PLEASE BE AWARE THAT
THIS PLAY IS FULLY PROTECTED BY COPYRIGHT

All plays, books, music and other materials published by Heartland Plays, Inc. are fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries which the United States has reciprocal relations including, but not limited to all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, The Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention. All rights to the plays and materials on our website are strictly reserved including, and without limitation, professional and amateur performance rights; motion pictures; public reading; radio and television broadcasting; audio and video recording and reproduction of any type known or yet to be invented; information storage and retrieval systems of any type known or yet to be invented; and the rights of translation into any and all languages. No individual or organization whether amateur or stock may perform this or any play published by Heartland Plays, Inc. without first obtaining advance permission from Heartland Plays, Inc. and paying the appropriate fees including Royalties and Single-Use Copyright fees. Heartland Plays, Inc. collects royalties on behalf of the Playwrights whose plays it publishes. Unauthorized copying, transcribing or reproduction of this or any play or excerpt, or storage or transmittal in any form and by any means whether known or yet to be invented, is strictly forbidden except as provided by Agreement with Heartland Plays, Inc. Any unauthorized use is a violation of copyright laws and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

FIVE SIMPLE RULES TO REMEMBER

1. **DO** take advantage of the free online perusal of our plays to help you make the best choice for your particular needs or production.

2. **DO** enjoy the convenience of our online purchase application for performance rights and single-use copyright.

3. **DO** understand that this play and all plays and materials on our website are controlled by Heartland Plays, Inc. and fully protected by copyright.

4. **DO NOT** attempt in any way to copy, transcribe or reproduce this play by any means or perform this play or use any play or material from our website without first receiving permission from Heartland Plays, Inc. Any attempt to use this or any other work without first obtaining permission is a violation of copyright and punishable by law.

5. **DO NOT** rob this Author or any of the Authors we represent of their right to be paid for the use of their property. It is a crime and it is wrong!
A Passing Moment

A Play by

John J. Kelly
A Passing Moment
by John J. Kelly

CHARACTERS
KATE HIGGS; 50 at rise, later 77; the proprietress of the Pub
FIONA KENNEALY; about 20 at rise, later 47; new owner of the Pub
MICHAEL MAHONEY; 13 at rise, later 40, later 61 (played by 2 actors)
BRIANNA BLY; 16 at rise, later 43, later 64
RYAN; an older man at rise, later an old man
ANGELIQUE; initially a (prop) infant, later 21; Fiona’s granddaughter
TIMOTHY MCGOUGH; a boy (played by actor playing young Michael)

SETTING
A Pub in a small town near Dublin Ireland
Act One, Scene One – 1918
Act One, Scene Two – 1945
Act Two - 1966
A Passing Moment
by John J. Kelly

ACT I: SCENE ONE

SETTING: The exterior of an old Pub in a small Irish town near Dublin, 1918. A small bench sits in front of the establishment.

AT RISE: Fiona Kennealy, a young woman of about 20, enters from indoors followed by Kate Higgs, a woman of 50 who owns the Pub. Fiona comes DS to survey the landscape.

KATE
(On entering) …but that was some time ago. (FIONA continues to look out) Are you certain you know what it is you’re doing, girl?

FIONA
Aye. Absolutely certain. This is home. Will be home.

KATE
Might you not wait for your husband to be coming home?

FIONA
Why? What would he be doing that I’ve not done?

KATE
I cannot say. I know nothing about your man. I know nothing about you. (She sits)

FIONA
No, this is it. This is our life. I can feel it in my bones. May I tell you something Mrs. Higgs?

KATE
If you wish. Sit. (FIONA sits)

FIONA
This place…this Pub. I need it.

KATE
Need it?
FIONA
Need it… as assurance of the future. Our future, Brendan and I. This war never ends. For years I thought we would avoid it. Brendan showed no interest in it, despite his father’s insistence that he join the fusiliers “as all the Kennealys before have done.” But then his mate Miles was killed, and his father passed. Next thing you know, Brendan was off to France.

KATE
Leaving you here –

FIONA
To “carry on.”

KATE
They say it should all be over soon.

FIONA
And how long do you think they’ll be saying it?

KATE
Ah, girl, that I wish I knew. Every day now there is a new name… a new battle… Chateau-Thierry, Bellau Wood, the Marne. The wireless tells of our men winning the war, but the end never comes.

FIONA
It shall. Soon. I know it.

KATE
You do, do you now?

FIONA
Aye.

KATE
So why the rush to buy the Pub? Here, where you know no one?

FIONA
Not a rush. A… determination.

KATE
As you wish.

FIONA
A determination to build a home for us… our family.

KATE
So why an old relic like this? (Ever the businesswoman) Grand though it may be.
FIONA
Why not? Brendan would love being a publican. All the comradery. All the blarney. And I could look after the rooms to let while looking after the child.

KATE
The child?

FIONA
Aye. I am with child.

KATE
And your man, Brendan, does he know?

FIONA
Not yet. I only just learned of it myself.

KATE
So you are not yet far along.

FIONA
About two months. Perhaps it happened our last night together. I rather like that. I’m not sure why, but it gives me comfort.

KATE
You must tell him girl.

FIONA
I will. I shall.

KATE
And you intend to run this establishment by yourself while carrying your child?

FIONA
Only until Brendan returns to help me.

KATE
And if his return is not imminent? If this bloody war goes on longer than anyone imagines?

FIONA
I’m sure I’ll be fine.

KATE
Fine. On some days “fine”. But on others you’ll not want to rise. You’ll curse the glorious gift you’ve been given. You’ll curse your man. You’ll curse every man that ever put woman in such a condition.
I’m sure I –

Have you other children?

No. This will be my – our – first.

Six. Four girls. Anne in Kilkenny. The other three in America. Two boys…fighting…God knows where. All brought into the world in this (Indicates Pub) old girl. So believe what you’re told child.

Yes ma’am.

It would be good to have a babe here in the house once again.

Then you’ll sell?

Whatever gave you the idea that I wouldn’t?

(Hugging her) Oh thank you, Mrs. Higgs.

All right then. Enough. We’d best be making the arrangements. Come inside.

MICHAEL, a boy of 13 enters with packages, riding a bicycle.

Morning! (Parks the bicycle and gets off)

(Rising with FIONA) And here, girl, is the first of many arrangements you’ll have to be making.

(Kissing KATE) And how are we this glorious morning?
KATE
We? We you say? Well I can’t be speaking for you, but I am fine. Except for a pain in my ass which is a pain in my ass.

MICHAEL
Mrs. Higgs!

KATE
Fiona Kennealy, this jumble of hair and energy is Michael Sean Mahoney. This is Mrs. Kennealy, the new mistress of the house.

MICHAEL
So you’re actually selling the old girl?

KATE
That I am.

MICHAEL
(To FIONA) A pleasure to meet you, ma’am.

FIONA
Michael.

KATE
And have you brought everything today? You’ll have to watch this one. You’ll tell him what it is you’ll be needing the next day, and when that next day comes…. 

MICHAEL
Now, now. I’ve brought everything you’ve wanted.

MICHAEL gets two bags from the bicycle.

