

THE WHALES OF LONG KESH^{© 2011}

By Matthew K. Weiland

FINAL ASSEMBLY | Full Revision #8 – Penultimate Draft for Full Reading
SUBMITTED | September 21, 2011 for Proposed Collective-NY Reading NOVEMBER, 2011

- NEW DRAFT -

CHARACTERS *(In order of appearance)*

THE MUSICIANS

The Troubadour
The Troubadette
The Tam O'Shanter Trio

THE FAMILY

Patrick O'Connor
Kathryn O'Connor
Caitlin O'Connor
Abbie O'Connor

THE SCRIBE

Elizabeth Fitch-Klroy

THE PRISONERS / SOLDIERS

Desmond "Doyle" Lenihan
Seamus Flynn
Paul O'Connor

THE CLERGY

Sister Judith Marie
Executive Assistant to the Cardinal, Auxiliary Bishop Martin Kelleher
Monsignor Michael Sweeney

THE GUARDS

Mule aka Malcolm MacDougal
Elbows aka Eddie Keating

THE ANAM CARA

Fiona O'Donnell
Caroline Lenihan

THE EX-

Bridgette Flynn

THE ADMINISTRATION

Assistant Deputy Under Secretary Brian Nolan
Warden Gordon Brennan

THE INFANTRY

Owen Farrell
Eamon Farrell

EXTRAS*

Patrick's Men (4)
The Guards (4)
The Pub (4-8)

**All can conceivably be played by the same four players.*

SCENE 1: A Safe House

Characters: The Troubadour and The Troubadette
 The Tam O'Shanter Trio
 Patrick O'Connor [and his Men (4)]
 Kathryn O'Connor
 Sister Judith Marie
 Elizabeth Fitch-Kilroy
 Caitlin O'Connor
 Abbie O'Connor

SCENE READER

[SCENE: Onto the empty stage there enter THE TROUBADOUR and THE TROUBADETTE, a man and a woman casually dressed in collegiate folk apparel, each attaching a respective guitar and banjo over their shoulders. They proceed to sing the first verse of the song, "Let the People Sing," as there gradually appears a shamrock above them.]

[During the course of the first verse, THE TROUBADOURS are joined by THE TAM O' SHANTER TRIO, two of whom are dressed in casual civilian clothes, one in semi-paramilitary garb. THE TRIO join-in on singing the first chorus. As the chorus commences, a light design appears of Orange and Green radiating across the stage as there unfurl from the ceiling assorted Irish flags, Gaelic banners, and various symbols of Irish nationalism suspended across the flanks of the stage, slightly billowing in a small breeze, the growing winds of change. The banners and flags might even tell the story of the history of Ireland, from ancient Hibernian and Celtic symbols through the mutated flags of conquest and the various ages of rebellion.]

SCENE READER (continuing)

[As the second verse begins, lights rise softly on a fairly dilapidated and abandoned, though still functional, kitchen. As the second verse and chorus continue, PATRICK O'CONNOR enters, appearing as if unlocking the door with a hefty set of keys, surveying the room. He is followed by his wife, KATHRYN O'CONNOR, who likewise enters, followed by PATRICK'S MEN, four laborers who carry in a large, heavy kitchen table and six chairs, arranging them somewhat upstage center. Meanwhile, KATHRYN shakes a shiver from her arms and shoulders, checks the water pressure of the kitchen sink, then checks the thermostat.]

[As PATRICK'S MEN complete their task, they exit. PATRICK kisses KATHRYN goodbye and exits as well, making sure that the door is locked behind him. KATHRYN checks the door knob as well then continues fidgeting with the thermostat before walking toward a door that leads to the basement and exiting through it,]

SCENE READER (continuing)

[The TROUBADOURS and THE TRIO begin the final verse and chorus again on the stage alone in the spotlight. As the song concludes and the lights dim to dark, there appears on a screen on the back of the stage: The play takes place between June 23 and October 3, 1981.]

SCENE READER

[In the darkness, the sounds of keys in the door lock are heard. The lights rise and there enters into the kitchen SISTER JUDITH MARIE accompanied by an American friend, ELIZABETH FITCH-KILROY. Both are hoisting bags of supplies: groceries, blankets, soap, towels, and linen. Throughout the scene, the woman shall be preparing the kitchen into a clean, useful space in a safe house, doing so with a fair sense of purpose and urgency.]

JUDITH MARIE

(Trying to warm herself.) Oohfff – Holy Jesus – That's a grave-yard chill. You don't expect it this late in June. Hope they've left the furnace working.

SCENE READER

[JUDITH sets down her bag and checks the thermostat as ELIZABETH begins unpacking the bags and setting items out on the kitchen table.]

ELIZABETH FITCH-KILROY

Now who's place is this?

JUDITH MARIE

T'was someone's home, once upon a time.

SCENE READER

[As she speaks, JUDITH MARIE adjusts the thermostat then takes a kerosene lantern from one of the bags, eventually lighting the lantern.]

JUDITH MARIE

It's one of a series a places. I get a call every so often when my help is needed. And so, I do what I'm able. This was someone's homestead from decades back. Someone who moved off to the states. Someone on the run, perhaps. And enough time is lapsed that it's collapsed beneath the radar. And, for the next day or so, it's a place to eat. To sit. Sleep. Collect your thoughts. And, if we can get some heat going, maybe even bathe. (Referring to the lit lamp.) There. A bit of inconspicuous light... Here...

SCENE READER

[JUDITH hands ELIZABETH two sets of sheets.]

JUDITH MARIE

If you could, would you make up those cots?

ELIZABETH FITCH-KILROY

Certainly. For whom am I making them up?

SCENE READER

[JUDITH MARIE resumes unpacking the bags.]

JUDITH MARIE

I don't know that. Conversations are brief. I gather food donations. Get soup simmering. That's the calling a this. Feather the nest, and then goodbye. – And then we've done what we can...I hope the plumbing's working.

SCENE READER

[JUDITH MARIE goes to the kitchen sink and turns on the water, the pipes knocking audibly, trembling-like, but eventually flushing into a full flow.]

ELIZABETH FITCH-KILROY

How close does this come, Judith, toward aiding and abetting?

JUDITH MARIE

Close enough for jazz, I imagine. Certainly some magistrate might see it as such.

ELIZABETH FITCH-KILROY

How do you...How do you go about reconciling all this?

JUDITH MARIE

I don't try. I'm at peace, Beth. I don't question the means as much anymore. I've seen them who make the rules not bother abiding by 'em in the least. So I live in the moment. I try to be helpful.

SCENE READER

[As ELIZABETH finishes making up the cots, JUDITH MARIE washes off a knife and hands it to ELIZABETH.]

JUDITH MARIE

Here. If you would, could you chop up the celery? – The carrots, the potatoes? Soup-sized.

ELIZABETH FITCH-KILROY

They who're dining: What might they be running from?

JUDITH MARIE

I don't know that either.

ELIZABETH FITCH-KILROY

Arson?...Murder?

JUDITH MARIE

I don't know, Beth. I'm not being coy with you. I don't ask. I don't know.

ELIZABETH FITCH-KILROY

Fair enough – I'm sorry. Just a scrivener's pry. I'm sorry.

JUDITH MARIE

No. No need. You know I'll tell you everything I can. The thing is, you learn to keep yourself sequestered. Insulated. It becomes second-nature – Compartmentalizing your life. Resisting all eyes. Asking no questions. Your adrenaline's forever coursing as is. You're continually fending off some dread that someone's lurking. Or that you're gonna get picked-up for questioning. Or that you're gonna get some phone call...Forever in fear that your luck's run out...Ignorance is bliss, believe me. I'd rather not know what I need not know.

SCENE READER

[JUDITH hands ELIZABETH a can of disinfectant.]

JUDITH MARIE

Here. Could you give the cots a spray-down, for good measure?

SCENE READER

[JUDITH proceeds looking through a couple of cupboards then beneath the sink until she finds a large soup kettle and begins washing it out before halting.]

ELIZABETH FITCH-KILROY

So, Sister Judith, you've officially become a doyenne of the rebellion –

JUDITH MARIE

Shhh! – You hear that?

ELIZABETH FITCH-KILROY

What? (Listens) What am I listening for?

JUDITH MARIE

Hm. I thought I heard something. Downstairs maybe.

SCENE READER

[ELIZABETH finishes spraying then resumes cutting celery, carrots, and potatoes. JUDITH MARIE, meanwhile, puts the soup kettle down, dries her hands, takes the knife from ELIZABETH, and moves toward a door leading to the cellar, continuing to talk in a steady cadence as she slowly walks, listening for something amiss as she goes.]

JUDITH MARIE

...You know, a lot of these guys are no different from them we knew at Loyola. They grew up wanting to be Bob Dylan and Otis Redding. Playing guitars and pubbing about. Nothing more. We've tried sit-ins and protest marches. And Britain responds by rolling out tanks through our streets and pretty much giving Marshall Law over to the Ulster Constabulary. The British let 'em set up their own police force. And they proceed cracking the heads of any Catholic kid from the wrong side a the wire who looks at 'em askance. And then, when the UVF makes a campaign of raping the women and killing the men in the aftermath – It was them who'll be dining here who protected and defended. Saved lives and preserved dignity. I don't want to see people hurt. But – I do believe in justice, Beth. And I believe in standing up to bullies. Some times you have to take sides.

SCENE READER

[JUDITH cautiously opens the door, quietly, listening before calling in a deeper, more authoritative voice.]

JUDITH MARIE

Hello?...Hello!

KATHRYN

(Offstage) Who's there?

JUDITH MARIE

Who's this?

KATHRYN

Judith Marie?

JUDITH MARIE

Kate?

SCENE READER

[There enters through the door KATHRYN O'CONNOR, as if coming up from the basement, holding a revolver in her hand that she eventually sets on the table.]

JUDITH MARIE

Christ, I didn't know who it might be. Certainly didn't expect to see you tonight.

KATHRYN

I was getting the pilot lit on the furnace. We're lucky the whole place didn't go up. Piping's all corroded. The great dilapidation. Gives the term 'shanty' a bad name.

JUDITH MARIE

What're you doing here?

KATHRYN

Patrick bought the note. We own it now. His men are working the place. – And who might this be?

ELIZABETH FITCH-KILROY

(Extending a hand) My name's Beth.

JUDITH MARIE

She's a college friend, Kate. Elizabeth Fitch-Kilroy – Kathryn O'Connor. Beth is a writer with the Irish newspaper in Chicago.

SCENE READER

[KATHRYN approaches the groceries and begins going through things.]

KATHRYN

(To JUDITH) She shouldn't be here.

JUDITH MARIE

She can help the lads get out the word.

ELIZABETH FITCH-KILROY

There's a lot of interest in what's happening over here. What the campaign's all about.

KATHRYN

(To JUDITH) Just the same, she shouldn't be *here*. There's protocol, Judith Marie. (Pauses and assesses the moment. Then to ELIZABETH.) It's nothing personal. I don't know you. But there is protocol. And you're in violation of it.

SCENE READER

[JUDITH MARIE joins KATHRYN, resuming the preparation of the vegetables and bread for soup. After a moment, ELIZABETH does likewise.]

JUDITH MARIE

There's no one more tread-lightly than me, Kate. I've known Beth for some 15 years. I trust her. And she can help us. The campaign's no good if no one knows about it.

KATHRYN

How much good will it do even then?

ELIZABETH

The more people know, the more pressure might be put on the Thatcher government to make concessions.

KATHRYN

What good is it if some of your own best voices silence themselves?

JUDITH MARIE

Kate, what are you doing here? I thought these days were behind you.

KATHRYN

I don't know. Pat got the note. We got a call. Old habits die hard. You answer the call....Here's the thing, Miss...Kilroy? *You* get picked-up and then you're put on the spot. And then that's it for all of us. We can't have it.

ELIZABETH FITCH-KILROY

I'm careful where I tread as well. I just want to tell the story of what's happening. It might help. Hopefully change some things.

SCENE READER

[KATHRYN continues unpacking the bag, checking through the donations. Meanwhile, JUDITH MARIE and ELIZABETH keep slicing and dicing.]

JUDITH MARIE

There should be enough for four, maybe six. Two full meals, with soup and leftovers.

SCENE READER

[KATHRYN removes a bowl of chicken covered with aluminum foil. She looks at it with noticeable disdain.]

KATHRYN

Look at this. – Look at all of it. Everything two days from rotten... I'm not saying we need to kill some fatted-calf, but I mean, come on. I can't stand cheap. There was a time when people gave – And they presented from their best...(Again to ELIZABETH) There are things you can't write about. (This chicken might be one of 'em.)

ELIZABETH FITCH-KILROY

But those things may help people see another side.

KATHRYN

People aren't looking to understand another side. You need leave certain things be.

JUDITH MARIE

Kate, you need to understand –

KATHRYN

I fully understand. More so than either of you. –

SCENE READER

[A series of noises from the other side of the door occur: steps toward up the stoop and to the door; a quick, light knock; a key in the latch; a jimmying loose of the door knob.]

KATHRYN

(To JUDITH) Were you followed?

JUDITH

No. We were careful.

SCENE READER

[KATHRYN picks up the revolver and nods toward JUDITH MARIE, who looks out a window then unlocks the latches on the door, opening it to KATHRYN's daughters ABBIE and CAITLIN O'CONNOR enter.]

JUDITH MARIE

Come in, come in.

CAITLIN

(As if cold and shaken) Sister Judith, what are you – Is my mother here?

SCENE READER

[CAITLIN suddenly sees KATHRYN.]

CAITLIN

Mum – We saw you and Da driving. We figured –

KATHRYN

Caity – What are you two doing here at this hour?

CAITLIN

Have you heard?

KATHRYN

Heard what?

CAITLIN

Paul's been arrested. Two British soldiers were shot and killed in a Boucher Road flat. Paul –

KATHRYN

Arrested?

CAITLIN

Yes.

KATHRYN

For what?

CAITLIN

On suspicion. He was stopped at a check-point. They found a gun in his trunk. Two British soldiers were found shot and killed about an hour ago. They're sweeping up everyone.

KATHRYN

Shot by who?

CAITLIN

No word.

KATHRYN

(To ABBIE) Aw Christ – Abigail – What've you gone and done?

[ABBIE doesn't answer.]

KATHRYN

. – Abbie, what have you done?

ABBIE

I've done nothing.

KATHRYN

Were you followed?

CAITLIN

No. I don't think so.

KATHRYN

You've done nothing? – Then what happened?

SCENE READER

[There is a pause. JUDITH MARIE takes the groceries from KATHRYN.]

JUDITH MARIE

Here. Let's get this cut-up and boiling. Beth, if you could?

SCENE READER

[JUDITH MARIE and ELIZABETH continue preparations with an accelerated sense of urgency, ultimately chopping everything into the soup and setting the soup kettle on the stove to simmering.]

KATHRYN

Did you pull a trigger?

ABBIE

No. – Mum, I swear to you, I didn't...

KATHRYN

What about your brother?

ABBIE

Paul had nothing to do with it. I swear to you.

KATHRYN

And you? What part did you have in it?

ABBIE

I didn't pull a trigger.

KATHRYN

Aw, Jesus, Abbie. – You promised this was behind us. Why? Why back to this?

ABBIE

Because I'm good at it. Because I smile then guys smile and they come with. – And because it needs be done.

CAITLIN

– There isn't time for this, Mum. They're looking for her. We need to figure things out. We need to get her away from here.

SCENE READER

[There gradually rises the distant din of trash can lids against trash cans.]

ABBIE

(To CAITLIN) But what about Paul? I can't just get gone and leave him to his own.

CAITLIN

You want to join him? They have nothing on him. They'll pin everything on you.

SCENE READER

[ALL THE WOMEN pause as the din of trash can lids grows more pronounced.]

ELIZABETH

What's that?

JUDITH MARIE

It's the Catholic women in the neighborhood. Announcing that another of the men on hunger strike has just died.

SCENE READER

[The rising din is punctuated by the rising sounds of a siren.]

JUDITH MARIE

Caity's right. I'll finish up here. Come on, Kate, Abbie. It's time to go.

KATHRYN

What about you?

JUDITH MARIE

I'll finish it up. And I'll make my way –

SCENE READER

[JUDITH MARIE procures and hands CAITLIN her car keys.]

JUDITH MARIE

Here – Take my car. Beth you go with 'em. Go! I'll catch-up with you later.

SCENE READER

[CAITLIN, ABBIE, and ELIZABETH all exit.]

KATHRYN

(To JUDITH MARIE.) You need to keep stirring the kettle...Aw Christ, Judith Marie. – How are we back to all this?

JUDITH MARIE

We'll get through. Kate. Come on – You have to go. Get the girls home.

SCENE READER

[Lights begin to diminish. JUDITH MARIE embraces KATHRYN.]

JUDITH MARIE

We'll make our way, Kate. Now go.

SCENE READER

[KATHRYN exits and JUDITH MARIE shuts the door behind her, locking it and pausing before approaching the stove, picking up a spoon and stirring the simmering soup.]

[END OF SCENE]

SCENE 2: Desmond and Seamus' Cell at Long Kesh

Characters: The Troubadour and The Troubadette
 The Tam O'Shanter Trio
 Seamus Flynn
 Desmond 'Doyle' Lenihan
 Mule aka Malcolm MacDougal
 Elbows aka Eddie Keating

SCENE READER

[SCENE: In the darkness there continues the sounds of trash can lids and sirens along with the growing sound of a bodhran drum. As the drumming commences and continues, there appear PRESS PHOTO SLIDES of the annual Protestant parades marching through the Catholic neighborhoods of Belfast celebrating William of Orange's victory in the Battle of the Boyne in 1690: the Orange Order; kids throwing rocks; crowds rioting; police crack-downs; the Reverend Ian Paisley; images of Bloody Sunday; of funerals; of uprisings; and of bombings, the panoply of images associated with "The Troubles" throughout the six counties of Northern Ireland.]

[After a minute or so of images appearing along with the cacophony of trash can lids and sirens and drumming occurring, THE TROUBADOURS and THE TRIO re-enter the stage, still dressed in civilian clothes, save for one additional member of THE TRIO joining the first in dressing in paramilitary-garb. THE GROUP proceeds singing the song "Come Out Ye Black and Tans."]

SCENE READER (continued)

[As the song commences and progresses, there appears a large white scrim lit from the back. We eventually see the silhouette of AN IRISH REPUBLICAN PRISONER being led by FOUR GUARDS. [NOTE: These guards can conceivably be portrayed by the initial four actors who served as PATRICK O'CONNOR's men.] The silhouette of THE IRISH REPUBLICAN PRISONER can be seen being thrown into a holding area then beaten ferociously, THE GUARDS finally leaving him on the floor. At the song's conclusion, as the screen dims to dark, there appears across it the following:]

**I'll wear no convict's uniform
 Nor meekly serve my time
 That Britain may call Ireland's fight
 Eight hundred years of crime.**

[NOTE: This poem could perhaps stay faintly visible to some degree throughout the play.]

SCENE READER (continued)

[In the darkness there rise the sounds of a prison – the bustle of voices, the buzzers, the heavy latches unlocking bolts and the heavy closing of metal doors. A light gradually rises on the cell of DESMOND "DOYLE" LENIHAN, who is curled-up and sleeping. The sound of boots on concrete is then heard as the sounds of the unlocking, the opening, and the closing of doors come closer. There appears the shadow of MULES and ELBOWS escorting SEAMUS FLYNN back to his cell.]

SCENE READER

[Upon ELBOWS signaling, the sound of a buzzer is then heard as there appear the shadows of a prison door opening. ELBOWS shoves SEAMUS slightly toward the open door, yet SEAMUS doesn't budge. ELBOWS pushes harder, still to no avail. Finally, MULE steps up and whacks SEAMUS in the lower back with his baton, tossing SEAMUS into the cell before THE GUARDS exit, the buzzer sounding and the shadows of the door closing.]

[As SEAMUS is thrown into the cell, DESMOND stirs awake and rises. DESMOND and SEAMUS are both dressed in army shorts, gray t-shirts, and Doc Marten combat boots with no laces, each with a blanket draped over his respective shoulder. SEAMUS appears badly beaten and bloodied. DESMOND approaches, putting his hand near SEAMUS' eye, then taking the corner of the blanket draped around his shoulders and dabbing at SEAMUS' mouth.]

DESMOND

Jesus, look at you. Holy Christ...Who done it?

SEAMUS

Who else? The Mule and his minions.

DESMOND

How many times this make?

SEAMUS

A baker's dozen or so. What I ever do to him?

DESMOND

I don't know, Seam. You must represent something. He loves aiming it at you.

SEAMUS

(Changing the conversation to the topic at hand.) We're in trouble, Doyle.

SCENE READER

[SEAMUS steps back and removes a dental bridge from the back of his mouth and produces a small cellophane packet. SEAMUS dries it on his blanket then hands it to DESMOND, who unwraps it and begins reading. SEAMUS returns the bridge to his mouth.]

SEAMUS

Our man is passed.

DESMOND

When?

SEAMUS

I don't know. But the next-up, he's dying quick. Quicker than anyone expected. – Christ, two a the guys behind him are in a really bad way. We're losing our footing...

DESMOND

How bad off is the next?

SEAMUS

Bad. Maybe last a day. Two at the most. Might could be hours as well.

DESMOND

Ah, Christ Jesus.

SEAMUS

And the other two are likewise. Lapsing into coma. Hallucinating. Retching. (Pauses.) Doyle?

DESMOND

– Don't –

SEAMUS

Put me on.

DESMOND

Seamus, I don't have a quarrel in me. Please, leave it be.

SEAMUS

Make me the next-up. Let me fill in.

DESMOND

That isn't to be happening.

SCENE READER

[SEAMUS begins crowding DESMOND as DESMOND tries getting away from him.]

SEAMUS

Put me on, Des.

DESMOND

Get off it – *Get off me!*

SEAMUS

I deserve a chance.

DESMOND

Oh do you? Deserve?

SEAMUS

I do actually.

DESMOND

GET-OFF-ME – And give me some fucking space or I'll batter the other eye.

SEAMUS

I do deserve the chance.

