actor (*Waiting for Godot*).

Rachel O'Byrne's theatre credits include *The Mai* (Decadent Theatre Company); *Assassins*, *The Great Gatsby* (2017, 2018/19), *One for the Road*, *The Constant Wife* (Gate Theatre); *The Good Father*, *At the Ford* (Rise Productions); *The Sin Eaters* (ANU Productions); *The Remains of Maisie Duggan*, *By the Bog of Cats* (Abbey Theatre); *Brigit* (Druid); *Othello* (Theatre Royal). Film credits include *Mammal* (Fastnet Films) and *Kaleidoscope* (The Lir Academy). Rachel trained at The Lir Academy and holds a BA in Drama and French from Trinity College Dublin.

Arthur Riordan is an actor and playwright. Arthur last worked with Fishamble on the Irish, UK and Australia tour of *Swing*. Other recent stage appearances include *A Day* (Olympia Theatre); *From Under the Bed* (Big Guerrilla Productions); *Krapp's Last Tape* (Theatre Royal, Waterford); *Kings of the Kilburn High Road* with Livin' Dred/Verdant productions. He has also worked extensively with Rough Magic (of which he is a founder member), as well as many other leading Irish theatre companies, including the Abbey and Peacock, Druid, Gaiety, Corcadorca, and Pan Pan. Arthur has also made numerous television and film appearances, including *Out of Here*, *Ripper Street*, *Stella Days*, *Killinaskully*, *The Tudors*, *Fair City*, *The Clinic*, *The Baker Street Irregulars*, *The Chosen*, *Borstal Boy*, *Rat*, *The Last September*, and *Pitch n' Putt with Beckett n' Joyce*. Arthur's writing includes the stage adaptation of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, libretto for Andrew Synnott's opera *Dubliners* for Opera Theatre Company, book and lyrics for the hit musical *The Train*, an adaptation of Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, book and lyrics for the multi-award-winning hit musical *Improbable Frequency* and a one-man show, *The Emergency Session* (all for Rough Magic); a stage adaptation of Flann O'Brien's *Slattery's Sago Saga* (for The Performance Corporation); *Love Me?!* (for The Corn Exchange); and two collaborations with Des Bishop

– *Rap Eire* (for Bickerstaffe), and *Shooting Gallery* (for Bedrock Productions).

Maree Kearns has previously designed *Rathmines Road*, *Maz and Bricks* and *Invitation to a Journey* (a CoisCeim/Crash Ensemble coproduction) for Fishamble. Recent designs include *Two Pints* at the Abbey Theatre, *Torch* for Anu Productions and *The Odd Couple* at the Everyman. Other work includes *Class* for Inis Theatre (Edinburgh Fringe First 2018), *The Wizard of Oz* at the Cork Opera House, *Agnes*, *Pageant* and *Faun* for CoisCeim, *Giselle* for Ballet Ireland, *Annie the Musical* and *ProdiJIG the Revolution* for Cork Opera House, *Desire Under The Elms* for Corn Exchange, *Monsters*, *Dinosaurs and Ghosts* at the Peacock, *These Halcyon Days* for Landmark & Tall Tales, *Zoe's Play* and *Far Away From Me* at The Ark, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth* and *Dancing at Lughnasa* for Second Age, *Molland Anglo the Musical* for Verdant Productions, *Plasticine* for Corcadorca, *Bronte*, *A Winter's Tale*, *Three Winters*, *In the Next Room*, *Scenes from the Big Picture* and *Troilus and Cressida* for the Lir. Maree has been the recipient of an Irish Times Theatre Award for her design of *Observe the Sons of Ulster Marching Towards the Somme* and is the course Director for the Masters in Theatre Design at the Lir Academy in Dublin.

Mark Galione's designs for Fishamble: The New Play Company most recently include *On Blueberry Hill*, *Swing*, and *Inside The GPO*. His designs in Ireland include works for Irish Modern Dance Theatre, CoisCéim, Dance Theatre of Ireland, The Peacock, Fíbin, Hands Turn, Classic Stage Ireland, Barabbas, Vesuvius, The Derry Playhouse, The Ark, Peer to Peer, Gonzo, Theatre Lovett, Second Age Theatre Company, Barnstorm, and *I'm Your Man* for THISISPOPBABY. Recent TV includes *Jack Lukeman* 27 Club, *All Ireland Schools Talent Search*, TG4 – *Country Music Legends* and *The Al Porter Christmas Show RTE2*. Mark is a staff Lighting Designer at High Res Lighting.

Saileóg O'Halloran's theatre credits include *The Anvil* (Anu/ Manchester International Festival), *The Bluffer's Guide to Suburbia* (Once Off Productions/Cork Midsummer Festival), *The Misfits* (Corn Exchange), *Macnas 2018*, *Copperface Jacks the Musical* (Verdant), *GPO 1818* (Fishamble), *The Half of It* (MOMMO), *The Shitstorm* (Dublin Fringe), *The Seagull* (Corn Exchange), *To Hell In A Handbag* (Show In A Bag/Tiger Dublin

Fringe), *Town is Dead* (Peacock Theatre), *Embodied* (Dublin Dance Festival), *Shibboleth* (Peacock Theatre), *Chekhov's First Play* (Dead Centre), *Thirteen* (Irish Times Judges Special Award – ANU Productions) and *Wake* (Chamber Made Opera). Film and television credits include *Bainne* (Anabasis Films), *Cynthia* (Copper Alley Productions) *Procession* (925 Productions), *The Trap* (Treasure Entertainment), *Away With The Fairies* (Treasure Entertainment), *Pebbles* (Jonathan Shaw Dir), *Lost in the Living* (Ballyrogan Films), *Children of the Revolution* (RTÉ), and *The Inquiry* (DCTV).