KATE
(To FIONA) Michael does odd jobs, as necessary, for me. And for you as well.

FIONA
(Amused) And have I any say in the matter?

KATE
Not with a child on the way.

MICHAEL
(Show one bag, then the next) Bread. Meat from Mr. O’Hanlon.

KATE
Well don’t stand there lad, take them inside! Do I pay you to stand and visit?
MICHAEL
(Playfully) For what you pay me—

KATE
(Bustling him off) Now enough of that—

MICHAEL
Yes ma’am.

MICHAEL exits into the pub.

KATE
(Calling after) And don’t be forgetting to clean the extra glass. We’ll be having the Saturday night regulars tonight. (To Fiona) He’s a local boy. Too young for the war, thank God. And good as gold. Honest as the day is long and willing to do anything you might need. (A crash is heard inside) Good Lord! What are you doing, dancing with the devil? (Exits inside)

FIONA
(Sits again and talks to her belly) Well James Patrick Kennealy, for I refuse to believe your father’s first born will be a girl, welcome to your home. May God bless it and all who will come to dwell therein. May it be for you the home I never truly had.

MICHAEL
(Enters to shouts from KATE) Our daily ritual. A bit of shouting—bluster and bravado to prove she’s still alive and important.

Ah.

MICHAEL
I live down the road a ways, with my parents and sister. My brother Colm is in Jerusalem. I do what needs doing around here, to keep the place.

FIONA
And would you be willing to continue on?

MICHAEL
If you like. She’s a grand old lady. She just doesn’t like anyone knowing about it.

FIONA
How long have you worked for her?

MICHAEL
As long as I could ride my bicycle. I’m not sure she needed me then. But times was hard for us and my Da needed money. So suddenly, here I was working for Mrs. Higgs.
FIONA
I’m sure she appreciates your efforts.

MICHAEL
At first, yes. Now, yes. But there were times when she couldn’t afford to keep paying me. I’m not certain she can now. Ever since this bloody war—

Language!

MICHAEL
Oh. Sorry. Ever since this war began business is down. She used to be full every evening. The local you know. Packed to the gunnels. Then later, just Fridays and Saturdays. Many of the young men volunteered and were taken off—many more than in other parts of the country. Girls won’t be going out without their men. And those people who remained thought it best to save what my Da calls “their meager wages” rather than have a night’s entertainment.

And now?

MICHAEL
Now things are all right. There’s enough business to keep her going. A new field office on the other side of town. (Pause) You’re with child?

That I am.

And the father?

MICHAEL
Brendan. Off to the war. Volunteered.

That’s good.

Glad you approve.

MICHAEL
I’m sorry. I didn’t mean… I just think the more of our lads we have in the fighting—like your Brendan and my brother Colm—the better. They say it should all end soon.

So everyone tells me.
MICHAEL
They should be home soon. Maybe in time to cut the cord.

FIONA
We can hope.

MICHAEL
Do you know where he’s stationed?

FIONA
He’s at a place called the Somme.

MICHAEL
That would make him part of the 10th or 16th. Do you know which?

FIONA
The 10th I believe.

MICHAEL
My mate Connor – from in town – he’s a bit older than me. He’s in the 10th.

FIONA
Perhaps they’ll get together. Talk about us here at home.

BRIANNA BLY, a girl of 16 and housekeeper at the Pub, enters

BRIANNA
(As she enters) Talking up the guests again, Mahoney?

MICHAEL
(Surprised) No, I was just—

BRIANNA
Do you think I’m of a mind to be listening to excuses?

MICHAEL
But you don’t—

BRIANNA
I don’t need to be hearing. Have you work to be doing?

MICHAEL
Yes, but—

BRIANNA
Then you’d best be doing it!
KATE

(Entering) Ah good. As you’re still here, could you be taking a look at the window in the rear? It seems it won’t open. We’ll have no fresh air. No ventilation.

MICHAEL

(Exiting) Well, let’s have a good look at it, eh?

KATE

I see you’ve met the new owner, Brianna.

BRIANNA

The new…?

FIONA

Aye.

BRIANNA

(Offering her hand) Brianna Bly. A pleasure making your acquaintance. (After a moment) Will you be keeping me on? There’s much to do, day and night. My father and uncle play on Saturdays. I know who pays and who’s on the tick. Who’s like to do a legger.

KATE

Enough, child. Now, upstairs, if you’ve a mind. Those rooms won’t be straightening themselves.

BRIANNA

Yes ma’am. A pleasure, as I said, Mrs….

FIONA

Kennealy.

BRIANNA

Mrs. Kennealy. (Exits)

KATE

(Calling after) There’s the wash to be hanging as well!

BRIANNA

(From inside) Yes, ma’am.

KATE

(Sitting, indicating BRIANNA) There’s a bit of the spirit for you.

FIONA

She certainly gave Michael his marching orders.
KATE
Those two. Always at each other. They fight like brother and sister.

FIONA
But they’re not related.

KATE
Not at the moment.

FIONA
Sorry?

KATE
I predict one day they’ll be sharing more than mere workplace. They’ll be sharing a family.

FIONA
A family? Those two?

KATE
Indeed.

FIONA
She hardly let him have a word –

KATE
And he enjoyed every moment of it, did he not?

FIONA
That he did, I must admit. But those two? Is she not a bit old, a bit mature, for the boy?

KATE
Today yes. Three years. But three years grow quite small as one grows older. In no time at all, that difference will be of no concern.

FIONA
Perhaps you’re right.

KATE
With this God-forsaken war going on and on, year after year, a man such as Michael may be in demand. Are we not hearing, day after day, of losses of our Irish lads at the front?

*FIONA reacts painfully. BRIANNA enters with the washing.*

KATE, *Continued*
Before you’ll be hanging that laundry, would you be getting me a glass of water?
BRIANNA

(Putting laundry down) Of course, Katie.

KATE

And you, Mrs. Kennealy? A water?

FIONA

Please.

BRIANNA exits inside

KATE

I’m sorry. I shouldn’t have mentioned… I blather. I’m sorry. Tell me about your husband.

FIONA

Brendan? What would you have me say?

KATE

Well I don’t know, woman. How did you meet?

FIONA

In Dublin. In a pub. So you see… (Indicates the Pub) He was there with his mates, focused upon a bracing dart match. Round the clock I believe it was. I was visiting friends of my parents. Ciara, their daughter, and I had walked the Liffey and had stopped in for something cool to drink. It’d been hot as Hades all day, and even late in the evening Lucifer was still stoking the fires.

KATE

And how did you end up together?

Ciara.

FIONA

Ciara?

KATE

FIONA

Aye. She fainted from the heat. Brendan was magnificent. He scooped her up. Took her outside. He tended to her as no man I had ever seen tend to a woman. He gathered water. Cooled her temples. Washed her face. Kept her company until all the effects had completely worn off. Then he returned her to me.

KATE

It sounds as if he paid you little mind.
A Passing Moment by John J. Kelly  Page | 15

FIONA
True. That evening. And I certainly had more than enough attention from his mates. All hanging upon me, making sure I was all right. They were nice enough lads, but not a one could measure up to Brendan.

KATE
But how did you come to know him, if he was out caring for your friend Ciara?