DESMOND

Look, Squire, you want brass tacks, here it is: As far as most are concerned, your entire life's been chance squandered. That's the perception. So what you feel you 'deserve' has nothing to do with it. You think *they'd* go for it? Putting their chips on you? – Christ, Seamus, why do you make me talk to you so harsh?

SEAMUS

You advocate for me, they'll go for it. We need people. We're running out a men who —

DESMOND

The answer's 'No!' The correct answer is: They won't go for it. The decision's already made, Seam. Paul O'Connor's been brought in. He's refusing to wear the prison issue. He's next-up in line for refusing food.

SEAMUS

– How else am I to mend? — Paul O'Connor?!

DESMOND

Mend? You doing such won't *mend* anything. And there's no 'deserving' it. There's no 'atoning' for past sins. There's no chancing it. We need proven men. And the Outside, they don't see you as such.

SEAMUS

What's Paul O'Connor proven? – Christ, he's green. He's soft. He's been coddled his entire life. – Jesus fuck, it fucking figures! His like. Get's everything handed to him. – I'm a good trooper, Doyle. I'm more seasoned than sonny-buck Paul. I deserve better! How long am I to wear the stigmata?

DESMOND

No one's disputing your credentials.

SEAMUS

Then?

DESMOND

Then? Then they're gonna say to me — *when you're* proposed as a replacement — that he had his chance. He couldn't handle a Constabulary interrogation, how's he gonna handle this? He failed how many times with how many assignments? We can't afford him to fail at this. What has he followed-through on ever once in his life? We need men who follow-through. Had anyone ever come forth to testify they could count on Seamus Flynn? That they could rely on him and depend upon him? We need men we can rely on. – That's what they'll say.

SEAMUS

That isn't fair. I follow through. You do depend on me. I am relied upon. – Besides, you've even acknowledged: I was a kid! And there were circumstances —

DESMOND

There were circumstances, fine! Everyone's got something. But you'll expect *them* to understand? The only thing they understand is success.

SEAMUS

And I haven't I anted up?

SCENE READER

[SEAMUS gets no answer and hence displays his crippled knee cap.]

SEAMUS

Doyle? Look at me. I'm a gimping comeuppance. And have I ever flinched since? Doyle? Do you ever see me wavering? I can hardly walk without wincing. I took to my punishment. And have I ever questioned any decision? (Pauses) Don't I deserve a chance to atone? Haven't I the right to a little redemption? The chance to contribute to this thing?

DESMOND

You do contribute.

SEAMUS

Ah, fuck – How? By swallowing and retching packs back and forth? By surviving every thrashing? Every beating. – I'm still the butt boy — The ragamuffin kid taking the risks no one else wants. Doing everyone else's chores. I've earned a chance at some respect. The Outside, they'll defer to you. – Don't play disingenuous. And you can finesse it. You can make it sound like the right move. If you recommend me. – Look, I know you don't think I can do it. But I won't let you down.

DESMOND

Ah, Seam. – I just see it ending badly.

SEAMUS

T'is a hunger strike, Squire. There's only one way for it to end successfully. And that's badly.

DESMOND

I just don't know that I can recommend you.

SEAMUS

Don't know? Do I not take every beating that's administered?

DESMOND

You do.

SEAMUS

Am I not the first to take part in any protest that comes down the pike, no questions asked?

DESMOND

I s'pose you are.

SEAMUS

Have I not been your chief counsel since we start rooming these past months?

DESMOND

On some level, I s'pose.

SEAMUS

On some level? You s'pose what? What's not to know?

DESMOND

(Considers it.) Because if you... Listen: If you fail at this, you've kicked the legs from beneath us. And we're talking starvation. We're not speaking of a beating that comes and goes. We're talking slow, excruciating, day-after-day. We're talking agonizing. A hunger that creeps through every cell a your soul, squeezing the last bit a life from each vital organ, then shutting it down. Piece by piece, your entire being... One day your kidneys go. The next day your eyes. One day you can't lift a finger because to do so summons the pain of a dozen broken bones. Have you got that in you?

SEAMUS

I do.

DESMOND

Because if you come off a hunger strike, you'll have told the world that your life – *your life* – is more precious than... than the trooper killed with your bullet. Or the screw who comes down on us in here then gets his while on his way home. Or more important than anyone else getting caught in the cross-fires. The *cause* is the thing. And your life can't take precedent over the cause.

SEAMUS

You're looking for people, Doyle. But everyone has family. Wives and kids need looking after. Well. Bride's some years gone. The girls don't hardly remember they have a Da. I have nothing. Which means I have nothing to lose. And that makes me the perfect candidate. Christ, who knows. How 'bout maybe I *can* salvage something out a doing so as well. Give me some sort a legacy my daughters might remember me by rather than the louse whose life simply sums-up as 'chance squandered'. It'll give me something to finally give them. Something good to remember their Da by.

DESMOND

(Considering it) Well, Squire, I don't know that I have it in me.

SEAMUS

I've never succeeded at anything, Doyle. School. Jobs. Family. – You don't know what it's like; to keep fucking up. But this — *This* I can do.

DESMOND

No. Listen to what I'm saying. – Do you know what you're asking of me? *Of me*. You know, I need... I have to stay distanced. Keep my perspective. My friends and brothers waste away and I have to swallow and nod and say, It's a means to a noble end... You see? What you're asking of me? This whole thing... It's... I'm... I'm broken out in a rash. My head throbs, tighter than a drum. I wake up and my jaw aches because I've spent the night grinding my teeth to dust. It's consuming me. And now you, asking me to stand by and watch... As, what, you salvage a legacy? Grasp at redemption? Leave your kids what? Without a father? Orphaned?

SEAMUS

How 'bout I leave 'em the notion of a father who stood up for what he believed in. Who walked-the-walk once and right and contributed to a cause greater than himself. Isn't that how you would spin it? (Pauses.) Put me on, Doyle. I can do it. I need to. Doyle, look at me. Please.

DESMOND

I already appointed Paul.

SEAMUS

Then appoint me thereafter. Guys are fading quicker than expected. Make me next-up in line.

DESMOND

You can't fail.

SEAMUS

I know.

DESMOND

You *can't* fail.

SEAMUS

I won't.

DESMOND

Do you know what you're fucking of asking a me? (Pausing.) Well, Squire. I'll be I guess the attorney of your request. I say it through gritted teeth and clenched jaw and a rosary full a reservations...But...I'll recommend you. – Though no promises! –

SEAMUS

Your advocacy. That's all I'm asking.

DESMOND

But don't be indignant when they dismiss the request. No pouting when they don't go for it.

SEAMUS

That's all I'm asking, Des.

SCENE READER

[SEAMUS extends his hand formally.]

SEAMUS

Thank you, Doyle. I won't let you down. I promise you. I'll see it through.

SCENE READER

[DESMOND, initially surprised a bit with the formality of SEAMUS' extended hand, reluctantly accepts SEAMUS' hand. As the lights dim on the cell of DESMOND and SEAMUS, lights rise on KATHRYN and PATRICK O'CONNOR, waiting in the VISITING AREA of LONG KESH.]

[END OF SCENE]

SCENE 3: The Family Visiting Area at Long Kesh

Characters: Patrick O'Connor
Kathryn O'Connor
Paul O'Connor

SCENE READER

[SCENE: Lights rise fully on the VISITING AREA of LONG KESH as PAUL enters, escorted by ELBOWS. PAUL is dressed in the clothes in which he's been arrested. ELBOWS removes a set of handcuffs from PAUL, who has visibly been beaten, and stands aside. PATRICK, who has been pacing with a noticeable limp, glares at PAUL as if in the midst of a tirade.]

PATRICK

(To PAUL) – You're going on no hunger strike!

PAUL

It's already decided, Da —

PATRICK

Let that Desmond Lenihan go on strike himself then.

PAUL

I am going on. And I need —

PATRICK

– Passing sentence on who dies and who doesn't.

PAUL

– I need your help —

PATRICK

Not a bad post if you can get it! How many meals is he missed?

KATHRYN

Patrick, for God's sake, let him talk.

PATRICK

No one's deciding my son's going on no hunger strike.

PAUL

Your son's deciding! I'm not wearing the prison-issue. And so I'm willing. And I'm ready.

SCENE READER

[PATRICK holds up the prison-issued uniform PAUL is refusing to wear.]

PATRICK

You put this thing on. You straighten-up. You do what you're told. And you get back home.

PAUL

That won't be happening.

PATRICK

You'll do it.

PAUL

Or what?

PATRICK

So you're gonna become a part a this? Christ, seven men dead and it hasn't made a drop a' difference in anyone's life.

KATHRYN

Except the families.

PATRICK

That's right. And that's where it ends. With the suffering a the families.

PAUL

So I should shirk my duty? Not stand up for what's right?

KATHRYN

Toward what end, Paul? How is you dying accomplishing anything?

PAUL

Toward what end? Look at me. Do I look like a criminal, Ma? 'Cause that's how they wanna dress me. As a convict. A thug. Ma?

KATHRYN

No. But...

PAUL

Don't you both get tired a being treated like second-class citizens in your own neighborhood? Your own homes? Of sitting in the back a the bus and having the Shankhill punks sticking it in your face every season? I want to keep my own clothes. I want recognition. Recognition that I'm part of a resistance. Resistance against an occupying army. I want what's right!

PATRICK

Ah, you sound like a fucking pamphlet. – You listen to me: Just do your term and come back home.

KATHRYN

Don't get anymore mixed up in this, son. Quit fighting 'em. Get whatever done and come back ho me. I mean, if this thing were making a bit a difference, that would be one thing –

PAUL

It *is* making a difference. The world sees what's going on. How we're being treated. The human rights issue. It's turning up the heat on Downing Street.

PATRICK

Ah, Christ, how? Who sees? Maggie Thatcher don't even acknowledge you exist. You're a bunch a' criminal terrorists to them and nothing more.

PAUL

She has to acknowledge us eventually. They can't ignore us forever. They'll have to recognize us as resistance if enough heat is ignited.

PATRICK

When? Once you're dead? (Turns away.) The world sees nothing. It sees buffoons being manipulated. – Committing suicide. The whole lot of you. Pointless suicides.

PAUL

Don't turn away from me, Da.. Ma?

KATHRYN

I hate seeing you here, Pauly. This ruins me. But at least I'm *seeing* you. There's hope that someday you might come home.

PAUL

I'll never be able to come home with things the way they are.

PATRICK

You listen to me: I've anted-up for our house. I've worked hard to see to it that you don't have to get involved in this. I can't control what you do in the streets, I'll concede that. And if you want to rot in here for... semantics of all things, I don't have much control over that either. But you're not going to kill yourself over something that won't amount to pork fat in the long run. Just do your time. Toe the line. And come back home.

PAUL

I can't do that, Da.

SCENE READER

[PATRICK grabs PAUL by the shirt and pins him in the chair.]

KATHRYN

Patrick!

PATRICK

You'll do it! – You want I'll give you a beating that'll make these guards look like geishas? I'm your father and I have a say in the matter. You understand?

KATHRYN

Stop it. – Patrick!

SCENE READER

[PAUL and PATRICK continue tussling. KATHRYN moves into the fray, wedging between the two. PAUL knocks PATRICK off, freeing himself from his father's grasp, standing toe-to-toe with him.]

PAUL

I'm done with this family's genuflecting! Never standing up for yourself. Never standing up to anyone! I'm a grown man. I'm striking. And there's nothing you can do or say to change that. Understand? (To KATHRYN.) Ma? I've made my peace with it. I'm asking you to do the same...I need your assurance that you won't interfere.

KATHRYN

Is that all your asking a me, Paul?

PAUL

I need to know that regardless of how you feel about this personally, you'll publicly support my decision.

PATRICK

Ha! Fat chance a that.

PAUL

Ma – You've got to give me your assurance —

PATRICK

We're not giving you assurance over anything.

PAUL

(Ignoring PATRICK, still addressing KATHRYN.) Ma? I need to know —

PATRICK

She's not gonna back you on this. (To KATHRYN.) Go ahead, Kate. Tell him. Tell him what a barrel-full this whole thing is. (To PAUL.) You go on hunger strike and we'll intervene the first chance we get. Tell him, Kate.

KATHRYN

Is there no other way, Pauly? Is there not something else you can do?

PAUL

No, Ma. There isn't. (Referring to the prison-issued uniform.) I'm not wearing that. – This, Ma. This is where I'm supposed to be. This is what I'm supposed to do. This is my calling.

KATHRYN

Couldn't you somehow be more useful...Couldn't you be more useful alive?

PAUL

I've got to think of the others, Ma. Guys like me, but with wives and kids. Guys like me, picked up on suspicion, never been charged with nothing. The usual suspects. With families they might never see again unless something's done. I'm single. I have no one depending on me. No accountabilities. I feel it in here. It's something I have to do.

PATRICK

Are you listening to this? 'Wives and kids.' What of your own? What of us?!

KATHRYN

(To PATRICK.) Will you quit with the huffing and puffing?!

PATRICK

Christ, his *calling*. – Break my fucking heart.

KATHRYN

Enough, Pat! Jesus, will you just shut for mouth for moment?

SCENE READER

[PATRICK looks at KATHRYN, notes his concession, and recedes into the shadows as the lights dim on him.]

KATHRYN

(To PAUL.) What about me, Paul?

PAUL

I need you to support me. Now more than ever, Mum. I need you by my side.

KATHRYN

What about me? – Asking me to give you up for something I've mixed feelings toward anyway. What's this gonna accomplish? Besides, we've given. Your father's done his time with campaigns. We've anted-up our share. And now you, telling me that that's not enough...I've always been there for you, haven't I?

PAUL

You have.

KATHRYN

Have I ever let you down?

PAUL

No.

KATHRYN

Now I'm supposed to sit beside you and what? Wait? Wait with you for to die?... You know what you're asking a me?

PAUL

I do.

KATHRYN

(Pauses.) There's no changing your mind?

PAUL

No.

KATHRYN

(Pauses.) My son... Whatever it is you choose... Whatever course you take... I guess I'll... I'll stand by you.

SCENE READER

[Lights diminish.]

[END OF SCENE]

SCENE 4: The Cardinal's Office in Archdiocese Building

Characters: Sister Judith Marie
Father Martin Kelleher, Assistant to the Cardinal
Monsignor Michael Sweeney

SCENE READER

[SCENE: As the scene is assembled, THE TROUBADOUR, THE TROUBALETTE, and THE TRIO re-enter the stage, this time all dressed in historical IRA uniform attire from the era of the 1916 Easter Rebellion, proceeding into the song, "The Merry Ploughboy." Meanwhile, on the screens behind appear images of the early years of Irish Republican resistance and its martyrs.]

[As the song ends, the lights rise on FATHER MARTIN KELLEHER, Executive Assistant to the Cardinal along with SISTER JUDITH MARIE and MONSIGNOR MICHAEL SWEENEY, who are there in tandem to see His Eminence.]

JUDITH MARIE

– I don't understand. For two weeks we've had an appointment.

KELLEHER

I'm only informed, Sister, to the extent I'm informed. No one spoke directly with me. – Besides, you should both know – The Cardinal's office – There are new developments unfolding. The Cardinal is altering the Office's stance regarding the Campaign.

SWEENEY

For why?

KELLEHER

In light of new developments.

SWEENEY

Such as?

KELLEHER

The British government is prepared to make concessions.

JUDITH MARIE

Such as?

KELLEHER

Clothes, for one.

SWEENEY

Bah – We've been through this before. They'll let the men wear blue jeans and cotton shirts instead of the stripes. Exchange one uniform for another.

KELLEHER

The men shall get their own clothes this time. – Visits will be restored on a regular basis – No more high-hurdles for ten minutes of time every few months. Privileges will be reinstated. Books, pens, and paper will be provided. The men will have regular exercise time. There's even talk that the men will be able to build themselves a chapel if they like.

JUDITH MARIE

The British government's willing to guarantee this?

KELLEHER

No. – No guarantees just yet. – But they appear to be negotiating in good faith. They're putting something forth – Of course, only if the men come off the campaign first.

JUDITH MARIE

The men won't go for that.

KELLEHER

What makes you think you'd know that, Sister?

JUDITH MARIE

We all make soup for someone. And people need folks to confide in. And it is Sister no longer, Father.

KELLEHER

The process takes time. And you've still taken an oath of obedience until its annulment. – To whom are your affinities? What makes you feel you can answer in a moment that which is a campaign of hundreds?

JUDITH MARIE

I've been working with IRA members in various manner since 1968. I've been working with Ulster Defense Association members since 1970. I've been to every hovel in the six counties. Often bearing food and blankets. And with each excursion has come conversation. I've been shot twice, once in the left lower leg; the other winged in the back of my shoulder. And I've been kidnapped once and held for 90 hours. I still don't know by whom. Those are my bona fides. What are yours? I'm neither hiding nor denying my affiliation. What of you and yours?

KELLEHER

You, Sister, seem divided between two masters.

SWEENEY

Martin, listen. – You can't switch perspectives so quickly. You need to maintain moral authority. The prisoners put a stop to the strike and there'll be no pressure on the Brits to negotiate anything. They've double-crossed those men before. Maggie Thatcher and her realm have lost their good-intention credibility. I mean, please, a "chapel," break my bleeding heart.

KELLEHER

It's a start.

JUDITH MARIE

T'is a bluff. T'is capitulation cast as compromise.

KELLEHER

T'is a gesture. Of good faith. – So you know, so you can be prepared. The Cardinal's calling a press conference. He's lending his voice to the discussion. This Archdiocese cannot support nor condone the hunger strike at Long Kesh. And we can't stand by silent any longer as though it isn't happening. We think this is a good chance to put an end to this and the Cardinal is planning on making a statement to that effect.

SWEENEY

You're the Archdiocese? You and the Great Miter. The *men* are the Archdiocese. I'm the Archdiocese!

KELLEHER

You may be a prison chaplain, Monsignor, but you are not among the prisoners. Nor their cause. This is a matter of doctrine. A matter of conscience. And of obedience. The Cardinal believe that rational minds should prevail. And He's assured all involved and all concerned that this Archdiocese shall do all it can to put an end to this...this madness. This sadness. What they're doing is tantamount to suicide, Monsignor. You know that. Read your 101. But you seem – and you Sister – you seem bent on promising those boys these iridescent dreams and they tilt toward them until they fall into graves. It's impractical. And it's a sin. What they need is someone who'll talk sense to them. Someone to address them as 'men' and not as 'boys'.

JUDITH MARIE

What about the political status? That's what this is about. Those men won't agree to anything until they're declassified as criminals.

KELLEHER

It will be considered. But there are no guarantees. – The strike must end first.

SWEENEY

The strike ends. The British government reneges. And then you'll get an eruption of violence that'll make all previous campaigns look like hibachi fires.

KELLEHER

The British government wants this to end, too.

JUDITH MARIE

Wants it to end? They don't even acknowledge that it's begun. That there's even is a hunger strike. – They've backed out before!

SWEENEY

I can't go to these men with a pig in a poke, asking them 'trust' and 'keep the faith' in a system that's been beating down them and theirs for generations.

KELLEHER

Suicide is a mortal sin, Mike. And what those men are doing is suicide. There's no grey area.

SWEENEY

You're so ready to bargain with the Pharisees? Britain's letting men die because they're too damn proud to back away from an immoral policy -- And by all appearances, the Irish Catholic Church is snug in Maggie Thatcher's satchel!

KELLEHER

Mind you place, Monsignor. And mind your tongue. Seven men have already passed. An eighth is ever more are on the brink. Like it or not, the Irish Catholic Church – of which you are a still an obedient member – is condemning that strike. – Sister? – And if I were you, I'd have a talk with your lad, Mr. Lenihan. If indeed he's orchestrating this, then counsel him accordingly. Be a disciple of the doctrine and not a chum to the pub masters. – This thing has to end one way or another. What they're doing – and I'll say it 'till it ceases – is suicide. No matter what we tell ourselves – His Eminence is saying such. – Considering the British government's offer, His position is that it is an honorable way for all involved to end this once and for all. And that is how "we" shall proceed.

SCENE READER

[Lights diminish.]

SCENE READER

[SCENE: As the lights recede, THE TROUBADOUR, THE TROUBALETTE, and THE TRIO re-enter the stage, still all dressed in historical IRA uniform attire from the era of the 1916 Easter Rebellion, again proceeding into song, this time, "On the One Road." And again, on the screens above and behind continue images of the early years of Irish Republican resistance and its martyrs.]

[END OF SCENE]

SCENE 5: The Kitchen of the O'Connor Family Household

Characters: Kathryn O'Connor
 Caitlin O'Connor
 Patrick O'Connor
 Elizabeth Fitch-Kilroy
 Sister Judith Marie

SCENE READER

[SCENE: Lights rise on the O'CONNOR kitchen, noticeably fresher than the Safe House Kitchen, though with a noticeable architectural similarity. Around the kitchen table sit CAITLIN O'CONNOR, ABBIE O'CONNOR, and ELIZABETH FITCH-KILROY. As the scene opens, KATHRYN is refilling the tea cups. As the dialogue begins, and in order to give her a moment from the previous scene, SISTER JUDITH MARIE enters whenever is convenient, perhaps drying her hands on a towel, perhaps as if just visiting the Loo. It is four weeks after the safe house.]

ELIZABETH

...I'm more Irish cultural than Irish actual. My great-grandmother was the last to head to America and that was some time in, what...the 1870s? But I grew up in a neighborhood of Gaelic expatriates, the Sons of the Sod, all born in a south-side neighborhood of Chicago with thicker brogues than their parents. – But the sense of Erin-go-Bragh was infectious. And I became an acolyte of the heritage. And that quickly brought me toward The Troubles. And the Cause. And to this.

KATHRYN

(After a slight pause) We can't serve as your story, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

I can respect that.

KATHRYN

But can you abide by it?

ELIZABETH

I can.

KATHRYN

(Pausing) My husband was part of a number of campaigns in his former days. We all kind a grew up in the world of rebellion and resistance. – But it was a different time. There wasn't...the thirst for the jugular that there seems today.

ABBIE

That's not true. There's always been the thirst. You and Da just didn't imbibe.

KATHRYN

I'm saying there wasn't the vehemence there is now. – Abbie, don't judge us. – You grow up. You make choices. You quench whatever thirst and finally you move on. You make a decision whether you're gonna live a life or not. And if so, you live it accordingly.