Denis Clohessy has worked with numerous dance and theatre companies including Fishamble, The Abbey Theatre, The Gate Theatre, Rough Magic, Junk Ensemble, Corn Exchange, The Tron Theatre, Glasgow, Northlight Theatre, Chicago and Beijing Children's Art Theatre. He won the Irish Times Theatre Award for Best Design Sound in 2011 (for Rough Magic's *Sodome, My Love*), he was a nominee in 2015 (for Junk Ensemble and Brokentalker's *It Folds*), was an associate artist with the Abbey in 2008, and was a participant on Rough Magic's ADVANCE programme in 2012. In 2016, Pat Kinevane's play *Silent* (Fishamble) for which Denis composed the music won an Olivier Award. His work in Film and Television includes music for the feature films *Under The Clock* and *Older than Ireland* (Snackbox Films), *The Irish Pub* (Atom Films), *His and Hers* (Venom Film), *The Land of the Enlightened* (Savage Film), *In View* (Underground Cinema), *The Reluctant Revolutionary* (Underground Films) and the television series *The Limits of Liberty* (South Wind Blows) performed by the RTÉ Concert Orchestra.

Oisín Kearney is a writer, director and filmmaker. He trained in television production in the *Aim High* scheme run by BBC NI, NI Screen and Skillset. He was Associate Producer on Oscar-long-listed and Emmy-nominated *ELLÁN* and Assistant Producer on Irish box-office hit *66 DAYS*. His credits as a film director include *All For Show* (BBC NI True North), *Bbeyond* (BBC Arts Show), *Borderlands* and *Unfinished Revolution* (De Correspondent, NPO2), and *BOJAYÁ: Caught In The Crossfire* (Hot Docs Film Festival 2019).

Marie Tierney is a production manager, she has toured extensively both nationally and internationally. Recent credits include *Haughey Gregory*, *On Blueberry Hill* and *Rathmines Road* for Fishamble: The New Play Company, *Ulysses* for The Abbey Theatre, *The Only Jealousy of Emer* for Dublin City Arts Office and The Nigerian Carnival, and she has been production manager for The Gap Arts Festival for the past 8 years. She has coordinated many large scale and site-specific productions. Previously she has been design coordinator on many productions such as St Patricks Festival, Special Olympics opening ceremony, a number of site specific shows in swimming pools with Big Telly, and shows in Kilmainham Gaol.

As a film designer, she designed costumes for *Borstal Boy*, *Mapmaker*, *Crushproof*, *The Disappearance of Finbar*, *On Home Ground* for RTÉ and many Filmbase shorts. She designed set and costumes for *Kathleen Lynn: The Rebel Doctor* and *James Gandon: A Life* for Loopline films.

She is course director on Colaiste Dhulaigh's Performing Arts course and she delivers modules in technical theatre and design.

She is a member of the board of directors of the Association of Irish Stage Technicians, which promotes safety and training in the arts.

Sarah Keane is a production manager and began her career in theatre as an ASM and Stage Manager. She then worked as a technician for Project Arts Centre during their time at Project@ the mint. From there she joined the Civic Theatre as Assistant Technical Manager where she spent the last 20 years working on countless productions with companies from all over the world, including several Fishamble productions over the years. This is her first time working directly with Fishamble.

Fiona Keller's recent credits as Stage Manager include *The Patient Gloria* by Gina Moxley and Abbey Theatre with Pan Pan (Fringe First and Herald Angel winner), and *Theatre For One* (Landmark Productions and Cork Midsummer Festival). *Lost O'Casey*, *Sin Eaters*, *Sunder*, *Vardo*, *Thirteen*, *Boys of Foley Street* all with ANU. *These Rooms* (CoisCéim and ANU), *RTE's Reflecting The Rising* (RTÉ and ANU), *On Corporation Street* (HOME Manchester and ANU Productions). *Chekhov's First Play* and *Lippy* (Dead Centre), *This Beach* (Brokentalkers), *Alive! Awake!* and *The Summoning* (Macnas).

Sarah Purcell is a theatre studies graduate of Colaiste Dhulaigh College of Further Education. Some of her previous ASM credits include: *Copper Face Jacks: the Musical* (Verdant 2019), *Haughey|Gregory* (Fishamble 2019), *Aladdin* (Cork Opera House 2019), *Rathmines Road* (Fishamble 2018), *The Wizard of Oz* (Cork Opera House 2018), *My Son, My Son* (Project Arts Centre 2018), *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Cork Opera House 2018), *The Chastitute* (Gaiety Theatre 2017), *Cinderella* (Cork Opera House 2017), *ProdiJIG* (Cork Opera House 2016), *Signatories* (Verdant Productions in association with UCD 2016), *Kings of the Kilburn High Road* (Livin' Dred 2016), *Freezin'* (Olympia Theatre 2016), *Are You There Garth? It's Me, Margaret* (Pat Egan Productions 2016), *The Bloody Irish!* (Bloody Irish Productions DAC 2015), *The Field, Moll* (Verdant Productions) and has stage managed *To Hell in a Handbag* which originated as a *Show in a Bag* in Dublin Fringe 2016.

Martha Fitzgerald is a Dublin based theatre maker who has just completed the MA in Theatre Practice at the Gaiety School of Acting and UCD. She is the co-founder of Fizz and Chips Theatre Company.

Gavin Kostick, as literary manager at Fishamble, works with new writers for theatre through script development, readings and a variety of mentorship programmes. For Fishamble Gavin is particularly proud of his work on *Show in a Bag*, *The New Play Clinic*, *Tiny Plays for Ireland* and *A Play for Ireland*. Gavin is also an award-winning playwright. He has written over twenty plays which have been produced nationally and internationally. Recent favourite works include, *Invitation to a Journey* and *The End of the Road* for Fishamble, *This is What we Sang* for Kabosh, *Fight Night*, *The Games People Play* and *At the Ford* for RISE and the Libretto for *The Alma Fetish* for Raymond Deane and Wide Open Opera. As a performer he performed Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness: Complete*, a six hour show for Absolut Fringe, Dublin Theatre Festival and The London Festival of Literature at the Southbank. His work in all areas has received many national and international awards.