FIONA
I did not. Not that evening. But the next night, Brendan came to see me. On the pretext of checking upon Ciara,

Of course.

BRIANNA
(Enters) Two glasses.

KATE
Thank you, darling.

BRIANNA
Michael seems to be having little luck with that window.

(Rising) Perhaps I should—

BRIANNA
(Pushing her back down) Perhaps you should remain sitting. There’s little you can do to help. And even if there were, Michael would take it as an affront to his manhood.

KATE
God forbid!

BRIANNA
So just you be sitting and giving yourself a moment’s rest.

Yes, Kate, please.

FIONA
Well… if the both of you insist.

BRIANNA goes back to the wash and takes it off.
(After a moment) And you, Mrs. Higgs? What about you?

Me?

How did you come to be the proprietor of this “old girl” as you call her?

That was my husband’s doing. I had nothing to do with it. Patrick, my husband, was sure this would put us “on the road to riches”, as he called it. Our “little pot of gold” he’d say. Some pot.

And your husband, Patrick?

Died.

I’m sorry.

(Realizes what she said) No, that’s not what I mean. Meant. I mean there is no need to feel sorry. He was some twenty years older than I. It was to be expected.

Twenty years!

Twenty two to be exact.

And were you never… concerned… about the age difference?

Aye. But when loves strikes your eye, all other visions become cloudy.

Mmm. How long were you married?

Married 25 years. Together 27. The finest 27 years a woman could desire or deserve.

And since his passing?
KATE
Life goes on. It must go on. I tell you, it is a lonely washing that has no man’s shirt in it. Now it’s only the Pub and my flowers that are my life.

FIONA
Do you like flowers as well? Sometimes I feel as if I’m a slave to their beauty.

KATE
“Flowers seem intended for the solace of ordinary humanity.”

FIONA
Ruskin?

KATE
Aye. Flowers may have no soul, but they certainly breathe life. Their art, their beauty, indeed suggests the wisdom and workmanship of God.

FIONA
Have you never wanted to move to be near your children?

KATE
I might have, had any stayed close. But America, no. And I’ve no taste for Kilkenney.

FIONA
I’m sorry. I just assumed.

KATE
Mmm. Here in this “booming metropolis”, what else is there to be doing, eh, but looking after the grand-kids?

FIONA
I didn’t mean—

KATE
Don’t you be worrying yourself. It does seem the natural thing. It just never was to be.

A loud crash is heard inside

KATE/FIONA
(Overlapping) That would be Michael, looking for attention./ Good Lord, are you all right?

The WOMEN run into the house. After a moment, an older man, RYAN, enters. He looks around a bit. BRIANNA reenters with the empty laundry basket.
RYAN
Pardon, young woman. Is this the Higgs Pub?

BRIANNA
That it is, sir.

RYAN
Are there any other establishments nearby?

BRIANNA
None. Perhaps if you’re wanting—

RYAN
This may do. May have to do. For a brief while.

BRIANNA
A brief while?

RYAN
It is not in my nature to be staying any one place too long.

BRIANNA
And why is that?

RYAN
I paint. I am an artist. I go where the light leads me.

BRIANNA
A painter! Might I have seen any of your paintings?

RYAN
No.

BRIANNA
No need to get high and mighty about it.

RYAN
No, I only mean it is unlikely. I paint for private collectors. My work is almost never on display.

BRIANNA
Oh. Sad.

RYAN
Why?
BRIANNA
I equate art with eternal truths, beauty. And beauty should be for all to see, not hidden in the recesses of some rich man’s home.

RYAN
Interesting. Would rooms currently be available to let?

BRIANNA
Rooms? How many of you are there?

RYAN
Just the one.

BRIANNA
And how many rooms does an artist need?

RYAN
Just the one. Has anyone ever told you you’re an exasperating woman?

BRIANNA
It’s been suggested. As to the room, I imagine there is one free. But you’ll have to be asking the proprietress.

RYAN
Then I shall be needing the proprietress.

BRIANNA
Of course. Do come this way. (She leads him in) If there’s one thing we have it’s an abundance – an overabundance – of proprietresses.

RYAN
Sorry?

BRIANNA
Let me explain…

END OF SCENE ONE

******
ACT I: SCENE TWO

SETTING: The Pub. A late, cool spring, 1945. Little has changed physically since scene one. A new Pub sign hangs in the place of the previous one. Otherwise no changes are apparent.

AT RISE: RYAN, aged, is setting up an easel by the bench. MICHAEL, now 40, is helping him.

RYAN
I am not at all convinced that this is a good idea.

MICHAEL
This, my dear Ryan, is a superb idea.

RYAN
And what if she should change her mind once again and decides not to sit for me?

MICHAEL
(Placing chair downstage) She’ll sit. I’m sure.

RYAN
And how can you be so certain?

MICHAEL
Because I told her she would be doing it for you.

RYAN
For me?

MICHAEL
That you needed to get your artistic juices flowing once again.

RYAN
Juices? Really!

MICHAEL
And if we were to be totally honest, this is for you as well. When was the last time you had a commission?

RYAN
It’s the damned bloody war. The Western Front. The Mediterranean. The East. Fecking Carpet Chewer. Who thinks of art when tomorrow all we know, all we love, may no longer exist?
MICHAEL

Enough of that! This must be a joyous moment. For Fiona. She can’t go on like this. To have lost Brendan, so close to war’s end, in a forlorn field somewhere in France. Yet on she soldiered. Always caring. Always doing for others - for us. And now this.

*BRIANNA rolls KATE on in a wheelchair. Age has taken its toll on KATE*

And here we are once again.

BRIANNA

MICHAEL

*(Crossing to BRIANNA) Anything? *(He kisses her)*

BRIANNA

She seems to brighten – seeing people out and about – especially children. Then something reminds her of the war – which war God only knows – and she’s off again.

And this time?

BRIANNA

The Walton boy. Home again, but with so many injuries he’ll never be the same again.

Will any of us be?

KATE

*FIONA enters from the Pub. She has aged, but not gracefully.*

MICHAEL

And here she is! Right on …

FIONA

Damn that Mr. Churchill. Telling us again how we need to send more of our Irish lads to fight “the good fight.” Says it’s our patriotic duty. I’ll tell you what you can do with your duty. Haven’t we done enough?

MICHAEL

*(Calming her)* You’ll not be winning any converts here, Fiona. Why not be giving it a rest? It’s time to sit for Ryan, here, and to be showing us that glamorous self of yours.

FIONA

Oh Michael, really!

BRIANNA

He’s right you know. What a fit subject for immortality you are!
FIONA
Immortality.

MICHAEL
So, Ryan, what is it we do? Tell us.

RYAN
Very well *(Rising)* You, Mrs. Kennealy, if you would sit there. *(She sits downstage)* Facing, perhaps, a bit more *(Adjusting head)* in this direction.

FIONA
I’m not really certain—

BRIANNA
Fiona, really, you’re the ideal model. Grace, beauty, determination.

FIONA
Sags, bags, wrinkles.

MICHAEL
Now no more of that. You are about to be given to the ages.

FIONA
And should the ages not want such a gift?

