

IN DONEGAL..... IN DONEGAL

a play for television
by P. Gems

CAST

MIRANDA, a young woman, just married to
IAN, a young man
TOM, an Irishman
CARA, an Irishwoman
A MAN
A GARDA
A DOG

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IN DONEGAL.... IN DONEGAL

SCENE 1. A VIEW IN IRELAND...
SOFT, WASHED... STRETCHING
AWAY TO A CLOUD SKY.

SCENE 2. A LITTLE CAR, IN THE
DISTANCE, CRAWLING UP A LONG HILL.

SCENE 3. THE CAR, MIDDLE DISTANCE,
TAKING A BEND.

SCENE 4. THE CAR, CLOSE. IT
SLOWS DOWN BEHIND A FEW SHEEP
WHICH HAVE WANDERED ON TO THE ROAD.
THE CAR MOVES THROUGH THE LOOSE
SHEEP WITH CARE AND THE GIRL IN
THE PASSENGER SEAT CRANES ROUND
FOR ANOTHER LOOK, SMILING.

SCENE 5. IN THE CAR. THE GIRL IS STUDYING THE MAP.

IAN: Well?

HE IS YOUNG, DARK, GOOD LEGS AND SHOULDERS..A NICE BOY WITH LOVING PARENTS, A CONSCIENCE, AND SOME ASPIRATIONS. IN TEN YEARS HE WILL BE POMPOUS BUT NOW HE IS YOUNG, AND IN THE WONDROUS DELIGHT OF LOVE. HE AND MIRANDA ARE ON THEIR HONEYMOON.

MIR: (TURNING THE MAP AND SCREWING UP HER FACE) Hell I don't know. Which way are we?

WITH A LORDLY GRIN HE BRINGS THE CAR TO A HALT AND GRABS THE MAP.. PUTTING AN ARM AROUND HER. WITH A QUICK LOOK BEHIND HE MAKES TO KISS HER, BUT SHE EVADES HIM, WITH A GIGGLE, AND A PROVOCATIVE GLANCE. STILL, SHE EVADES IT. HE GIVES A MOCK GROAN OF FRUSTRATION AND REGARDS THE MAP.

IAN: Donegal... Donegal... we're in Donegal! Conregar...that was the little place we came through... here, after the lake, when we left the main road... this was the windy bit... god you are marvellous.

HE FALLS UPON HER AND KISSES HER. MIRANDA IS VERY YOUNG.. BEAUTIFUL AND INTELLIGENT, THE GOODS. SHE IS A REAL CATCH, AND HER MOVEMENTS, GALVANIC.. SOMETIMES IRRITABLE.. PROMISE PASSION. BUT AS YET THERE IS AN UNAWAKENED, EVEN WARY QUALITY ABOUT HER. SHE PERMITS THE EMBRACE, AND THEN PULLS AWAY, FINISHES.

IAN: (QUERY) Mm?

MIR: (BRIGHT) Come on Piggy...
I want to see the sea.

IAN: And I want to eat you.

MIR: I hate being away from the
sea. I feel all shut in.

HE REMOVES HIS ARMS AND STARTS UP.
THE CAR MOVES AWAY, AROUND A BEND,
AND THEN ANOTHER, AND ANOTHER,
DESCENDING.

SCENE 6. A LITTLE VILLAGE. IT IS
RAINING. IAN IS IN THE CAR ALONE,
WITH THE RADIO ON. HE HAS AN AIR
OF PATIENCE. THEN MIRANDA RUNS
OUT OF A TINY SHOP, WEARING A
WHITE MOHAIR CAP AND CARRYING A FELT
DONKEY. SHE PUSHES IT THROUGH
THE WINDOW AT IAN.

MIR: What do you think of him?

IAN: Come on.. you'll get wet
through.

MIR: (GETTING IN) They don't
seem to mind... they just walk
about in it. Perhaps I shall get
a shawl. What do you think of him?
Do you like him? I've called
him Piggy.

IAN: (LETTING IN THE CLUTCH)
Thanks very much.

MIR: (JERKED AS THE CAR MOVES
FORWARD) Now don't be mean.
(TO THE DONKEY) Piggy doesn't
love you, Piggy dear....poor
little piggy donkey...I love you,
out in the cold, cold Irish snow,

MIR: (CONT.) was I a long time,
darling?

IAN: You were ages. How much did
it cost?

MIR: Oh, the earth. I'll pay for
him out of my money. Since you
don't like him.

SILENCE.

Do you like my hat?

IAN: It's OK.

MIR: Ooh, darling, look... do
stop... another little place....I
must get something for Belinda!
Come on...

IAN: Do you really want to?

MIR: May we?

IAN: (SLOWING DOWN AND PULLING
IN) We've got a long way to go
yet.. we're off the main road.

MIR: How far?

IAN: We-ell, it'll be dark. Of
course I don't mind, sweetie...I'm
jealous. I'm jealous of him,
and the scenery, and the bloody
tweed...

HE OPENS HER HAND TO KISS IT.
SHE IS STILL CLUTCHING CHANGE.

MIR: Darling, look! Irish money!
It's delicious.... it's all covered
in animals!

HE MAKES AN ANIMAL NOISE AND KISSES
HER NECK.

IAN: (HELPLESS) I just want to get to the hotel. Don't you?

MIR: Yes of course.

IAN: I'm not being too rough?

MIR: Don't be silly. Darling I must get something for Belinda, she was awfully good helping over the wedding. I won't be long, I promise.

HE LETS HER GO, OPENS A PACKET OF CIGARETTES AND LIGHTS UP IN RESIGNATION. SAFELY OUT OF THE CAR SHE GIVES HIM A FLIRTATIOUS LOOK.

SCENE 7. IAN IN THE CAR, WAITING. HE IS GETTING VERY RESTLESS.

SCENE 1. IAN IN THE CAR, SLUMPED AND SULLEN. MIRANDA GETS IN, THROWS A PARCEL IN THE BACK.

MIR: They took ages... then she couldn't find any string....