Eva Scanlan is the general manager and producer of Fishamble: The New Play Company. Current and recent producing work includes *Before* by Pat Kinevane, *Rathmines Road* by Deirdre Kinahan, *Haughey|Gregory* by Colin Murphy, *On Blueberry Hill* by Sebastian Barry, Fishamble's award-winning Pat Kinevane Trilogy on tour in Ireland and internationally, *The Humours of Bandon* by Margaret McAuliffe, *Maz and Bricks* by Eva O'Connor, *Inside the GPO* by Colin Murphy, *Tiny Plays for Ireland and America* and *Swing* on tour in Ireland, the UK, and Australia. Eva produces *The 24 Hour Plays: Dublin* at the Abbey Theatre in Ireland (2012–present), in association with the 24 Hour Play Company, New York, and has worked on The 24 Hour Plays on Broadway and The 24 Hour Musicals at the Gramercy Theatre. Previously, she was Producer of terraNOVA Collective in New York (2012–2015).

ABOUT FISHAMBLE: THE NEW PLAY COMPANY

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THE STAGE

Fishamble is passionate about discovering, developing and producing new plays.

It is named after the Playhouse on Dublin’s Fishamble Street which, in the 1780s, became the first theatre to commission and produce plays by Irish writers.

‘Fishamble puts electricity in the National Grid of dreams’

SEBASTIAN BARRY

Fishamble believes that vibrant theatre stands at the centre of a vibrant civic society. It harnesses the imaginative power of theatre to provide audiences with a diverse range of contemporary, compelling and heartfelt dramatic works.

‘A global brand with international theatrical presence’

THE IRISH TIMES

Fishamble thinks nationally and reaches globally. It works collaboratively with networks of artists, communities, and organisations, to achieve the maximum possible life for its plays. For instance, over 30 Fishamble playscripts have been published.

Fishamble has toured its productions to audiences throughout Ireland, and to 19 other countries. It typically produces over 200 performances annually, from the Aran Islands to Auckland, Ballymun to Brisbane, Clonmel to Cleveland.

‘Forward-thinking Fishamble’

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Fishamble champions the role of the playwright, through its productions, and wide range of artist support and development initiatives. It works with over 50% of the writers of all new plays produced on the island of Ireland each year.

‘Excellent Fishamble... Ireland’s terrific Fishamble’

THE GUARDIAN

Fishamble has received many awards in Ireland and internationally, including an Olivier Award, won jointly with Pat Kinevane. Its living archive is at the National Library of Ireland.

‘When Fishamble is [in New York], you’ve got to go’

TIME OUT NEW YORK

FISHAMBLE'S RECENT AND CURRENT PRODUCTIONS INCLUDE:

- *On Blueberry Hill* by Sebastian Barry (2017–19) touring in Ireland, Europe, and Off-Broadway
- *Before* by Pat Kinevane (2018–19) touring in association with the Strollers Network, and internationally
- *Haughey|Gregory* by Colin Murphy (2018–19) in the Abbey Theatre, Mountjoy Prison, Dáil Éireann, Croke Park, and Larkin Community College, as well as on national tour with the Nasc Network
- *The Humours of Bandon* by Margaret McAuliffe (2017–19) touring in Ireland, UK, US, and Australia
- *Rathmines Road* by Deirdre Kinahan (2018) in coproduction with the Abbey Theatre
- *Drip Feed* by Karen Cogan (2018) in coproduction with Soho Theatre, touring in Ireland and UK
- *GPO 1818* by Colin Murphy (2018) to mark the bicentenary of the GPO
- *Maz & Bricks* by Eva O'Connor (2017–18) on national and international tour
- *Forgotten, Silent* and *Underneath* by Pat Kinevane (since 2007, 2011 and 2014, respectively – 2018) touring in Ireland, UK, Europe, US, Australia and New Zealand
- *Charolais* by Noni Stapleton (2017) in New York
- *Inside the GPO* by Colin Murphy (2016) performed in the GPO during Easter
- *Tiny Plays for Ireland and America* by 26 writers (2016) at the Kennedy Center, Washington DC, and Irish Arts Center, New York, as part of *Ireland 100*
- *Mainstream* by Rosaleen McDonagh (2016) in coproduction with Project Arts Centre
- *Invitation to a Journey* by David Bolger, Deirdre Gribbin and Gavin Kostick (2016) in coproduction with CoisCeim, Crash Ensemble and Galway International Arts Festival

- *Little Thing, Big Thing* by Donal O’Kelly (2014–16) touring in Ireland, UK, Europe, US and Australia
- *Swing* by Steve Blount, Peter Daly, Gavin Kostick and Janet Moran (2014–16) touring in Ireland, UK, Europe, US, Australia and New Zealand
- *Spinning* by Deirdre Kinahan (2014) at Dublin Theatre Festival
- *The Wheelchair on My Face* by Sonya Kelly (2013–14) touring in Ireland, UK, Europe and US.

Fishamble Staff: Jim Culleton (Artistic Director), Eva Scanlan (General Manager and Producer), Gavin Kostick (Literary Manager), Chandrika Narayanan-Mohan (Marketing and Development Manager), Ronan Carey (Office and Production Coordinator).

Fishamble Board: Tania Banotti, Pádraig Burns, Peter Finnegan, Louise Molloy, Doireann Ní Bhriain (Chair), Vincent O’Doherty, John O’Donnell, Siobhan O’Leary, Andrew Parkes.