MICHAEL
You are about to be given to the ages in the work of one of the Emerald Isles most celebrated artists! Is that not right Ryan?

RYAN
Celebrated? Oh yes, indeed. Now, if you please, we must be starting. Good light and all. All of you not vital to the work of creation, off. Off.

MICHAEL
Very well.

BRIANNA
We’re leaving.

*MICHAEL and BRIANNA exit into the Pub.*

FIONA
*(Rising)* I’m sorry, but I’m not really certain –
RYAN
Mrs. Kennealy – Fiona – Please. Please sit. It is a lovely day — the light, the landscape. Everything is perfect.

FIONA
But I am not.

Kate.

FIONA
Yes Katie? (Crosses to her)

Kate
Where is James? Where has that lovely son of yours gotten to?

FIONA
He’s not here Katie.

Kate
Yes, but where is he? He always brought me –

Ryan
He no longer lives here, Mrs. Higgs.

Kate
He no longer…?

Ryan
He isn’t here Mrs. Higgs.

Kate
I don’t understand.

Fiona
He’s dead, Katie. Dead.

Kate
Dead? But…

Fiona
He died in the Ardennes. The Battle of the Bulge they called it. He’s been dead some time now.

Kate
But I don’t… I…
RYAN

Mrs. Kennealy, if you would rather not –

FIONA

No. I think I would like to sit. Here. Now. In this lovely light, before this lovely landscape. My moment with immortality. I’d like that. If you’re still willing.

RYAN

Of course. Please.

*HE helps her sit, then sits himself at his easel.*

FIONA

So how is this done, exactly?

Done?

FIONA

This sitting… what does one do? Other than sit.

What would you like to do?

FIONA

You misconstrue my intent. What is it that people do? To keep… occupied.

RYAN

Ah, I see. Some read, some attempt crosswords. Some drink. Others just talk.

FIONA

Talk. Yes, I like that. May I talk?

RYAN

Anything you wish.

FIONA

*(Rises, gets a small table with flowers for potting on it)* And while I talk, these beauties shall be given new hope for a new life. A better life. *(Sits and begins potting)* I have a request, however. A demand, actually.

RYAN

A demand?
FIONA
That you listen. Only listen. Or don’t listen for that matter, it matters not. But don’t converse. No questions. No responses.

RYAN
(Thinks a moment) If you wish.

FIONA
Very well. Shall we begin? (He does not answer) Oh, you’ve begun. I see. Thank you.

RYAN
(Nods, then) Am I permitted to nod? Oh, sorry.

FIONA
A single indiscretion. And yes, you may nod. (He does so)

FIONA takes a long moment to consider her surroundings

FIONA
What does one talk about in moments like this? Not that you can – or should – tell me. I can just imagine what you should like to hear. Well, no I can’t actually. (Pause) Have you ever been tired, truly tired Ryan? You know, I don’t even know if Ryan is your Christian or family name. Not that it matters, I suppose. For the past quarter century you’ve simply been Ryan. So many things have changed. So many people have come and gone. You’ve been a steady and reliable part of our lives here. For that we owe you our thanks. Thank you, Ryan. (He nods) There is much beauty here – in this world. (Considers a flower) Why must it be associated with so much pain? Suffering? Loss. When Brendan was lost – lost, it sounds so innocent, so full of the possibility of being found once again – when Brendan passed I thought I might die. Should die. But the days passed. Seasons changed. Spring returned I found. Returned with new life. And somehow life went on. I don’t remember how.

RYAN
Fiona.

FIONA
(Stopping him by raising just one finger) Then there was James. Ever smiling James. Ever joyous James. As a babe, a child, a teen. James who you helped bring into this world, took to school, taught to fly fish. James, whose loss affected you as much – perhaps more – than it did me. We never really talked of it, you and I. For that I owe you an apology, Ryan. Apologies.

RYAN
None are needed.
FIONA
What was it we were talking about? Or, not talking about? Ah...tired. Truly tired. Of this life. Have you ever contemplated visiting the sea? High on the cliffs, taking in all that beauty, and then simply ending life? Before the joy of the moment could change to sorrow as so many moments have done?

RYAN
Fiona...

FIONA
No, don’t go worrying yourself. I’m not mad, nor suicidal. Though that thought does not repulse me as one might expect. As I expected. My saints, I do ramble on, don’t I?

MICHAEL
(Entering with BRIANNA) Fiona, Paddy just came round the rear. Pardon, Ryan. (RYAN nods) He wanted to know if you’ll be wanting the band for the season, as before.

FIONA
The band? Of course. Life goes on! The summer will bring back the crowds, you’ll see.

MICHAEL
So I told him.

FIONA
Thank you, Michael. As I have you all here, I should tell you – this morning – I’ve received a notice.

MICHAEL
A notice?

FIONA
From Belgium. From Angelique Kennealy.

MICHAEL
Angelique?

FIONA
James’ wife. She’s coming. Here.

MICHAEL
Angelique is coming?

BRIANNA

FIONA
The wording was odd. Arriving shortly. No greeting. No discussion. Just arriving.

MICHAEL
Angelique.
BRIANNA
We’ve never met James’ wife.

FIONA
They married quickly. In haste, as they say. A wartime wedding they called it.

How exciting, Fiona.

FIONA
For whom?

BRIANNA
Why for you, Fiona. For us.

For all of us.

MICHAEL
Is it now? Why?

FIONA
How can you ask such a question?

BRIANNA
I know nothing of the woman.

MICHAEL
Fiona, she’s James’ wife.

FIONA
Not to me. To me she is only a photograph. Worn. Tired. Hard to distinguish. I know nothing of the woman.

BRIANNA
She was the love of your son’s life. What more need you know?

FIONA
Much more. More. More that could be shared between family… those who shared the loss, and pain of loss, together. It has been some time since James was killed. Have we seen or heard from the woman? No.

RYAN
Fiona—

FIONA
(Raising one finger again) No.
MICHAEL
Fiona, there’s a war on.

FIONA
Don’t I know it. It seems there’s always a war on, doesn’t it?

BRIANNA
Are you saying you don’t want to see her, Fiona?

FIONA
I don’t know what I’m saying. Or why I’m saying it. I just know it needed saying.

A knocking at the rear door offstage
sends BRIANNA in to answer it.

MICHAEL
And if she should come?

FIONA
Then she will be here. Won’t she? Though how she will be traveling our troubled straits, I’ve not a clue.

MICHAEL
And how would you have us treat her?

FIONA
Treat her? As we would treat any other guest.

RYAN
But she is not any other guest.

FIONA
What would you have me do?

RYAN
Welcome her.

FIONA
All are welcome here. Hospitality is our business. Our calling. And being Irish—

MICHAEL
That’s not what he means and you know it.

RYAN
Fiona, she is a member of your family.
(Almost silently) Families seem to die quickly. Too quickly. Faster than flowers in foreign soil.

RYAN
Is that what this is about? Death? Are you afraid of death?

FIONA
I have never been afraid of death. I live with it constantly. Incessantly.

RYAN
Fiona, this is not about death. But life. It is a new bit of life, James’s life, which will bless us with joy, not sorrow.