HE LETS IN THE CLUTCH AND THEY ROAR OFF.

MIR: Darling please!

THE CAR TEARS ROUND THE BEND. THERE IS A TERRIBLE YELP, AND A BUMPING SOUND. MIRANDA SCREAMS AND THROWS UP HER HANDS.

SCENE 9. IN THE CAR. IAN BRAKING,
WITH A SHOCKED FACE.

IAN: He's had it.

MIR: Oh no.....

THE CAR STOPS AND THEY BOTH LOOK
BACK. THERE IS A BLACK AND WHITE
DOG LYING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD.

SCENE 10. IAN AND MIRANDA GET OUT
OF THE CAR AND COME TOWARDS THE
DOG. IT MOVES SLIGHTLY AND TRIES
TO LIFT ITS HEAD. IAN LOOKS AWAY
IN HORROR. MIRANDA STEELS HERSELF
AND KNEELS BESIDE IT.

MIR: It's alive. Oh Ian, it's
alive.

SHE GETS UP.

But only just.

THEY LOOK BACK, AND THERE IS A MAN,
STANDING, A LITTLE WAY OFF.....
ELDERLY, BONY FACED, STILL.

MIR: It's the dog....

IAN: It came right out under the
wheels.. I hadn't a chance of
missing it.

THE MAN ADVANCES AND LOOKS DOWN
ON THE DOG, WITH NO SHOW OF
EMOTION.

MAN: Is it dead then?

MIR: No, not quite. I'm afraid it's... finished. Do you know whose dog it is?

MAN: He'd have been good with the sheep. A young dog... not like losing an old mongrel... a good sheep dog there...worth a fiver.

IAN: Do you know the owner?

MAN: It's my dog.

HE KICKS THE DOG SLIGHTLY AND GRIMACES.

Ay, then, Billy.

MIR: Look we must do something... we can't let him lie like that... I mean, I don't think he can feel anything, but we can't let him lie. Are you a farmer....could you....?

MAN: No.

IAN: Is there a vet?

MAN: No...no vet. The nearest vet's in Ardara...that's forty mile.

MIR: Oh, that's no good.....what about a doctor, is there a doctor who could give him an injection? Ian, can't you? Can't either of you?

IAN: Is there anyone with a gun?

MAN: Ye might try the butcher. He has a humane killer.

MIR: Yes...all right...where is he?

MAN: Down in the village... beyond the fork... oh, ye know, opposite the garda.

MIR: Come on darling.

IAN: You'll stay with the dog?

MAN: Ay.

THEY LEAVE HIM, STANDING BY HIS DOG. THE DOG STIRS.

SCENE 11. A TINY BUTCHER'S SHOP. IT IS FULL OF WOMEN. NO SIGN OF THE BUTCHER. IAN ENTERS, LOOKS AROUND, VERY UNSURE OF HIMSELF. THEY ALL LOOK AT HIM. MIRANDA HANGS IN THE DOORWAY.

IAN: (TO THE NEAREST WOMAN)
Is the butcher here?

SHE LOOKS AT HIM WITHOUT REPLY.

There's a dog been run over. We want the butcher, with his humane killer.

SILENCE. THEN

WOM: The dog's not dead then?

IAN: No. Is the butcher here?

A YOUNG LAD COMES THROUGH FROM THE BACK WITH A SIDE OF LAMB WHICH HE THROWS ON THE SLAB. IAN PUSHES FORWARD.

IAN: (GLAD TO SEE ANOTHER MAN)
Are you the butcher?

BOY: (SHY) No.

IAN: Is he here please?

A WOM: He's away.

BOY: No, he's not here.

IAN: Could you help me? A dog's been run over...we wanted the butcher's humane killer...

BOY: Oh. Oh. No, I couldn't help. (HE LOOKS AWAY, EMBARRASSED, THEN) Go over to the garage. Mr. Dolan has a shotgun.

IAN: Thanks.

HE LEAVES SWIFTLY. MIRANDA IS BEFORE HIM. THEY CROSS THE ROAD AND TALK TO A MAN AT THE PUMP. HE STRAIGHTENS UP AND LISTENS TO THEM. THEN HE POINTS TO ANOTHER MAN. THEY TALK TO HIM. HE LISTENS. THEN HE SHAKES HIS HEAD AND POINTS ACROSS THE STREET. THEY THANK HIM AND FOLLOW HIS DIRECTION.

SCENE 12. IAN AND MIRANDA COMING DOWN THE STEPS FROM THE POLICE STATION WITH A YOUNG POLICEMAN. THEY PAUSE AND CONSULT. HE SHAKES HIS HEAD. MIRANDA GESTURES UP THE ROAD. HE NODS, AND ACCOMPANIES THEM. THEY WALK UP THE STREET TOGETHER.. MIRANDA HURRIES.

SCENE 13. IAN AND MIRANDA WALKING UP THE ROAD WITH THE GARDA. THEY ROUND THE BEND, AND THERE IS THE MAN, STANDING WITH HIS DOG. THEY APPROACH SLOWLY. IS THE DOG MOVING? IS IT DEAD?

MIR: Is he still alive?

MAN: He is. (HE TOUCHES HIS CAP TO THE GARDA)

GAR: He come out of the hedge.. is that right?

MAN: I was in the field below. He'd be coming to find me.

GAR: The dog shouldn't be on the road.

MIR: But we are sorry.....

THE DOG GROANS. IT IS A PITEOUS SOUND.

GAR: The humane killer we have is the old type...more like a hammer with a bullet behind it....I couldn't use it. I've sent now for the butcher.

MIR: But how long.....?

IAN: Look...I don't accept responsibility but...

GAR: There's no need for you to stay sir, have ye far to go?

IAN: Quite a way. (TO THE MAN) I'd like to pay you something for the dog....I'm sorry about it.

MAN: I've refused five pound for the dog. It was a good dog.

IAN LOOKS AT THE GARDA.

GAR: If you feel two pounds sir,
for the loss...

IAN: Yes. You realise I don't
accept responsibility (TO THE MAN)...
but I am sorry it happened...I'm
very sorry.

MAN: (VERY CHEERFUL) Why thank
ye, sir...

GAR: That's very generous.

THE MAN SHAKES HANDS WITH IAN,
AND THEN MIRANDA. THE GARDA NODS
FAREWELL WITH A FORMAL SMILE.

GAR: Good-day, sir.

MAN: And enjoy your holiday.

THEY WALK TO THE CAR.

MIR: (THROUGH HER TEETH) When
are they going to kill it?

SCENE 14. IN THE CAR. IAN
DRIVING, HIS FACE CONCENTRATED.
MIRANDA, SOBER FACED, CUDDLES THE
DONKEY.

MIR: (AFTER A PAUSE) Do you think
it's dead yet?

IAN: I should think so.

MIR: It must be. Surely. It was
in pain...it was groaning.

IAN: Oh for God's sake, Miranda!

MIR: (DREAMILY) You were in a temper. You were mad because I was so long buying the tweed for belinda....you were going too fast.

IAN: Not very helpful.

MIR: Nonetheless..true.

IAN: Well, as I said, not helpful.

MIR: Still, true.

A SILENCE.

MIR: God, the rain.

SCENE 15. IAN, OUT OF THE CAR, IN THE RAIN, TRYING TO READ A SIGNPOST. HE RETURNS TO THE CAR. THE RADIO IS PLAYING SWEET MUSIC. MIRANDA, SWATHED IN A RUG, IS CUDDLING THE DONKEY. HE BANGS ON THE WINDOW AND SHE WINDS IT DOWN.

IAN: Let's see the map again.

MIR: What does it say?

IAN: I dunno. It's in Irish. I dunno.

SHE GETS OUT OF THE CAR, TO STRETCH HER LEGS AND HAVE A LOOK. IAN GETS IN, AND THE CAR, WHICH HAS BEEN TICKING OVER, STOPS.

IAN: Damn.

HE TRIES TO START THE CAR, SEVERAL TIMES, BUT GETS NO RESPONSE. MIRANDA, TRYING TO READ THE SIGNPOST, TURNS AND WATCHES.

MIR: (TO THE DONKEY, IN HER ARMS...
IN SOFT ALARM) It's going terribly
wrong.

THE CAR STARTS, AND SHE GETS IN.
THE CAR MOVES AWAY.

SCENE 16. IN THE CAR. MIRANDA
IS ASLEEP. IAN, VERY TIRED, IS
DRIVING DOGGEDLY THROUGH WINDING
LANES AND BLINDING RAIN.

SCENE 17. THE CAR STOPS WITH A
JERK, AROUSING MIRANDA.

MIR: What is it?

IAN SWITCHES ON THE LIGHT AND GRABS
THE MAP.

IAN: We're right off our road.
God knows where we are. We'd
better go back.

MIR: (A WAIL) Oh no! I'm sure
we're nearly there.....we must be
nearly Somewhere....let's go on!
We'll stop at the first place....
we can't go Back!

IAN: Oh all right! We must be
Somewhere!

THE CAR STALLS. HE SWEARS UNDER
HIS BREATH AND TRIES AND TRIES TO
MAKE IT START, BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS.
MIRANDA SINKS INTO HER RUG, REMOTE.
AT ALST HE GIVES UP...FEELING
UTTERLY HELPLESS. HE LOOKS AT HER
FEELINGLY, BUT SHE IS WITHDRAWN.

SCENE 18. IAN AND MIRANDA,
WALKING ACROSS A FIELD, IN THE DARK.

IAN: Nearly there.

MIR: I can't see anything.

IAN: Look, it's probably just
a ruin, but we might as well try....
there might be someone there.

THERE IS AN EAR-SPLITTING, DEMONIC
NOISE. THEY BOTH STUMBLE WITH
FRIGHT.

IAN: What the hell was that?

MIR: (FAINT) Some.. animal.

THEY WALK.

I hope it doesn't do that again.
Do you think it's following us?

IAN: Come on.

SCENE 19. THE COTTAGE. THE ROOF
STANDS..IT IS NOT A RUIN. IT
PRESENTS, HOWEVER, A CLOSED
APPEARANCE.

IAN: I don't think there's anyone
here.

MIR: Knock.

HE DOES. THEY LISTEN. SILENCE.
HE KNOCKS AGAIN. NO REPLY. HE MOVES
AWAY FROM MIRANDA. SHE TURNS
SLIGHTLY. THERE IS A MAN, HUGE IN
THE DARKNESS, STANDING BEHIND HER.
SHE SCREAMS.

MAN: What do you want?

IAN TURNS AND APPROACHES.

IAN: I'm awfully sorry to bother you. My car's broken down.

A WOMAN'S VOICE: (FROM INSIDE THE COTTAGE) Who is it?

THE MAN MOVES TO THE DOOR, AS IF TO BAR THEIR WAY.

MAN: Wait on. I'll go round and open the door.

HE GOES.

MIR: Darling, let's go.

IAN: What?

MIR: There's something funny.

IAN: Ah, you're tired. I wonder where the nearest phone is?

THE DOOR OPENS AND THE MAN STANDS IN THE LIGHT OF AN OIL LAMP. HE LOOKS DOWN AT MIRANDA, WET AND FRIGHTENED AND BEAUTIFUL. HE STEPS BACK, AND MOTIONS THEM IN.

THE ROOM IS VERY SIMPLE, THE WALLS WHITEWASHED, THE FURNITURE MADE FROM BEACH WOOD. BUT IT IS CIVILISED. THEY ARE SURPRISED. A LARGE PEAT FIRE IS BURNING. THE MAN IS VERY BIG, DARK.. UNNERVING. HE REGARDS THEM WITHOUT SPEAKING. THERE IS NO SIGN OF THE WOMAN.

MIR: Gosh it's warm in here.

MAN: Come in...come in. Come in.
You'll sit down?

IAN: Oh, thanks.

MIR: Thank you. It's so...wetx out.
We got lost and then the car wouldn't
go.

MAN: Ye'll have some coffee. It's
not as bad as most Irish coffee.
Made from the turf, of course.

HE KNEELS AT THE WIDE FIREPLACE.
IT SEEMS INCONGRUOUS THAT SUCH A
LARGE MAN SHOULD BE MESSING ABOUT
WITH CUPS AND SAUCERS. MIRANDA THINKS
SO AND HE SUDDENLY LOOKS UP AT HER,
AS IF CATCHING HER AT THE THOUGHT.
SHE RECOILS. AND SHE NOTICES
THAT THERE ARE TWO DIRTY CUPS.

IAN: I suppose you haven't a telephone
.....is there a telephone anywhere
around?

MAN: (SOOTHING) No. No telephone.
I have some milk though...wait,
I'll get it.

HE GOES INTO A ROOM AT THE BACK.
THEY HEAR HIS VOICE, SPEAKING TO
SOMEONE. THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER,
PUZZLED. HE RETURNS, WITH A JUG
OF MILK.

MAN: There. Will ye take sugar?
I have sugar. I should come into
the fire...you'll be wet.

MIR: The Irish don't seem to mind
it. The wet.

MAN: (LOOKS AT HER..THEN) No.

HE STIRS THE FIRE AND MOTIONS HER TO MOVE CLOSER.

IAN: We were trying to get to Ardara. Are we far off the road?

MAN: A hell of a way. The car doesn't go?

IAN: (LOOKING AT HIS WATCH) No.. seized up completely. Is there a garage?

MAN: No. No garage.

IAN: Oh God. I'm sorry darling.

THE APOLOGY TO HER SEEMS TO FASCINATE THE MAN.

MAN: (TO MIRANDA) Sit close. Here. let me take your coat... it'll dry over the chair.

HE TAKES HER COAT OFF. THE FEELING BETWEEN THEM IS SO IMMEDIATE THAT SHE SHUDDERS. SHE WATCHES HIM PLACE HER COAT OVER THE CHAIR. WHEN HE HAS DONE SO HE LEAVES HIS HAND ON THE CORNER OF THE CHAIR... ON HER COAT.

IAN: Well, is there anywhere about where we could get a bed? For the night.

MAN: Herd. You could get a bed here...if you wish.

IAN: That's awfully good of you.... we don't want to put you to any trouble.

MAN: Oh, no trouble. I'll just move the pig out of the parlour.

HE SAYS THIS WITH SUCH A CHARMING SMILE THAT THEY ALL LAUGH.

IAN: My name's Ian Taylor. This is my ah wife, Miranda.

MAN: Miranda. Good then. You'll stay. You'd like a bit of food and now..ah..I'll find some sheets for the bed.

MIR: (POLITE) Can I help?

MAN: Yes.

HE CROSSES TO THE DOOR ON THE LEFT, MIRANDA FOLLOWING. HE OPENS THE DOOR AND HER MOUTH OPENS IN AMAZEMENT. IT IS LIKE THE CHAMBER OF A FAIRY PRINCESS. THE ROOM IS DOMINATED BY A TESTER BED, HUNG WITH CONVOLUTED DRAPING. THE FURNITURE IS STRANGE. AT THE FOOT OF THE BED IS A WOLFHOUND, WHO LIFTS HIS HEAD AND GAZES, LIGHT-EYED. THE MAN TAKES LINEN FROM A CHEST, APPROACHES MIRANDA, LOOKS DOWN AT HER, AND CLOSES THE DOOR. HE CROSSES THE LIVING ROOM TO THE DOOR ON THE OTHER SIDE. SHE FOLLOWS. IT IS A TINY ROOM, SIMPLE, WITH A LOT OF BOOKS, AND A PLAIN TABLE WITH A TYPEWRITER...A WORKROOM, WITH A BED AND A CHAIR. THEY MAKE THE BED IN SILENCE.

MIR: (AT LAST.. TO BREAK THE TENSION)
Are they linen.. the sheets?

MAN: (WITH AN IRONIC GLANCE) Oh
yes.

MIR: (AS THEY FINISH THE JOB)
What a lot of books.

AT THE DOOR HE BLOCKS HE WAY. SHE SMILES UP POLITELY AND HE PUTS A HAND ON HER BELLY, RESTRAINING HER FOR A MOMENT. IT IS SUCH AN IMPOSSIBLY INTIMATE GESTURE THAT SHE IS QUITE CONFUSED AS TO HOW TO ACT. SHE TRIES TO LOOK ANGRY, BUT IT DOESN'T COME OFF. SO SHE GIVRS HIM A LOOK OF REPROACH. HE ALLOWS HER TD PASS. THEY HAVE REACHED A POINT OF CONNIVANCE, AND HE IS PLEASED.

SCENE 19. IAN AND MIRANDA EATING AT THE TABLE. THE MAN SITS BY THE FIRE.

MAN: And where are you from?

IAN OPENS HIS MOUTH TO ANSWER BUT THE MAN JERKS HIS HEAD TO INDICATE MIRANDA

No....

MIR: Me?

MAN: Ye haven't said much.

MIR: No.

MAN: Ye had a job, he says, before you married?

MIRANDA GIVES IAN A CROSS LOOK. HE HAS BEEN TALKING TOO MUCH, GIVING HER AWAY.

MIR: Yes. I work for a photographer.

MAN: Ye'll miss that.

MIR: Oh I shall go on working.

MAN: Independent.

MIR: There's no point in stopping just because you're married, or even when you have children, come to that.

MAN: And who'll bring them up, then, your children?

MIR: I shall. But that doesn't mean being with them all the time, twenty four hours a day.

MAN: Be sure you don't resent it after.. the hours spent holding the cartridges, and the children in another woman's eyes. You won't get it back. I have an aunt... a clever girl. Really clever. She went to the university, then she marries a chemist, research. So they both spend their days in the laboratory. They had one boy, a fine boy, brought up by nurses and nannies. And suddenly she's forty and wants a proper family, not this orphan away at school, but daughters in pretty dresses to giggle on the stairs, and more boys, for kicking and shouting. But it's too late... she can't conceive.

MIR: Oh, that's bad luck.

MAN: No. Bad judgment.

MIR: I suppose you're a Catholic.

HE LIFTS HIS HEAD AND LAUGHS
SOUNDLESSLY.

MAN: What you get, is what you want.

MIR: Oh no!

MAN: For you, yes.

IAN: How do you find it up here...

MAN: Oh, pretty well, pretty well...

IAN: Isolated enough.

THE MAN DOES NOT REPLY.

Tired darling? Are you tired?

MIR: No, no.

MAN: A glass of whiskey.

IAN: Oh, no thanks....it's been a long day, I think we should -

MIR: We heard a noise as we came across the field..... very loud...

MAN: What kind of a noise?

HE FINDS GLASSES AND POURS THEM A DRINK.

MIR: I don't know.

MAN: Was it the donkey? Was it the donkey in the field?

IAN: Yes, of course, that's what it was! Extraordinary noise they make.

MAN: Oh he's peaceful. He's no trouble. Not really.

MIR: It was like...out of hell.

MAN: It has nothing to do with him. The noise.

MIR: I'm not so sure.

HE PUTS MORE WHISKEY IN HER GLASS.

Oh..no..thanks.

SHE DRINKS ABSENTLY.

IAN: (RISING) OK darling?

BUT SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO MIND HIM.

MIR: We ran over a dog today.

MAN: You did what?

MIR: We ran over a dog. Bump,
bump, bump.

MAN: You killed it?

MIR: Not quite.

MAN: (TO IAN) Ah, ye had to
finish him off.

IAN: Well, actually, that was
difficult. We left a policeman...
they were going to find the butcher..
he had a humane killer.

MIR: We tried everywhere! No-one
had a gun, or anything! We tried
for over an hour!

MAN: So the dog died anyway.

MIR: No. It was still alive.
What would you have done?

MAN: Killed it.

IAN: How?

MAN: With a stone.

IAN: I did think of it, but I was afraid of making things worse. It's a matter of experience....I didn't know the best way to tackle it.

THE MAN SAYS NOTHING. MIRANDA TURNS HER GLASS.

Unfortunately, killing's not my line.

SILENCE. HE GETS UP.

I'm going to bed. Will you excuse us..you've been awfully kind..... come on darling, we'll try and get to the Devil's Causeway tomorrow.

MIRANDA PUTS DOWN HER GLASS. THE MAN STANDS BY THE FIRE, FROWNING AT HER. SHE DOESN'T WANT TO LEAVE HIM AT ALL..IT SEEMS ALL WRONG.

MIR: Goodnight then.

HE LOOKS AT HER. SHE LOOKS AT THE DOOR TO THE BACK ROOM, THEN AT THE MAN, AND THEN AWAY. SHE PICKS UP HER GLASS, PUTS IT DOWN AGAIN, AND FOLLOWS IAN. THE MAN GOES TO THE DOOR OF THE BACK ROOM AND LISTENS. THERE IS NO SOUND. HE REFILLS HIS GLASS, AND LEANS AGAINST THE FIREPLACE, WAITING.

SCENE 20. MIRANDA AND IAN IN BED. THE ROOM IS VERY DARK, JUST A WEDGE OF LIGHT FROM THE WINDOW OUTLINES MIRANDA'S ARM.

IAN: Oh darling, darling, darling,
darling, darling.....‡

SILENCE.

SCENE 21. THE LIVING ROOM. THE
MAN IS SPRAWLED IN A CHAIR, BEFORE
THE FIRE.... GAZING AT THE PEAT
GLOW. THE DONKEY MAKES ITS AWFUL
NOISE, OUTSIDE, CLOSE. THE MAN
SMILES BRIEFLY. THEN THE DOOR OF
THE LITTLE BEDROOM OPENS SLOWLY.
IT IS MIRANDA.

MIR: That noise..... I heard it
again!

MAN: Oh yes.

MIR: Didn't you hear it?

HE GETS UP AND APPROACHES.

MIR: You heard it, didn't you?

MAN: Sure. I heard it.

HE KISSES HER. THEN HE PUTS AN
ARM ROUND HER AND LEADS HER TO THE
OTHER ROOM.

MIR: I don't want to.

MAN: Oh I think you do. Isn't it
what you want?

MIR: I don't know. Yes, I think
so.

THEY LOOK INTO THE ROOM. THE DOG
RISES AND SNARLS. THEN IT SLIPS PAST,
ACROSS THE MAIN ROOM AND INTO THE
ROOM AT THE BACK.

THE FIRE IN THE ROOM BURNS....
 SOME OF THE BEAT LOGS COLLAPSE.
 THE THREE DOORS ARE CLOSED, AND
 TELL NOTHING. A WIND LIFTS THE
 CURTAINS AT THE TINY WINDOW.
 PETALS FALL FROM A BOWL OF FLOWERS.
 A WOODLOUSE CLIMBS UP A WOODEN CHEST.
 MIRANDA'S COAT AND SCARF DRY NEAR
 THE FIRE.

THE DOG WHINES, FROM BEHIND THE
 DOOR, AND SCRATCHES. SLOWLY THE
 DOOR OPENS AND A YOUNG WOMAN ENTERS
 THE MAIN ROOM. SHE IS DARK AND
 BEAUTIFUL, WITH LOOSE, DARK, IRISH
 HAIR. SHE WANDERS ABOUT THE ROOM,
 PUTTING DOWN HER CANDLESTICK, AND
 INSPECTING THE ROOM...SHE NOTES THE
 COAT, THE SCRA^{AP}T, THE CUPS, THE
 GLASSES. SHE PICKS UP AND DROPS
 THE PETALS, AND PUTS HER FINGER
 ACROSS THE PATH OF THE WOODLOUSE.
 IAN'S COAT IS ACROSS A CHAIR.
 SHE LOOKS DOWN AT IT, FOR A LONG
 MOMENT, AND THEN TOUCHES IT,
 THOUGHTFULLY. SHE WANDERS AROUND
 THE ROOM AGAIN, AS IF HAVING DISMISSED
 THE COAT. THEN SHE CROSSES TO IAN'S
 ROOM, THE CANDLESTICK IN HER HAND,
 AND GOES IN.

SHE CROSSES TO THE BED AND LOOKS
 DOWN. HE IS ASLEEP. CAREFULLY
 SHE PUTS DOWN THE CANDLESTICK,
 AND BEGINS TO STROKE HIM.

IAN: (MURMURS) Darling.....

SHE LIFTS HER HAND, OBSCURING THE
 CANDLE, AND IT GOES OUT.

IAN: Darling....

SCENE 22. THE BEDROOM. EARLY LIGHT. IAN ASLEEP. THE YOUNG WOMAN LOOLLS, ON THE SIDE OF THE BED, ~~HE~~ WATCHING HIM. HE STIRS.

IAN: Darling?

WOM: Yes?

IAN: What time is it?

HE ROUSES AND LOOKS AT HER. HE IS CONFUSED WITH SLEEP AND IT TAKES HIM A MOMENT. THEN HE FROWNS IN SURPRISE AND LIFTS HIMSELF ON HIS ELBOW.

IAN: Who are you?

SHE SMILES. HE SITS UP..MOVES AWAY FROM HER.

Where's Miranda..... where's my wife?

WOM: She's your wife then?

IAN: Yes....is she up?

WOM: She couldn't sleep. She went for a walk.

IAN: At this hour?

WOM: The rain's stopped. I think the donkey woke her. He's a noisy brute.

HE FIDGETS IN THE BED FOR HIS PANTS, THEN GETS UP AND BLUNDERS INTO THE LIVING ROOM. HE BLINKS, LOOKS ABOUT, AND THEN COMES BACK INTO THE BEDROOM.

IAN: Look, do forgive me.. who are you...I mean -

WOM: I live here.

IAN: Was it you we heard last night?

WOM: It was. Have you got a cigarette?

IAN: Oh...yes....

HE STUMBLES ABOUT, FINDS A CIGARETTE, AND LIGHTS IT FOR HER.

WOM: Ah, that's lovely.. (INHALING)

HE WATCHES HER. SHE PATS THE BED FOR HIM TO SIT WITH HER. HE STAYS STANDING.

WOM: What's your name?

IAN: Ian Taylor.

WOM: Ian...Ian.... that's a Scottish name. Are you a Scots boy?

IAN: No.

WOM: Ye have the name of a Scot.

IAN: (SLIGHT LAUGH) My brother's name is Jason.

WOM: And he's not Greek. As far as you know.

HE FROWNS, THEN LAUGHS POLITELY AT THE DOUBTFUL JOKE.

IAN: Has she been gone long?

WOM: (SOOTHING) No... not long.

IAN LOOKS AT HIS WATCH.

It's five o'clock. Come and sit down. Now what's the matter with you... she'll be back before anything. Don't you ever sit by a woman before?

IAN: Yes of course. I'm awfully sorry...is this your room?

WOM: Not at all...it wouldn't do for me.

HE SITS ABRUPTLY.

IAN: I can't understand it...she was here a little while ago... she hates walking.

WOM: But this is Ireland. Do you know where you are?

IAN: No..not really.

WOM: Ah well, it's how you are that matters, not where or when or why. How long are you married?

IAN: Since...three days ago.

WOM: That must be lovely.

IAN: Yes it is.

WOM: And you hope it will never end. Do you love her?

IAN: Yes, yes of course.

WOM: But you're a man.

IAN: Is your husband up?

WOM: (SOOTHING) Oh yes. (SHE SMILES AT HIM) Married....that's lovely.

SHE LIES BACK, LOOKING AT HIM. HE GAZES AT HER, FASCINATED, PUZZLED.

You looked like an angry man to me. When I come in.

IAN: I'm not angry. A little worried.

WOM: Oh you don't look angry now.

IAN: No.

WOM: It's better now, eh?

IAN: What do you mean?

WOM: Now that's wonderful.. to be married....to be joined up with someone, together. Now why would you have had that look on you... of anger? Why would you look like that?

IAN: I'm sure I wasn't.

WOM: Perhaps now it was your fault.

Perhaps you've been going at her like a bag of sweets...gorging yourself? Isn't that it? Wasn't that how it was?

SHE CARESSES HIS HEAD.

IAN: Look, don't.

SHE STOPS.

I..I am normal.

WOM: Oh yes. Were you quarrelling?

IAN: No, no.

WOM: Wasn't she holding off you ? You never really felt she was yours...

IAN: No. .not until tonight. Not at first, even then. But later, it was... it was....(HE SHAKES HIS HEAD IN WONDER)

SHE WATCHES HIM, LIKE A SNAKE

How on earth do you know? You must be a witch.. how can you know?

SHE PULLS HIS HEAD DOWN AND KISSES HIM. HE IS INTRIGUED, AROUSED, AND HORRIFIED.

IAN: Look, what are you? I've just got married. Miranda's not the first girl I've had, but I love her.... I've married her. What do you want?

SHE STROKES HIS FACE.

WOM: Piggy....

HE RECOILS AS TO A PHYSICAL BLOW ON THE CHEEK. HE LOOKS AT HER IN HORROR. SHE SNIGGERS. A TERRIBLE ANGER OVERWHELEMS HIM, AND HE PUTS HIS HANDS ON HER THROAT. HIS FACE IS BLANK AND HE IS DANGEROUS.

WOM: (SOFT) Go on. Do it.

HIS MIND TAKES OVER AND HIS HANDS FALL.

WOM: You'd better wait for your wife.. it won't be long now. Go to bed and wait for her. Sure she'll be destroyed not to find you here, you don't want that. It won't be long. Not long. A little time. Sometimes things drag on for a while and we don't seem able to stop them, well, a little suffering, it makes the good times better.

IAN: Where is she?

WOM: What are you going to do.. when you find her?

THIS CHECKS HIM.

You love her. You wouldn't want to hurt her, you love her. Now who'd want to hurt such a lovely girl?
(AT THE DOOR) Except in an accident.

HE MOVES TOWARDS HER, ALARMED.

WOM: (CONT) But there's no accident.
She went for a walk.....go to bed.

IAN: (BITTERLY) You're very
beautiful.

WOM: Oh yes.

IAN: Why? Why? You don't even know
me!

WOM: Oh I know you, Ian. I know
you. I know you well.

DESPITE HIMSELF HE APPROACHES HER.

~~XX~~
~~XX~~

Wait for her. You wouldn't want it
to be just idleness.

SHE GOES, CLOSING THE DOOR IN HIS
FACE. HE OPENS IT. THE SITTING ROOM
IS EMPTY. HE CROSSES TO THE DOOR AT THE
BACK, THE KEY TURNS IN THE LOCK. HE
TRYS THE DOOR, USELESSLY. THEN HE LOOKS
AT THE OTHER DOOR. HE STARES. HE CROSSES
AND STANDS BEFORE IT. THEN, IN SUDDEN
INDIGNITY, HE CROUCHES, LISTENING.
HE STRAIGHTENS UP, BUT TRIES AGAIN.
THERE IS NO SOUND. HE LOOKS AT THE
HANDLE, AND TRIES, SLOWLY, TO TURN IT.
THE HANDLE TURNS, BUT THE DOOR WILL NOT
BUDGE. HE KNOCKS. NO REPLY. HE
KNOCKS AGAIN. AND AGAIN, AND HARDER,
AND HARDER. NO REPLY. HE BANGS HIS
FISTS ON THE DOOR.

IAN: Miranda! Miranda please!

HE ATTACKS THE DOOR, CALLING HER NAME. THEN SLOWLY HE SUBSIDES, AND COLLAPSES ON THE FLOOR. TEARS ROLL SILENTLY DOWN HIS FACE. HE DOES NOT SOB, BUT GROANS, SEVERAL TIMES. A WOMAN'S FOOT KICKS HIM LIGHTLY.

MIR: Poor Ian.

HE LOOKS UP. IT IS MIRANDA. SHE LOOKS DOWN AT HIM.

IAN: Where were you?

MIR: I went for a walk.

SCENE 23. THE SITTING ROOM. MIRANDA STANDS ON THE CENTRE OF THE ROOM. IAN IS AT THE DOOR LEADING TO THEIR BEDROOM.

IAN: Come on!

MIR: We can't go now. Besides, we haven't paid!

IAN: I'll leave some money..

MIR: I don't want to.

IAN: What do you want to do... stay?

MIR: It's too early.. I can't... what about the car?

IAN: We'll walk...we'll have to walk to the nearest phone.

MIR: It's too early..

HE COMES CLOSE, TAKES HER BY THE ARM.

INVOLUNTARILY SHE SPRINGS AWAY
FROM HIS TOUCH.

MIR: No, don't..

SHE REALISES AT ONCE, AND THEY
STARE AT EACH OTHER IN MISERY.

IAN: Where were you?

MIR: I told you...I went for a
walk.

IAN. No. No, piggy, no.

MIR: Why did you ask then?

IAN: I must know.

MIR: Yes. Yes, I suppose you must.

IAN: Shall I help you?

SHE DOES NOT REPLY.

Just...just say what happened.

MIR: (FLARING UP) What about you?
I came back!

HE STARES AT HER, STRICKEN.

She was there... with you.

IAN: I was asleep.

MIR: It doesn't matter. I love
him. I'm going to stay.

HE SITS, HEAD IN HANDS.

IAN: What happened?

MIR: It was the donkey...it woke
me. He was here. I should never
have married you! I didn't want to
be married!

IAN: Well neither did I!

MIR: You wouldn't leave me alone!
All I wanted was to buy something
for Belinda..it's not much to ask...
after all, your life doesn't stop
just because you're married!

IAN: I waited a long time for you.

MIR: I'm not a bag of sweets.

IAN: That's what she said.

MIR: Did you Discuss me?

IAN: She knew...all about us.

MIR: Well so did he. I love him.

IAN: Miranda you can't....it's
impossible... you're not yourself.
Come with me...I'll look after
you...

MIR: You couldn't even put a dog
out of its misery. I saw you...you
turned your head away!

IAN: So did you.

MIR: No! I touched it! ~~xxxxxxx~~
~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ It's all
wrong between us....all wrong.

IAN: Miranda..... please....

MIR: No..it's all changed..it's
different....I'm not the same.
I'm changed. It's all different
now.

IAN; I'm not leaving without you.

~~MIR: I'm staying here~~

IAN: (CONT) Darling, I love you... you're my wife. I've known lots of girls, but from the moment I saw you, at Mary's, sitting in the sun...you were like a pale princess...I wanted to.... there was no question. You know you love me.. you're my little princess...

~~I'm staying here~~

MIR: No. I'm an animal.

IAN: Piggy please.....

SHE LOOKS AT HIM AND HE BITES OFF HIS TONGUE.

MIR: It isn't any good. I'm staying here.

IAN: Has he asked you? What about her? She'll eat you alive! What's he going to do..throw her down a well?

MIR: I don't know. It doesn't matter. Whatever he says. I'm staying. I'm going to stay with him.

MAN: (FROM THE DOOR) Would ye like some breakfast before ye go.. the two of you?

MIRANDA LOOKS AT HIM, AND MOVES TOWARDS HIM.

MIR: Tom.....

HE SMILES, AND COMES FORWARD

MAN: What do you say.. bacon and eggs....

IAN GOES FOR HIM. THERE IS A
SCUFFLE BUT IAN IS NO MATCH FOR HIM.

Now come on.. you don't want to
make a scene before your wife..why
don't you get dressed?

MIR: Tom.....?

TOM: I was out just now.. to look
at the animals. Your car goes.

HE PAUSES, BY MIRANDA, AND LOOKS
AT HER) As pretty as a seashell.
Now what do you say.. bacon and
eggs, have ye no appetite..that
won't do, ye must have appetite.

MIR: Tom.

MAN: (SMILING, TO IAN) Get her
out of here. And yourself. Five
minutes. I'm a terrible man
for boredom.

IAN: Come on darling...

HE TRIES TO EMBRACE MIRANDA BUT SHE
BREAKS FREE AND THROWS HERSELF
AT THE MAN'S FEET.

MIR: Tom, please....please...please....
let me stay... please.. oh please.....

IAN: Darling, come on... come away...
can't you see, he's just tormenting
you....he's cruel.

MIR: Where is she?

MAN: Get her out.

MIR: I want to see her! Where is
she? I want to speak to her!

SHE GOES TO THE DOOR AT THE BACK
AND RATTLES THE HANDLE.

MIR: Come on!

IAN: Miranda please!

MIR: Well where is she? I want to
talk to your wife!

MAN: I have no wife.

MIR: But who -

MAN: Who said she was my wife?
Who said that? Did she say that?
Did she say she was my wife?

HE CROSSES TO MIRANDA AND LIFTS HER
TEAR-STAINED FACE IN HIS HAND

(GENTLE) I've no wife....

HER FACE COMES TO LIFE...

Now how would you think that...

HE CROSSES WITH HER TO THE DOOR
OF THE CHAMBER, THEN LEAVES HER.
HE GOES INTO THE ROOM, LEAVING
HER, AND BEHIND HER IAN, AT THE
DOOR. HE STANDS BY THE BED, AND
SMILES AT THEM. THE WOMAN, COMPOSED,
MAGNIFICENT AND SMILING, IN AN
ENORMOUS SILK SHAWL, LIFTS HERSELF
FROM THE BED.

Cara's my sister.

THE WOMAN EMBRACES HIS LEGS, AND THEY
SMILE, BOTH OF THEM, ALMOST
TENDERLY, AT THE TWO IN THE DOORWAY.
THEN THE MAN SMILES DOWN AT THE
WOMAN. SHE LOOKS AT IAN.

WOM: Piggy....

AND THEY BEGIN TO LAUGH. IAN AND MIRANDA MAKE FOR THE OTHER ROOM AND DRESS, BUMPING AGAINST EACH OTHER IN HASTE AND SHOCK. IAN GRABS ~~HER~~ COATS AND THEY MAKE FOR THE DOOR. THE OTHER TWO REMAIN, IN A HIERATIC EMBRACE, THE MAN STANDING, THE WOMAN ON THE BED. THEIR LAUGHTER RISES AGAIN, AND MIRANDA BEGINS TO LAUGH TOO, HYSTERICAL, SHAKING LIKE A LITTLE RAG DOLL. IAN SHAKES HER LIGHTLY, AND MANHANDLES HER THROUGH THE DOOR AND OUT OF THEIR SIGHT. ~~ON~~TSIDE MIRANDA LOOKS AT IAN PITIFULLY, AND HE LEADS HER AWAY GENTLY.

IAN: Come on darling....

THROUGH THE WINDOW, THE OTHERS LAUGH. THEIR LAUGHTER SIBSIDES TO SMILES.. AND THEN, LAZILY, THEY EMBRACE IN TRIUMPH.

SCENE 24. THE COTTAGE....STILL AND BEAUTIFUL IN THE MORNING SUNLIGHT.

SCENE 25. IN THE CAR. IAN DRIVING WITH A SET FACE. MIRANDA AT HIS SIDE, HER FACE STIFF WITH SHOCK. THE CAR PASSES AND MOVES AWAY ROUND A BEND.

SCENE 26. IN THE CAR. MIRANDA NERVOUSLY TWISTING THE EARS OF THE FELT DONKEY.

MIR: I'd better stay with Belinda.
I wonder if I'll get a night flight.
Do you think we dreamt it.

IAN: No.

MIR: But why? Why?

IAN: I don't know.

SHE GIVES HIM A QUICK, IRRITABLE
LOOK..HE KNOWS NOTHING.)

MIRANDA LIES BACK IN HER SEAT,
RELAXING HER HEAD. HER HANDS ARE
STILL. IAN DRIVES DOGGEDLY.

IAN: (AFTER A PAUSE) I know one
thing.

MIR: What?

IAN: It was wickedness. They
were wicked.

AND THEY EXCHANGE A FRIGHTENED
GLANCE. SHE TWISTS AND TURNS HER
HEAD, CLUTCHING THE DONKEY. SHE
LOOKS DOWN AT THE DONKEY, AND THEN
PUSHES IT OUT OF THE WINDOW.

SCENE 27. THE DONKEY LIES ON THE
ROAD...THE CAR MOVING AWAY FROM IT.

SCENE 28. IN THE CAR. THE CAR IS
SKIRTING A BEAUTIFUL LAKE. MIRAND A
LE LYING BACK WITH HER EYES CLOSED
THOUGH OBVIOUSLY NOT ASLEEP. SHE
OPENS HER EYES AND LOOKS AHEAD, TO
WATER.

MIR: How beautiful.

IAN: Yes.

HER HANDS RELAX. HER EYES ARE
DOWNCAST, BUT HER WHOLE BODY RELAXES.

MIR:
It might..... it could..... be
all right.

HE LOOKS AT HER BRIEFLY.

(TIMIDLY) I feel sorry for them.
I am frightenedbut.....

HE STOPS THE CAR AND EMBRACES HER.

SCENE 27. THE DONKEY, LYING IN
THE ROAD. IAN AND MIRANDA'S
VOICES, ABOVE

IAN: You know, I didn't mean to
run him over, darling...I didn't
see him.....

MIR: If only he'd died....you
should have done something... ..

IAN: But I didn't want to kill
him...I've never killed anything...

MIR: He was in pain....

IAN: I know...I know...I wanted
to help...

MIR: Yes I know you did...I know...
we both felt bad.....

IAN: It was awful....

MIR: Poor dog...poor dog.....

THE END