THE PROCESS OF A PLAY FOR IRELAND

In 2011, Fishamble invited submissions of tiny plays, and received over 1,700 submissions. *Tiny Plays for Ireland* subsequently played to sell out runs in Ireland, transferred to the Kennedy Center and Irish Arts Center in the US as part of *Ireland 100*, generated similar initiatives in the US, Australia and Russia, and was called ‘a brilliant project...really wonderful’ by President Higgins.

In 2017, inspired by the public’s appetite for work that really engaged with contemporary concerns, Fishamble launched a call for ideas for one, big, ambitious play – a play for Ireland. A work that would capture the zeitgeist of the country. Fishamble received over 370 proposals. *A Play for Ireland [APFI]* was designed as a two-year artist development initiative to mentor playwrights throughout the island of Ireland, and result in the production of a very special new play. The initiative has been run in partnership with six venues across the country: Draíocht, The Everyman, Lime Tree Theatre/Belltable, Lyric Theatre, Pavilion Theatre, and Town Hall Theatre. It has been supported by the Arts Council, and by sponsors Irish Rail and Tesco Finest.

In April 2018, Fishamble and the partner venues chose five ideas to develop through the initiative in each venue, making a total of 30 plays, to mark Fishamble’s 30th year. It has been a huge privilege to work with wonderful playwrights during this time: Ann Blake, Mike Finn, Brendan Griffin, Michael Hilliard Mulcahy, and Joanne Ryan in Lime Tree Theatre/Belltable; Caitríona Daly, Jeda de Brí & Finbarr Doyle, Barry McStay, Alice Murphy, and Ian Toner in Draíocht; Noelle Brown & Karen Cogan, Lisa Carroll, John Doran, Bridgid Galvin, and Margaret McAuliffe in The Everyman; Vittoria Cafolla, Seamus Collins, Clare McMahon, Michael Patrick & Oisín Kearney, and Shannon Sickels (Yee) at Lyric Theatre; David Horan, Shay Linehan, Jody O’Neill, Lee Stafford, and Ciara Elizabeth Smyth at Pavilion Theatre; Fionn Foley, Janet Moran, Marina Ní Dhubháin, Neasa O’Callaghan, and Hugh Travers in Town Hall Theatre.

During April–November 2018, the playwrights met at each venue, to discuss and develop their plays, with Jim Culleton

and Gavin Kostick from Fishamble, and guest directors and designers, including Annabelle Comyn, Oonagh Murphy, Lynne Parker, Maree Kearns, Niamh Lunny, and Saileóg O'Halloran. At the end of 2018, a draft was submitted of the plays.

In February 2019, one writer from each venue was chosen by Fishamble and the venues, and these six shortlisted plays were optioned by Fishamble. They were: *Duck, Duck, Goose* by Caitríona Daly (Draíocht); *In Passing* by John Doran (The Everyman); *Wreckquiem* by Mike Finn (Lime Tree Theatre/Belltable); *A Line of Work* by Marina Ni Dhubháin (Town Hall Theatre); *Ballybaile* by Jody O'Neill (Pavilion Theatre); *The Alternative* by Michael Patrick & Oisín Kearney (Lyric Theatre).

The shortlisted plays were developed further through readings and discussions with a team of actors: Karen Ardiffe, Steve Blount, Tara Breathnach, Kate Brennan, Emmet Byrne, Lorcan Crannitch, John Doran, Clare Dunne, Maeve Fitzgerald, Fionn Foley, Michele Forbes, Ali Fox, Eanna Hardwicke, Katie Honan, Fionntán Larney, Ronan Leahy, Julie Maguire, Karen McCartney, Michael Glenn Murphy, Kate Murray, Mary Murray, Rory Nolan, Marion O'Dwyer, Mark O'Regan, David Pearse, Roseanna Purcell, Bryan Quinn, Arthur Riordan, Kieran Roche, Joan Sheehy, Pat Shortt and Amilia Stewart.

In March 2019, a subsequent draft was submitted, and *APFI* was chosen from these drafts. The Fishamble team, and the partner judges, were joined for this part of the process by independent assessor, international dramaturg Ruth Little.

In April 2019, *The Alternative* became the chosen play and was commissioned and developed further by Fishamble, up to its rehearsals in August. The production was produced by Fishamble, in partnership with the partner venues, and toured to all these venues in September/October 2019.

Fishamble wishes to thank the following Friends of Fishamble & Corporate Members for their invaluable support:

Alan & Rosemary Ashe, ATM Accounting Services, Mary Banotti, Tania Banotti, Doireann Ní Bhriain, Conor Braiden, Business to Arts, Breda Cashe, Maura Connolly, John & Yvonne Healy, Gillie Hinds, Monica McInerney, Stuart Mclaughlin, Ger McNaughton,

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To the people of Ireland.

CHARACTERS LIST

RICHARD DEVLIN (*BBC Producer, Grainne's father*)

GRAINNE DEVLIN (*Physics Student, Richard's daughter*)

JOHN FITZGIBBON (*BBC Debate Presenter*)

HANNAH MURRAY (*BBC Assistant Producer*)

URSULA LYSAGHT (*Prime Minister of The United Kingdom
of Great Britain and Ireland*)

PETER KEOGH (*Irish First Minister and Leader of the Irish
Parliamentary Party*)

PATRICK (*Vote Leave protestor*)

Three members of the audience will be given cards and asked
to read the lines for:

QUESTIONER 1

QUESTIONER 2

QUESTIONER 3

FILMED CHARACTERS

NIAMH (*Richard's dead wife, Grainne's dead mother*)

REPORTER

VOX POP 1

VOX POP 2

VOX POP 3

VOX POP 4

VOX POP 5

PRESENTERS (*Voice over only*)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVERYMAN

ANNOUNCER Welcome to the Royal Everyman Theatre.¹

Please stand for our National Anthem.

PAVILION

ANNOUNCER Welcome to the Pavilion Theatre, Kingstown.²

Please stand for our National Anthem.