FIONA
You should have been a curate.

RYAN
And how do you know that I wasn’t?

FIONA
I’ve heard words escaping that mouth of yours no man of the cloth—

RYAN
Oh, enough with you now. And you’ve a very narrow view of the Priesthood. The holy men I have known have been—

FIONA
Agh – as you just said – enough with you now.

(Reenters) She’s here.

BRIANNA
Here? Angelique is here?

MICHAEL
Yes. And no.

BRIANNA
And what does that mean? You haven’t left her sitting all alone in the Pub, have you?

MICHAEL
She’ll be fine for the moment.

BRIANNA
Fine for the moment! (Exits into the Pub)
RYAN
Fiona, this child is a part of your life. Of James. Show her the amazing woman we all know, admire, and love.

FIONA
Ah, the blarney! Very well, bring the child out. Let us give her the welcome she deserves.

MICHAEL enters, carrying an infant in his arms. He seems transfixed.

FIONA
Michael, what are you… What is this?

RYAN
Have we gained not one new member of the Kennealy clan but two?

MICHAEL
No, we’ve but one. A frail woman, speaking no English, placed the babe in Brianna’s arms and ran off before we truly knew what was happening.

FIONA
I don’t understand.

BRIANNA
(Huddling with the child and MICHAEL) Allow me to introduce Angelique Kennealy.

FIONA
But it is James’ wife that is named –

MICHAEL
Angelique. Yes.

BRIANNA
This babe is named Angelique as well. A name bestowed upon her by her father.

MICHAEL
It is all in the note. (Takes a note from his pocket)

FIONA
A note. This is all a bit too theatrical for my taste. Where is Angelique? The mother.

MICHAEL
There is no other. The note will explain.

MICHAEL gives the note to BRIANNA, who gives it to FIONA. BRIANNA then hurriedly returns to MICHAEL.
FIONA
I’ve not my reading glasses. Could you read it for me please?

Neither BRIANNA nor MICHAEL moves toward the note. After a moment, RYAN takes the note and begins to read.

RYAN
“Greetings. My name is Michelle Bonnet. I must begin by apologizing for the nature of this message, and for the… surprise that accompanies it. I can imagine the astonishment it must surely bring. The shock, the suddenness.”

FIONA
Does she speak only in riddles? What does the woman mean?

RYAN
I’m sorry. I am translating as best I can.

FIONA
No. It is I who should be sorry. Please continue.

RYAN
“The bundle of wonder and marvel you have received, Angelique Evonne Kennealy, I have sent to you – her only living relative. Or the only one of which I know.”

FIONA
Only relative?

BRIANNA
Fiona, please…

RYAN
“Angelique Yvette Kennealy, her mother, wife of James Kennealy, lost in this great never ending war, is no longer of this earth. She has gone to meet James and her Maker in a land much better than this. The circumstances of her death I shall not relate. They are too…” I can’t make out the word. “Know only that she died after much suffering. In life due to the loss of the man she adored, as well as in death. It is my hope her child can be provided some happiness. That you can be a source of joy in a life that has known little of it.” There is what seems to be some legal language. She concludes “I am sorry I shall not be able to provide you any additional information about Angelique. Our village has been destroyed. Our house, and Angelique’s, is but a shell. My husband and I shall be moving. Where we do not know. I wish you may find in Angelique some small bit of her father. I regret he never knew her. He would have adored her.”

FIONA
Never knew her?
BRIANNA
It seems Angelique was pregnant with little Angelique when James was killed.

FIONA
And so it continues… it goes on and on.

RYAN
Fiona if you would rather… There are homes for children such as…

FIONA
A home? For James’ daughter? Never. (She rises)

MICHAEL
Fiona, are you sure.

FIONA
(Crossing to Pub) I’ve never been more certain.

BRIANNA
We’ll be needing diapers.

FIONA
Oh child, and so much more.

All but KATE and RYAN enter the Pub.
KATE looks out over the horizon.

RYAN
(Putting his tools away) Enough for one day. Life, it seems, takes precedence over art. Sacrilege! No, I imagine it’s as it should be. It is a shame, though. Beautiful day.

RYAN exits as well.

KATE
Yet another day.

MICHAEL
(Reenters) Would you like to be coming in Katie?

KATE
(Shakes her head no; MICHAEL exits) When there’s so much beauty in the world?

END ACT ONE
ACT II: SCENE ONE

SETTING: 1966. Another new, bright Pub sign is discovered, along with several new strings of lights radiating out from the establishment. It is evening, a sunset transitioning to dusk and then dark.

AT RISE: ANGELIQUE is on the bench sipping tea and reading a pamphlet. A small transistor radio plays the end of The Beatles “Yesterday.” This is followed by a news report saying “In further news, US President Johnson today announced a new deployment of men to Vietnam. This escalation is…” ANGELIQUE turns off the radio.

ANGELIQUE
Deployment. Escalation. Not at all dangerous are they?

BRIANNA enters from the Pub, carrying a cardigan sweater.

BRIANNA
Are you not a bit cold, Angelique?

ANGELIQUE
Cold? No. A bit chilly.

BRIANNA
Would you be liking a sweater then?

ANGELIQUE
That would be nice.

BRIANNA
(Putting the sweater on her) We can’t be having you catching a chill.

She sits next to her.

ANGELIQUE
Is Michael feeling any better?

BRIANNA
It’s just a bit of the rheumatism. The old goat still believes he’s young and healthy.
ANGELIQUE
Well, he’s young at heart.

BRIANNA
A lot of good that will do his legs. *(The two stare out for a while)* These lights truly do make quite a difference, don’t they?

ANGELIQUE
*(Nods)* Mmmnn.

BRIANNA
It’s still a bit early, but when the season finally arrives, when it’s warm enough to sit out here and enjoy the evening, it’ll be wonderful.

ANGELIQUE
I imagine.

BRIANNA
And what is it you’re reading?

ANGELIQUE
Something from a group called the Cork Vietnamese Freedom Association. It came in the mail for Fiona.

BRIANNA
All the way from Cork?

ANGELIQUE
Apparently.

MICHAEL
*(Entering from the Pub with a cane)* So there you are! I was wondering where the two of you had gotten to.

ANGELIQUE
*(Rising)* Here, take my seat, Michael, please.

MICHAEL
No need.

ANGELIQUE
No, really. I’ve been sitting much too long anyway.

MICHAEL
I think I’d rather be standing a while if you don’t mind… Get a bit of exercise for these old legs.
ANGELIQUE sits again

Did you finish the paper then?

BRIANNA

I did. Same news. The same old news. The Viet Cong. The DMZ. What a misappropriation of terminology. It’s appalling. But enough about the troubles. What were you two discussing when I interrupted you?

MICHAEL

Nothing.

BRIANNA

Ah, feminine things. Enough said.

MICHAEL

No, not feminine things, Mr. Wiseacre.

BRIANNA

So what then?

MICHAEL

The Cork Freedom Association if you must know.

BRIANNA

The pacifist organization?

MICHAEL

The same.

BRIANNA

Why, in Heaven’s name?

MICHAEL

ANGELIQUE

This flyer. It came in the post. For Fiona.