ELIZABETH

(After another slight pause, to ABBIE) What brought you into it so full-throttle?

[There is a pause. Then CAITLIN takes a deep breath.]

CAITLIN

I, um...I was assaulted when I was fourteen. Three guys. UVF. I was coming home from a dance. Alone. And that sort a...I don't know...

ABBIE

– That sorta tilted things. For all of us. I don't see the meek inheriting anything in our neighborhood.

ELIZABETH

May I ask: How do you know they were UVF?

ABBIE

Because we knew them.

CAITLIN

And they knew me.

KATHRYN

We can't be your story.

JUDITH MARIE

It may help, Kate.

KATHRYN

It can't be, Judith Marie. (To ELIZABETH) You want to help, help Abbie, Get her away from this. Help her get a life for herself. Take her to Chicago with you.

ABBIE

Who says I *want* to get away from this?

CAITLIN

You're gonna wait until you get picked-up? Is that how your plan on *proving* yourself?

ABBIE

I'll make my way.

CAITLIN

You're so ready to join Paul in jail?

ABBIE

Someone needs to stand beside him.

CAITLIN

You want to come watch me rubbing lotion into his arms? His legs? How comfortable do you think I am doing that? But I'm doing it. – I do stand beside him. Every day.

KATHRYN

(To ELIZABETH) Can you help Abigail?

ELIZABETH

Absolutely. Plenty of ways to make a go of it. There's dozens of Irish businesses advertising with us. Always in need and especially eager to help someone new – especially new and pretty. Especially she who hales from here. We have a good network for such as her. She can have a career. Make a home.

KATHRYN

(To ABBIE) How does that sound to you?

ABBIE

Oh, so I *do* have a say in this.

SCENE READER

[Enter PATRICK O'CONNOR, placing his large ring of keys on kitchen table.]

PATRICK

Have say in what? (To JUDITH MARIE.) Sister Judith.

JUDITH MARIE

Hello Pat.

KATHRYN

How did it go?

PATRICK

It didn't. He's still refusing to see me.

KATHRYN

Still? I thought he'd be over that.

PATRICK

Well you know what? To hell with him. – I have a call into your boyfriend the Monsignor. Paul don't want to see me? He won't listen to me? – Fine. I'll circumvent him. And then we'll see.

JUDITH MARIE

A call into the Monsignor about what?

PATRICK

(To ABBIE) You know, I'm not gonna necessarily assign blame to you for all a this. But you know as well as I, this whole thing is your fault.

KATHRYN

Pat, don't start.

PATRICK

How many times we have the talk? About her conduct. Her behavior. Her defiance. And now? Paul's locked-down a month now for something he'd a stayed under the radar for. Rams his bull-head into the prison powers. And now, nearly three weeks he hasn't eaten! Do you know what you start to look like three weeks into such? Christ, ready to starve himself for no-one-gives-a-shite!

KATHRYN

The bellicose you doesn't do anyone any good.

PATRICK

And what am I to do? Bellicose is all I know! (Noticing ELIZABETH.) Good morning.

ELIZABETH

Hello.

PATRICK

(Referring to ELIZABETH) Who is this?

JUDITH MARIE

Pat, this is Elizabeth Fitch-Kilroy. She's a friend a mine from the states. Beth, Patrick O'Connor.

PATRICK

My pleasure.

CAITLIN

She's a newspaper writer. She's doing a story on the campaign.

PATRICK

What sort a story?

ELIZABETH

A profile. How the government's handling it. How the families are handling it. How one deals with such a thing.

PATRICK

How *does* one deal with such a thing? (To JUDITH MARIE.) What good you think that's gonna do?

JUDITH MARIE

I don't know, Pat. The more people know, the more pressure seems ratcheted-up on the Thatcher regime. To acknowledge the men. To acknowledge their human rights. To acknowledge their voice. To make some sort a concession.

PATRICK

And for whom do you write?

ELIZABETH

The The Hyde Park Hibernian News.

PATRICK

Hyde Park? A neighborhood publication? That preaches right to the choir loft.

ELIZABETH

We distribute close to some sixty thousand every month throughout the region, from South Bend to Milwaukee. People read us.

PATRICK

Another diary for the Diaspora. We need a national voice. International – Something that's gonna carry some weight. – Christ, even then, who's gonna care?

JUDITH MARIE

A lot of these stories get picked up for syndication and they make their way through papers all over the country. – Small towns. Cities. Metropolitan regions. All across the states.

PATRICK

To what end, Judith? I mean, Jesus Christ this whole fucking thing! – Excuse me. But – This whole fucking thing. (To ABBIE) Well?

ABBIE

Well what?

PATRICK

What have you to say for yourself?

ABBIE

What am I expected to say? – All right, I'm sorry Paul's in jail. There. I've said my daily vesper. I'm sorry he's refusing food. I'm sorry Britain's occupying Ireland he got he picked up with a gun. But this is his choice. – You know what, Da? Don't worry over me. I'll be heading away and you won't have to be bothered with what I'm doing or with whom or the legitimate reasons why.

PATRICK

Oh, you're heading, are you? To where?

ABBIE

America.

PATRICK

With who? And with what money?

ABBIE

I'll make my way.

CAITLIN

She says they're looking for her, Da. She's under warrant.

PATRICK

For what?

ABBIE

Aw Christ – Does it matter? Under warrant for suspicion. – Like everyone else we know.

PATRICK

Suspicion a what?

ABBIE

Suspicion a conspiring. Suspicion of abduction. Of kidnapping. Accessory before the fact. Accessory after. – Accomplice to Murder. – Suspicion of whatever they want to lay on you. Because that's all they need. That's all they needed for Paul. That's all they need for me.

PATRICK

And their scrutiny is so unfounded?

ABBIE

You know, I'll gladly take Paul's place. I'll take to jail. Take to the blanket. Join 'em on strike.

KATHRYN

And then what?

ABBIE

Fine. Then instead I'll go to America. – You want me away from it? – Then there's that. I'm gone.

PATRICK

And leave us to clean up your mess. (To KATHRYN) How about you?

KATHRYN

How about me what?

PATRICK

You gonna come down there with me? Show a sense a solidarity?

KATHRYN

I go down there, Pat. Caity and I show solidarity. Every day. We show solidarity with Paul.

PATRICK

Tell him you want him to put an end to this then. (She doesn't answer.) Kate? You coming along?

KATHRYN

No. I can't do that. I'm not going down there to hector him about it. Or to make him feel worse for what's happening. Or circumvent his wishes by sneaking behind his back.

PATRICK

Stand with me on this

KATHRYN

I can't betray my word to him.

PATRICK

Don't give me 'Can't', Kate.

ABBIE

You know, considering your own past campaigns, you'd think you'd understand this.

PATRICK

What I done had purpose. We made gains. Negotiated deals. Gave a little to get a little more. But this...This thing's going nowhere. He lays down his life and it's been for what?

JUDITH MARIE

Principle?

PATRICK

Aw, Jesus – Principle?! Really Judith Marie. You know what it's like to have a son? One involved in such as this? Would you settle for principle as compensation for his perish? Besides, you and I both know first-hand how principle has a way a being twisted according to whichever agenda needs furthering. Principle's an empty relic anymore.

CAITLIN

Seems principle's been a way of justifying an awful lot along the way.

PATRICK

So you're ready, all of you – ready to just let him go? Just like that?

KATHRYN

I hate it, Pat! But in his heart he believes it's the right thing. Who am I to say otherwise?

ABBIE

Besides, he's a grown man. Grown beyond your grasp.

PATRICK

Grown or no, he's my son! I've – You've an obligation to steer him right, no matter what his age.

KATHRYN

My obligation is to stand by him. To be of comfort in his time a need. To help him with a peaceful transition, if at all possible. *That's* a mother's duty.

PATRICK

Our obligation is to save his ass – And right now, if that means yanking it from the fire, then so be it. He can hate me the rest of his life. A good, long Irish resentment. (To KATHRYN.) He'll listen to you. (To CAITLIN.) To both a you. You have sway.

KATHRYN

Not with this, Pat. He won't. He... Besides, I promised him. No interference. No intervention. He's made his decision. We've no sway. And no say.

PATRICK

The hell I don't!

KATHRYN

I won't have it.

PATRICK

You've no control over me.

KATHRYN

He comes off on his own, fine. But I won't let you put a stop to it. You're not the one he's chosen to be his voice.

PATRICK

What the fuck kind a mother sits by and watches this? Ease his transition! There is no easing into the abyss he's falling into...It's the worst kind a contortion. (Pausing) You're a failure as a mother, you know that Kate?

KATHRYN

You think I'm not torn by this?! That everyday I... (Pauses and composes herself.) 'Go down there.' For the love a Jesus, that's all my life's become ...

SCENE READER

[A blue light dimly rises on a shivering SEAMUS sitting in his cell, DESMOND pulling the blanket up over SEAMUS' shoulders before lying down beside as they both drift off to sleep.]

KATHRYN

...I'm torn every day. I watch his body shrink. Knowing his arms and legs...will soon begin to shrivel. And there's nothing I can do...I want so much to hold him and hug him. Yet I'm so afraid I'll crush him... I look at the bones on his face and they look like as if ready to puncture through the skin of his cheek. He doesn't even look like my handsome boy. My beautiful baby boy. Becoming this beached whale... And all I can do is dab his lips. And dry the tears he don't even know he's shedding. And whisper in his ear that he'll be all right...And he looking at me with those silent eyes. Looking for comfort. For someone to see him through. To listen through the tempest of the tide and bear witness...- Christ, Pat. He's our son...What are we gonna do?

SCENE READER

[The lights of the O'CONNOR kitchen fade to darkness. The blue light then slowly diminishes on DESMOND and SEAMUS in their cell until darkness.]

[END OF SCENE]

SCENE 6: The Guards Quarters at Long Kesh (Beginning of Third Shift)

Characters: Mule aka Malcolm MacDougal
Elbows aka Eddie Keating

SCENE READER

[SCENE: MULE appears in his civilian clothes, beginning his daily ritual of changing into his uniform for his shift as the scene progresses. As the scene opens, ELBOWS enters, carrying a small binder, hesitantly though purposefully approaching MULE.]

ELBOWS

Evening Malcolm. You wanted to see me?

MULE

Sit down, Eddie.

ELBOWS

Everything all right?

MULE

Sure. Just... Some tendencies I see happening. Some too-familiars I see developing.

ELBOWS

I'm, uh...I'm not aware of such.

MULE

It's not an indictment. It's a human-condition thing. The phenomenon of proximity. It's been my experience that whenever you're physically close to someone day-in and day-out, week-upon-week, that over the course of time, you can't help but feel some sense of... kinship. And I have found that it's best to identify the genesis of it happening and...prune it. (Pauses) I've noticed at times you recoiling from the means of conditioning.

ELBOWS

I don't feel I am.

MULE

There's no shame in it. I initially had a tough time with the regimen. But such is essential in maintaining order. Especially with this herd.

ELBOWS

I understand that – Absolutely –

MULE

– Let me finish. Not all the Catholics are like this. Not all Irish Republicans are like this. I've had conversations with good Catholic Republican folks who are peace-loving people. This in here? This is an aberrant group. Malcontents. Rabble. Punks and thugs. Con men. Killers. Sniping at soldiers. Planting car bombs. Waging war, against whom? A society and a system that's basically created everything that is civilized, the fruits of which they and theirs enjoy? Doesn't mean everything's perfect. Christ, a course not. But look at the way they've chosen to serve due time. Stripped bare. Refusing to wear clothing. Refusing to use the facilities. Smearing their filth all over the walls a their cells. Who lives like that? Miscreants. Animals. And that's how they have to be treated. Do you think they respect you? Respect your station?

ELBOWS

I don't know. I'm not given to think otherwise.

MULE

They don't. You're seen as a buffoon. That herd calls you Elbows. You've heard 'em.

ELBOWS

I have.

MULE

Do you know why?

ELBOWS

Not really. No.

MULE

Because you're all elbows. Because that first week here, you slip, you trip, and it's stuck with you. And it'll continue sticking. And you end up being dismissed as a joke instead of respected as the hand of authority. The hand a command. Do you know what they call me?

ELBOWS

(Hesitates.) I believe I've heard, um...Mule?

MULE

Ya. Do you know why?

ELBOWS

Because you've got resolve?

MULE

Because I'm stupid. Like a Mule. – Thick. Obtuse. They tagged me with it last year when I first began and I had to get out in front of it. Mold perceptions around it my way. To suit *my* means. So I began kicking in the head. In the knee-cap. In the kidney. Like a Mule. And gradually, over thump-thump-thump, it's become my own. T'is become *my own*. A term a respect. Y'see? A term of reverence. But / changed it. And you need do likewise.

SCENE READER

[MULE holds up a large baton.]

MULE

Condition them. Condition as though delivering elbows to the gullet. Perhaps shatter an elbow or two. And then the name shall be yours, not theirs. You folla?

ELBOWS

Yeah, sure. Makes sense. (Pauses.)

SCENE READER

[MULE hands ELBOWS the large baton. ELBOWS accepts it then begins to exit before halting.]

ELBOWS

Oh, Malcolm – I came to tell you: While you were on holiday, one of ours on the Block. He's refusing food.

MULE

Refusing food? Who's this?

ELBOWS

The Flynn.

MULE

The Flynn? Seamus Flynn? Christ, they put their chips on him?

ELBOWS

Yeah. Looks like.

MULE

How does this occur? I was away only a week. Who let it happen?

ELBOWS

How might one control such? A conditioning don't rouse an appetite.

SCENE READER

[MULE considers things, taking a flask from his pocket and drinking from it.]

MULE

His own cellmate allows him this?

ELBOWS

His cellmate eats his meals.

SCENE READER

[MULE takes a second drink from the flask then returns the flask to his pocket.]

MULE

I don't understand it. Starving yourself, for God knows what... Have you any experience with this?

ELBOWS

Only the little I've seen in the other wards.

MULE

Any gone down while I's away?

ELBOWS

Ya. One.

MULE

What's that make? Eight?

ELBOWS

So far.

MULE

Ah, for the love a Christ. – What're the others doing about it?

ELBOWS

No one seems to know what to do. They try reason. Persuasion. Temptation. Compassion even. Some are talking to priests, trying to have them use their Office with the men. Some trying to get the families, so's they might intervene. But nothing. The guys who embark are intent.

MULE

Honest to Christ, I don't understand this herd. How many UVF similars have we locked-up in here? – *They* don't get special political treatment. What is so Goddamn special about 'Political Status' – Would you explain that to me? What do they think's gonna happen? Hard time's hard time. And you're gonna do it regardless...(Pausing) And you say conditionings don't stir the appetite?

ELBOWS

Doesn't seem like so. We've tried.

MULE

I was hoping we'd get through this without having to get involved. Is the cellmate still orchestrating things?

ELBOWS

It's hard to say who's in charge. But it seems so.

MULE

And t'is he who chooses who'll be next to refuse feedings?

ELBOWS

My understanding is there's some list a candidates. Of men waiting to volunteer. He's more charged with corralling the campaign than recruiting.

MULE

But it's ultimately *his* choice. – While *he* commences dining. (Pauses.) What's the word on him? How does he ascend to such an echelon?

SCENE READER

[ELBOWS consults his binder, which is filled with files and notes.]

ELBOWS

Says here: Desmond Lenihan – also known as Doyle Lenihan – Convicted of homicide. Led a campaign exploding an Ulster pub. Five people killed. No grey area regarding his culpability... He's in for the duration.

MULE

And he don't embark on their campaign because...?

ELBOWS

...Because he's a murderer. And no one will care if a killer starves to the death.

MULE

They've thought all this through like this?

ELBOWS

The campaign's about public relations. Raising public awareness. Molding public perceptions.

MULE

Wait – You're saying none a those men on strike are convicted of violent offenses?

ELBOWS

None.

MULE

What about them already have died?

ELBOWS

All on minor scrapes. Gun possession, maybe. Most merely arrested and incarcerated on suspicion. Most never tried or convicted of anything.

MULE

Is that so? (Considers things.) Tell me: Who's this Maud Gonne woman who comes around sporting care packages and dispatches from home for 'em?

ELBOWS

Maud whom?

MULE

The inspiration to the revolution; she's always dropping by with the care packets...The cigarette girl.

ELBOWS

Oh, her. Yeah. She's a Catholic nun. Or was a Catholic nun. Something like that. Sister Judith Marie.

MULE

She don't dress like no nun.

ELBOWS

I don't believe she's anymore among the nuns. She serves as sort of a conduit to the men whose families live away from here.

MULE

She have any sway with this?

ELBOWS

I don't know. I don't believe so...Maybe.

MULE

Find out. (Pausing to further consider things.) And get me a breakfast menu...I s'pose we'll have to figure out how not to have this happen on our watch. Create a buffet they can't refuse. – Go. I want to see a menu from the galley. I think we're gonna be joining our neighbors and see about brunch.

SCENE READER

[Lights diminish.]

[END OF SCENE]

SCENE 7: The Cell of Desmond and Seamus at Long Kesh

Characters: Desmond 'Doyle' Lenihan
The Apparition of Fiona O'Donnell
The Apparition of Monsignor Michael Sweeney
The Apparition of Caroline Lenihan

SCENE READER

[SCENE: DESMOND and SEAMUS are asleep in their cell as a violet light rises on THE APPARITION of FIONA, dressed in a slip, who enters the cell, stepping over SEAMUS and gently awakening DESMOND. Through the course of the scene, FIONA proceeds to get dressed for a dinner party. As DESMOND awakes and rises from beneath his blanket, we see he is dressed in collegiate civilian clothes.]

FIONA

Des...Desy? Come on. – We're already running late.

DESMOND

(Awakening.) Fi? What're you? – Late for what?

FIONA

Come on. They see you can't get up and it's off to the infirmary. – Come on. – You're gonna shave, right? I know it's not shave day, but still.

DESMOND

I can't go, Fi.

FIONA

What do you mean, can't? You've known about this for weeks.

DESMOND

I'm stuck here, Fi. They're not gonna let me out for an engagement.

FIONA

You're putting me off for this?

DESMOND

I'm not putting you off. It's beyond my control.

FIONA

Tonight I need you by my side.

DESMOND

Don't put me in this position –

FIONA

You put yourself in this position. You know how I feel about this – The whole thing.

DESMOND

Please don't –

FIONA

Don't what? You want to become one of that? Blood on your hands? Blood on your house? You think I can raise a family in such a household?

DESMOND

Something needs be done. I mean, I don't know how I feel about everything. But something... Something needs be done.

FIONA

What's happened to teaching?

DESMOND

I can do both.

FIONA

You can? You can be part of an ambush on Saturday and teach catechism on Sunday? Reading on Monday? With that logic, you might as well go back to the seminary so's we can get married.

DESMOND

Why the sudden snide?

FIONA

Because you've known about this, you know my feelings about it – And now tonight I'm on my own.

SCENE READER

[As FIONA continues applying make-up and dressing, a green light rises upstage center on the APPARITION of MONSIGNOR SWEENEY, now serving as DESMOND'S teacher and mentor during DESMOND's time in the seminary.]

SWEENEY

So you're leaving us I hear.

DESMOND

(Mildly surprised.) I, uh...I was gonna stop by and see you before I left.

SWEENEY

I might have thought you may have stopped by to discuss the issue of leaving.

DESMOND

I have to go back home. I'm needed there.

SWEENEY

Needed? Well, if you're needed. (Pauses) Is it the girl?...Is she pregnant?

DESMOND

It's more complex than that. Things are coming a part. All over. I need to get back.

SWEENEY

It might be said that the Order needs you, too, you know. There're villages around the world who might likewise need you. You can do more to help others than going home and throwing stones.

SCENE READER

[FIONA re-enters the conversation.]

FIONA

I'm tiring of it, Des. Tired of being dismissed for –

DESMOND

(To FIONA.) Hold it a minute, Fi –

FIONA

No, you hold it. It's not just that I've taken a backseat. Everything has. I don't like what it's doing to you. You're becoming hard. Narrow. There are other ways of 'doing something'.

DESMOND

Oh, sure. We'll put daisies in their carbines and they'll leave us be to live our lives.

FIONA

Don't patronize me. You blast an outpost. – They blast a storefront. – You blast a pub . – They blow-up a car. What's it accomplished? Their funerals look any different from our own?

DESMOND

Do you like that your father can't get a job? That no one'll give him a chance? Or your brother?

FIONA

Don't hand me that –

DESMOND

No – No! I listened to you, Fi. You let me talk. Do you like that your father can't get a job? That half a who we know can't get decent work because we're from the wrong side a the barbed wire? That you can't live where you wish without fear of Ulster punks and UVF gangs? That you can't drive from one side of town to the other without being stopped. Your car being searched. All because some Ulster cop doesn't like the way you look at him. Or *don't* look at him. Or whatever the fuck he feels like stopping you for? – Look at me, Fi. How many guys we know been tossed in the brig because some cop felt the itch? How many guys we know been beaten by such? Or've died during 'in-depth interrogation'? What about Cousin Danny? How long's he been in? Sixteen months? Eighteen months? He yet been charged with anything?

FIONA

Because they didn't catch Danny red-handed packing a pipe bomb don't mean he's innocent by any stretch.

DESMOND

But has he ever *been charged* with anything? I mean, you do believe in due process, don't ya? If you can prove someone's committed a crime, then charge 'em! Not because he 'might-have-done' or 'might-do.' Aren't we entitled? What happened to innocent until proven otherwise? Where're we living? Belfast or East Berlin?

FIONA

You're all so innocent?

SCENE READER

[Enter THE APPARITION of CAROLINE LENIHAN, DESMOND's mother, as if setting a table for dinner.]

DESMOND

(To CAROLINE) Mum, what's the name of that kid who was hired for the post then the post was eliminated when they discovered he was Catholic?

CAROLINE

You don't know that that's the case. That whole theory was no more than tavern conjecture.

DESMOND

How hard is it connecting dot A to dot B?

CAROLINE

Fair enough, he's having a tough time of it – But so is everyone. Know of anyone who can find decent work? It's not all a conspiracy to keep you down –

DESMOND

Am I wrong? Truly?

CAROLINE

You can't presume to know every slant a motivation.

DESMOND

You can certainly recognize patterns when they persist. Why's it so hard for you to acknowledge what is? To recognize as things are?

CAROLINE

Because I tire of detonating tirades when any one of a dozen topics is tripped. You have to censor any news that's told to you. Otherwise you're spending your days extinguishing eruptions involving every perceived injustice the universe perverts. This is why I don't tell you things.

DESMOND

But am I wrong?

CAROLINE

It's not always about being right, Desy. It's about peace a mind. It's about reconciling what you can control and relinquishing what you can't.

DESMOND

(Making the sign of the cross over her as if a priest) Oh, peace be with ya Sister Serenity Prayer.

CAROLINE

Tell me this: Who on earth wants to spend their meals sitting across from such grouching, grousing, and griping? Or listening to sermons? Just...Put peace in your heart. And put a sock in your moosh. And gives those around you a life a tranquility.

SCENE READER

[Having set the table, CAROLINE exits. FIONA continues getting dressed while the light dims on the APPARITION of MONSIGNOR SWEENEY, who removes a pipe from his pocket and proceeds cleaning and packing it. A light rises on THE APPARITION of SISTER JUDITH MARIE.]

JUDITH MARIE

You may have to rethink Paul O'Connor.

DESMOND

How so.

JUDITH MARIE

Paddy's fervently against it. He's not willing to sacrifice a son.

DESMOND

What exactly do y' suggest? Paul has no listen for that. – Christ, they're both stubborn as rust. We've just got to go through with it as planned.

JUDITH MARIE

It seems an increasing number are coming out against this. You might be losing the public trust. It may be time to get what you can and put an end to this whole thing.

DESMOND

Eight men haven't died so that we could 'get what we can.'

JUDITH MARIE

They didn't die so they could be the first links in a never-ending chain of deaths, either. You'd better start rethinking this whole campaign. It doesn't seem to be getting us anywhere.

DESMOND

Aw, give the weathervane a rest. One minute you're 'us' and the next minute I'm 'them. How about a little sisterly consistency, Sister?

SCENE READER

[MONSIGNOR SWEENEY re-enters the scene, stepping out of the shadows.]

SWEENEY

Judith is right. The public trust is tilting from you. That's a fact. It's time to get what you can and put a stop to this. It's grown into madness. (Hesitates then puts his cards on the table.) You should know. I'm giving a sermon Sunday echoing support for the Diocesan stand on this. There *is* a fine line between political protest and suicide. That line's been crossed. This is becoming suicide. Enough is enough.

DESMOND

You know what that'll do to us.

SWEENEY

It's gonna turn the heat up on you. As it should.

DESMOND

It shifts the moral terrain and takes the heat off them.

SWEENEY

Too many boys've already died. Eight funerals –

DESMOND

It'll kill another, maybe two. Maybe more.

SWEENEY

– Eight funerals that could've all been avoided weren't it for pride. On both sides. I'm tired of eulogizing the sons of my friends. (Pauses) People are saying you've a rather choice seat, you know. Passing sentence on those you choose for strike. Passing sentence on the next to die. They wonder how many meals you've missed in the last nine months.

DESMOND

Is that what *you* think, Mike?

[The APPARITION OF MONSIGNOR SWEENEY doesn't answer.]

DESMOND

I've been appointed a post and I'm doing my duty. I didn't ask for it. But I can't shirk it. I've a job to do.

SWEENEY

You just don't get it, do you?

DESMOND

Sure I get it. You're defecting. The pressure's on and you're abdicating – That's your M-O. You're a political creature, Monsignor. That's just how t'is.

JUDITH MARIE

That's just it, Des. No one's defecting. Enough people – good, Catholic families – already think this thing's just a different breed a pipe bomb.

DESMOND

It's the *men* who're living this – No one else. It's they decide which way it goes.

SCENE READER

[There is the distant sound of someone being beaten by the guards, the sound of a prisoner moaning in pain, and the far off din of tins clamoring and prisoners jeering at the guards. DESMOND looks up and listens for a moment, more resigned but no less affected by it now. He turns back to the conversation at hand.]

DESMOND

(To SWEENEY, referring to the sounds of beatings.) That's what we're negotiating with. That's the negotiations – on both sides.

SWEENEY

The families are gonna step in and put an end to it. And then eight men'll've died for nothing.

DESMOND

They didn't die for a compromise!

SCENE READER

[The light rises again on FIONA, who re-enters the scene, all dressed in formal attire.]

FIONA

I just don't want it changing you so. I don't want you becoming so hard and filled with hatred that your eyes chill to deadness. Don't lose yourself, Desy. I don't want you becoming some Commander Doyle – Tacticians expert.

SWEENEY

You know, since before the seminary – even once you'd decided it wasn't for you – I've stood by you. Been your advocate. I've understood your passions and stood by and absolved while you've indulged them. But this? I can't stand by you any longer. I'm coming out against it. Against you.

JUDITH MARIE

Perhaps it's time to listen to the realities of the situation, Des. That perhaps it's time to get what you can. That not another boy should die. Is this working? The families *are* gonna step in.

SCENE READER

[Light diminishes on the APPARITIONS of MONSIGNOR SWEENEY and SISTER JUDITH MARIE. FIONA steps up to DESMOND and touches his face then steps into his embrace.]

FIONA

You're a good man, Desmond...Don't lose that.

DESMOND

I'd never let that happen.

FIONA

You don't control something like 'that.' – It just happens.

DESMOND

I won't let it happen.

FIONA

(Pauses.) But you're not going with me tonight.

DESMOND

I can't. I'm here.

FIONA

(Removing herself from DESMOND'S embrace.) Can't? Won't.

DESMOND

I'm stuck here, Fi. Please understand.

FIONA

I do.

SCENE READER

[FIONA steps away then turns back, facing DESMOND.]

FIONA

Have you blood beneath your own nails?

DESMOND

No.

FIONA

No, never? Or no you've never actually pulled the trigger?

DESMOND

No, never.

FIONA

Did you have anything to do with the blast of that pub? (DESMOND doesn't answer.) I suspected such. As soon as I heard, I thought of you. The past couple a months. The changes. How sad is that...That you instantly came to mind.

DESMOND

Please, Fi. I need you beside me.

FIONA

And I need *you* beside me tonight. This is becoming a way of life.

DESMOND

I had nothing to do with it.

FIONA

It'd be nice if you could actually look me in the eyes when you say it.

DESMOND

(Looks her in the eyes.) I'm no killer.

FIONA

But you're able to justify it for those who are. How many of the five dead in the pub were someone's brother? Someone's husband? Someone's Da?

DESMOND

They were all UVF-affiliated. And it was retaliation. They had it coming –

FIONA

We've all got it coming...It's only a matter a time before you're detonating the charge. Once you're articulating the rationale then you're just a step away from the trigger. And you're just as accountable.

DESMOND

They just need me for a short term.

FIONA

What, just one campaign? One attack?

DESMOND

A short term. Then I'll get out. And we'll get away. Get a place somewhere....Become teachers.

FIONA

There are no short terms with this.

DESMOND

I promise, Fi. I *promise* you.

SCENE READER

[The lights dim on FIONA until they darken altogether. The lights then turn to a bluish hue on DESMOND, who sits a moment before commencing on the making of a linen rosary for SEAMUS.]

SCENE READER

[Into the blue light return THE TROUBADOUR, THE TROUBALETTE, and THE TRIO, this time all dressed in contemporary IRA uniform attire circa 1981, proceeding into the song "Rock on Rockall." Meanwhile, on the screens above and behind appear further images of the Irish Republican resistance during the 1970s. At the conclusion of the song, THE MUSICIANS exit.]

[END OF SCENE]

SCENE 8: The Cell of Desmond and Seamus (Breakfast Call)

Characters: Desmond "Doyle" Lenihan
Seamus Flynn
Mule aka Malcolm MacDougal
Elbows aka Eddie Keating

SCENE READER

[SCENE: In the darkness there rises the faint clamoring sounds of tin plates and cups, Gaelic calls, whoops and hollers, as if a breakfast reveille. A light rises on the cell of DESMOND and SEAMUS. While SEAMUS sleeps, wrapped in his blanket, DESMOND finishes the fashioning of a make-shift rosary woven together from strips of linen. Upon completion, DESMOND awakens SEAMUS. Meanwhile, the sound of guards coming down the halls, banging with their batons on cell grilles, tin trays dropping on the floor, can now be heard in a more pronounced fashion, as if approaching closer.]

DESMOND

Seam. Seamy. Seamus – Come on! You have to be up when they come by, else it's the infirmary.

SCENE READER

[SEAMUS sits up tentatively, weak and aching. Once he does so, DESMOND hands him the linen rosary.]

DESMOND

Here. For you.

SEAMUS

What's this?

DESMOND

A rosary. I made it.

SEAMUS

From what?

DESMOND

Bits a blanket. Bits a lint. – A Linten rosary, as it were, I guess.

SEAMUS

You made it for me?

DESMOND

Ya.

SEAMUS

Thanks, Des.

SCENE READER

[As SEAMUS finishes the previous line, a buzzer sounds and the shadow of the door of DESMOND and SEAMUS' cell appears to open. MULE then enters the cell, carrying with him a small stool. DESMOND and SEAMUS remain seated as MULE sets the stool on the floor, removes his baton from his belt, holding it in his grip as he sits down, speaking down to both as he does so.]

MULE

Gentlemen. Top a' the morning.

DESMOND

What a pleasant surprise, Malcolm. How was holiday?

MULE

Well, let me tell ya, Squire Lenihan – It's ending stressful. I go away and when I return they tell me one a mine is refusing food and has gone on some sort a...What did you say they call it, Eddie?

ELBOWS

A 'Hunger Strike.'

MULE

Ah. A 'Hunger Strike.' Now can you imagine my surprise? My dismay? Such drastic measures; refusing food... Now what is it makes you both choose to live this way?

SEAMUS

May I have my water replenished, please?

MULE

It's coming, lad. Patience.

SCENE READER

[MULE pokes his baton lightly though firmly into DESMOND's chest.]

MULE

What're you filling him with, that he feels bold enough to refuse food?

DESMOND

I fill him with Truth, Mule. Feed him righteous, glorious Truth.

SCENE READER

[MULE presses his baton full-on, pushing DESMOND to the floor, then pressing a knee atop him.]

MULE

What're you doing, brain-washing these kids?

DESMOND

You know better than that, Malcolm. Everyone here's a man of his own volition. And they've all grown up on the foul side of a bayonet their entire lives. And t'is they who've chosen this.

SCENE READER

[MULE pauses for a moment then lets DESMOND up off the floor before sitting back down upon his stool.]

MULE

You were once studying to be a priest. Do I understand correct?

DESMOND

Our ministry takes us where it will.

MULE

Ministry? Is that how you call this? You're complicit with murdering every man who hungers himself into a grave while you clean his plate. – But you know what? This isn't the conversation I came here to have. Eddie?

SCENE READER

[ELBOWS wheels around a care cart along with a breakfast buffet that he brings into the cell.]

MULE

I brought you some soap and towels. Some clean linen. Bedding. Clothes. You two are welcome to go and shower. Plenty a privacy. Plenty a hot water. Take as long as you like. Meanwhile, we'll hose this place down. Start making it more of a home.

SEAMUS

What clothes?

SCENE READER

[ELBOWS removes from the cart then presents two pairs of jeans and cotton shirts.]

SEAMUS

I want my own clothes.

MULE

Ah, no. Those clothes are long-gone, believe me. These are fresh garb for you.

DESMOND

That's no deal. We're not trading in one prison-issue for another.

MULE

Aw, let's get by that, shall we? Can't you just accept as a gift from Her Majesty? I'm talking about a fresh start. For us. Us in here. – Let's peace begin with me. Isn't that among your hymns?

SEAMUS

May I have my water, please – Mule?

SCENE READER

[MULE nods at ELBOWS, who produces a ewer with which he fills SEAMUS' tin cup.]

MULE

Seamus Flynn. Why continue this volley into a fool's errand? Let's get you healthy. Let's get you strong so's you can get beyond this. Eddie, how many days he refusing food?

ELBOWS

Been six days.

MULE

Six days? That t'is a long time to be without. But not as long as others, eh? How long do you think you can go, my young shaman Seamus Flynn?

SEAMUS

As long as it takes, Squire.

MULE

How about today we call it a wrap, eh? Let's ease you back into the mix. Soft foods. Comfort fare. And is there anything more comforting than breakfast? Breaking the fast. Isn't that the root of it? Eddie? What have we got for the lads?

SCENE READER

[ELBOWS begins producing various plates and bowls that he sets on small crates around the cell.]

ELBOWS

We have apple sauce, either chilled or warmed, to help the stomach get used to eating. We have a nice soft porridge, warmed, with a little butter and milk. – Help fill the stomach with easy-to-digest. We have some dairy to coat the stomach. We have eggs scrambled. For protein. – To help gird-up the strength. Bits a ham. A shepherd's pie for measure. And fresh, warm cinnamon biscuits.

MULE

Christ. The holy scent a cinnamon. The stuff a life, eh boys? Baby food, really. T'is truly something special. Is there a better association than that of breakfast?

SCENE READER

[SEAMUS slides the bowls and trays toward DESMOND. DESMOND looks at MULE while beginning to eat SEAMUS' food. MULE, in turn, pokes his baton into DESMOND's chest again.]

MULE

You're gonna sit there and eat two portions while he looks on and eats none?

DESMOND

You're gonna sit there and taunt him? Take the food away. I'll strike with him.

ELBOWS

Can't do that. Two meals issued. Two meals need be eaten. Them's protocol. Procedure.

SCENE READER

[MULE retrieves the bowls and trays with his baton, sliding them back in front of SEAMUS.]

MULE

Them's procedure...(To DESMOND.) So t'is true. You eat while he starves.

DESMOND

T'is none of your concern.

MULE

Oh, but it t'is. You're a guest in my house. You abide by my rules. See, there's two ways to make use of the present. This present: You can either spend your time itemizing all your perceived slights and spites, kindling your resentments. Or, you can get on with things. (To SEAMUS) Have a taste, lad. Eat up. See if it isn't a better way to be. Get your strength back. Shower up. Cleanse. And get on with it...

SCENE READER

[MULE rises.]

MULE

You see: You're gonna eat. And you can either supper friendly-like. Or otherwise. That's a choice. One that is made by you. But on my watch, you're gonna eat. Rest assured.

SCENE READER

[MULE and ELBOWS exit, leaving the cart of clothes and comfort, the sound of the door closing being heard and the shadows of the door creeping across the stage being seen. SEAMUS, meanwhile, takes tentative sips of his water.]

SEAMUS

Please. Get rid a the eggs. The smell's enough I'm about to retch...

SCENE READER

[SEAMUS slides the bowls and trays back toward DESMOND, who begins consuming all the food in the cell as SEAMUS looks on.]

DESMOND

(After a moment.) You want me to eat? Quit ogling me.

SEAMUS

Huh?

DESMOND

I can't eat with you looking at me like a hound at the supper table.

SEAMUS

Hmm? Oh. Christ, I'm sorry. Go ahead...Eat. Please. (Pauses) Is it good?

SCENE READER

[DESMOND takes another bite, shaking his head, speaking with his mouth full.]

DESMOND

No.

SEAMUS

T'is, t'isn't it?...Cinnamon still smells so good to me.

DESMOND

Seam – I can't eat with you carrying on so. – Christ, *every* meal.

SCENE READER

[DESMOND reaches into his pillow and pulls out a pack of cigarettes.]

DESMOND

Here. You want for a smoke? Go on. They're the good kind. Brought in by the Sister.

SEAMUS

No. I can't. The smoke's catching in my chest. I start wheezing and I feel I've got broken ribs. They've been giving me creeping headaches, too.

DESMOND

(Stops eating) Headaches whereabouts?

SEAMUS

(Massages his forehead and temples.) Round right here.

DESMOND

How often?

SEAMUS

I get a spell every now and then. Once an hour, maybe. Sometimes more. Happens when I'm reading.

DESMOND

(Pauses) It might be your eyes, Seam.

SEAMUS

My eyes, what?

SCENE READER

[DESMOND eats a mouthful of eggs.]

DESMOND

...The body's feeding off the protein in the brain and it's causing your eyes to weaken. And it's causing the headaches...The time's a coming.

SEAMUS

(Pauses) Don't talk to me about time. – Eat a biscuit. Relish a biscuit, Desy, and regale me with tales a cinnamon...

SCENE READER

[DESMOND rises and procures from the cart a set of prison visiting clothes that he unfolds.]

DESMOND

Seamy. I've been thinking. About Bridgette. She's insisting on seeing you. Raising a ruckus. It seems there's not much choice with this one. You need to see her.

SEAMUS

How many times I have to say no?

DESMOND

I'm asking you to reconsider.

SEAMUS

I have. And I won't.

DESMOND

Just meet with her. Talk to her.

SEAMUS

Toward what end?

DESMOND

Because she's your wife? She's the mother a your daughters?

SEAMUS

Was my wife. And it's she who's shunted me. – Taken my daughters! I don't owe her a thing.

DESMOND

Ever think she might need you? Now more than ever --

SEAMUS

She needs! What about me? Where's she been when I've needed her?

DESMOND

Oh, come on, Seam. I wouldn't overplay the role of wounded swain. You've been no prize as a boyfriend or a husband or whatever.

SEAMUS

She took everything from me, Doyle. Home. Kids. She's tossed *me* aside. Everyone knows what a...what a...What a failure I've been. Tell her I said she can go to hell!

DESMOND

(Pauses) She could hurt us. She could damage this. What you're doing.

SEAMUS

Damage how?

DESMOND

Public relations. Spouting off to any scribe who'll listen. Telling how the campaign has taken her husband and brainwashed him into starving himself. Leaving her widowed. Leaving two little girls orphaned.

SEAMUS

People know otherwise.

DESMOND

People barely know it's happening! And hers'll be the first voice they hear? All she has to do is plant the smallest whiff a doubt in the minds a civilians. Can you picture her on the telly? Video of your daughters? Looking wide-eyed into the cameras while she plays the wronged widow? Besides. Asunder or no, Bride's your wife. Meeting with her is the right thing. Comfort the afflicted. The spiritual works...I keep telling you, those are the most important. Do this, Seamus. You'll be doing the right thing. You'll be helping everyone involved.

SEAMUS

I don't need you telling me about the spiritual works.

DESMOND

I'm just trying to take everyone into consideration.

SEAMUS

Are you ordering me?

DESMOND

If that's what it takes, then yeah: I'm ordering.

SEAMUS

(Pauses) Fine.

DESMOND

What's that?

SEAMUS

I said, 'Fine.' I volunteer to confront the enemy face-to-face.

DESMOND

That's the lad. I'll get word. Come on. Let's get you cleaned. Looking sharp. We'll show her.

SEAMUS

Des? Eat a biscuit. Eat a biscuit for me and regale me with tales a cinnamon...

SCENE READER

[As darkness descends from the previous scene, THE TROUBADOURS and THE TRIO return to the stage, still all dressed in contemporary IRA uniform attire, proceeding into the song "Big Strong Man" as DESMOND helps SEAMUS into his prison visiting clothes. Meanwhile, on the screens behind appear further images of the Irish Republican resistance and imprisonment. The stage fully darkens at the song's conclusion.]

[END OF SCENE]

SCENE 9: The Family Visiting Area at Long Kesh

Characters: Bridgette Flynn
 Seamus Flynn
 Elbows

SCENE READER

[SCENE: BRIDGETTE FLYNN is pacing, taking deep breaths trying to calm herself. ELBOWS escorts SEAMUS, dressed in prison-issued visiting clothes, looking more sallow and weak. He is ten days into his hunger strike. SEAMUS enters. ELBOWS helps SEAMUS sit down then exits.]

BRIDGETTE

Oh my God. – Look at you.

SEAMUS

Enough. What is it you want, Bride? What is it you're harping at everyone for that I need be a part of?

BRIDGETTE

That's how you greet me? No hello? No how are you? How are the girls?

SEAMUS

No hello. No how are you. You stressed how important it is to see me. So, I'm here. I'm seeing ya.

BRIDGETTE

Do you know the fucking dance I had to do? Just for ten minutes a seeing you? And not from the authorities here, mind you. From my own! Who the fuck are they? My own people telling me I can't see my husband?

SEAMUS

Ex-husband. And don't act so indignant. T'was you who pulled the rip cord on me. This is how you greet me? Please. *This* is how you bid me goodbye. This tone. This...T'is what you've wanted.

BRIDGETTE

Everyone I'm sure has heard what a roaring bitch I am. What about what a louse you've been? Birthdays come and go without notice. Missed recitals and first communions. The night after nights, weekends at a time. And then every so often, there you appear, all stinking and haunted and everyone on edge over what might click within you next and when you might erupt. The constant anxiety and-and-and awkwardness. Don't give me the hurt look. Where's my advocate? How many times you come home all drunk and beat up at three in the morning, hardly able to walk? The girls at the top of the stairs seeing their father falling on the floor, pissing his jeans.

[Takes a moment to compose herself.]

BRIDGETTE

Ah, Christ, Seamus, I'm sorry – This isn't the conversation I came here to have. It's just, you and yours – *I'm* the shrew who left you. That's all anyone sees. But is that all I am to you? Is that really how it was? I stay away from friends and family for how long until my bruises heal? All so's to protect you from their wrath, their disdain. I advocated for you when most any other woman would've taken her black eye and her kids and a gun and left ya face down.

SEAMUS

You know what, Bridgette, you win. Fine. I'm every bit the louse you indict me to be. Tell the world. I'll sign a plea agreement. Guilty! All right? I just...I don't have the energy for this. I quit.

BRIDGETTE

(Pauses and takes a deep breath to calm herself.) Seamus, put a stop to this.

SEAMUS

Don't start. This has no bearing on you.

BRIDGETTE

No bearing? You're the father a my daughters. My husband – However ex-ed. – Christ, you get to become a martyr and I'm the shrew who drove you to it. (Pauses) Seamus, I need your help.

SEAMUS

My help? With what?

BRIDGETTE

I want to be able to live my life.

SEAMUS

Aw, Bridgette, what the fuck. Am I stopping you? Go. Live it. Christ, what sway over your life can I possibly have anymore?

BRIDGETTE

I want to not be a marked woman. I want to not be ostracized. – I'm stained. Your people – Christ, my *own* people. I can't get a job. Can't walk into a store that a chill doesn't descend. No one speaks to me. My parents are dismissed – And this is coming from all sides. Jesus, it's bad enough having the Paisley-ites harass you and bully. I expect that. But not from my own. I'm asking you. Call off the curse on my house. Have people stop treating me like a traitor.

SEAMUS

I can't help how people see things.

BRIDGETTE

Oh, but you can. Talk to Doyle. He's master of the finesse. I mean, I've been living this for nearly ten years. A fourteen-year-old falling for a roughneck and how was I to know? I've never had a life a my own. Spend my youth taking care of an absent husband and kids and never once have I tended to myself. I'll pitch in my share with no reservations, but I also want something for me. I don't care how selfish it looks. Or how much I love you – And, yeah, don't start. I do love you. But I can't live my life like...like this. Like a pariah! I want...I want to show our daughters that a woman can live her life as a person. Not merely a subordinate.

SEAMUS

So this is the conversation you sought?

BRIDGETTE

T'is. I've spent my whole life waiting for you. Waiting on you. Waiting 'til you crawled home from a pub or from some campaign. Tending wounds I'm never allowed to ask about. Waiting for you to get out a prison. Or worse. Waiting for the day I get a phone call that you've been found lying in the gutter full a slugs. Or blown a part. I want credit for it. I want credit for time-served and not be punished for what I wasn't able to endure.

SEAMUS

Bride, I don't have the energy for this.

BRIDGETTE

Talk to Doyle. Have him call of the curse on my house.

SEAMUS

Doyle can't do anything for you. People feel a certain way. That's that.

BRIDGETTE

Then you tell 'em! You on this strike, and you get nothing for it? Use whatever moral authority this gives you and tell your lads. Tell about how many times I change your trousers and tend your wounds and put you to bed. You tell 'em about being unable to hold a job. Pilfering money from my Da, he knowing all along he'll never be repaid. Then out risking your life with a bunch a...a bunch a whatever. Let's face it. Expecting me to cook and clean and await your return. How long am I expected to live with that?

SEAMUS

Whatever, indeed. – This is why. This why you get the chill. You're so fucking mouthy. They're concerned you're gonna mouth off and cause trouble. That's why I'm here.

BRIDGETTE

Trouble?! I left you because I needed to get away from all this. I want no trouble. I just want my life. Christ, a life. I wanna be able to get a job. Go to school, maybe. Be able to go to a playground with my daughters and not have everyone giving me the stink eye.

SEAMUS

They fret you're gonna mouth off to the media. Say I've been brainwashed to go on strike.

BRIDGETTE

Christ, you probably have. You're forever the joiner. A yelping puppy after the pack. (Pauses) You don't have to do this, you know. Seamus. You don't have to do this to gain their respect.

SEAMUS

I asked *them* to go on, Bride. Not the other way around. I appealed to them.

BRIDGETTE

You think starving yourself's gonna make any difference to anybody? You don't see the papers. The Tories don't even acknowledge there is a strike. Or that there's a prison problem. You're all criminals as far as Downing Street's concerned. Let me be the one to tell you straight, since apparently Desmond don't: Seamus Flynn wasting away to his grave won't change a fucking thing.

SEAMUS

Mind your tongue.

BRIDGETTE

I will not! I'll speak my mind. I'm as Nationalist as anyone. As Republican as anyone. And I still say, fuck this – Fuck them! Me asking permission to visit my daughters' father. Who deified them? I've been among the righteous indignant. I've been a part of enough campaigns. And I know the difference between protest and thuggery! Fuck them!

SCENE READER

[SEAMUS goes to smack BRIDGETTE, but BRIDGETTE blocks his swing and slaps him back, stunning the both of them, partly due to her strength, partly to his weakness. BRIDGETTE is frightened, yet doesn't lose her composure or vehemence.]

BRIDGETTE

Seamus! – Oh my God. I'm so sorry. Are you all right?

SEAMUS

Go. Go live your life. Me doing this...It should help you get on.

BRIDGETTE

Why do you make everything so difficult? Make loving you so insurmountable?

SEAMUS

What love?

BRIDGETTE

Constant disappointment douses such. Continual expectation and hope and anxiety and ultimately let-down. Time and again. Withers real love. But that doesn't diminish how much you're a part of me. How much a kindred spirit I am with you. And how much I still want to be in love with...with who we once were. I guess that's the conversation I wanted to have...Seamus, don't do this.

SEAMUS

I have to.

BRIDGETTE

You don't. You can finish your time. Come home. And be a father to two girls who adore their Da.

SEAMUS

Don't tell me that.

BRIDGETTE

I'm gonna tell you: your daughters, they're in love with you. Seam, look at me. They are. You don't have to do this. Don't do this to them.

[SEAMUS begins displaying a slight wince, feeling weak as if experiencing heart irregularities.]

SEAMUS

I can give them a name, Bridgette. Alive, I'll always be this. But with this, I can pass along a legacy. Seamus Flynn can finally mean something noble. I don't want them...growing up thinking...of their father...as a louse...

SCENE READER

[SEAMUS trails off, becoming dizzy, slipping slightly off his chair, falling to one knee.]

BRIDGETTE

Seamus?! (Lights begin going out.) Guard!

SCENE READER

[As darkness descends from the previous scene, THE TROUBADOURS, THE TROUBALETTE, and THE TRIO return to the stage, still all dressed in contemporary IRA uniform attire, proceeding into the song "Many Young Men of Twenty." As the song concludes, a light rises and we see a hospital bed in the Long Kesh infirmary, SEAMUS lying in it. The stage fully darkens around him, leaving him in a fading light at the song's conclusion.]

[END OF SCENE]

SCENE 10: A Conference Room Inside of Long Kesh Prison

Characters: Desmond "Doyle" Lenihan
 Monsignor Michael Sweeney
 Patrick O'Connor
 Assistant Deputy Under Secretary Brian Nolan
 Warden Gordon Brennan
 Mule aka Malcolm MacDougal
 Elbows aka Eddie Keating

SCENE READER

[SCENE: Light rises on DESMOND, in a prison holding cell. DESMOND is dressed in the prison issue, pacing, appearing haggard, distraught, boxed-in. He walks in a rectangle, sometimes as if strumming an acoustic guitar or a banjo, as he speaks.]

DESMOND

(Trying to recollect a nursery rhyme) ...The Queen a Hearts she made some tarts...all on a summer's day / The Knave a Hearts he...he done something amiss. (Pauses) The Knave a Hearts he...He *stole* the tarts...and took them clean away / ...The King a Hearts called for the tarts and beat the Knave full sore / The Knave a Hearts brought back the tarts and vowed he'd steal no more...Vowed he'd steal no more –

DESMOND (continuing)

(As if turning to beside him or over his shoulder, as if to some hectoring voice.) – *What?! I am listening – I'm done listening! You piping on-piping on-piping on – No! They're gonna bring him off. One family intervenes, the others folla. And there t'is; that's that.*

(Stops pacing and turns as if to someone behind him.) All right, so say we do? The Brits've left us hanging plenty...Well, we might have to take the chance. This may be the best stance we'll see. (Listens) Well, then, what else? No, *you* tell me. Nothing I say seems to solve it. What've *you* got?

(Thinks a moment.) What if we get Paul to sign some sort of-of-of...some sort of...official writ? Something legal. Something stating he wants the right to die peacefully, without interference. (Listens) Why not? Not *any* court? Come on!...We shouldn't even *try*?

SCENE READER

[ELBOWS appears from the shadows approaching DESMOND and the holding cell.]

DESMOND

(Listening then responding) – *Well, then, you decide!* You have all the fucking answers. You do it. – You take the fucking helm... Don't fucking sleep. Every eye sizing you up. Ready to gut you for the scape-goat. You do it! – *You fuck!* –

ELBOWS

Lenihan.

DESMOND

... *You* make the gallows choices. *You* stand up to the scrutiny of every arched brow...

ELBOWS

Lenihan!

DESMOND

...Feel your heart wrench. Your soul parch. Each time you – *You do it!* You fuckin'-piece-a-shite!

ELBOWS

Doyle!

DESMOND

(A pause then to ELBOWS, calmly.) How's that?

ELBOWS

Who you howling at?

SCENE READER

[DESMOND doesn't respond. There is heard the sounds of the cell door being unlocked.]

ELBOWS

You all right?

DESMOND

Yeah. Yeah, sure, Mr. Bows. Just, you know...Thinking out loud.

ELBOWS

You have visitors, Squire. You need to pull it together.

DESMOND

Who's that?

SCENE READER

[Light fully rises on DESMOND as his cell shadows disappear and we see him in a Long Kesh conference room with a table and seven chairs. ELBOWS steps aside as MONSIGNOR MICHAEL SWEENEY enters.]

SWEENEY

(Good natured with a touch of irony.) I was told you wished me to hear your confession.

DESMOND

Friar Mike! Holy Jesus.

SCENE READER

[MONSIGNOR SWEENEY extends a hand, which DESMOND accepts, drawing it in to an embrace.]

DESMOND

I was wondering who they're dressing me for.

SWEENEY

How are you, Des?

DESMOND

Keeping on, Monsignor. Barely, but surely.

SCENE READER

[MONSIGNOR SWEENEY steps aside.]

SWEENEY

You know Patrick O'Connor?

DESMOND

No, sir, I do not. Mr. O'Connor.

SCENE READER

[PATRICK nods and steps aside as well as MULE enters joining ELBOWS followed by WARDEN GORDON BRENNAN and ASSISTANT DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY BRIAN NOLAN.]

WARDEN BRENNAN

Gentlemen. Good morning. – (Gesturing) Mr. Under Secretary.

SCENE READER

[DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY BRIAN NOLAN takes the chair at the head of the table.]

SECRETARY NOLAN

Thank you Warden Brennan. Please, everyone. Sit.

SCENE READER

[All take a seat around the conference table, DESMOND being the last to do so.]

WARDEN GORDON BRENNAN

We've convened to see how we might put an end to this...This what?

SECRETARY NOLAN

This sadness.

DESMOND

Might I ask, sir, who you are?

WARDEN GORDON BRENNAN

This is Assistant Deputy Under Secretary –

SECRETARY NOLAN

– Brian Nolan, Mr. Lenihan.

SCENE READER

[SECRETARY NOLAN nods toward WARDEN GORDON BRENNAN who nods toward MULE who nods toward ELBOWS, who produces a medium-sized flask and seven paper cups. ELBOWS begins pouring as MULE hands the filled cups to WARDEN GORDON BRENNAN who hands one to SECRETARY NOLAN, who ultimately hands them all around the table.]

DESMOND

I didn't catch that. Assistant Deputy Under Secretary? To whom?

SECRETARY NOLAN

To the Deputy Under Secretary.

DESMOND

Oh. Well. That puts you right in the thick a the periphery.

SECRETARY NOLAN

I'm here as an emissary, Mr. Lenihan. A mere messenger.

SCENE READER

[SECRETARY NOLAN continues passing around paper cups until he gets to PATRICK O'CONNOR, PATRICK holds up his hand.]

PATRICK

None for me, thanks.

SECRETARY NOLAN

Mr. O'Connor, you must. T'is how Churchill begun his days.

PATRICK

I've been off the imbibe for some stretch.

SECRETARY NOLAN

Ah. An oath-taker. Monsignor? No such oaths in your realm, I'm sure.

SCENE READER

[MONSIGNOR SWEENEY accepts the cup as SECRETARY NOLAN hands one to DESMOND.]

DESMOND

(In deference to PATRICK) I'm good without as well.

SECRETARY NOLAN

(To DESMOND) Come on, Commander. You don't want a taste of what once was?

SCENE READER

[DESMOND makes no movement toward accepting the cup. SECRETARY NOLAN retrieves the cup, emptying the contents into his own.]

SECRETARY NOLAN

Very well.

SCENE READER

[SECRETARY NOLAN hoists his tin-cup as does WARDEN BRENNAN and MONSIGNOR SWEENEY.]

SECRETARY NOLAN

Gentlemen. To better days.

SCENE READER

[SECRETARY NOLAN, WARDEN BRENNAN and MONSIGNOR SWEENEY drink.]

SECRETARY NOLAN

Now, then. Mr. Lenihan: How can we put an end to this thing?

DESMOND

Acknowledge our status as prisoners of war.

SECRETARY NOLAN

Hm. Mr. O'Connor. T'was partly your request prompted this convening. What is it you want we should so formally hear?

PATRICK

(Pauses) I want my son brought off this. I'm here with humility. Making a formal request.

DESMOND

A request to whom?

WARDEN BRENNAN

A request to you.

SECRETARY NOLAN

T'is our understanding that you have the power to do so.

DESMOND

I've less influence than is perceived.

PATRICK

Since when? You're Pontius Pilate on this. You talked my son on. You talk him off. (Pauses to maintain composure) – I'm formally requesting a reprieve for my Paul.

DESMOND

I've never talked a single soul onto this. Every man is volunteered – Fervently. Christ, I spend most of my tenure talking men away from it. This is Paul's choice. Not my edict.

SWEENEY

Patrick's here as a father, Des. He's asking. Talk to Paul. Tell him you're taking him off. Let's do so.

DESMOND

He won't have it. He's resolute. Christ, there both as stubborn as rust.

SWEENEY

Tell him it's time to start rethinking this. That him dying isn't helping anyone.

DESMOND

Ah, Christ, give it a rest. *Us?* – Please. One minute you're an advocate; the next an indictment. A weathervane comrade. Agreeing with whomever's pouring you a drink.

SWEENEY

That's just it, son. I'm stalwart. Perhaps the last advocate you have. When I start telling wincing truths you can grimace and roll your eyes, but still, you better listen. You're losing the public trust. It's time to get what you can for these men and put a stop to this madness. This sadness.

DESMOND

Public trust? For fuck sake, the world's condemning the Realm's stance on this – Condemning from *all sides*. I hear things. I remain aware. The Yanks. The French. The Russians. – All outraged over "official British indifference." T'is the only thing uniting the capitalists and the communists since Nuremburg.

SECRETARY NOLAN

Don't overplay it.

SCENE READER

[SECRETARY NOLAN nods at WARDEN GORDON BRENNAN who nods toward MULE who nods toward ELBOWS, who produces a folder full of newspaper clippings. ELBOWS hands them to MULE who hands them to WARDEN GORDON BRENNAN.]

SECRETARY NOLAN

The winds of public opinion can turn without warning. You're welcome to read for yourself. From and through the Realm and beyond. You're losing. – But this is yesterday's news. I'm here for us to begin anew. A fresh offer. I'm given charge to convey terms. (Nodding to WARDEN BRENNAN.)

SCENE READER

[WARDEN BRENNAN opens a folder and reads from a formal memo.]

WARDEN BRENNAN

In order to conclude the food refusal campaign against prison administration of the Maze Prison at Long Kesh, the prison administration agrees to the following:

- The return of personal clothing to respective inmates. (Everyone shall get their own wardrobe.)
- The restoration of privileges and the distribution of regular parcels to inmates along with the restoration of visiting privileges.
- The restoration of sports and recreation privileges.
- The establishment of academic studies and vocational training for those who wish to partake.
- The administration also agrees to acknowledge the internal inmate hierarchy of command, which shall be consulted regarding prison policy and prisoner affairs.
- Prisoners may also begin once again to freely associate amongst one another.
- And, finally, prisoner time off for good behavior shall be restored.

SCENE READER

[WARDEN BRENNAN passes the memo along to SECRETARY NOLAN, who looks it over before extending the paper for DESMOND'S inspection.]

SECRETARY NOLAN

Sounds very reasonable.

DESMOND

– However –

SECRETARY NOLAN

However, you must put an end to this “Food Refusal Campaign.” Pull Mr. O’Connor’s son from this strike. Call a halt with the others and the families. And you’ll be getting what you’re asking.

DESMOND

We’ve heard this before. Then, when we call an end, you pretend no offer ever exists.

WARDEN BRENNAN

That’s not how it’ll be this time. We’ll follow-through.

SECRETARY NOLAN

I’ll see to it.

DESMOND

You’ll see to it, eh? Bringing all the power of periphery to bear.

SCENE READER

[DESMOND picks up the folder of newspaper clippings and leafs through them.]

DESMOND

Make it public. Balance out the news food refusal cessation with Britain’s concessions.

SECRETARY NOLAN

We won’t be doing that. You and yours – You put an end to this and we’re in business. Let us, what is that you so often say, Monsignor? Choose faith? Let’s us choose faith, shall we?

DESMOND

What about status? Acknowledge us as political prisoners. – Prisoners of war. A war against British occupation. Make it formal. Make it official.

SECRETARY NOLAN

That’s not gonna happen.

WARDEN BRENNAN

You’re getting what you want, Mr. Lenihan. Your own clothes. Control over keeping your own. It all amounts to the same in the end. Don’t go gripping on Pride.

SECRETARY NOLAN

Or semantics for God’s sake.

DESMOND

Eight men haven’t given their lives to die as “criminals”. They died proclaiming their campaign legitimate. They died as political prisoners. Prisoners of war.

SECRETARY NOLAN

There are no prisoners of war in British jails! You want we should give such status to the Ulster Volunteer Force? Blowing up Catholic shops and bistros full a women and children in Catholic neighborhoods? UVF or IRA – Murder's no less murder because he who's responsible claims political motive. You kill, you go to jail. You blast a bomb, you go to jail. You terrorize, you wreak havoc in civilized streets – You go to jail! No matter who you are. England isn't *at war* with Northern Ireland, Mr. Lenihan. We're here to help you keep the peace –

DESMOND

Not at war? Get your troopers out of our doorways and your tanks off our streets. Not at war? Expel the Orange Order from our neighborhoods and put some of our own on your police force. Not at war? – Bayonets pointed at our children. On our blocks. Our homes. The Falls Road form of Apartheid. Take away your troops and we'll get on with our lives in a peaceable way.

WARDEN BRENNAN

You and yours – You're in prison because you've committed murders. Or abetted in the commission of such. Or conspired toward such. The killing of civilians. Of church-goers. Of mothers and their babies. You're criminals by anyone's definition.

SECRETARY NOLAN

This isn't negotiations, Mr. Lenihan. I'm merely a courier. But this – This is it. This is how this concludes. Else you can just go on starving these boys until their families intervene – (Gestures to PATRICK O'CONNOR) And some family will. And then everyone shall wonder, What were they ever striking for? And no one'll know. No one will remember. Or care. You're getting what you're asking. Really, a very reasonable offer.

WARDEN BRENNAN

The fact of the matter is, families are already making arrangements. When one family does so, that'll be it for this offer.

SECRETARY NOLAN

Your own pulpits calling your campaign pointless suicide. Those are the words of your own: 'Pointless suicide.' Am I wrong Monsignor?

SWEENEY

No. You're not wrong.

DESMOND

You siding with them, Father Mike?

SWEENEY

(Hesitating then putting his cards on the table.) I'm giving a sermon, myself, Des. A sermon supporting the Irish Catholic Church's stance on this. There is a fine line. That line's being crossed. I'm supporting the Archbishop. T'is time for enough.

DESMOND

You know what that'll do to us, Mike?...*Mike?* – They're trying to dismiss us altogether. All of us – *All of it*. Trying to make 400 years of oppression seem legitimate and four centuries of dissension seem illicit. This isn't pointless, Mike. We're not criminals. Don't help them make us out to be.

SWEENEY

This has to end, Des.

DESMOND

All you're gonna do is take the heat off a them to do *anything*. – Mike. Don't do this. You of all people. We need you by our side. You have eminence with this. With us. With them. You join the Church and it'll kill another man. Maybe two. Maybe more. We don't keep the morality firmly entrenched on our own terrain, then we've lost all. (To PATRICK) It'll kill Paul.

PATRICK

T'is my understanding that you're the one holding sway over that.

DESMOND

Sway over whom? Who do you know who's *ever* held sway over Paul? It's his campaign. *Their* campaign. *Their* choice to see themselves through with this. You know how many guys want to be part a this? I'm a...a...a mere gatekeeper. I manage logistics. I'm gonna *tell them* what to do? You expect me to tell Paul that "His Da says so, so's that's how it's gonna be"? Or his Da "Wants"? Paul's grown up with his Da bellowing and getting what he wants his entire life. I'm sorry, Mr. O'Connor. I'm sorry you're not "Entitled" to an "Exemption". And I'm certainly sorry for your suffering. But t'is not only the classes beneath that seek to sacrifice. Paul's seeing to it that the upper echelon is likewise represented. – He trumps me, Mr. O'Connor. They all do. I'm merely a messenger as well. And the message is: We're seeing it though as planned until we're recognized as prisoners of a war against our own. – Mike: You're pulling the floor from beneath those lads.

SWEENEY

I need to do what my conscience dictates, Des. Eight funerals in the last five months that should have been avoided, weren't it for pride – and I'm saying pride from all sides.

WARDEN BRENNAN

You know, people are saying you've a rather choice seat, Mr. Lenihan. Immune from going on the strike yourself, yet able to pass sentence.

DESMOND

Look. You want this over? (To PATRICK) You want it over? Go ahead. *You* take him off. You don't need me. You have the law on your side. *You* intervene.

PATRICK

If it comes to that, I will.

DESMOND

Then why am I here? You go ahead. Go do your own bidding. Go against his wishes. Do exactly what he in his heart would abhor you to do. You don't need me.

PATRICK

You think I'd come here hat-in-hand if there's any other way? Come pleading to the likes a you? But apparently, you're the one he'll listen to.

DESMOND

He won't.

PATRICK

You're the last hope a him listening to anyone.

DESMOND

Then I don't know what to tell you.

SCENE READER

[MULE clears his throat and speaks-up.]

MULE

Mr. O'Connor: How shall we proceed if your son – *once* your son – lapses into coma?

PATRICK

(Looks at MULE and pauses.) I don't know that.

ELBOWS

Shall we be putting an I.V. in his arm, sir? Hydrate him? Nutrify him?...Sir?

PATRICK

I don't, um...I'm not...I don't know.

SWEENEY

What do you mean, you don't know? For six weeks you've been railing your house against this.

PATRICK

– Christ! I don't know my stance. You tell me: What is it I'm expected to do?

SWEENEY

You're expected to intervene. Be his father. Put a stop to it. -- Before he's too far gone .

PATRICK

I do, and I'm a traitor to my own. I save my son's life and I'm Judas to the world.

SWEENEY

And who exactly is it you're betraying? Who in here isn't feeling some tormenting bite of compromise? I've stood and supported eight boys. Told 'em that God would look into their hearts and understand intentions and well-meanings. But I can do it no longer. I can't look into the sallow faces of the living dead and tell 'em it's all for the best. It's their destiny. It's what God wants. Things change. There comes a time. And that time is now.

PATRICK

I hear this from you. But then I hear from neighbors - and - and – and – people I don't even know, all *praying for Paul* and *rooting for Paul*. *Rooting for Paul?* To do what? Die with a flourish?...And "Comes a time?" I'm saturated with voices telling me such: Comes a time when you stand up for what's right. Comes a time to sacrifice. – Christ, I know how Paul feels. I know what it's like to be...to be young and swelled with so much conviction you could...you could tear through brick and never once feel the bullets piercing your flesh. How do you reason with that?...Christ, other families have lost sons and daughters, what makes me so special? Perhaps *this* is what I'm called to endure. Perhaps it's 'comes a time' for this. No entitlement. No exemptions. And you. – Jolly Monsignor Avuncular, preaching the virtues of conversion? Especially to one who's already been long among the converted. I'm sorry for breaking your heart, Father: But I *don't know* what to do. And I don't know what I'm gonna do.

SCENE READER

[PATRICK sits a moment. SECRETARY NOLAN nods toward MULE and the flask. MULE nods toward ELBOWS, who pours a paper cup full and passes it along to WARDEN BRENNAN, who passes it along to PATRICK.]

WARDEN BRENNAN

You're not the only parent prepared to pull his son off, Mr. O'Connor. There are others ready as well, just like you.

SCENE READER

[PATRICK places his hand on the paper cup, pulling it close to him, holding it in his grasp, almost as if enjoying the feel of it. He looks at it, considers it, then slide it back away from him.]

PATRICK

Then have one of them bring their sons off. I'll be the next in line thereafter.

ELBOWS

(After a pause, hesitantly, clearing his throat) Fact is, sir: Your Paul's the farthest gone. T'is he whose put the baton in your hand.

SWEENEY

Paul's nearly out of time, Pat. T'is your move.

PATRICK

I can't. He's put the baton in the wrong hand...

MULE

(To DESMOND) You see this? What you've wrought? The anguish. This is what people see.

SECRETARY NOLAN

This proposal leaves with me, Mr. Lenihan. You're getting what you're asking. Accept that as triumph...Another man dies and that's that. Know how much we need – we all need – to re-examine the realities of the situation and somehow arrive at a solution that saves face for all. What's the expression: Peace with honor? It's time for humility, Mr. Lenihan. Time to put an end to this sadness.

PATRICK

(To DESMOND) I'm asking: Please. Save my son.

SWEENEY

It's the right thing, Des.

SCENE READER

[DESMOND pauses, considering all angles, then reaches for PATRICK's paper cup, grasping it, then drinking it.]

DESMOND

(Pausing) Fine. I'll propose it. I'll talk to Paul. Tell him we're bringing him off. And I'll sell it like Barnum, but I'm telling you – He won't go for it. He'll likely hand me my head. But...I'll try.

PATRICK

I have your word?

DESMOND

Yes sir, you do. I shall try.

SECRETARY NOLAN

I can pass that along as a verbal agreement?

SCENE READER

[DESMOND nods slightly.]

WARDEN BRENNAN

Is that a yes?

DESMOND

T'is. Yes.

SECRETARY NOLAN

All right, then. This is how change happens, gentleman. This is how we commence momentum. Reluctantly. – Grudgingly. – But decidedly.

SCENE READER

[SECRETARY NOLAN rises as do WARDEN BRENNAN, MONSIGNOR SWEENEY, PATRICK O'CONNOR, MULE, and ELBOWS. DESMOND remains seated.]

SECRETARY NOLAN

Thank you, sirs. Mr. O'Connor: Hopefully we'll have your Paul restored in no time. Monsignor: Thank you for your time...Mr. Lenihan. You're doing the right thing, sir. – Gentlemen. Thank you. And now I'll bid you good day.

SCENE READER

[SECRETARY NOLAN exits, followed by WARDEN BRENNAN. ELBOWS pauses then approaches PATRICK O'CONNOR.]

ELBOWS

Mr. O'Connor? Would you care to see your son, sir?

PATRICK

(As if a little dazed.) I'm sorry. – What's that?

MULE

Would you care to go visit your Paul?

PATRICK

(Pausing) No. – No. I can't. I can't see him this way.

SCENE READER

[There is a moment to make certain PATRICK has meant what he's said. ELBOWS then stands aside and lets PATRICK proceed before him. As they exit, DESMOND remains seated.]

DESMOND

Mike?

SCENE READER

[MONSIGNOR SWEENEY begins to exit then pauses as DESMOIND addresses MULE.]

DESMOND

Malcolm? Might I have a moment?

MULE

(Pausing, sizing up the two) A moment.

SCENE READER

[MULE exits.]

DESMOND

He's not gonna listen to me, Mike.

SWEENEY

Be that as it may, Des. It needs be done. And you need to make with the doing. Make the decision. Make it happen.

DESMOND

How much should we worry about them renegeing?

SWEENEY

We might indeed have to choose faith. Truth is, the Tories are in a bind as well. They're saturated with the violence this is caused. But they're also bound to be feeling stronger as the families question the means. What's on the table today – It won't last another death. But if you accept it now, I have to believe they'll make good.

DESMOND

(Considering it) Maybe it's time to get what we can, then, right? Paddy intervenes; the other families folla. Then it's eight deaths for nothing. I mean, that's a fair reading of the situation. Right?

SWEENEY

I truly believe so. They may not even wait for Paddy. Families are poised. Someone's bound to intervene. They want it over. This needs be done.

DESMOND

How connected are you with this?

SWEENEY

People still answer my calls. I'll use whatever cache I have, Des. The morality of "making good" will be voiced and expected.

DESMOND

You'll stay connected with me? Do things in conjunction and in unison?

SWEENEY

I shall.

DESMOND

They're isolating me, Mike. Don't leave me alone in here, left to wondering.

SWEENEY

I won't.

DESMOND

(Pausing) Well then, pass word along. Tell 'em... Tell 'em that I'm all for...making considerations. That maybe it's time to get the most we can... It's the right thing, Mike. Right?

SWEENEY

T'is. (Pauses) All right, then. I'm going to go see the boys.

DESMOND

Don't say anything to Paul about this. It'll only rile him.

SWEENEY

I won't. But it needs be done immediately, Des. Soon-to-Now.

DESMOND

I know. It shall.

SCENE READER

[MONSIGNOR SWEENEY pats DESMOND on the shoulder as he begins to exit.]

SWEENEY

Peace be with you, Desy.

DESMOND

Father?

SWEENEY

(A little taken aback with the formality.) Yes Desmond?

DESMOND

(Pausing) I'm so full a hate, Mike. – I resent...I resent so much. Loathe so many. I'm howling at people I ain't seen in 20 years. Arguing spats that jab at like pins. I have so much hate in my heart. I don't want it. I don't want this to be the way I am. (Pauses) Would you hear my confession, Mike?

SWEENEY

Of course, Des. Of course...

SCENE READER

[MONSIGNOR SWEENEY sits back down beside DESMOND, turning his chair perpendicular to DESMOND. The lights begin to dim as together they make the sign of the cross.]

SWEENEY

In the name of the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit...

DESMOND

Bless me father for I have sinned. It's been...Jesus...It's been a generation past since my last confession...

SCENE READER

[Lights diminish to darkness.]

[END OF SCENE]

SCENE 11: The Safe House

Characters: Sister Judith Marie
 Patrick O'Connor
 Caroline Lenihan
 Monsignor Michael Sweeney
 The Troubadour
 The Troubadette
 The Tam O'Shanter Trio
 Desmond 'Doyle' Lenihan

SCENE READER

[SCENE: Lights rise on the initial safe house kitchen, lights initially rising on the stove, now with a soup kettle simmering. Enter JUDITH MARIE through the door leading into the basement. As she sees to the soup and the house, she addresses the audience.]

SISTER JUDITH MARIE

The second half a your life often seems to involve reconciling what you've been taught with what you've actually learned. You grow up believing in do-unto-others. Turn the other cheek. The meek shall inherit. You're taught to practice the preaching and walk-the-walk and we all do our best.

SCENE READER

[JUDITH MARIE disappears into the shadows as PATRICK enters through the main door, carrying a tool box which he places on the kitchen table, proceeding to remove PVC pipe, gunpowder, roofing nails, blasting caps, duct tape, etc. and putting them in a cardboard box on the kitchen table.]

PATRICK O'CONNOR

We all grow up with some 'something' and that's fine. You learn to adapt to what is. But when cops bully your wife in front a your kids. When they start hauling yours off 'cause they won't 'mind their eyes' and 'mind their tone.' When they're continually knocking the heads a your mates. When plastic bullets start piercing the air behind your ears on your own front stoop – I mean, I get where Paul's heart's at. It's just...All this. T'was never meant for him.

SCENE READER

[PATRICK puts the cardboard box full of items underneath the kitchen table then likewise exits through the shadows. As he does so, there enters through the basement door CAROLINE LENIHAN, carrying bedding in a clothes basket, spraying down and making up two cots as she speaks.]

CAROLINE LENIHAN

Des was always drawn to the...ritual of the Catholic rites since his altar-boy back-when. And by the time school concluded for him he had made up his mind that he was gonna be a missionary: Order of the Divine Word, with outposts in 52 countries. Be one of the 'people's priests.' Take up for the locals in some far off colonial. Dig wells. Pump water into huts. Wire villages for electricity. Build libraries and teach young people reading and writing and civics and persuasion. Perhaps even teach the means of peaceful protest. He was ready to take all the vows. Poverty. Chastity. Obedience. My Des, pledging to take a vow of obedience. As if.

SCENE READER

[CAROLINE exits into the shadows as there enters through the front door MONSIGNOR SWEENEY, carrying two fifths of Irish whiskey in separate paper bags. He removes the cardboard box from beneath the kitchen table, looks over the contents of the box, then places one of the bottles in it. He then opens the second bottle and pours himself a drink as he speaks, leaving the bottle and the glass on the table.]

SWEENEY

He was in the first year of studies at seminary when the Troubles erupted – *really* erupted. He came home for holiday to find his streets under siege from the UVF with their self-appointed Royal Ulster Constabulary surrounding them and their neighborhoods and with the British army policing them. They were getting it from all sides. – In a neighborhood, mind you, already surrounded by Protestant neighborhoods, filled with Protestant neighbors none too neighborly toward their Catholic brethren...But don't you know, there've been many of us who share a life of similar trajectory. We're all on a pilgrimage. Spiritual seeking in a cynical world. – But then, when you and yours butt-up against all the institutional barricades. And then when the chaos of riots and Marshall Law start infecting your own house. – It keeps you up nights, it really does. You agonize over it. You gonna catch a flight to Managua and help the peasants fight the junta? Or go home to stand up for your own? Stand and fight on behalf of what's right. For your neighbors. For your family. – You feel it in you. You can hear the herald of the chosen calling you to lead the ministry of resistance...Some end up following that...So, with a year in, DESMOND left the Order.

SCENE READER

[MONSIGNOR SWEENEY drinks-up then disappears into the shadows. As he does so, the lights diminish until they tighten on CAITLIN, sitting in a chair at the table.]

CAITLIN

You grow up and things are as they are and you don't give it much thought. You go along, you get along. T'is what t'is...

SCENE READER

[Meanwhile, as CAITLIN speaks, a light rises on the table at which she is sitting and we can see her speaking into a tape recorder microphone.]

CAITLIN

...Then one day you get assaulted by guys you know who are among them and among the protected. Then you see on the television the demonstrations. People you know being beaten. The cops clubbing the neighbors a your cousins – The cousins a your friends. You grow up with partition, with barbed-wire and concrete slabs. With this is your quarter and your quarter is here and where do you think you're going? On so many levels, it shatters you to shards.

SCENE READER

[Light diminishes on CAITLIN as it rises downstage on ELIZABETH FITCH-KILROY, a bottle of whiskey and a glass beside her, she opening a pack of cigarettes, tapping the pack to pack the tobacco, then trying to light a cigarette, though never getting around to it. She is reading copy into a phone, to an editor with her Chicago newspaper, sending a story back home. As ELIZABETH narrates her story and the action, there enter THE TROUBADOUR and THE TROUBALETTE who pour drinks from the MONSIGNOR'S bottle, retrieving the cardboard box from beneath the table, and beginning the actual assembly of the exploding device.]

ELIZABETH FITCH-KILROY

New Paragraph: The Troubadour begins taking objects – Can you hear me? Hello? Okay. – Again:

New Paragraph: The Troubadour begins taking objects from the box and setting them on the table, one-by-one – PVC pipe, gunpowder, roofing nails, blasting caps, electrical tape. The two – a husband and wife-like couple who tour playing Republican pubs on and in the boarder counties – the two then begin assembling the objects they have removed from the box into an exploding device. "T'is they who own the factories," says The Troubadette. "T'is they who run the government. T'is they who hold the jobs. They run the police force. They preside over the courts." The Troubadour ceases his assembly and takes a drink from his whisky glass for emphasis.

SCENE READER

[Light slowly diminishes on ELIZABETH FITCH-KILROY as THE TROUBADOUR drinks from his whisky glass.]

TROUBADOUR

You grow up and things are as they are. You grow up with the arrogance of the majority. Protestant parades marching through your streets - *Your* streets. Sticking it in your face year-after-bloody-year. Sneering. Jeering. Celebrating a three-hundred-year-old battle. For what? For the sheer joy of stepping on your neck until hearing it crack

THE TROUBALETTE

They watch your every move and if they don't like the way you look at 'em, they grab you; throw you up against a car; rip through your pockets; and haul you off to lock-up. The Falls Road form of Apartheid.

THE TROUBADOUR

They then interrogate you for hours; beat on you; and detain you as long as they like on 'suspicion.' Suspicion a' what? They don't have to say. 'You've an attitude. You're suspicious a something.' Suspicion a "bad vibes." So they toss you in and forget about you until they feel otherwise. –

THE TROUBALETTE

You know, such circumstances – Sometimes you need to trade in your rhetoric for rifles.

SCENE READER

[As THE TROUBADOUR and THE TROUBALETTE continue assembling the exploding device, DESMOND appears from the shadows, dressed in civilian clothes as if a student – black turtleneck sweater, black leather jacket, Doc Marten boots, backpack slung over his shoulder. DESMOND greets THE TROUBADOUR and TROUBALETTE each with an embrace.]

DESMOND

...And all the while you soldier on. You don't let it dampen your spirit. You're still quick with a smile and to join in a song. You don't give up your guns and you don't give up your grin...

SCENE READER

[DESMOND opens his backpack and removes the books within it as he speaks.]

DESMOND

One day I happened on a passage written by a Central American priest: (Reading from one of the books he's unpacking.) "I took off my cassock to be more truly a priest, for the Catholic who is not a revolutionary is living in mortal sin." (Closes the book) The Judas brand a Christianity: Take the fight to Caiaphas. (Reads again) "The duty of every Catholic is to be a revolutionary. And the duty of every revolutionary is to *make* the revolution..." (Addressing the audience) So here I was. – And there I went. I walked away from the calling a year or so in, brimming, with a head full a verse and a heart swelling with righteous rage...I would become The Right Reverend Commander Doyle. Minister to the Revolution.

SCENE READER

[THE TROUBADOUR finishes assembling the exploding device and hands it to THE TROUBADETTE, who begins adjusting the timing device.]

THE TROUBADOUR

In the course of a year we had two friends killed in shoot-outs with British troops. I had a neighbor shot dead while standing on his doorstep one evening having a smoke.

THE TROUBADETTE

I had three cousins attacked by gangs of Ulster punks – Another cousin raped by the same.

SCENE READER

[THE TROUBADETTE finishes setting the timer on the explosive device. DESMOND holds open his backpack and THE TROUBADETTE gently places the device inside it.]

DESMOND

One day my closest is killed in a car blast by an organization calling itself the Ulster Protestant Action Group – A bomb meant for me. She was the tenth Catholic to be killed in a six-week span; the 59th to be killed that year...She was my anam cara. The One who beholds your light and beauty, and accepts you for who you truly are...That tilted things. Changed for good my world view...

THE TROUBADOUR

People die every day. Of famine. Of leukemia. Gunshot. Genocide. The meek and the innocent. Mothers and children...People who bring light to the world are snuffed out in an instant.

THE TROUBADETTE

Why not they then? Why not they who perpetrate and perpetuate the violence and doom of others? Why should them who cause the suffering continue on?

DESMOND

Here's become my ministry...This...This is become my purpose. – Revolution needs to happen. Things need to change. 'The Catholic who is not a revolutionary is living in mortal sin.' And I say, *Amen to that, brotha!* Amen to that! – People are gonna die tomorrow one way or another. So let us smite the evildoer for the cause of what's righteous. –: "Let me hear the sounds of joy and gladness; and though you have crushed and broken me, I will be happy once again!" There it is. I'd rather light a fuse than curse the darkness...

SCENE READER

[As if AT THAT: THE TROUBADOUR and THE TROUBADETTE commence with song, singing “Boys of the Old Brigade” to DESMOND. They appear to serenade him as THE TROUBADETTE helps DESMOND put on his coat and then hoist the backpack over his shoulder, embracing DESMOND long and strong. THE TROUBADOUR and THE TROUBADETTE are then joined by the rest of the band for the first chorus and the remainder of the song. Meanwhile, DESMOND, backpack over his shoulder, turns toward the back wall and exits into the shadows.]

SCENE READER (continued)

[As the song concludes, the music gives way to the laughing sounds of a crowded pub slowly rising. As the lights diminish, an explosion erupts as if nearby down the street. As the lights further diminish and the explosion occurs, there rise the stark sounds of fire along with distant, chaotic screams and sirens, all initially, strikingly audible then quickly growing distant as the lights darken on THE TROUBADOUR, THE TROUBADETTE and THE TRIO.]

SCENE READER (continued)

[From the darkness there appears again a light rising on SEAMUS in a hospital bed, alone. There then enters SISTER JUDITH MARIE, who says a quiet prayer over SEAMUS before pulling the blanket over him and making the sign of the cross.]

[END OF SCENE]

SCENE 12: The Safe House / The Long Kesh Infirmary

Characters: Desmond "Doyle" Lenihan
 Paul O'Connor
 Owen Farrell
 Eamon Farrell

SCENE READER

[SCENE: A ready and prepared safe house. Food, linen, and towels have been left for the visitors. Gradually, there is heard approaching the sounds of running footsteps up and onto the stoop then a key fumbling into the latch. Enter DESMOND LENIHAN and OWEN FARRELL, both out of breath, closing the door behind them, both looking out individual windows.]

OWEN

What the fuck was all that?

DESMOND

How the fuck should I know! Did you see where they went?

OWEN

No – What the fuck *was* that? What's with your boy?

DESMOND

Don't take a tone with me.

OWEN

I'm not giving tutorials.

SCENE READER

[Enter PAUL O'CONNOR and EAMON FARRELL, equally out of breath.]

OWEN

(To EAMON) Anyone on ya?

EAMON

No. (Taking a breath) Man, we barely made it.

OWEN

What the fuck was that sonny-buck?

PAUL

What was what?

EAMON

You know what the fuck. No one needs some tottering tag-along to be flustering into a panic inciting a fuck-up.

PAUL

Panic? That was initiative. Someone has to rise-up.

SCENE READER

[OWEN steps toward PAUL.]

OWEN

Who you think you're talking to?

SCENE READER

[OWEN pushes PAUL then follows it up with another shove. Without hesitation, PAUL grabs a rolling pin from the counter and whacks OWEN in the knee, who then doubles over, clutching PAUL and pulling him to the floor on top of him. Almost immediately, EAMON grabs from the kitchen utility carousel a knife. EAMON lunges at PAUL, tackling him to the floor and then atop him, holding the knife to his throat as OWEN writhes holding his knee. DESMOND subsequently lunges at EAMON, grabbing him from behind, around the neck, trying to wrestle him off of PAUL.]

DESMOND

Get off him... EAMON ...Owen – *Get him off him!*

OWEN

Ow – My fucking knee!

DESMOND

Get – off him! What are you gonna stab us all...Get the fuck off him!

SCENE READER

[DESMOND summons his reserve, bites EAMON's knuckles to free the knife from EAMON's hand, then pulls EAMON up off of PAUL, throwing him up against the stove. EAMON subsequently grabs PAUL's rolling pin and raises it to DESMOND, who then pulls a gun from his jacket and aims it at EAMON's face.]

DESMOND

I'll give you a third eye, Eames. – Now knock it off!

SCENE READER

[EAMON drops the rolling pin and DESMOND subsequently lowers his gun.]

DESMOND

Owen! You and Eamon. – Get the fuck outta here.

OWEN

For what?

DESMOND

For my peace a mind. Go on. Get your gear and go.

EAMON

Where are we supposed to go?

DESMOND

Go to the old boat house. I'll catch up with you in a bit. We'll get things right.

OWEN

The boat house?! Fuck that!

DESMOND

Every time with you guys! Anytime things go wrong – You know, things – They go wrong – Fine. But you two have a habit of...of...of losing your heads and lashing out at whoever's around ya.

EAMON

(Referring to PAUL) You're gonna stand by him over us?

DESMOND

Yeah. He takes orders. He listens. He don't create problems that he can't solve. Now go. Get on. We should be getting asunder as is.

OWEN

What are we supposed to eat?

SCENE

[DESMOND grabs a pair of hot pads, goes to the stove, then hoists the soup pot from the stove and hands it to EAMON.]

DESMOND

Here.

SCENE READER

[DESMOND turns and grabs a ladle and spoons and pushes them into OWEN's hands.]

DESMOND

Here. Get up – Get up – *Get up!* – Here! Take this. – Take it! – Now *get the fuck out.*

OWEN

What about my knee?

DESMOND

Walk it off.

PAUL

(To OWEN) I'll see you about some time.

DESMOND

(To PAUL) You'll see no one about.

OWEN

(To PAUL) I'll see you on the street as well, Squire.

SCENE READER

[DESMOND re-aims the pistol at OWEN's throat.]

DESMOND

You see him on the street, you walk the other way. You hear me, Owen? Oates? You hear? – Christ, I'm tired a having to clean up after you two. Eamon, you hear me? Eamon! Say it.

EAMON

I'm hearing you.

DESMOND

Owen? (OWEN doesn't respond) Let's not do this, Oates.

SCENE READER

[DESMOND lowers his gun again.]

DESMOND

Let's not be this way. All right?...*All right?*

OWEN

All right.

DESMOND

All right, then. You've got food. You've got something to eat. Go to the boat house. Give me 20 minutes. Decompress. And we'll convene anon. (Pauses) *Now go! – Go! – Go! – Get gone!*

SCENE READER

[OWEN and EAMON gather their gear and food, grabbing a couple of breads and muffins from the table as they exit. PAUL watches DESMOND give them brothers the bums-rush out the door.]

DESMOND

Christ almighty. – Why do I get involved with them?

PAUL

Because if you're not supervising them, they're supervising you.

DESMOND

What the fuck happened out there?

PAUL

Nothing happened. Things got fouled-up. Someone had to do something. I did. We got out.

DESMOND

Ah Christ. That wasn't in the plan. – Jesus, we gotta get gone from here as well.

PAUL

Let's give it a moment. Let things decompress a bit.

SCENE READER

[PAUL goes to the ice box and takes from atop MONSIGNOR SWEENEY's whiskey bottle. He opens the top, smells it, then looks into it before going and finding himself a cup.]

PAUL

You want a cup?

DESMOND

No.

PAUL

Come on. Have one.

SCENE READER

[PAUL finds a cup and cleans it out for DESMOND then fills it.]

DESMOND

You have to learn to defer.

PAUL

Defer to the likes a that? You want *your* fate in those hands?

DESMOND

It don't matter what I want. Or what *you* want. You get involved with something, and there's a system you adhere to. There's hierarchy. There's protocol. There's reasons behind all of it.

PAUL

Yeah, well.

DESMOND

Yeah, well, nothing. I'm telling you and that's that. You want to get along, you best listen to those who've been getting along longer than you.

SCENE READER

[PAUL hands DESMOND the cup.]

PAUL

Fair enough.

SCENE READER

[DESMOND and PAUL drink-up. PAUL is suddenly struck with what seems a paralyzing pain.]

DESMOND

You all right?

PAUL

Ah...Ow...Yeah...

SCENE READER

[There begins occurring a gradual transformation of YOUNG RENEGADE PAUL into HUNGER STRIKE PAUL, commencing with a light shift as the surroundings of the safe house dim to dark. Meanwhile, the light tightens on DESMOND and PAUL as PAUL begins his subtle, slow deflation. PAUL grabs tightly onto the chair as he unzips his jacket, then sits down to catch his breath.]

DESMOND

Pauly?

PAUL

Aye. Yeah. Fit and fine – Fit and fine ...Just...Feeling – I don't know...Clammy. (Thinks about it.) A little weak in the legs. – My sight's blurring. – It hurts to breathe...But with a song in my heart, Squire...

SCENE READER

[PAUL slowly, delicately rises and removes his leather jacket, beneath which PAUL is wearing a hospital shirt. PAUL sits back down, bending over to untie the laces of his boots, struggling to do so. As he continues struggling, DESMOND rises and goes to unlace them for him. The essence of the scene is that we have transformed from the safe house flashback to the current infirmary.]

PAUL

What's this about, Doyle? How'd you manage seeing me?

DESMOND

Monsignor Mike. He arranged things. He's trying to build some bridges.

SCENE READER

[Gradually, quietly, there appears in blue light PAUL's hospital bed in the Long Kesh infirmary, I.V. beside it, flanked by heart monitors.]

PAUL

Bridges toward what? What's this about?

SCENE READER

[DESMOND takes a knee and unties PAUL's boot laces.]

DESMOND

(Pausing, then not mincing words.) We're taking you off strike, Paul.

PAUL

You're what? –

DESMOND

We're taking you off.

SCENE READER

[PAUL summons all his meager strength, kicking DESMOND in the chest and himself away from him.]

PAUL

The fuck you are.

DESMOND

You on is a mistake, Paul. – My mistake. I should have considered it more thoroughly.

PAUL

You're taking *me* off? How's that gonna happen?

SCENE READER

[As the next exchange occurs, PAUL slowly, painfully rises, carefully removing his dungarees under which fall the full hospital gown. At some point, PAUL looks like he might take a tumble and DESMOND goes to see if he can help, though PAUL recoils and waves him off.]

DESMOND

You never mentioned how passionate Patrick is about this. He's poised to be pulling you off himself.

PAUL

Ah, who cares what the old scowl thinks. He's got no sway over this.

DESMOND

Who cares? Christ, how many times I have to sound it out for you guys? It's about soliciting the public sympathy. An old scowl – a former compatriot, no less – telling the world his son's been talked-onto the campaign and that he's taking him off – It doesn't do much to solicit public sympathy. – It creates antipathy. No one gives a shite what you're striking for or what you die for or what was all the bother for. He could hurt us bad.

PAUL

(Dismissing) Bah.

DESMOND

I'm telling you, Pauly. A public relations nightmare. I've met with Dear Old Da. He thinks I'm pulling the strings on ya. Holds me responsible. As though I have sway. All he need do is plant the smallest seed in people's minds. The slightest, reasonable doubt. And they're set to wondering.

PAUL

Doyle. – I can barely see your shadow. – I'm too far gone with this. You're speaking to the blind. I'm tired. Let it be. There's no 'bringing me off.

DESMOND

Paul, he's ready to intervene. Once you can't protest he's ready to...

PAUL

– He won't do a thing.

DESMOND

He'll pull you off.

PAUL

My mother knows. She'll see it's as I wish.

DESMOND

How can you be sure?

PAUL

She said so. She's my Mum.

DESMOND

But your father's the one with the law on his side. Whether you like it or not, he's your legal guardian. Not her. He'll make use of it, believe me. And it'll impel the other families to follow. And the public will always back the families. And then we're fucked. We can't risk it.

PAUL

I'm seeing this thing through, Doyle. Like we all agreed.

DESMOND

Aw, Jesus, Pauly. Don't fuck this up out of ego. You have nothing more to prove. Just...do what you're told. Be a soldier. Do your job. And leave it at that.

PAUL

I'll do what my conscience dictates.

DESMOND

You don't belong on this thing. You've got a family tearing itself apart over it. You've got a future in your Da's business. Just let it go. It's not meant for you.

PAUL

Is that all the credit you give me, Doyle? That I can just walk away and back into what's been?

DESMOND

No, it isn't like that. I'm just –

PAUL

You think I could face the men on one a Paddy's sites knowing that I didn't do what they would've done if confronted?

DESMOND

You're his son, Paul. If he feels this adamant...I don't know. Maybe...Maybe it's the right thing.

PAUL

He turned away from *me* when I joined this, Des. Not I from him.

DESMOND

Your Da's ante-d up his share. He doesn't need relinquish a son.

PAUL

Ante-ed up? At what point exactly does compromise take precedent over conviction?

DESMOND

It just seems, Paul –

PAUL

'It just seems,' Des - Fine. But I'm staying on this. And there's nothing you can say, or he can do, that will unknot that decision.

DESMOND

(Rubbing his eyes and head, noticeably weary.) Aw Christ, you guys...

SCENE READER

[As PAUL makes his way toward his hospital bed, he is gripped by another pang and he winces.]

DESMOND

You all right?

PAUL

What do you plan on doing, Doyle? Put the 'I.V.' in my arm? Bring me back from the brink? To a life a what? Frailty? Half-sight? A haunt that I...I... I couldn't face with grace the final inevitable? You gonna sit there with me then, day-in and day-out, in some nursing quarter while I stew about that? I'm here. I've arrived...T'is never been *your* campaign, Doyle. It's ours. If you can't handle it, then we'll see it through on our own. To the finish. With or without you. But don't interfere. And don't fret over my Da and his feelings. You were chosen for a job. You see it through. As will I. It's what needs be done. It's what I need to do.

SCENE READER

[PAUL eventually makes his way to the hospital bed, though he is exhausted by this point. He tries hoisting himself up into the bed, to no avail. Eventually, PAUL turns to DESMOND.]

PAUL

I need your help.

SCENE READER

[DESMOND doesn't move.]

PAUL

Don't just sit there, Doyle. I need your help...Do your job.

SCENE READER

[DESMOND rises and walks over to PAUL, hoisting him up, onto, and into the bed.]

DESMOND

What do I tell your Da?

PAUL

Tell him I love him. Tell him I miss him...I'm tired, Doyle. I'm gonna ask you to go.

DESMOND

But Paul –

PAUL

Go away from me, Des. I'm feeling right about this. And you're bringing me down.

DESMOND

Paul?

PAUL

Feel what I'm saying, Doyle. I don't want you here. Please. A dying man's wish. Now go.

SCENE READER

[DESMOND holds a moment before exiting, leaving PAUL in the blue light, the movement of his heart monitor visible in the descending darkness.]

[END OF SCENE]

SCENE 13: The Visiting Area of Long Kesh

Characters: Desmond “Doyle” Lenihan
Bridgette Flynn
Monsignor Michael Sweeney
Sister Judith Marie

SCENE READER

[Scene: DESMOND turns away from PAUL as the light on PAUL dims to the blue hue. The light follows DESMOND into the next scene as he sits with MONSIGNOR SWEENEY and SISTER JUDITH MARIE to one side and BRIDGETTE FLYNN across from him.]

DESMOND

What time did he pass?

SWEENEY

Just before sunrise.

DESMOND

Were you with him the whole way?

JUDITH MARIE

I was.

DESMOND

He say anything?

JUDITH MARIE

No.

DESMOND

It's good he wasn't alone. (To BRIDGETTE) And you?

BRIDGETTE

I was alone, yes. – I wasn't permitted to be by his side. There was issued a restraint against me.

DESMOND

Don't get all indignant. He didn't want you seeing him in that way. – Didn't want anybody seeing him that way.

BRIDGETTE

Who put him up to it? Issuing an injunction against me. He wouldn't a thought a that on his own.

DESMOND

Listen, Bride, I've been battling on your behalf for longer than you know.

SWEENEY

What about Paul O'Connor?

DESMOND

It's no go. He's staying on.

SWEENEY

What about the agreement? What of his father?

DESMOND

He won't listen to me, Mike. – Besides, Paul says his father won't butt in.

SWEENEY

That's not the point. It's about what's right. You saw his Paddy's face.

DESMOND

What exactly do you suggest I do? I tell him I'm bringing him off, he tells me to stuff myself!
What am I to do?

JUDITH MARIE

What about Seamus' wake? What of his funeral?

DESMOND

What of it?

BRIDGETTE

I want to be there. I want to stand as his widow.

DESMOND

Come on, Bridgette, get real. Who's gonna consent to that?

BRIDGETTE

I'm his wife. I have a right to be there.

DESMOND

Ex-wife. And t'was you who asunder-ed him. Besides. it's outta my hands.

JUDITH MARIE

My God, Des. She's still his wife.

DESMOND

It's a *family* funeral. And she's not welcome at family events of any kind.

BRIDGETTE

Family? I was the only family he had. I was the only one who tended to him for how long?

DESMOND

Be that as it may –

BRIDGETTE

I want what's fair for me. For my girls. – Christ, I want what's fair for Seamus.

DESMOND

Your daughters are welcome to bury their Da. T'is you who's not.

SWEENEY

Have you lost all sense a simple decency?

DESMOND

I'm explaining the facts a life. What power have I from in here?! I'm giving you the rationale. Besides, Bride: Would Seamus have even wanted you there?

BRIDGETTE

I will be there, Des. Like it or not.

DESMOND

Bride, I'm warning you: Don't push it. You're not in favor with many. Don't invite push-back.

BRIDGETTE

Push-back by whom? You? "They?" Tell me, who am I to fear, Des? In my own neighborhood? At my own husband's funeral? Aren't we all supposed to be "Us"? Look at yourself, Desmond. Look at what you've become. And don't be using Fi to justify anything. She would've left you long ago.

DESMOND

Don't invoke her name. You hardly even knew her.

BRIDGETTE

She never would've stood by this. She hated it. Hated everything you've come to stand for.

DESMOND

You hardly knew her, Bridgette –

BRIDGETTE

– I knew her enough. She and my sisters were tight for a time. And she weren't about this.

JUDITH MARIE

Bridgette, enough.

BRIDGETTE

Enough what? Truth? The women take the brunt of it for the men and I'm tired of it. Detained. Beaten. Raped. All because some boyfriend's on the lamb and the Constabulary wants to find out where he's at. Am I wrong, Des? Fiona dies – Why? Who were they trying to get to?

SCENE READER

[DESMOND grabs BRIDGETTE by the arm and puts his hand over her mouth.

DESMOND

Shut your fuckin' mouth.

JUDITH MARIE

Desmond!

SCENE READER

[BRIDGETTE smacks DESMOND's hand away and slaps DESMOND.]

BRIDGETTE

Don't you ever put a hand on me.

DESMOND

Get her outta here. All of you – Go from me!

SWEENEY

Judith, Bridgette – Come on. It's time we're going. (Pauses, then to DESMOND) You should know, Des: Bridgette Flynn shall be accompanying me to her husband's wake and funeral. Tell all concerned. She'll be walking in with me. She shall sit in the front row. Her daughters and she. I'm doing the courtesy of informing you first. She shall walk by my side. She shall remain by my side.

DESMOND

Why would you go and cloud everything in such a way, Mike? Especially now?

SWEENEY

There's no cloud about this. She being there is the right thing.

DESMOND

It projects a perception of division. It's the wrong message to be sending.

SWEENEY

There *is* division, son. Beginning with you and me. The handling a this. Are you hearing me?

DESMOND

I am. You've defected..

SWEENEY

I'm defecting no where. I've been on the side of right since the beginning. I've gone no-where.

DESMOND

Fine. You're all right and I'm wrong. Just – Leave me the fuck alone.

SWEENEY

You know, since you were in the seminary – even after you decided it wasn't for you and you left -- I've stood by you. Been your advocate. Even your defender. Haven't I? Des? I've understood your indulgences. Your passions. Your, your, your...indignations. But this? That everything's either commitment or compromise? What of compassion? What of charity? Christ, of pragmatism. Where's your being magnanimous? It's a world turned grey now, Des. Do – what's – right.

DESMOND

I'd appreciate it if you'd refrain from visiting the men. Once they hear you've turned on them again, it'll only bring them further down.

SWEENEY

(Standing a moment in the stature of his office) You'll stop me? Those boys need their Chaplain. They need their Church. They need someone to counsel and tell them squarely what's what and guide them toward the light of right decisions... Bridgette, come on.

SCENE READER

[MONSIGNOR SWEENEY stands aside and lets BRIDGETTE exit, awaiting JUDITH MARIE.]

JUDITH MARIE

I *knew* Fiona, Des. I knew her pretty well. And I was there that first summer she met you. And I hear her talking about you. Her poet warrior. Her gentleman ruffian. What a crush she had. And what a good guy you were... You once were, Des. Someone you looked forward to seeing. Someone fun to be around. Someone who brought joy to a room. Now... If she meant anything to you, Desmond, do what's right. Make her proud to have chosen you to love.

SCENE READER

[JUDITH MARIE stands a moment then exits with MONSIGNOR SWEENEY, BRIDGETTE, and ELBOWS, who closes the door behind him. As darkness descends, there rises the sound of a bodhran drum as though a rising heartbeat for a few moments.]

[In the darkness, a blue light dimly rises on PAUL in his hospital bed, asleep, an I.V. by his bedside as is his sister, CAITLIN, who is praying the rosary beside him.]

[END OF SCENE]

SCENE 14: The Infirmary at Long Kesh

Characters: Paul O'Connor
Caitlin O'Connor

SCENE READER

[SCENE: The blue light fully rises on PAUL and CAITLIN, revealing on the audience-side of the bed the I.V. bottle on a tall stand, a tube leading from it to PAUL's bedside, though not attached to his arm. There are also situated around PAUL's hospital bed baskets of fruit, muffins, and pastries left there by the prison administration in order to tempt him. As the bodhran drum heartbeat rises to a crescendo, PAUL awakens and recoils.]

PAUL

– Who's there?

SCENE READER

[CAITLIN rises, dips a wash cloth in a basin, and dabs it on PAUL's forehead and face.]

CAITLIN

Paul it's all right. It's me Paul. – It's Caity.

PAUL

(Getting his bearings.) Caity? What time is it?

CAITLIN

It's morning.

PAUL

How long've you been here?

CAITLIN

An hour or so.

PAUL

I was sleeping?

CAITLIN

Yes.

PAUL

Aw shite. I don't like nodding off with no one here. – They're slipping me vitamins in me water while I'm sleeping.

SCENE READER

[CAITLIN procures a bottle of aloe and begins massaging lotion into PAUL's arms.]

CAITLIN

Who is?

PAUL

The warders.

CAITLIN

Why would they be doing that?

PAUL

They do it to keep guys going. They did it so's none would expire during the royal wedding. I can taste it, trust me. I can feel it in my system. Even been feeling bursts a strength. I can't drink it.

CAITLIN

I'll find out about it. I'll see if I can bring some water from home.

PAUL

Will you? Please? I don't want anyone fucking with me on this. Please?

CAITLIN

I said I will.

SCENE READER

[Dabbing his forehead with a towel, feeling it for fever.]

CAITLIN

Jesus, you're burning up. And yet I can hear your teeth chattering with chill.

SCENE READER

[CAITLIN tucks the blanket around him.]

PAUL

I can't hardly see you, Caity. My eyes. It's just happening to me. I can only see your shadow.

CAITLIN

I know. Ma mentioned such.

SCENE READER

[PAUL reaches beside him and feels for the I.V.]

PAUL

Is that thing still here? Get it away from me.

CAITLIN

There's nowhere to take it.

PAUL

Get it away. – And don't let him stick it in my arm, Caity.

[CAITLIN doesn't answer.]

PAUL

Caity? Say it. Tell me you won't let him interfere.

CAITLIN

(Hesitates) I can't say it Paul. I can't promise you that.

PAUL

I'm asking ya.

CAITLIN

I don't want to argue with you. And I'm not gonna apologize for my feelings. Da's gonna do what he's gonna do. Just like you. And I've no control over either.

PAUL

Then go! You're of no use to me.

CAITLIN

Don't talk big to me, Paul.

PAUL

I don't want you by me!

CAITLIN

You've really no choice. Da can't bear to see you. Mum's crushed by this. Abbie's gone to the States. I'm all that's left.

SCENE READER

[PAUL takes a deep breath, causing noticeable strain and pain.]

CAITLIN

What is it?

PAUL

Ow. – Everything. I can't hardly move without it hurting. (Pauses) I don't mean to snipe at you.

CAITLIN

No worries.

PAUL

Abbie's gone?

CAITLIN

She's being sought for questioning. There's talk of a warrant being issued. She had to head out.

PAUL

To where?

CAITLIN

Chicago. Some friend a Sister Judith.

PAUL

I tried to dissuade her from getting so involved. – Is Da angry?

CAITLIN

Anger seems a luxury these days. Da's seems too humbled by circumstance to indulge his ire.

PAUL

I'm sorry for all this, Caity. I know it's a stress I've created for everyone. (Pauses) I do appreciate you sitting with me.

CAITLIN

You're my brother.

PAUL

(Pauses.) You know, I awoke last night, around, I don't know, two, three in the morning. And it was gone.

CAITLIN

What was?

PAUL

I don't know...The appetite. The void...These past weeks, I awake in the middle a the night and I... I don't know. – I feel so alone. – And I can feel it happening. My stomach filling with nausea. My throat parched. Mouth crusting. I can hardly open my lips that I don't crack 'em into bleeding. And I realize: This...This is how it happens. Just you and the void. Consuming. Decaying. Swallowing you up. It can be chilling at times. Alone with the abyss. But then...I awoke in the night, maybe the night before last. I still had my sight. Ma had gone home. (Carefully sits up a little.) And I get up out a bed and look at myself in the mirror. The first time I've seen my own face in so long. Weeks. Months, maybe. And such a spectacle...And I take a long last look at myself. – I am Paul O'Connor, I says. – Jesus, *this* can't be Paul O'Connor, says I...This isn't Paul O'Connor. This is just face...Paul O'Connor's only a name, I says. But it's *my* name, says I. But there are other Paul O'Connor's. Ya, but you are *the* Paul O'Connor. You are on a hunger strike. You're gonna see it through. The food the warders leave on the table to tempt you won't touch you. The I.V. they poise, you won't let 'em stick in your arm! You won't let the lads down. Am I Paul O'Connor? I am. Yet... Who am I?...That's all what I remember. Can't even recall how I got back to the bed or falling back asleep. But when again I awoke at dawn, I felt different. Maybe I'm dead, I think. Maybe I should lie back and look upwards and await the ascension with the heavenly hosts...When I awaken now, the nausea's gone. My mouth feels moist. My mind clear. My legs have failed me and my hands are trembling, but it's okay. I've taken my last walk. I've looked at the last a my face. I'm in no fear. I'm at peace. This...This is a good thing. T'is a good thing, Caity. I am at peace...How is Da?

CAITLIN

Humbled.

PAUL

Is he mad at me?

CAITLIN

.He's just scared, Paul. He just can't bear to see you this way. Can't bear the thought a losing you.

PAUL

I've been dreaming about him, too. About being kids. Saturday mornings. Off to practice. Da standing on the hill behind the field, watching. In the cold. In the freezing rain. Always there, watching over us. Then after, in the kitchen. Him making breakfast. Oatmeal and biscuits. Bangers and mash...Telling us stories of the All-Timers...Telling how I could be an All-Timer. (Pauses) Caity?

CAITLIN

I'm here.

PAUL

Should it ever come up – I mean, don't make a deal of it or anything. But if you and he are ever alone together...If you could, please mention to Da how much sorry I am. And how much I do love him.

SCENE READER

[After a moment, as darkness descends, there again is heard the rising sound of the bodhran drum as though a rising heartbeat. Meanwhile, the blue light diminishes on PAUL and CAITLIN, though stays dimly lit as CAITLIN further attends to PAUL. A light subsequently rises center stage on THE TROUBADOUR, THE TROUBADETTE, and THE TRIO, who re-enter the stage, again dressed in paramilitary-civilian garb. They proceed to sing the song, "The Broad Black Brimmer."]

[As the song ends and darkness descends, there remains the heartbeat sound of the bodhran drum lasting a few moments before accelerating its rhythm.]

[END OF SCENE]

SCENE 15: Desmond Cell / The Long Kesh Infirmary

Characters: Patrick O'Connor
 Kathryn O'Connor
 Desmond "Doyle" Lenihan
 Caroline Lenihan
 Fiona O'Donnell
 Seamus Flynn (As a Waiter)
 Mule aka Malcolm MacDougal
 Assistant Deputy Under Secretary Brian Nolan
 Bridgette Flynn
 Monsignor Michael Sweeney

SCENE READER

[SCENE: In the darkness, the sound of the bodhran drum continues as the blue light remains dimly affixed on PAUL, emphasized by the pulsating light of his heart monitor. Through the sound of the bodhran drum there rises the sound of a rotary phone ringing. A light then tightens on the I.V., still unattached to PAUL. As the phone fades, the sound of the heart monitor can eventually be heard. A light eventually rises on the O'CONNOR kitchen. KATHRYN is sitting in a chair, while PATRICK talks on the phone as the bodhran drum fades. It is evening.]

PATRICK

– Caitlin, listen. Caitlin...Caity! Listen to me! You'll do nothing. Understood? I mean it. Caity? Nothing happens until we get there. – That's not your say. Do you hear me? Let me hear it, then. Let me hear you say you understand...All right...What's that? Yeah, yeah, me too. G'Bye. (Hangs up the phone.) Kate. We have a decision to make. (KATHRYN doesn't answer.) Kathryn! Your son's in a coma. He's dying. Right now. What do you intend to do about it?

KATHRYN

I've never let him down, Pat...I can't let him down.

PATRICK

We can't just sit back and let him – He may not make it through the night! The other families are ready.

SCENE READER

[PATRICK procures and dons his coat and cap.]

PATRICK

Kate? Come with me. Let's do this together.

KATHRYN

I can't, Pat...I promised him. I gave my word. It's the only thing I've left to give him.

PATRICK

(Glares at KATHRYN.) Gave your word about what? What kind a promise? — What kind a mother promises such?

KATHRYN

I can't go back on it. I can't let him down.

SCENE READER

[PATRICK grabs a framed picture of PAUL, holding it in front of KATHRYN's face then propping it on the kitchen table.]

PATRICK

This is all you'll have left a him. Come with me. Do what's needed...Look at him. He's unconscious. Comatose. He's dying. And you're gonna sit here and let it happen?

SCENE READER

[PATRICK waits for her reply, though no reply is forthcoming.]

PATRICK

He can hate me the rest of his life if he wants, Kate. If that's how it'll be, fine. I don't care. But this. This is gonna end. – It's gonna end now.

SCENE READER

[PATRICK exits and there is heard the sound of a door slamming. KATHRYN picks up the frame and looks at it. There suddenly rises the distant, though growing, sound of trash can lids banging on trash cans and sidewalks throughout the neighborhood, signifying another striker's death as the lights diminish on KATHRYN.]

SCENE READER (continued)

[Downstage center, a dim red light rises on DESMOND as he sleeps restlessly on the floor of his cell. The din of trashcan lids continues until punctuated by the light of an arcing Molotov cocktail.]

SCENE READER (continued)

[The ringing of the rotary phone rises again along with the rising din of the bodhran drum synthesized with the prison tins and trash-can lids (a sort of Celtic version of Stomp), a low-level cacophony rising and falling throughout the scene.]

[As DESMOND continues restlessly sleeping, there appear above and around the stage further slides of Northern Ireland, its people, and its Troubles, all appearing and dissolving in overlapping intervals on separate screens or walls.]

SCENE READER (continued)

[As the images appear and dissolve, there slowly, quietly, almost imperceptibly, appear NINE HONOR-GUARD PRISONERS / SOLDIERS, all dressed in IRA gear – Doc Marten combat boots, wearing sun glasses, with scarves wrapped around their faces, blankets draped over their shoulders as if a military sash, representing THE NINE MEN who have died on strike.]

[ONE IDEA: The NINE HONOR-GUARD PRISONERS / SOLDIERS can perhaps enter from different points in the theater through the audience, standing silently near audience members, in front of the stage.]

[The synthesis of phones, bodhran drums, and trashcan lids continues, punctuated again by the light of an arcing Molotov cocktail, this time awakening DESMOND with a start, DESMOND sitting up.]

SCENE READER

[Lights then rise on THE APPARITIONS: CAROLINE LENIHAN, FIONA O'DONNELL, MONSIGNOR MICHAEL SWEENEY, PATRICK O'CONNOR, BRIDGETTE FLYNN, SEAMUS FLYNN (as A WAITER), ASSISTANT DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY BRIAN NOLAN, MULE and ELBOWS.]

[A different hue briefly rises on each APPARITION as he or she speaks, the lighting hue then shifting to the next APPARITION. The other APPARITIONS, meanwhile, perhaps rotate quietly, slowly exchanging places, so that there is a carousel effect of characters being everywhere at once.]

CAROLINE LENIHAN

(Initially calling from a distance before approaching.) ... Desy! Desmond! Come on! If they don't see you up, then it's off to the infirmary.

SCENE READER

[Light rises on FIONA in casual dress, kneeling down upon entering the scene and straddling DESMOND, kissing him awake.]

FIONA

...Come on, Des. It's time...

SCENE READER

[FIONA helps DESMOND to his feet and toward the O'CONNOR kitchen table. DESMOND sits down as CAROLINE LENIHAN and FIONA set the table around him. After a moment, SEAMUS FLYNN appears as A WAITER, listing menu items as the corresponding plates of food are brought out by the APPARITIONS in rotation. The plates are placed in front of DESMOND as DESMOND tries to cut bits of entree and take the ever-elusive bite as the plates are then spirited away.]

CAROLINE

What have you a hunger for, dear? And call your sister. Hurry, before it gets cold...

SCENE READER

[CAROLINE places a plate in front of DESMOND.]

SEAMUS AS A WAITER

...Entrees this evening include grilled veal and gulf shrimp on a shallot of dill sauce with hay stack potatoes...

SCENE READER

[A light rises on MULE who enters, taking DESMOND'S fork, taking a bite from the portion DESMOND has just sliced for himself on his plate.]

MULE

(Eating DESMOND'S portion) Now then, Squire Lenihan: How might we put an end to this thing?

SCENE READER

[The plate is then taken away by FIONA. Except for FIONA and MRS. LENIHAN, every character who speaks takes the portion DESMOND has sliced for himself from DESMOND'S plate, preventing him from eating, as the plates are delivered by CAROLINE and then taken away by FIONA.]

CAROLINE

(Serving DESMOND a plate) ...You know you can come home anytime you'd like, Desy. You've always a room...

SEAMUS AS A WAITER

...Roasted rack of lamb with a pistachio nut coating on a black currant sauce with sweet potato hash browns and broiled tomatoes...

SECRETARY BRIAN NOLAN

...People are asking how many meals've you missed?...

FIONA

(Taking away DESMOND's plate) ...Do you ever think about maybe raising kids?

CAROLINE

(Serving DESMOND a plate)...Hide what you need out in the shed. But I don't want to know about it...

SEAMUS AS A WAITER

...Grilled breast and roasted leg of white Peking duck on a lingonberry sauce with vegetable filled Asian pancake...

BRIDGETTE

...She would've hated everything you stand for...

FIONA

(Taking away DESMOND's plate) There was a shooting down the street from school today. Everything happened so fast...Right through the down coat of a Brit soldier. Young guy. Blood and feathers floating everywhere...

CAROLINE

(Serving DESMOND a plate)...Hide what you need out in the shed. But I don't want to know about it.

SEAMUS AS A WAITER

...Roasted rack of lamb with a pistachio nut coating on a black currant sauce with sweet potato hash browns and broiled tomatoes....

PATRICK O'CONNOR

...Why doesn't he go on strike himself then?

CAROLINE

(Serving DESMOND a plate) ...You know you can come home anytime you'd like, Desy. You've always a room...

SEAMUS AS A WAITER

...Grilled Porterhouse steak topped with a western peppercorn sauce accompanied by barbecued potatoes...

MONSIGNOR SWEENEY

...The petal's in full bloom, Squire Lenihan. You best pluck it quickly...

SCENE READER

[There continues the phantom, distant sounds of a rotary phone ringing along with the distant clamor of bodhran drums, tins, and trash can lids rising and falling, jumbling with the voices, along with a growing swell of sirens, explosions, and gunshots.]

CAROLINE

(Serving DESMOND a plate) ...You know you can come home anytime you'd like, Desy. You've always a room...

SEAMUS AS A WAITER

...Grilled breast of chicken stuffed with lobster and asparagus spears, on a honey mustard sauce accompanied by a trio of vegetable crowns...

FIONA

(Taking away DESMOND's plate) Teach me how to play the banjo...

SCENE READER

[BRIDGETTE FLYNN, PATRICK O'CONNOR, SECRETARY BRIAN NOLAN and MONSIGNOR MICHAEL SWEENEY, ELBOWS and MULE all begin to encroach on DESMOND, speaking over one-another, repeating lines if need be.]

SEAMUS AS A WAITER

...And for dessert we have a peanut butter chocolate mousse torte...

FIONA

...Teach me to play the banjo and I'll teach you to speak Portuguese...

BRIDGETTE

...She would've hated everything you stand for...

PATRICK O'CONNOR

...Why doesn't he go on strike himself then?

SECRETARY NOLAN

...The petal's in full bloom...

SWEENEY

...You can put a stop to it...

ELBOWS

...The families are ready to intervene...

BRIDGETTE

...Look at what you've become...

SWEENEY

...Is this truly what you want?...

MULE

..You're knotting your own noose...

PATRICK O'CONNOR

...Why doesn't he go on strike himself then?

BRIDGETTE

...She hated everything you've come to stand for...

SCENE READER

[Except for SEAMUS as A WAITER, who continues listing menu items, the others each begin repeating their own individual lines over and over as the lights circle, eventually dissolving, making THE APPARITIONS appear as if fading to shadows.]

SECRETARY NOLAN

...Now then, Mr. Lenihan...How might we put an end to this thing?...

BRIDGETTE

...The women take the brunt of it...

SWEENEY

...What's happening to you?

SEAMUS AS A WAITER

...Marinated raspberries and strawberries over vanilla ice cream...

PATRICK O'CONNOR

...Go on strike yourself then...

SCENE READER

[The combination of everything builds to a frenzied crescendo, through which CAROLINE LENIHAN quietly calls to her son.]

CAROLINE

...Desmond! Des? –

SEAMUS AS A WAITER

...Hazelnut and almond meringue layered with praline and vanilla butter creams and covered with dark chocolate...

FIONA

...I can see you becoming a good Da someday...

SEAMUS AS A WAITER

...And a mocha and white chocolate torte on raspberry coulis...

CAROLINE

...Des? – There's been an accident...

SCENE READER

[Gradually the repetition of the voices crescendos then fades into the overwhelming climax of bodhran drums and clanging tins and trash-can lids, until the clamor too begins fading. THE APPARITIONS recede into the shadows on the periphery of the stage – save for FIONA – the silhouettes of the APPARITIONS still in view.]

[The NINE HONOR-GUARD PRISONERS/SOLDIERS still stand silently by throughout until each PRISONER begins, one-by-one, removing his scarf and sunglasses so that his face can be seen, each PRISONER / SOLDIER's youthful, next-door-neighbor familiarity looking directly into the faces of those in the audience around them. (NOTE: These should include women as well as men.) After a moment, a light rises on a casket center stage and the NINE HONOR-GUARD PRISONERS / SOLDIERS eventually assemble, hoisting the casket upon their shoulders and quietly exiting.]

[As the stage empties and quiets, only DESMOND and FIONA remain. DESMOND is seated at the table, the mocha and white chocolate torte on raspberry coulis in front of him. FIONA is opposite him. The light shifts to a warm, violet hue. All is quiet.]

FIONA

You can't have it both ways.

DESMOND

Don't put me in this position, Fi.

SCENE READER

[FIONA rises and slowly approaches DESMOND.]

FIONA

I'm not putting you in any position.

DESMOND

They need me.

SCENE READER

[FIONA sits on DESMOND'S lap, picks up a spoon, dips it into the dessert, then feeds it to DESMOND – pulling it back once from him as if teasing – then slipping the spoon into his mouth. FIONA then deeply kisses DESMOND.]

FIONA

And me? I need you, too.

DESMOND

They need what I can do.

FIONA

And what's that? Instill the resistance with the rhetoric of nobility?

DESMOND

It feels like a calling. – At least for now.

FIONA

'For now' has a way of becoming 'forever'. I won't raise children in a household eclipsed in such.

SCENE READER

[DESMOND prompts FIONA from his lap and rises.]

DESMOND

And I won't raise 'em in a land where some cop can thump 'em because he don't like the lilt in their voice or the disdain in their eye.

FIONA

So you're gonna teach them to thump first?

DESMOND

I'm gonna teach 'em to stand up for what's right. Stand up for themselves.

FIONA

I can't live that life.

DESMOND

I *need* to live this life. – At least for a time.

FIONA

How long is 'for a time'?

DESMOND

I don't know that.

FIONA

So you *have* come to a decision.

DESMOND

I don't want to have to decide.

FIONA

That's a decision.

DESMOND

(Approaching FIONA.) I don't want to lose you. I need you beside me.

FIONA

Then let's leave here. Let's start a life, just for the two of us. Somewhere. Anywhere.

DESMOND

I can't turn my back like that.

FIONA

(Recoils from his embrace) Then you are turning your back. On me. What I need for my life.

DESMOND

That's not fair.

FIONA

Fair, Des, really? (Pauses) I can't stay with you like this. If this is what you've chosen, then...this is your path. But...

DESMOND

It's only a phase of our life. We can get through it and then be on to the beyond ...

SCENE READER

[FIONA begins exiting the stage, before stopping and turning to DESMOND.]

FIONA

I want a quiet a life, Des. I don't want some phase that's gonna haunt for the rest of our days.

DESMOND

Fi? Please understand.

FIONA

I do. But I can't.

SCENE READER

[FIONA again begins exiting, then turns toward DESMOND one last time.]

FIONA

You should know, Des...I'm late. And...I'm never late...

SCENE READER

[The lights diminish on FIONA as she exits, rising and tightening on CAROLINE LENIHAN.]

CAROLINE

Desy? – There's been an accident, son. Oh God, it's awful, Des. It's Fi. She was starting your car. There was an explosion...They think it might have been meant for you...

SCENE READER

[Light diminishes on CAROLINE LENIHAN. Gradually, quietly, the bodhran drum resumes its heartbeat tha-thump tha-thump. DESMOND, staring off at a life in the distance, eventually lies back on the floor, coiling himself beneath his blanket as the lights diminish on DESMOND all together.]

[The bodhran drum continues its heartbeat until it is replaced by the gradual rise of the staccato beep of PAUL's heart monitor. As the blue light rises fully on PAUL, the sound of the heart monitor's activity, the staccato beep of the monitor eventually gives way to the sound of the monitor's flat line.]

[Gradually, PATRICK O'CONNOR'S shadow is seen in the blue backdrop. In the silhouetted light, PATRICK slowly approaching PAUL's body, then carefully cradling PAUL in his arms for a moment before the light diminishes altogether.]

[END OF SCENE]

SCENE 16: Visiting Area at Long Kesh / The O'Connor Kitchen

Characters: Desmond "Doyle" Lenihan
 Monsignor Michael Sweeney
 Kathryn O'Connor

SCENE READER

[SCENE: Light rises on DESMOND and MONSIGNOR SWEENEY in a visiting area of Long Kesh. MONSIGNOR SWEENEY is seated while DESMOND paces as he reads a newspaper. DESMOND is fairly composed, yet still somewhat coiled, relatively healthy-looking, though tired. He is also now showered and dressed in his own clothes.]

SWEENEY

...I don't really have anymore insight than that. Paddy didn't intervene. That's all I know. Paul's to be buried Saturday.

DESMOND

How is Mr. O'Connor?

SWEENEY

Devastated. The whole family. They've lost a son. They've bid farewell to a daughter.

DESMOND

Abbie O'Connor really caught flight?

SWEENEY

She's gone. To America. – Anyway, the other families followed suit. Nearly all-as-one they took the boys off. T'is become official.

DESMOND

How's the public receiving it?

SWEENEY

The general perception is that the prisoners and the families agreed as one to call a halt. The pressure's on the Tories and the administration at all levels to do right. I mean, you wearing your own. Privileges. Free association. T'is not that hard, unlocking a door. I have to believe they'll respect the chain of command. You'll get all your demands eventually. Everything you wanted.

DESMOND

Sure, Mike. – But not quite. They still can't say the words. They still won't confer status. We're all criminals in the eyes of the British government.

SWEENEY

It's a good settlement, Des. It comes at a good time. There's pressure to dispatch with this quickly. Put it all in the past-tense. The world's watching what happens. It's become aware of the counties. Become aware of the circumstances. The Troubles.

SCENE READER

[Hands DESMOND a package.]

SWEENEY

Here. This is for you.

DESMOND

What is it?

SWEENEY

It's part of the concessions. Parcels from home. – Soap. Magazines. Chocolate. You know, stuff. Thought you might could use them.

SCENE READER

[Accepts the package and looks at it, then at SWEENEY.]

DESMOND

Thanks you, Friar. – Any way I can talk with the Outside?

SWEENEY

I don't know. It's asking a lot. Bur, if you play it right, who's to say?

DESMOND

It's just, things need to be discussed carefully, thoroughly. Can't overlook any details. Everything needs, you know...We need to make sure things...That it's done properly...(DESMOND's voice trails off, his mind somehow distancing.) Christ, Mike. How is everyone?

SWEENEY

The men?

DESMOND

Yeah.

SWEENEY

As well as can be expected. They're hoping no one's to suffer any permanent damage. But there are no guarantees.

DESMOND

(Takes a deep breath and sighs with exhaustion.) No guarantees...I suppose not..

SWEENEY

They're cut from the cloth of resilient fiber, everyone of 'em. It may take time, but eventually, things heal.

SCENE READER

[DESMOND doesn't answer. He smells the box from home.]

SWEENEY

You all right, Des?

DESMOND

Hmm? Oh, yeah. I was just cascading on the scent of soap. It's been so long. It's mesmerizing. (Pauses) Home. Clean linen, pillow cases. Quilts. Comforters... Hot water running. A radio playing. Someone singing in a shower. The smell of a breakfast kitchen. (Pauses) Some year this has been, eh Friar? Some fucking year. Man, am I tired. (Pauses). I'll tell you what, now that we can enjoy it, let's get the warden back in here with his bottle.

SCENE READER

[An acoustic melody softly rises played by THE TROUBADOUR and THE TROUBALETTE.]

DESMOND

Man, I miss the music of a whiskey pub. A warm crowd on a cold night. A fire going. The lads playing. Drinking a draught and having a laugh and smiling at the gal who's smiling at you from across the bar...(Smelling the box from home again.) Amen, my brother. I do enjoy the song of a good whiskey pub.

SCENE READER

[Light fades on DESMOND and MONSIGNOR SWEENEY as the music continues.]

[A light then rises on KATHRYN O'CONNOR, 20 years hence, sitting at the O'CONNOR kitchen table, finally packing PAUL's clothes into boxes for charity, talking to PAUL as she does so.]

KATHRYN

...And their marriage, I don't know. I suppose it is what it is. I mean, she *seems* happy. How about her daughter's graduating next spring. Can you believe that? I mean, a day can sometimes drag for weeks, but the seasons, they disappear like morning dew...I'll tell you this: You'd a made a better match for her, I'm sure a that. I mean, he's a good guy, but there's just not much there. Of course, I'm somewhat biased, I suppose...Anyhow, she seemed to just want to talk about you for a time. A little 'Remember when...' And so we did so. Visited for an hour or more. It was nice to see her...

We all miss you, Pauly. So many people stop me to say how fondly they remember you, even after so long. You're father comes back from the churchyard and people are still leaving flowers – Jesus, bouquets! – every week ever since...They leave notes and letters addressed to you – School kids, two generations past, they know who you are and where you're laid to rest. They stop by and pay respects. All saying what a hero you are...But no one needs tell me...

I don't go much, myself. I'm not sure why. I just don't. I guess I more feel you here in your house and here in my heart than in the reality of the churchyard. I'm hoping you'll forgive that.

You know, Paul, I never really thought anyone would care. But I was wrong. Even after truce and treaty and peace and amnesty, all brought about through prosperity, people still remember the guys who made it so. They still remember and they still revere. And they always express admiration and appreciation for what all you boys have done. And it always makes me feel that much closer to you...

KATHRYN

...Of course, you're with me always Paul. It's as if in the right light, if I remain still, I can see you right there, just off the periphery. I can hear your little voice and I can see you growing into your own. Sixteen, seventeen. – And such a beautiful boy...

There you are in the late spring. The air warm after a rain. Full a lilac and bayberry. And there you go, down the street toward from our sight. Gathering your swagger... There's music coming from a pub and somewhere along the way it begins lifting you, lifting you... So young, so excited. The world is yours for an evening. In the music of a May twilight... My son...

My son...

SCENE READER

[Lights diminish to darkness.]

[END OF SCENE]

SCENE READER

[Darkness descends until, after a moment, a light rises center stage on THE TROUBADOUR, THE TROUBADETTE, and THE TRIO, now joined by THE ENTIRE COMPANY OF PLAYERS, all of whom proceed to sing the song, "A Nation Once Again."]

END OF PLAY