BELLTABLE

ANNOUNCER Welcome to the King George Theatre³ Limerick.

Please stand for our National Anthem.

TOWN HALL

ANNOUNCER Welcome to the Royal Court Theatre,⁴ Galway.

Please stand for our National Anthem.

¹The Everyman Theatre was built in 1897. This renaming as the 'Royal Everyman Theatre' highlights a link to the British Royal family in alternative reality.

²The Pavilion Theatre is in the Irish town of Dún Laoghaire. It was renamed Kingstown in honour of King George IV's 1821 visit, before reverting to its original name upon Irish independence.

³Belltable Limerick is found on O'Connell Street. This street was originally George's Street, before it was renamed after Daniel O'Connell.

⁴The building which houses the Town Hall Theatre was erected in the 1820s and served first as a courthouse. This is also a reference to the Royal Court Theatre in London.

DRAÍOCHT

ANNOUNCER Welcome to the Prince's Theatre, Blanchardstown.⁵

Please stand for our National Anthem.

LYRIC

ANNOUNCER Welcome to the Dame Mary O'Malley Memorial Theatre.⁶

Please stand for our National Anthem.

⁵ Draíocht Arts Centre, Blanchardstown has been renamed as the 'Prince's Theatre' to highlight a link to the British Royal family in alternative reality.

⁶ Mary O'Malley was a theatre director who founded The Belfast Lyric Players, later becoming the Lyric Theatre. She was not a Dame.

ACT ONE

Scene One

*A screen lights up. A full choir sings one chorus of ‘**GOD SAVE THE QUEEN**’ as Gaeilge.*

Video archive of the last one hundred years of Irish history in this universe.

DIA LENÁR BHANRÍON

ÁR BHANRÍON GO DEO

DIA LENÁR BHANRÍON

SEOL LEIS AN BUA Í

RÍMÉAD AGUS GLÓR UIRTHI,

AGUS MUID FAOI REIM TAMALL FADA,

DIA LENÁR BHANRÍON⁷

BBC Dublin studio. Shiny floor. Cameras. Wires and studio equipment. Flightcases.

A staircase on one side leads up to the production office which overlooks the studio floor. On one side

⁷The national anthem of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

God Save the Queen in Irish:

God save our gracious Queen,
Long live our noble Queen,
God save the Queen;
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the Queen.

is a gallery space with a mixing desk, at which sits a technician.

In the office, a desk and a bust of Oliver Cromwell.⁸

RICHARD *storms into the studio, followed by JOHN.*

JOHN *holds a Pret a Manger⁹ coffee cup in one hand and a little white bag with a bagel in the other. RICHARD has a reusable glass coffee cup and a notebook.*

They walk and talk, heading up the staircase into the office.

JOHN Four pound fifty!¹⁰

RICHARD Yep.

JOHN Four pound fifty for a coffee!

RICHARD I know.

JOHN Four pound fucking fifty for a fucking cup of coffee Richard?!

RICHARD I / know!

JOHN What is Dublin coming to? It's getting like fucking Zurich!

RICHARD Not like you can't afford it.

JOHN It's not even the good stuff.

HANNAH *crosses the studio, carrying papers, with her phone held between her ear and her shoulder.*

HANNAH Yeah yeah yeah, grand, yeah, lovely.

RICHARD You can tell the difference, can you?

⁸ Oliver Cromwell is a hated figure in modern Ireland due to his military campaign in the Wars of the Three Kingdoms.

In the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland, there were 20,000–30,000 battlefield casualties, and 200,000–600,000 civilian casualties.

⁹ Pret a Manger currently does not operate any shops on the island of Ireland.

¹⁰ Ireland uses the Euro.

JOHN I can. D'ya know / in Milan...

***JOHN** and **RICHARD** reach the top of the staircase and enter the office. **HANNAH** climbs the staircase, and shouts after them, having hung up her phone.*

HANNAH The Prime Minister's on her way!

RICHARD How long Hannah?

HANNAH About 15 minutes.

JOHN She was in my History class at uni/ you know.

RICHARD Any sign of Keogh yet?

HANNAH Not yet.

***HANNAH** enters the office. She hands some of the papers to **RICHARD**.*

RICHARD Right, what have we got?

HANNAH These are the new run-downs.

JOHN Used to be in the Trinity Young Conservatives.

***HANNAH** hands some papers to **JOHN** and checks her phone for updates.*

RICHARD They reviewed the format?

HANNAH We did a walk-through with their staff earlier.

JOHN And now she's Labour's saviour.

HANNAH The PM wants the handshake nearer the audience.

RICHARD Grand.

JOHN She was stuck up, even back then.

RICHARD The gallery happy? Elaine yapping away?

HANNAH No more than usual.

JOHN Fond of auld 'sneachta bán'.¹¹

¹¹ Cocaine. Literally 'White Snow' in the Irish language.

RICHARD John, please. Set ready?

HANNAH Podiums are prepped.

JOHN You should see our sting for the top of the show, Rich.
Some fancy jiggery-pokery from the graphics guys.

HANNAH And here's all the latest polls.

JOHN You'd never know we were bankrupt.

HANNAH Including that Ipsos-MORI¹² one.

RICHARD What about it?

HANNAH *hands him another print-out.*

HANNAH The one with Leave ahead.

RICHARD Bloody hell.

He pours over the poll.

JOHN An eleventh hour surge.

RICHARD She should never have called this bloody referendum.
What do the other polls say?

HANNAH They still have Remain ahead, but they're tight.

JOHN Exciting.

RICHARD *This* is why she decided to come at the last minute.

HANNAH They must have similar internals.

JOHN They should have stuck with Kendrick. He's a terrible
Chancellor, but he can make the economic argument!

RICHARD (*gesturing to the paper*) It's clearly not working.