MICHAEL

Say no more. If it is pacifist, it’s for Fiona.

BRIANNA

Can you be blaming her? After all she endured?

MICHAEL

Not at all. Not at all.
ANGELIQUE rises and crosses down; looks out.

ANGELIQUE

(Changing the subject) The new construction seems to be progressing.

MICHAEL

Aye.

ANGELIQUE

Soon we’ll no longer be able to call ourselves a village. We’ll be a small city.

MICHAEL

Not so small.

BRIANNA

A metropolis.

ANGELIQUE/MICHAEL

God forbid!

BRIANNA


MICHAEL

Ryan would have liked that. God rest his soul.

BRIANNA.

Ryan, aye. Our perpetual guest.

MICHAEL

Our perpetual friend.

ANGELIQUE

I think I’ll have a bit more tea. Would either of you care for some??

MICHAEL

No, thank you.

BRIANNA

Yes, actually. Please.

ANGELIQUE

Something a bit stronger, Michael? A half-un?
Too early.

I’ll be but a moment. *(Exits into Pub)*

How is she?

*(Rising)* Fine, I think.

Has she said anything?

*(Crossing to him)* She’s said many things.

You know what I mean, woman!

I do. And no, she has not.

Is that healthy, do you think? Avoiding it?

We all cope in our own ways.

Perhaps. I think I might be sitting down after all.

*(Helping him to the bench)* I knew it! You’ve been doing too much. Straining yourself.

Ah, go on with you, I’m not dead yet.

And would you be seeking to hurry that along? Are you wishing to make me a widow?

*(Joking)* Will you be continuing to yell at me like this?

*(Having gotten him seated)* There.
Thank you.

You’re most welcome, Mr. Michael Sean Mahoney *(Kisses him)*

*(Turns on the radio. “Turn, Turn, Turn” by The Byrds begins)* So she’s not spoken of her plans for the future either?

No. I imagine she thinks she cannot speak of the one without bringing up the other.

Perhaps.

And you’re certainly not to bring it up – nor do or say anything that would force the poor girl to bring it up.

*(Saluting)* Yes, Captain! My Captain.

Hush, now.

*(Reenters)* Your tea, madam.

Why thank you, miss.

A pleasure.

Tip the lady my dear.

Ti… what?

Give the young lady a tip!

A tip? Of all the… *(Sees he must go along with the foolishness)* Never wager against Arkle! *(Gives BRIANNA a “so there” look)*
ANGELIQUE
I imagine it’s time we discussed Fiona.

BRIANNA
Only if you wish to.

ANGELIQUE
I think I need to. We need to.

MICHAEL
(Turns radio off) It certainly was a shock.

ANGELIQUE
Was it? Should it have been?

BRIANNA
I could never imagine… What was she doing?

ANGELIQUE
We may never truly know. I remember exactly the day…

MICHAEL
(Rising) Won’t you be sitting, Angelique?

ANGELIQUE
Michael, your knees.

MICHAEL
Standing or sitting it matters not, they give me troubles. I don’t think it’s the position so much as the remaining in any one position for too long, sitting or standing. Now please sit. Enjoy your tea.

ANGELIQUE
(Sits) Thank you, Michael.

BRIANNA
You’d best be getting yourself a jacket, darling. It’s getting a bit nippy.

MICHAEL
Yes, mother. (Exits)

ANGELIQUE
That is a fine man you’ve got there.

BRIANNA
And don’t I know it. Unfortunately, so does he, the bugger.
ANGELIQUE
I had hoped we might have a word alone. Without Michael.

BRIANNA
Without Michael?

ANGELIQUE
Aye. How is he bearing up?

BRIANNA
Michael? Bearing up? As well as can be expected, I imagine. Why?

ANGELIQUE
I always thought Michael was closer to Fiona than either you or I.

BRIANNA
Yes.

ANGELIQUE
Then he’s sure to take her death harder than we.

BRIANNA
He once told me he felt a special bond with Fiona. One he had felt since they first met when he was a lad of 12, delivering groceries for the Shaughnessy brothers.

ANGELIQUE
Then we must make certain of his well-being during this time.

MICHAEL
(Reenters) Plotting your womanly ways once again?

BRIANNA
Ah now you’ve caught us. It’s all we women do, don’t you know that?

MICHAEL
I have had my suspicions.

ANGELIQUE
What is it you’ve brought with you?

MICHAEL
Photos. I’ve kept a box since I was young.

BRIANNA
I didn’t know that.
MICHAEL
Well the saints preserve us! The missus Mahoney can still be surprised.

BRIANNA
Ah go on with you now.

MICHAEL
I thought we might share them. Remember.

ANGELIQUE
What a lovely thought, Michael.

BRIANNA
Yes Michael, lovely.

ANGELIQUE
So what have you all in there?

MICHAEL
All sorts of pictures. Different occasions. Holidays. Here is one of all of us. Last Easter.

BRIANNA
A damned cold day it was.

ANGELIQUE
But you’d never know it to look at the picture. All these bright, happy faces.

BRIANNA
Frozen in a perpetual smile.

MICHAEL
Here is an old one of Fiona and I taken… oh I’d say just after we’d met. I think Kate took that picture.

ANGELIQUE
Kate. I wish I could have gotten to know her. I know only the stories.

MICHAEL
She died shortly after you’d arrived from Belgium. You would have liked her – and she you.

BRIANNA
She was a force of a woman, a force of nature—at least until the years took their toll.

MICHAEL
And here is one of the missus in a two piece swimming suit. A bikini I think they call it?
BRIANNA
*(Grabbing the photo)* I’ll be taking that, thank you very much.

MICHAEL
*(To ANGELIQUE)* There are several here of you and Fiona—when you were a child, at your catechism.

ANGELIQUE
Fiona. May you live forever in our hearts and minds. *(Pause)* Do you think she enjoyed her life here? I mean truly enjoyed her life? So much happened to bring her sorrow and pain.

BRIANNA
So much occurred to bring her happiness as well.

MICHAEL
Your arrival, for example.

ANGELIQUE
I’m not sure I brought—

MICHAEL
I’m sure.

BRIANNA
We’re sure.

ANGELIQUE
*(Smiles, then)* On the day she… When I last saw Fiona she was watching the telly, listening to the morning’s news. A report came on – about Vietnam – the war and the like. Commentators discussed Ireland’s choice to remain neutral, unlike the North which took part with the United Kingdom. They told of some Irish who had become United States citizens in order to fight, while others fought with the Aussies. “Eejits” she called them. “They does my head in.” Then some radical priest, I don’t recall his name, presented his reasons why it was imperative that the nation join in the war. How the Good Lord demanded it. He went on and on. Finally Fiona stood up, literally kicked the “blasted box” as she called it, and stormed out.

MICHAEL
She did have a bit of a temper that one.

BRIANNA
A bit of a temper! She’d run amok if given the chance.

ANGELIQUE
When I was going to town later that morning, I saw Fiona again. Outside, in the garden. She had pulled each and every one of her sunflowers from the ground.
MICHAEL
Her sunflowers? Is that why they’re gone?

BRIANNA
But she adored those plants. She gave them more attention than most would give their children.

ANGELIQUE
When I asked her why, she just said “It is time.” Then she told me she was going out for the day. Taking a day for herself, she said. I asked where she was going and she said she wasn’t quite sure. Thought it would be best to go where the winds took her. I suggested a quick trip to Dublin, just to watch the Jackeens, but she said no. No plans. She’d had enough. I thought she meant enough of plans.

BRIANNA
You couldn’t have known. No one could.

ANGELIQUE
I suppose. But what was she doing there, of all places? The sea is so far away. I thought she’d be visiting the local galleries, or the gardens. Maybe an afternoon tea at one of the shops. Nothing more. Certainly not Howth.

MICHAEL
I remember her talking of going to Howth to see the sun rise over Lambay Island as a girl.

ANGELIQUE
So you think she went there to –?

MICHAEL
I don’t know. She’d told many stories.

ANGELIQUE
I’ve never been. What’s it like?

BRIANNA
Beautiful. Picturesque they call it. The lighthouse at Green Bayley. The sea, as tempestuous as we Irish ourselves. Birds… constant chatter, wings flying everywhere. Mr. Barrie said the reason birds can fly and we can’t is simply because they have perfect faith, for to have faith is to have wings.

MICHAEL
Yeats spent much of his childhood above those cliffs.

BRIANNA
It’s a bit of a climb but not difficult, though the footing can be tricky. The path is firm in places, loose gravel in others.
MICHAEL

It would be easy to fall if one wasn’t paying attention. Good Lord what an end. What a terrible end.

ANGELIQUE

So you think it was an accident?

MICHAEL

I can’t think anything else.

BRIANNA

Can’t? Or won’t?

MICHAEL

What?

BRIANNA

Is it that you believe that she lost her footing and fell to her end? Or that you dare not believe she might have chosen her end?

MICHAEL

Jeanie Mac! What are you saying?

BRIANNA

What you yourself have been thinking. That the accident was anything but.

ANGELIQUE

You know how recently she had become… agitated… at the very mention of war. Depressed.

MICHAEL

She was hardly depressed.

BRIANNA

Do you mean she didn’t sit staring out at nothing at all for hours? That she wasn’t found out sitting in the rain? Or the black moods? The turmoil. The look of pain, suffering, loss in her eyes… You yourself saw it.

MICHAEL

What?

BRIANNA

You remarked upon it. That morning she was tending her garden – her sunflowers – when children on their way to school passed. What was it you said?

MICHAEL

What I said?
BRIANNA
You said she smiled – momentarily. But then something changed and she seemed… distraught.

MICHAEL
I really didn’t think about it. It was only a passing moment.

ANGELIQUE
I think it was more than that. I think we all believe it was more than that.

MICHAEL
So you think it was…?

ANGELIQUE
War. Again war. Always war. Threatening our lives, our children. First the French in Indochina, now the Americans. Vietnam. The thought of our children, Irish children, again being pulled into battles we had not begun… the horrors… it might have been too much.

BRIANNA
(Changing the subject) We had best be going. The service will be starting.

ANGELIQUE
They’ll wait. They’ll… see, and wait. We have time yet. (She exits momentarily)

MICHAEL
This makes it all the worse. I’m not certain I can….

BRIANNA
You can. And you know you will. You couldn’t live with yourself otherwise.

MICHAEL turns on the radio. We hear “And in tonight’s news, Vera Brittain publisher of the controversial Letters to Peace Lovers, has been roundly criticized for her opinions on the Allies’ conduct of the war, especially the bombing of civilian areas of Germany. She has…” ANGELIQUE enters.

MICHAEL
(Turning it off) Go ahead. Bomb them all! And they’ll soon be bombing us! Perhaps if we kill each other this nonsense can end.

ANGELIQUE
Before we go, I must tell you—I’ve decided to sell the Pub.
MICHAEL
Sell the Pub?

ANGELIQUE
Yes.

MICHAEL
You can’t.

BRIANNA
Michael.

MICHAEL
It isn’t right. Isn’t proper. After all Fiona has done for you?

BRIANNA
Michael, please.

MICHAEL
Fiona would not sell the Pub.

ANGELIQUE
Perhaps not. But Fiona is not here. She’s passed. And I am not Fiona.

MICHAEL
That much is certain.

ANGELIQUE
What is it you wish to do, Michael? Hurt me? Shame me?

MICHAEL
Remind you. Fiona was as a mother to you.

ANGELIQUE
Do you think I do not remember it? Do you think there is not a day that passes when I thank both God and Fiona for my life?

MICHAEL
Then how can you sell?

ANGELIQUE
Because this Pub is, was, Fiona’s life. The nightly ritual. The coming together, the joining in community that she so loved. The town came alive evenings in this Pub. The Pub was life. Life was the Pub. For Fiona. But not for me. This life… It is not mine. I cannot let it become mine.
BRIANNA

(Comforting Michael) You can understand that, can you not, Michael?

ANGELIQUE

I’m returning to Bruges. To Belgium. I would like to know more of the life I never had a chance to live. About my mother. About her and James, my father. I’ve received a letter from a Michelle Bonnet. From Antwerp. She says she knew my family.

BRIANNA

It was she who sent you to us.

ANGELIQUE

She thinks she can be of help reuniting me with relatives – admittedly distant ones – should I wish it. I do, I must. You Michael, and you Brianna – and certainly Fiona, God bless and keep her – you’ve been like family to me.

MICHAEL

(Softly) One does not desert family.

BRIANNA

Michael.

ANGELIQUE

No, one does not. But eventually one must strike out on their own. Make their own way in the world. Which is all that I’m doing. You’ll always be family to me.

BRIANNA

And you to us.

ANGELIQUE

(Confessing) Despite all the love I’ve felt here, I’ve never really felt I belonged here. Perhaps in Belgium I can begin to... I don’t know... perhaps I’m not... Irish enough? I don’t know how to deal with the constant –

MICHAEL

Neither did Fiona, apparently.

ANGELIQUE

Fiona. A solitary woman, running the Pub. Kate before her, single as well. And if all of the tales I was told as a child are true, a Molly and another woman before that. I cannot be another in the line of lonely women, solitary women. I will not be.

BRIANNA

That’s understandable, isn’t it Michael?

MICHAEL

Yes, of course. Do you truly believe Fiona was lonely?
ANGELIQUE
Not with you and Brianna. No.

BRIANNA
It’s hard for a woman alone. For anyone alone.

ANGELIQUE
I hope you’ll understand. And forgive me. *(She starts to exit)* It will take some time to arrange the sale. To make arrangements. *(Exits offstage for the funeral)*

MICHAEL
Arrangements.

BRIANNA
Are you all right, Michael?

MICHAEL
Aye… Sell the Pub.

BRIANNA
Hadn’t you seen it coming?

MICHAEL
I’d seen… well, I thought she’d…

BRIANNA
This has been like a second home—

MICHAEL
Home.

BRIANNA
A home – for you.

MICHAEL
And for you as well.

BRIANNA
Yes, but in a different way.

MICHAEL
Aye. Things will be… different. Life offers up changes, doesn’t she? Changes, for the better or worse.