JOHN The Prime Minister returning to her hometown to save
the Union! She's desperate.

RICHARD Better optics than cowering in Downing street.

¹² Ipsos MORI is a market research company in the United Kingdom. It is a member of the British Polling Council.

JOHN Well, it's certainly dramatic.

HANNAH Oh and Keogh's put out a statement on the Prime Minister coming over.

JOHN Making a play for the country.

HANNAH Saying she only comes to Ireland when her paycheck's in danger.

JOHN A play for Ireland.

HANNAH And he's accused us of having an agenda.

JOHN Well, we are the *British* Broadcasting Company.

RICHARD *Corporation* John. Jesus you've only been working here ten years. Are the questions sorted?

HANNAH *shuffles through her papers.*

HANNAH Yes. We can do four between each of the ad breaks.

JOHN Thank God they abolished the licence fee.¹³

RICHARD Like you ever paid it anyway. Give us the questions there.

HANNAH Are you sure you can get across these in time Rich? You know I'm ready.

RICHARD Questions Hannah.

HANNAH *receives a phone-call.*

HANNAH They're on my laptop. Give me a second. *(Into phone)* Hello?

HANNAH *leaves the office, walks down the stairs and offstage.*

RICHARD How's she been?

¹³ Instead of adverts, the BBC in the UK is funded by a Licence Fee, which is required to be paid if you watch live television.

JOHN Ah, thinks she's the big producer now. A bit too much of this (*gestures chit-chat with his hand*). But everyone in the gallery loves her. You're lucky you were allowed back in.

RICHARD I've taught her well.

JOHN *pulls out his avocado, bacon, and egg bagel and begins eating it.*

Do you have to do that now, John?

JOHN Rich, I've been working twenty hours a day! I apologise if my eating habits do not please you. (*Pause*) So as I was saying...in Milan, you can get a world-class espresso for one euro. And in the CAS, I had this gorgeous stuff for about thirty cents! That's under twenty pence! Dublin? (*Holds coffee aloft*) Four hundred and fifty of the Queen's pence.

RICHARD When were you in the Central America States?¹⁴

JOHN Oh, years ago. Martha and I honeymooned in Playa Grande. It means 'big beach'. We went to see the turtles breeding.

RICHARD What?

JOHN Hundreds of these leatherbacks. Big fuck off bastards.

RICHARD You went to watch turtles get the ride?

JOHN We did.

RICHARD On your honeymoon?

JOHN That's right.

RICHARD Was it any use?

¹⁴ The Federal Republic of Central America was a sovereign state in Central America consisting of the territories of the former Captaincy General of Guatemala of New Spain. It existed from 1823 to 1841. At the end of World War II, interest in integrating the Central American governments began. On October 14, 1951 the governments of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua signed a treaty creating the Organization of Central American States to promote regional cooperation and unity.

JOHN No. The cunts do it at night. At high tide. So you can't see a fucking thing! We were sold a lie. Mmm, that's good bagel!

HANNAH *enters the office, carrying her laptop and a ream of papers.*

HANNAH John, can you please start getting ready? We're letting the audience in soon.

JOHN Just because I don't buzz about the building like a blue-arsed fly, doesn't mean I'm not working.

JOHN *takes another bite of his bagel.*

RICHARD *(noting the laptop)* You don't have print-outs, Hannah?

HANNAH Here.

HANNAH *quickly hands RICHARD some papers, he looks through them.*

John, please. Makeup's ready for you.

JOHN I was thinking I might go au-naturelle tonight...

RICHARD John, I'm trying to catch up here.

JOHN Show off the true face of the nation.

RICHARD Hannah, what's this? Question 10. Carbon taxes?

HANNAH It's a legitimate issue. The Prime / Minister has –

RICHARD Yeah but not when the fate of the country's at stake.

HANNAH The fate of the world, Rich.

RICHARD I know that! I know you're on a crusade Hannah. And I'm doing my bit, I've got my reusable coffee cup for fuck sake!

HANNAH There was a story this week. Climate change has forced Maasi tribes in Tanzania to /abandon their traditional nomadic –

RICHARD Of course, of course – you care, I care, but the gluebags in Kingstown just want hotter summers.

JOHN Tonight is about Ireland, Hannah. Not the fucking Africans.

***RICHARD** flicks through the other questions. **HANNAH** receives a phone-call. She answers.*

HANNAH Hi Elaine...

RICHARD The people need the facts.

HANNAH Guest shot. Yeh. No worries.

RICHARD About the vote. Nothing else.

***HANNAH** hangs up.*

HANNAH Yeah yeah, you're right.

RICHARD And if it goes well, It won't go unnoticed.

JOHN The higher-ups will be watching.

***RICHARD** hands a pile of papers with questions on them to **HANNAH**.*

RICHARD The figures for the last programme looked good. Good work. For keeping things moving.

HANNAH Good work for dealing with Mr Celebrity you mean.

JOHN (*with mouthful of bagel*) I'm a respected journalist.

***HANNAH** gives **RICHARD** a look, and leaves. **JOHN** gestures the 'chit-chat' again to **RICHARD**. Through this dialogue, **RICHARD** is looking through papers, taking notes with a pen, and checking things on his laptop. **JOHN** is lounging, slurping his coffee.*

That poll's *very* interesting.

RICHARD It's a poll. It's not *that* interesting.

JOHN Might mix things up a bit.

RICHARD Perhaps you could hold it up.

JOHN Not only could I hold it up, I could quote from it.

RICHARD Double whammy!

JOHN Prop.

RICHARD Prop with a point!

JOHN *rehearses holding up the poll and pointing at it.*

I never thought I'd see the day that Irish people might vote to leave the UK.

JOHN No longer the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Just 'Great Britain'.

RICHARD Or just '*Britain*'.

JOHN '*Britain*'. '*Britain*'. It's a very cold word isn't it? Hardly matches the warmth of the people at all.

RICHARD It won't happen.

JOHN Why not?

RICHARD Because we're British.

JOHN Yes. But. British or not, we Irish hate the English.

RICHARD We do.

JOHN We always have.

RICHARD It's hard not to.

Beat.

They *are* annoying.

JOHN It's their brashness.

RICHARD Their ignorance.

JOHN Their arrogance.

RICHARD Their sense of self-importance.

JOHN You'd never hear an Irishman go on about how great *his* country is!

RICHARD Never.

Beat.

JOHN You know, I didn't have a problem with them until I actually went to the mainland.¹⁵ (*English accent*) 'Awww, I've never been to Ireland, but my granny's from Skibbereen.' Fuck 'em.

RICHARD Sure who would we be without our beloved English?

JOHN Right enough. And the Scots.

RICHARD And the Scots. And the Welsh.

JOHN And the Welsh. I always forget the Welsh.

RICHARD Poor man's Scot, the Welsh.

JOHN (*welsh accent*) 'Look at us with our dragons and our coal mines'. Couldn't even make it onto the Union Jack.¹⁶ Cunts.

RICHARD We may hate the English, but we'll never leave them.

JOHN Sure that's the basis of my marriage.

RICHARD You hate Martha?

JOHN I love the woman! But *fuck* I hate her. It's complex. Much the same.

Beat. RICHARD's pen has stopped working. He shakes it, tries it again and throws it down.

How have you been coping?

¹⁵ 'The mainland' is a phrase often used by Northern Irish Unionists to refer to Great Britain.

¹⁶ The Union Jack consists of the Cross of St. George (England), St Andrew's Saltire (Scotland) and St. Patrick's Saltire (Ireland). It has no Welsh representation.

RICHARD *stops looking at papers. He looks at JOHN, takes a new pen out of his breast pocket and begins writing notes again.*

RICHARD Got to get on with it.

JOHN Are you sure you're up for tonight?

RICHARD Of course.

JOHN Rich, it's a well-oiled machine at this stage. Hannah could have handled it. And you know me. Sure, I'm great. You didn't need to come back in.

RICHARD I would have sat out the Chancellor, but there's no way I'm missing the Prime Minister.

JOHN I'm just looking out for you.

RICHARD I appreciate it. But I have to be here.

JOHN You're looking the MBE¹⁷ aren't you?

RICHARD *gives JOHN a look.*

Rich! I thought you were a republican?¹⁸

RICHARD I am, I am. But... I just wouldn't mind some recognition for the work I've done over the years.

JOHN You'd have more clout over those snobs in BBC London anyway.

RICHARD Smug pricks. But who's got the PM in their studio tonight? Not them!

JOHN I wouldn't take an MBE. It's a knighthood or nothing. 'Sir John' they'll call me!

¹⁷ The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire is a British order of chivalry, rewarding contributions to the arts and sciences, work with charitable and welfare organisations, and public service outside the civil service.

¹⁸ 'Republican' in an Irish sense generally means someone who favours Irish separation from Britain. Here it refers to an Irish Unionist who simply opposes monarchy, and wants to remove the Queen as head of state.

RICHARD Richard Devlin MBE...Niamh will love it...she...would have loved it.

Beat.

JOHN She was mad for them royals, wasn't she?

RICHARD She never shut up about them.

JOHN *picks up the bust of Oliver Cromwell.*

JOHN *(dismissively)* Republicans. You won't be happy till there's some moronic president desecrating Buckingham Palace. Good looking fella, Cromwell. Handy in a civil war.

RICHARD We may see Ireland's first civil war kick off tonight.¹⁹ Those protests outside could get nasty.

JOHN Ha! Irishmen killing each other? Like that'd ever happen.

RICHARD There's definitely a chance of trouble. It's in your hands. And God help us, with those socks and *that* tie.

JOHN What's wrong with my tie? Martha picked it. She said it's *neutral*. Is it not *neutral*?!

JOHN *rushes to check his appearance in the reflection of a mirror. He pulls out another tie from his pocket. He holds it up to his neck.*

What do you think? Red? Or blue? Blue! Red?

HANNAH *enters.*

HANNAH Rich?

RICHARD What is it?

HANNAH Grainne's here.

RICHARD Great, she's sitting in tonight.

HANNAH She's round the back at security.

¹⁹ The Irish Civil War (28 June 1922 – 24 May 1923) was a conflict that followed the Irish War of Independence.

RICHARD What? I told her to queue round front like everyone else.

HANNAH She wants to speak to you.

RICHARD Now? Bloody hell, right. Bring her up, Hannah.

HANNAH I've a million other things to be doing, but fine.

HANNAH *nods and leaves.*

RICHARD Now remember, tonight's about the facts. 'Inform, educate and entertain'.²⁰

JOHN I'd rather lean into 'entertain'.

RICHARD John, this referendum's stirred something up in people. The debate tonight is the last chance we'll get to contain it. So no grandstanding! The world's watching. And more importantly, the lads from SKY will be watching *you*.

JOHN *chooses the blue tie, and begins putting it on.*

JOHN Ach, nothing's signed yet. Apparently they're questioning my sex appeal... I know! That's why I need to make a bit of a splash. Give them a good sparky, sexy debate. Create the 'moment' that people will never forget.

RICHARD 'The moment'? Jesus.

JOHN Remember when I asked the Foreign Secretary about WMDs in Iraq?²¹ And you were just silent...

²⁰ The phrase 'inform, educate, entertain' was coined by former Director-General of the British Broadcasting Corporation John Charles Walsham Reith to summarise the BBC's purpose. Reith is credited with established the tradition of independent public service broadcasting in the United Kingdom, and the phrase remains part of the organisation's mission statement to this day.

²¹ The Iraq War began in 2003 with the invasion of Iraq by a United States-led coalition. The Bush administration based its rationale for the war principally on the assertion that Iraq supposedly possessed weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). These WMDs were never found and the U.S. Senate later released a report that the government's pre-war statements were not supported by intelligence.

RICHARD I was.

JOHN And I know that when you're silent, that's the signal to go in for the kill! The audible wink. And we got the cunt! He admitted it. People still talk about that!

RICHARD And even more people talk about the time you picked your nose when you thought you were off-air. How many hits does that have on YouTube now?

JOHN Coming on seven million. Proving my worth as a man of the people.

JOHN opens a locked drawer and takes out a box containing his earpiece, takes it and puts it in his pocket before returning the box to the drawer.

RICHARD Seven figure salary?

JOHN Fingers crossed.

RICHARD Jammy bastard. And you'll be off to London I suppose?

JOHN Place to be. Here, I got you something. Look in your drawer there.

RICHARD takes out a long wrapped object from a desk drawer. It's clearly a bottle of alcohol.

RICHARD I wonder what this is!

RICH unwraps in and reveals a bottle of Bushmills 16 Year old Single Malt.

Ah John. You shouldn't have.

JOHN Celebrate our potential last show together. Shall we have a cheeky one now?

RICHARD After! I can't let you go on half-cut.

JOHN I'd give you the highest ratings we've ever had.

RICHARD And probably break up the Union.

JOHN You really think that muck-savage Keogh can convince enough bidders in the godforsaken midlands to vote for independence?

RICHARD There's a lot of bidders! And it's not just them. The right wing pricks in Belfast, the Daily Mail readers in Limerick, the stupid bastards in feckin...Longford. We need to get through this fairly and restore some bloody order.

JOHN If you want to Remain you should let me duff Keogh up a bit.

RICHARD No. It could backfire.

JOHN It'll be fun.

RICHARD Seriously now John. A debate is a very sensitive thing. One small change could make a big difference on the entire outcome of this vote. And more importantly your job prospects.

A knock at the door.

Yes?

The door opens. HANNAH enters first, followed by GRAINNE.

JOHN Grainne!

GRAINNE Hello.

HANNAH receives a phonecall.

HANNAH John, they're looking for you now. *(She answers)* Hello.

JOHN It's good to see you.

RICHARD John, please leave us alone.

HANNAH Alright, I'll call down.

JOHN I can't imagine how hard it must be for you.

RICHARD Makeup John. Now.

HANNAH The Prime Minister's almost here.

RICHARD I'll be right down.

HANNAH See you in a bit, Grainne.

JOHN and HANNAH leave. RICHARD closes the door behind them.

RICHARD Sorry Grainne I don't really have any time. I'm flat out here. Did I not say to use the public entrance?

GRAINNE I don't think I can do it.

Pause.

I can't sit there, with all those people. In front of all the cameras.

Pause.

RICHARD I thought it would be good for you to watch the debate.

GRAINNE I can't, Dad.

RICHARD Come here.

They hug.

GRAINNE I can't stop thinking about her.

There is a long, awkward silence. They don't know how to act around each other.

RICHARD Did you get here, OK?

GRAINNE It was tricky. The marches have started.

RICHARD Sackville Street²² must be a nightmare.

²² Dublin's main thoroughfare was named after Lionel Sackville, 1st Duke of Dorset and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1750–1755). In 1924 it was renamed 'O'Connell Street' in honour of Daniel O'Connell.

GRAINNE There's like a thousand people out there. Going from Nelson's Pillar²³ to King George in Stephen's Green.²⁴

RICHARD The Remainers will be out in force as well.

GRAINNE They'll probably end up meeting at College Green for a punch up.

RICHARD You didn't feel like joining them?

GRAINNE Which ones?

RICHARD Well, not the racists.

GRAINNE You can't dismiss them all like that. There's extremists on both sides.

RICHARD Oh, here we go.

GRAINNE They have legitimate grievances.

RICHARD Like what? Too many brown people?

GRAINNE Lack of representation.

RICHARD Spouting about their ancient Celtic utopia. All this nationalism, Grainne. Don't let yourself get caught up in it.

GRAINNE Is that what you told Mum? She was a nationalist.

RICHARD It's bad for the country. Did you know that Keogh is an immigrant himself?

GRAINNE I don't want to talk about politics, Dad.

RICHARD His mother is American! One of those Boston Irish trying to fund uprisings in Connacht. Half his funding is from Alopecian rednecks...

GRAINNE *What* rednecks?

²³ Nelson's Pillar was a large granite column capped by a statue of Horatio Nelson, built in the centre of what was then Sackville Street. It survived until March 1966, when it was severely damaged by explosives planted by Irish republicans.

²⁴ Stephen's Green once had a large statue of King George II at the centre of it. In May 1937 it was bombed by Irish republicans, coinciding with the coronation of King George VI.

RICHARD Alopecian. The mountains.

GRAINNE The *Appalachian* mountains, Dad. Alopecia's when your hair falls out.

RICHARD Gotcha.

They both laugh.

GRAINNE You genuinely think you're funny, don't you?

RICHARD I do, yes. *Alopecian* rednecks. That'd be some sight. Look, if you're not up for it tonight. I'll get you a car back home.

GRAINNE You're not listening.

RICHARD Well, what do you want? Do you want to watch the debate or go home?

GRAINNE Can I not stay with you?

RICHARD I can't bring you into the gallery. It's manic enough in there.

GRAINNE But you're the boss, Dad.

RICHARD Yeah, and I have responsibilities. I have to run this place.

GRAINNE Wasn't Hannah doing that when you were off?

Beat.

RICHARD Well, yes.

GRAINNE Get her to do it.

Beat.

RICHARD No, I have to do it.

GRAINNE What's the point of training Hannah if you don't let her do her job?

RICHARD I do. She ran the last show! But not tonight.

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