BRIANNA
Aye.
MICHAEL
Better or worse are determined by what we make of the change presented.

BRIANNA
Where are you going with this?

MICHAEL
I’m just saying... better or worse are ours to determine.

And this?

BRIANNA
We shall have to see, shan’t we?

MICHAEL exits offstage.

BRIANNA
That we shall my love. That we shall.

She follows.

END OF SCENE ONE

********
ACT II: SCENE TWO

SETTING: One month later.

AT RISE: MICHAEL is on a small step ladder, taking down a string of lights. ANGELIQUE enters from the Pub.

ANGELIQUE
Are you trying to kill yourself man?

MICHAEL
I’ll be fine.

ANGELIQUE
Of course you will.

MICHAEL
I’ve been doing this work since I first came here. I’ll be damned if I won’t continue until the day I’m forced to leave.

ANGELIQUE
Michael…

MICHAEL
No subtle message intended.

ANGELIQUE
Very well. But did I not tell you to get some help with the more, well, challenging duties?

MICHAEL
That you did.

ANGELIQUE
And?

MICHAEL
That I didn’t.

ANGELIQUE
And why didn’t you?

MICHAEL
You’ve no need to be spending your monies on this place – or for me. You’ll be needing it all. Back in Belgium.
ANGELIQUE
There’s money enough.

MICHAEL
There is never money enough. It’s wise to have a bit put aside – for moments of need.

ANGELIQUE
And have you and Brianna put a bit aside? For your moments of need?

MICHAEL
There never seemed to be enough to put aside. Rarely enough to pay the creditors, let alone put any aside.

ANGELIQUE
I can’t imagine Fiona ever had much with which to pay you.

MICHAEL
She did what she could. She was a fine woman.

ANGELIQUE
That she was.

MICHAEL
And Kate before her.

ANGELIQUE
As is your Brianna.

MICHAEL
And thank the good Lord for that. I’d be hopeless without her.

BRIANNA
(Enters from offstage) And what makes you think you’re not hopeless as you are?

MICHAEL
I stand corrected. I’d be even more hopeless than I am now.

ANGELIQUE
Where’ve you been, Brianna?

BRIANNA
In town.

MICHAEL
You’ve been going to town a good deal lately.
BRIANNA
Have you missed me? Can you not do without me?

ANGELIQUE
So he was just saying!

BRIANNA
Really? *(She kisses him)* Well, he’s a good bloke.

MICHAEL
Why, thank you madam.

BRIANNA
If a bit daft.

MICHAEL
Ah, now there’s the woman I married.

BRIANNA
And now I’ll be sitting a moment if you don’t mind. *(She sits)*

MICHAEL
Would you be liking something to drink?

BRIANNA
A tea would be perfect.

ANGELIQUE
Permit me. I need to be making a call anyway. *(Exits into Pub)*

MICHAEL
*(Sitting as well)* Are you all right?

BRIANNA
I’m fine. It’s my feet been giving me troubles.

MICHAEL
Again? And yet you’re running all over town.

BRIANNA
*(Laughs)* I hardly run. Not anymore.

MICHAEL
Except perhaps from me.

BRIANNA
Can you be blaming me? Ah, I’d never run from you, my darling. *(Kisses him)*
MICHAEL

You’re in a kissing mood today.

BRIANNA

Are you complaining, man?

MICHAEL

No, no. Indeed no. So what have you been up to in town? You’ve not been shopping. Not if you return with empty arms.

ANGELIQUE

(Reenters) Tea should be but a moment. (She seems to search the horizon)

BRIANNA

Are you looking for something, Angelique?

ANGELIQUE

Not exactly. Michael, you haven’t seen Quentin Quinn’s automobile driving by have you?

Quinn? The solicitor?

MICHAEL

Aye.

ANGELIQUE

Are you expecting him?

MICHAEL

Not expecting. Though he did say he hoped to be coming by today. I telephoned his office, to no avail.

BRIANNA

Perhaps he was out on business.

ANGELIQUE

Perhaps. I think I’ll try calling again. (Exits)

MICHAEL

You know why she’s so anxious.

BRIANNA

One can guess. It doesn’t take a genius. The Pub.

MICHAEL

She’s found a buyer.
BRIANNA
So it would seem.

MICHAEL
Well, good for her, I say.

BRIANNA
You’ve changed your tune in the past weeks.

MICHAEL
You were right. It’s her life. Not ours. And she has a long life before her.

BRIANNA
You’re not planning on departing anytime soon are you?

MICHAEL
And give you the satisfaction of outliving me? Never.

BRIANNA
Good. (Pause) What would you do with it?

What?

MICHAEL
The Pub. What would you do with it if it were yours?

I’ve never thought about it.

BRIANNA
Think about it.

MICHAEL
Why should I want to do someth –

BRIANNA
Humor your wife.

MICHAEL
I don’t know. Clean up the place, modernize. Brighten it up. Make it attractive to young people perhaps. Make it a place where the young and their children could learn about their past. Our past. Children. I rather like that. Our future.

BRIANNA
And you’ve not been thinking about it?
MICHAEL
Not really, no.

BRIANNA
I love you, Michael Sean Mahoney.

MICHAEL
Now you’re not going to be kissing me again, are you?

BRIANNA
A cross you’ll just have to bear. *Kisses him* Things will be different. No more bar to tend. Patrons to cajole. No food to cook.

MICHAEL
You’ll not be stopping your cooking now will you?

BRIANNA
No darling, but now I be cooking only for you.

MICHAEL
And what better occupation could there be for a loving wife? I’d best be getting back to work. It won’t be finishing itself. *(Starts up ladder)*

BRIANNA
You don’t have to be doing—

ANGELIQUE
*(Reenters)* Again Michael? Have you a death wish?

MICHAEL
Not at all.

BRIANNA
He says he’ll not give me the satisfaction.

ANGELIQUE
I don’t follow.

BRIANNA
No matter.

ANGELIQUE
As I’m sure you’ve surmised, I’m expecting the solicitor Quinn to conclude the sale of the Pub. He’s found a buyer.

MICHAEL
*(Coming down again)* A local buyer?
ANGELIQUE
I don’t know. One of the conditions of the purchase is the anonymity of the purchaser.

MICHAEL
For what reason?

ANGELIQUE
I don’t know. I only know the asking price was met. I expected he might be coming out today to conclude the arrangements.

MICHAEL
Perhaps he’s busy and is still on the way.

BRIANNA
I very much doubt it.

MICHAEL
You do? And why are you doubting it, very much?

BRIANNA
Because I know he is not coming.

ANGELIQUE
How do you know that?

BRIANNA
He has no need to come.

ANGELIQUE
No need?

BRIANNA
These are the papers you’ve been awaiting (Gives papers to ANGELIQUE)

MICHAEL
You mean you’ve had them all the time and made no—

BRIANNA
There seemed no rush.

MICHAEL
No rush, woman? With Angelique waiting on pins and needles?

BRIANNA
She seems no worse for wear.
(Reading) But this says –

  Yes.

  You purchased the Pub.

  What?

  You’re to be the new owner?

  No.

  What do you mean, no? Did you purchase the Pub or not?

  This is Not the End of the Play
  Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes