

Seán MacDiarmada

Signatory to Proclamation – Executed after the Rising of 1916 - Leitrim to Kilmainham

A Play in 12 Scenes

By Tom Madden

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Scene 1: Teaching School in Leitrim
Sound: Child song/Tables by Rote

- MacDiarmada (*Pointing to Leitrim on a map of Ireland*) *Scrape of chalk on Blackboard*
And how big are we?
- Student 1 Do you mean the whole of Ireland? Master!
- MacDiarmada Well! Let's start with Leitrim boys – everything starts from where we are and who we are – never forget that.
- Student 2 Well! Drover always says it's 50 mile from Carrick to the Donegal Bay.
- MacDiarmada Familiarise yourselves with it, children - know it and love it – 'cause it will go everywhere with you – and God knows we are fed up of all the 'goings'.
- Student 3 Do you mean the two big lakes as well? And sure there must be hundreds of little ones – and the mountains?
- MacDiarmada Don't worry they will all fit in your head – and the older you get and the further away you are the more will fit there – even Slievanierin, all 2,000 foot of it. Look at it another way! This beautiful countryside is the geography and history book of our lives! Our families and neighbours saw us through 1798, the Famine and the land clearances. Sometimes the powers-that-be want to cover over our real origins but we have them recorded in our songs and stories. We made beautiful books called annals and Leitrim is proud that one of the Four Masters came from among us.
- Student 1 Where is the book now?
- MacDiarmada In jail! Up in Dublin.
- Student 2 When do we get it back?
- MacDiarmada Now! That's a big question
(*Points back to the map*)
Can anyone give me the real meaning of Manorhamilton?
- Girl My Granny calls it Cluainín Uí Ruairc
- MacDiarmada Aye! O'Rourke's little fields. God you've a great granny, girl!
A 'cluain' is a piece of dry ground between a bog and a river. Know that much and you'll build your house in a safe place – like our own place at home, built on a rock.
Now! What else do we learn from the name Manorhamilton? Anyone?
Yes, Brigid!
- Brigid A man called Hamilton took over the place!
- MacDiarmada Aye, a man! And where did the Irish people go?
- Brigid America and Scotland? Master?
- MacDiarmada Aye, one man took over the whole place! All 10,000 acres. And the majority of the poor creatures were banished to the marshy bits and up on to the hills.
- Girl That's unfair, Master.
- MacDiarmada (*Aside*) Out of the mouths of babes.
True for you, girl.
- Boy Didn't Tiernan O'Rourke's missus run away with a Wexfordman?
- MacDiarmada She did! And that same man Diarmaid McMurrough brought the British Conquerer in to Ireland for the first time. And every 50 years since then we try to do something about it.
- Boy Is that why they go out on the hills practicing?

MacDiarmada (*Ignoring the observation*) It will need something even bigger than 1798 to finish the great work of Robert Emmet. We'll start with him tomorrow children. In the meantime, go home and talk with your grannies.

(All the children stand)

In ainm an Athar agus an Mhic agus an Spioraid Naoimh.

Slán Abhaile.

MacDiarmada Oh! Pádraig Óg! Tell your aunt and your father there's a card game tonight.

Boy Go raibh maith agat! I will.

MacDiarmada Maith an bhuachail.

Scene 2: The Meeting/Local Influences on the 1916 Rising

Sound: Outdoor evening sounds ending with the firm closing of a door

Local woman *(Taking off her hat and scarf)* On my cycles around the parishes Seán, there is a lot to be gleaned. Some of it we know already -as we set it running ourselves to check out the trustworthy from the rest. It comes as no surprise that you are being shadowed on some occasions. But don't worry too much 'cause we get to know them faster than they get to know us.

(Leaning into MacDiarmada) Oh! And every letter you write is given special attention – opened and passed to the censor.

MacDiarmada *(Dealing out cards)* Has it become more evident since our last meeting?

Local woman It has!

MacDiarmada Every letter I write from now on I'll include a phrase like 'I'd tell you more but I don't want to tire the Postmaster's eyesight with too much reading'

Local woman Well it would take you to come up with a quick answer.

MacDiarmada Secrecy is everything folks.

I will have no formal military rank in what is to come. My authority will be as an administrator in the Provisional Government if that's what emerges.

Pádraig Snr Well you're certainly getting top billing as a commander from what is coming down from Dublin.

Local woman The Castle always pays more - the higher the rank they think you are.

Pádraig Snr 'Tis a bit like the boys selling turf by weight to the barrack below? They pulls up the cart on top of the little bridge, then drop buckets down for water to throw over the load until the poor ass doesn't know whether he is to swim or pull.

Local woman The ass will eventually work it out and refuse to stop on the bridge.

MacDiarmada That's why secrecy and a variety of organisations all being focused towards the same outcome will win through this time.

We will keep changing that ass – the important thing is to get the load through - whatever that may be.

Local woman You're a gas man, Seán – God! I'm glad you don't sell me turf. *(Pausing)* Now the setting up of the various ladies' committees are going very well. What we sell off the holdings is suddenly having a whole new value. We're nearly overrun with new members, all vetted I might add. And we got a copy of Pádraig Pearse's *Murder Machine* on education. He is a very insightful man. The ladies of our new local education council have studied it and have a draft to be put forward to the national meeting.

Pádraig Snr Well! It's the same with the agriculture committee – god there is great excitement with the plan to go back to a fully supported *meitheal* system. We'll use our own resources – in as far as they will reach – for the sowing and harvesting and then get the seeds in bulk from Spain, France, Portugal or wherever. It'll be a shock to them Dublin importers - they are a terror at charging. They'd be a long time looking at a cow's udder before they'd work it out. They milk nothin' and sow nothin' but charge all.

Local woman There is a great feeling of hope coming over the communities now that they see we are on the move towards governing ourselves.

We'll keep you up to date Seán with progress hereabouts but what is next for you now that your book-keeping course is finished?

MacDiarmada My last journey took me to Tralee and there is a great surge in preparations in Kerry, as there is in Limerick and all the way up through Galway. God, the bravery and ingenuity is heart-warming. A young Galway girl had to deliver a message to one of the organisers in Limerick and with the roads and railways thick with agents she wove the message into her hair and got it through undetected. And just a word to say my Limerick friends want me to go to Belfast. Enough said. Well, first I can't say enough for the women from all over Ireland. In the new republic they will have the vote just as everyone else. And manage the country along-side the men – whoever would be elected will have responsibility to the people who elected them. The British don't want it, if the mothers of Ireland had the vote now how many of their sons would be marching off to a brass band in a new suit to die face down in the mud of a French or Belgian farm that will never again produce food. I learned something useful for my own behaviour when I was in Tuam. I was delivering an oration there - to members and potential members - and I got unusually hot under the collar and nearly got myself locked up. It taught me that there should be no big sporadic gestures however justified. No! All our like-minded movements need to continue their individual preparations and let the big gesture take the British by surprise.
(MacDiarmada raises a hand and gestures for his companions to listen. He picks up his hand of cards off the table)
Now where were we woman of the house?

Local woman Well *(looking at the money and cards on the table)* someone is shy and it was my trick.

Pádraig Snr God you're sharp! *(Roots in his pocket and produces a coin)*
(To the woman)

Gis! You'd be a good leader of the new Dail.

MacDiarmada Stranger things will come to pass! - you may be sure. Please God!

Lights Fade

Scene 3: Belfast Re-awakened

Sound: Outdoor sounds –city and industrial – ending with a ritual closing of the door.

Opening

A Boy wearing a sandwich-board stands on steps near the Meeting Hall – the front board reads ‘Save your Country’ the back ‘Join the IRB’.

Seán McGarry lurks in the shadows smoking a cigarette.

A policeman passes the boy - the front board is showing – boy tips his cap at the Policeman who pauses and then strolls on. The back board is seen as the boy turns to make sure he has passed on.

Note: This scene can be played using the audience as part of the meeting.

Boy

(To McGarry) Everyone you described is gone in!

McGarry

Gawd, but you’re a great scout! Away with you now – you’ll be late.

(Boy takes off the boards and legs it.)

(McGarry is seen entering the meeting hall. He closes and barricades the door.)

McGarry

I’m Seán McGarry! Everyone is in! So I’ll get things rolling by introducing Belfast’s very own Mr Bulmer Hobson to put this evening into context.

Hobson

(Addressing the meeting of Belfast community nationalists and guests.)

Since we merged the Sinn Féin League, the Dungannon Club and Cumann na nGaedheal the resulting organisation – simply Sinn Féin – has improved somewhat our ability to influence elections. As I said to Joe McGarrity in the past, contesting them will focus our members and allow us to grow membership. And I must acknowledge here the £100 sent from America by that great activist, on behalf of Irish nationhood, John Devoy. For those of you attending for the first time tonight, Devoy is intimately aware of the political struggles here in Ireland being born in Naas in the County Kildare. We learned much during the Leitrim election. The sheer energy of the local people is an example to be followed here in Belfast and across our northern communities. It became evident from the beginning of the campaign that my style of flowing oratory - which you could expect from a lay preacher – was doing the candidacy of local man Dolan little good. In hindsight my helping Charles J. Dolan to change allegiance from the Irish Parliamentary Party to Sinn Féin was my best contribution. They now have a man who, at least has a year’s first-hand experience of how the British parliament works. But understanding the directness and passion of the Leitrim people does not come easy to me. But our main speaker tonight is a man who does. He is an up and coming young intelligence organiser who has come to live amongst us. Steeped in the trials and tribulations of community organisation. Let us welcome Seán MacDíarmada from Kiltyclogher in Leitrim who took over the running of the election campaign from me. Give him a warm Belfast welcome.

(Quiet applause)

MacDiarmada

(He looks at each person before speaking)

Some of you met me already. I know this because I made a habit of remembering faces. I encourage you to do the same. Besides the knowledge you collect will make you better at hiding your own identity when needed. Knowledge is everything. The British paid spies here in 1798. It’s how they work. You can be sure they are doing the same now. That’s what we are up against.

(He looks at everyone in the room)

I know already where most of you live – because I took a job on the trams. I was helped to get that job – which tells us something else. If we co-operate we can do great things. But you don't have to worry about meeting me on a tram again. I was sacked for smoking on the job.

McGarry I bet it was Nanc that got you.

MacDiarmada You're dead right! God it was my first introduction to the puritanical strain in management here. Working as a barman – my next job - let me see first-hand the social set-up in the nationalist areas. You have great potential and I hope – with your help – to grow it.

I'm thankful to Mr David McCullough for recommending me.

McCullough *(Rising)* Seán's official role is as Organiser for Sinn Féin in Ulster and the nationalist cause where he sees the need. His subsistence is provided by the goodness of the Dungannon Club and in particular the intervention of Ernest Blythe. He will of course be getting County Tyrone well organised.

On a lighter note we have also provided him with a bicycle.

McGarry *(Standing up)* He is going to need protection and I would like to present him with a 'revolver'

(Seán MacDiarmada is surprised but goes along with the gesture – McGarry stands forward)

On behalf of all here please accept your own personal 'revolver'.

MacDiarmada *(Taking the pencil case and grinning at the idea)*

I'll make good use of this pencil case when I'm in tight corners.

McGarry Fair dues to you man - you're one of us!

And now – to formally introduce our main speaker – I call on Dr. Pat McCartan.

McCartan *(Rises)* Bulmer Hobson and I moved down to Dublin in 1905 to be closer to the growing stirrings of nationalism. We are back in Belfast for this meeting of the IRB. It has been an eye opener to see the growth of nationalism in every part of life down there and indeed the whole country. The arts, schools, trade unions, whole communities and work places are stirring. We, here in Belfast are going to have to make our presence felt. No better man to organise us than Seán MacDiarmada. We are back tonight to be part of this re-awakening. Those of us in the IRB know his tireless work all over the country organising their affairs. I call on Seán to address you.

(A round of applause accompanies Seán MacDiarmada's rising to his feet)

MacDiarmada What we are undertaking is not about another blood sacrifice for Ireland but when this war in Europe ends - and end it will - when the only ones left to fight will be the big officers and politicians. Yes! When those who send the young and needy to die are next in line - then it will end. Then there will be a peace conference called to carve up the goodies. Our coming blood sacrifice will get us a rightful place at the conference table as a country being in armed dispute with the British, just as Germany and bits of France will be called. Then Britain will have to hear the Irish-American and the Diaspora voice loud and clear. Britain's colonies - like India, Egypt and Africa, whose sons are being killed off in this *Great War*, will add their voices with ours in a forum where they will have to be heard. That is the real aim of the coming sacrifice. The British have a legal system! Not a justice system. Their laws are to ensure that the Irish in Ireland get

dis-possessed, do the starving while paying the taxes, do the dying, emigrating, have to educate themselves in hedge-schools. When we object and they crush us and then they send over their monarch! They control what the monarch sees and who they meet. Then they tell us we should be glad of this nonsensical royal consolation prize.

(Loud round of applause)

We are in constant contact with John Devoy and his American movement, who assure us that funding will continue to be put at our disposal. For this we are grateful to them and to Tom Clarke here and John Daly of Limerick. Their experience in such a struggle is an inspiration to us.

Belfast Voice You're going to have to control your anger when hecklers have a go at you, Seán!
You'll find Belfast is a very mouthy city.

MacDiarmada I've fielded a fair number of batons from RIC and eggs from oppositions but your point is well taken. Be clear! Nobody should join any part of the British forces. No participation in juries. Let their legal system fail and be seen to fail. Take no part in elections where only candidates from the establishment are taking part. The aim of Sinn Féin and the IRB is an independent Irish parliament. You will be called on in the name of Irish freedom. Bí Linn.

(All in the meeting stand and applaud)

B/O

Scene 4: Liberty Hall

Sound: City sound of tram traffic and church bells

(Visual Scene – In the form of a moving tableau)

(Liberty Hall the rallying point where Irish Citizen Army members and Irish Volunteers are mustering to march to the GPO. Their dress is a mixture of full uniform with hat – to good suits and caps – nurse’s uniforms - shirt sleeves with a waistcoat and bandolier – all the men have clean white shirts).

(Two fruit sellers meet on the edge of the gathering)

Brigie How’s business Annie?

Annie Great!

An’ the fruit is selling as well!

Brigie Gees, you’re one gas woman!

(chuckles) May God forgive ya!

Here, what’s goin’ on down at Liberty Hall?

Annie Haven’t a clue Brigie! But there’s fellas in uniform and ones with guns in their skirt pockets. And they’re after coming out of every street and lane! All at the same time.

Brigie Come on Annie where ever they’re going there’s bound to be a crowd!

(A woman runs from the bye-standers with a green necktie in her hand and puts it round her husband’s neck, knotting it carefully to the unease of the man and the ‘Gee-up’ from the Volunteers).

Woman *(As she walks off)*

Well he has to be well turned out for this occasion!

Sound: (In the background noises of the British Army firing on the ranges on Bull Island is heard in the distance.)

(MacDiarmada and Tom Clarke - both with walking difficulties - walk erect and briskly on the footpath beside the main body of Volunteers who march in strict military formation.)

Sound: A lone piper tunes up to lead the parade to the GPO.

(The colour party made up of Cumann na mBan volunteers form up behind the piper. They are followed by Pearse and Connolly who march at the head of their men.)

Lights fade

Scene 5: GPO Headquarters

Sound: Various gunfire, Single shot, volleys, machine gun as the scene progresses

(Pádraig Pearse stands reading the Proclamation)

Present: Tom Clarke, James Connolly, Pádraig Pearse, Seán MacDíarmada, Joseph Plunkett, Seán McLoughlin, Mrs McLoughlin and volunteers of the garrison at the GPO.

Mrs McL *(Standing in a side doorway watching those entering suddenly sees her Séan)*
 Séan McLoughlin! Did you know that your sister Mary, who is only a school girl, is in the GPO? *(Pauses hands on hips)*. Acting as a messenger no less. In the name of God, Seán! Will you send her home! She is far too young for that sort of thing.

Seán McL I'll go and talk to her!
(He leaves his mother standing proudly looking after him as he walks briskly away)

(Seán is seen walking amongst the volunteers)
 Seán McL *(Shouting)*

Mary McLoughlin! Mary McLoughlin!
(A young girl trots forward smiling)

Seán McL You're to go home out of here Mary. Mother will murder you!
 MacDiarmada *(Comforting her)* Indeed she won't Mary.
(To Seán McLoughlin) Her mother will be proud of her later on.
Sound: Rifle fire from upstairs

Mrs McL *(Throws her eyes up to heaven and turns to leave the doorway)*

Messenger *(Rushes in past Mrs McLoughlin almost knocking her down)*

Terrible sorry missus! *(Doffs his cap)*

But I have a dispatch for Commandant Connolly.

(Yells out) Commandant Connolly!!

Connolly *(Making his way through the volunteers carrying a handful of maps)*

Good Man! *(Looks at the note)* You made it all the way from Fairview.

Messenger Yeh! We could hear yis firing all the way out there! Deadly!

Connolly Hold here for a minute, son. I'll get the Garrison Commander.

(Shouts above the firing) Pádraig Pearse!

(Voice off) Yes, James!

(Pearse comes down stairs – shakes hands with the messenger)

Great news Pádraig. The 2nd Battalion in Fr. Mathew Park are fully mobilised.

Liam Henderson, Liam Breen, Frank Henderson, Oscar Traynor with Tom Ennis in charge – Cumann na mBan have the whole area staked out. Couldn't be done without them. Says here that the British Army from the Bull Island Camp are engaging them – trying to come into the city. Ennis is concerned that if they get over-run by the British their ammunition and stores would be lost.

What do you want to do Pádraig?

Sound: Intermittent, single volley and machine bursts

Pádraig P *(Pointing with his finger moving along possible routes)* *(Pauses)*

- Okay, let the main body come in to re-inforce us here – where they will have some cover – and we could do with their stores - especially the medical materials.
- Connolly Right so! Then their best way in is through Ballybough – then Summerhill and down into Sackville Street.
(Pearse is writing as Connolly speaks, signs the order and hands it to the messenger who salutes)
– You’re a brave young man.
- Messenger *(Grinning impishly)* Not a bother, Sir! *(He trots off)*
- Connolly You can always count on the men and women from Big Jim Larkin’s stomping ground!
Sound: Incoming shell, breaking glass, burning building
- Girl *(Girl Messenger enters producing a note)* Message from Weafer! Connolly
- Connolly See what I mean!
- Pádraig P *(Opens it and reads aloud)*
‘Have sent a detachment under Frank Henderson to Ballybough Bridge and Fairview Strand – to block the British advance on the city. Have intercepted them at Annesley and Newcomen bridges. Harry Boland has a detachment taking over Gilbey’s Wine Branch Depot, in Fairview Strand. But a detachment of British troops slipped past on foot on the railway line and have taken over the Customs House and Amiens Street Station – the Brits are also moving large forces in from the Curragh Camp’.
- MacDiarmada Harry Boland and his volunteers with Cumann na mBan are still actively engaging with more British trying to move in from the north. The Cumann ladies have a series of ammunition stashes in houses all over that area. They have even taken British prisoners – one is a machine gun instructor at the Bull Island Camp. That should give us a bit of a breather here.
(Volunteers come in dragging a wooden crate)
- Volunteer 1 This is the first of the North Strand medical stores – the rest will be a bit slower getting here – the women in charge of the dumps had to put ammunition into prams to avoid some of the check-points.
(The volunteer prises open the crate)
- O’Farrell *(Rummaging in the crate)* God that’s great! And badly needed
(Shouts) Julia! Julia!
(Julia Grenan makes her way through the volunteers)
Look! Fresh bandages and dressings.
- Julia Grenan Couldn’t come at a better time – I’m just about to go around changing dressings on the wounded. That’s if I can get half of them to get down off the firing points long enough to get the wound dressed.
I’ll take some of that anti-septic as well – God! This is great.
- O’Farrell *(To volunteers)* Thanks men!
- Volunteers We’re going back to give cover to Captain Mary Kelly and her Clan na Gael ladies who are getting the ammunition in the Drumcondra dump ready to bring in. It’s getting a bit dodgy in places now. We’ll be back.
(They start to go)
- Julia Grenan Míle Míle buíochas
- Volunteer Tá fáilte romhat a cailín!
(He cocks his pistol and goes to the door – looks out)
Anois! Le chéile.

(They exit)
Sound: bursts of machine gun fire and single revolver shots from outside
 Connolly (Connolly goes to doorway waving to the others to keep back)
 They made it!
Sound: a single rifle shot is heard – Connolly stumbles clutching his leg
 Sniper!! Second window to the left!
 Volunteer (Shouts up the stairs)
 Sniper – second window to the left - 303.
 Draw him first.
Sound: A single shot is heard followed – after a short pause by another
 Female voice (Off) Got him!
 Volunteer (Shouting to upstairs) Good work! Watch for a replacement taking up position!
 MacDiarmada (Rushes to Connolly's aid and lifts him up –supporting him with his shoulder)
 Let me get you away from there Jim.
 Connolly It's the ankle! I'll be okay! Easy now! (grimaces) I can't feel it, Seán!
 MacDiarmada Don't worry we'll look after it. Nurses! Nurses!
 (A volunteer rushes over with a stretcher – He and MacDiarmada help Connolly to lie down on it)
 (Miss O'Farrell and Mary McLoughlin rush down the stairs to Connolly's side - Miss O'Farrell examines the wound and turns to look at Pearse who is approaching. She silently shakes her head to inform Pearse that it's not good)
 Mary McL (Shouts up the stairs) Nurse Grenan! Nurse Grenan! – (Repeated by voice off.)
Sound: Heavy incoming shell burst
 O'Farrell (To Pearse) The ankle is shattered, Pádraig.
 Connolly Can you patch it up, Elizabeth?
 O'Farrell We'll do what we can! Lie as still as you can manage!
 (To Nurse Grenan)
 You may put splints from knee to toes, Julia!
 Julia Grenan We'll have you right as rain in no time, Commandant Connolly.
Sound: Burning building
 Seán McL (rushing down from the remains of the stairs towards MacDiarmada)
 God! Seán, that roof structure is almost gone! That British Navy ship is firing incendiaries. Timbers are burning fiercely and there will be even more of it dropping down as the day goes on.
 What about the ammunition over there, Seán? (Pointing to a wooden box)
 MacDiarmada Well, none of it went up so far – can't be in that great a condition.
 Seán McL Christ, you're a cool man – ever the pragmatist.
 MacDiarmada Better move it to the basement, Seán. Put a count on it as you go and let me know the tally when you're finished.
 Seán McL Won't have to take off me shoes to help count it! Just the fingers will do!
 MacDiarmada Go on you Dublin wit! If you don't move it soon you mightn't have fingers left!
 Make sure your men get a bit of food soon!
 Seán McL Well! I was just passing the menu around when some git put a bullet through it.
 (Loud laughter from the volunteers)
 Gees, them biscuits are stale – and scarce - don't worry all us Dubs are like you Leitrim lads - the landlords trained us to live on nothing.

MacDiarmada Oh! And Seán, get the volunteers down from the upper floor before any more of the roof hits them and get an order over to those in the Metropole Hotel to retreat. It's ready to fall in from the shelling the navy is giving it.

Sound: Heavy incoming shell and overhead light flash. (Projected on ceiling?)

Lights cross-fade

As lights fade up a meeting is being held

MacDiarmada We've reached Friday men and this place won't stay standing much longer. That British Navy ship is blasting the whole area around us. Even the other side of the street – using incendiaries to torch the city. All the women volunteers have been evacuated except for these great ladies.

Winifred Well it's an easy choice! I've been secretary to James Connolly through thick and thin – those awful years of struggle for the destitute of this rotten city – but it's only the buildings and the so called aristocracy that rots – the people of this city and country deserve to share in its wealth. All they got in 1913 was slaughtered by the police and army and starvation from employers and demonization from the so called Independent newspapers – we couldn't do anything then - well we're doing it now. The Irish Volunteers were set up in response to bad government by the British and their lackeys – we'll always be here as long as they remain. You can count me in to the end.

Connolly Women like you have always borne the brunt of hardship. Land clearance – famine – evictions – deportations. You are an inspiration to us all Winifred Carney. Enough out of me! You better call us to order Pádraig.

Sound: Shell burst, flame

Pádraig P God bless the skill and courage of Julia Grenan and Elizabeth O'Farrell for keeping us so well and able in this awful situation. But there is better to come with the help of God and his Blessed Mother.

(Pearse holds up a handful of various scraps of paper)

From the reports coming in from our comrades all over the city we know the British Army are raking Henry Street behind us with machine-guns and hidden snipers.

Sound: Heavy machine gun

Tom Clarke If this bombardment keeps up we will need a new headquarters.

O'Farrell *(Looking across at Connolly)*

Your leg is going towards gangrene, Comrade Connolly.

Plunkett There's no way of keeping the fires at bay anymore and the roof is really starting to collapse.

Connolly We'll keep the fight going – whatever happens.

Tom Clarke We need to look for an escape route, Jim! We got out of places worse than this.

(Turning to MacDiarmada) Seán, you reconnoitred the whole neighbourhood.

What would be the best route?

MacDiarmada Pádraig has filled us in on Henry Street and it's not very good - but it is our best chance of making a break out of here Tom. If we can cut across to Henry Place and cross the end of Moore Lane, then we can reach Henry Street.

Pádraig P Right so! We hold out for the darkness or at least as long as we can.

How is James doing?

Connolly Don't worry I'll make it that far.

MacDiarmada What are his chances Nurse?

- O'Farrell *(Inspecting the wound again)* I'll need three volunteers to help. Two for the stretcher and one with a rifle for cover.
- MacDiarmada That's no bother! Eh! Lads!
- Volunteers No bother at all!
- MacDiarmada Right! That's the plan.
- Pádraig P All in favour, raise a hand
(All hands go up in the air)
Mile buíochas. You are the bravest of the brave. Ireland will be proud of you forever. I'll write a communiqué to the other garrisons telling them of your decision to relocate our headquarters.
(Female volunteer enters) As soon as it is written, our network of messengers will get it through – don't worry.
- Dr. Ryan *(Medical Officer to the garrison who has been inspecting the wounded with Miss O'Farrell)*
(Turning to MacD) Could we possibly have them removed to hospital?
- MacDiarmada The lady volunteers under May Kelly have offered to be stretcher-bearers under the direction of the Red Cross – we'll move the wounded to Jervis Hospital. I had best go to the nearest post with a Red Cross flag and see what can be arranged.

Lights fade fast to B/O

Sound: The sounds of heavy artillery fire and exploding shells are heard throughout the black-out.

Scene 6: **In No. 16 Moore Street. New HQ after the GPO had been evacuated.**
Sound: Throughout this scene British naval, machinegun and artillery fire is heard sporadically

Prologue *(Two women pushing prams come on and meet centre stage.)*
 Woman A How is the babby?
 Woman B *(Looking around before reaching into her pram and taking out rifles wrapped in a blue blanket)*
 Raring to go! Take them down to No.16 Moore Street. They're after setting up their new headquarters there.
 Woman A They're shellin' the city centre even where nothin' was goin' on.
 Woman B It's that shaggin' ship on the Liffey and the curs up at Trinity College.
 Woman A I'd love to nick them big guns off them posh shaggers.
 Woman B *(Laughing)* They'd never fit in my bleedin' pram!
 Oh God, I nearly forgot! *(Reaches into pram and takes out two cardboard boxes of bullets and hands them to her friend.)*
 Woman B Some food for the babbies. *(Turns her prams and starts off shouting back)*
 You have to keep them fed or they won't do any good! Don't get shot!

Lights crossfade

Dr. Ryan *(Bending over Connolly)* What day is it at all, Nurse?
 O'Farrell Saturday morning and nineteen made it through that hell of machinegun and rifle fire – eighteen of the wounded have gone to hospital. Those who made it here are well bruised and fatigued.
 MacDiarmada *(To all)* God! Ye worked like miners. Fair dues to all of you – tunnelling your way through the walls of houses to here.
 Tom Clarke You can be sure that now that the real dig has started the country won't stop 'till we're free from English influences and tax burdens – no matter how they dress them up.
 Pádraig P You ladies were, as always, heroic last night through all the gunfire and the work of tunnelling. Your intelligence and humanity saw us through. Anyone who wants to know why our Proclamation – which we are ensuring by this armed struggle – states so clearly the equal rights of women in this new Ireland, only have to recall the great attributes and sacrifices of Elizabeth O'Farrell, Miss Carney and Miss Grenan here. And the countless women volunteers in the other garrisons all over the country so betrayed by the countermanding order.
Sound: Dull distant explosions
 MacDiarmada We got more wounded to hospital but we need to take an overview of the whole situation. Gather around Jame's stretcher.
(Present are Tom Clarke, Joseph Plunkett, who hands a note to a messenger, Willie Pearse, Winifred Carney, Julia Grenan)
 Pádraig P The British are inflicting great hurt to the citizens of this city pounding areas well away from our garrisons. We have made our stand for Irish freedom but I will not see ordinary citizens suffer under these military attacks on them and the British Army excesses under the guise of Martial Law. *(Pauses – walks – pauses)*. I am proposing that we surrender under

the best terms that we can get. But if it will save the lives of citizens – then we will go for an un-conditional surrender.

Connolly
MacDiarmada
Joseph Plunkett
Pádraig P
All
MacDiarmada
O’Farrell
Pádraig P
MacDiarmada
Connolly
MacDiarmada
Pádraig P
O’Farrell
Pádraig P

You have led us bravely and well, Pádraig – I concur.

The price of life is best made by the leadership as envisaged. I am willing to pay that price.

It has been a privilege to serve. I concur also.

What is the response of everyone else? You have given your all with bravery and dignity!

Agreed!

Could I suggest that Miss O’Farrell improvise a number of white flags from the bits and pieces left at her disposal.

I volunteer to go with Pádraig. I have been down to the Red Cross station at the barricades a few times.

If I’m not shot on sight I will send a communiqué by Nurse O’Farrell on the agreed terms.

(To Elizabeth O’Farrell)
The British don’t know how important you are to the whole movement. Stand very close to Pádraig at all times – they’ll want to photograph him – protect your identity Elizabeth – we’ll need you back. I’ll hang a white flag out the window now to let them know our intentions.
(Julia Grenan walks to MacDiarmada and taking her white nurse’s headpiece off her head hands it to him. MacDiarmada goes to the barricaded window and pokes the long flag stick out through it.)
(Pearse begins shaking the hand of all the volunteers present – volunteers shake his hand and then salute Pearse.)

We have fought with bravery! Whatever is to come we will do with all the pride and courage of our great Irish people past, present and to come.

(Walks to stand beside Winifred Carney who is weeping)
I know! I know! Winnie. I feel the tears welling up too. Your great strength will see you through all this. You are a great woman.
(MacDiarmada looks across to Julia Grenan who walks to put an arm around Winnie’s shoulder.) (Pearse is seen putting on his great-coat and hat and walks towards the door which is closed and barricaded. He turns. He comes to attention and salutes the volunteers.)

*(To himself)*Tá an t-am istigh!
(To all present) Time for the next step – you are remarkable people whom Ireland has gathered to her side. Míle míle buíochas daoibh.
(He turns to Elizabeth O’Farrell who has a large white flag in her hand)
It’s time to go!

I’ll step out first with the flag.

Ready when you are Elizabeth.

Sound: Machine gun fire (Volunteer pulls the barricading back and opens the door – a bullet splinters the door – he holds it open. Elizabeth O’Farrell steps out – flag held high. Pearse follows at her heels.)

Fast Light Fade

Scene 7: Sackville Street

Sound: Babble of crowd

(Volunteers are laying down their arms in front of the Gresham Hotel)

G Man (To two British soldiers)
Those two there!

Soldier 1 Which two?

G Man The old bloke and the one with the stick!

Soldier 2 You're taking the piss, Guv? Not those two limping goats?

G Man We have been tracking that guy with the stick all the way from Leitrim, around Ireland to Belfast and down to Dublin. This is the nearest we got to him.

Soldier 1 You're not too good are you, Sir?

G Man We're only as good as our informers.

Soldier 2 Waste of good money if you ask me!

Want me to shoot them here while they are laying down their arms?

G Man No! No! Not in front of the Gresham Hotel. We want to make an example of them. March them up to the railed-in-yard at the Rotunda Hospital.

Soldier 2 Right you scum, to your left – Quick march!

(Large groups begin to fall in and as they move off it is obvious that MacDiarmada and Tom Clarke can't keep up.)

Soldier 1 Detail Split! We'll make sure this slow lot get there.

(Poking MacDiarmada with his bayonet.)

So the Sinn Féiners take cripples in their army now. Eh?

Soldier 1 Okay move it! You'll love the hospital garden. Great place to spend the night.

(Laughs)

Soldier 2 We'll strip search them when we get there.

Soldier 1 *(Nudging Clarke with his bayonet)*

Yea! Let all the nurses see his tackle!

Tom Clarke We are now prisoners of war and have rights as such.

Soldier 2 You're going to find out mate that only the Brits can insist on this prisoner of war lark.

Soldier 1 He's going to love our prisons.

MacDiarmada He has already had fifteen years of your penal servitude and he is still here.

Soldier 2 We'll wipe your face in it too mate!

MacDiarmada Beidh lá eile a Thomáis.

Lights fade

Sound: Heavy marching of soldiers

Scene 8: Richmond Barracks

Sound: In darkness - 3 individual volleys. Heavy marching of soldiers on barracks square.

(A crowded barrack room. Dull green wall – small window placed high on the wall lets a small amount of light slant down on the heads and shoulders of grumbling prisoners).

Volunteer 3 Those shots at half past three this morning were the executions of Pearse, Tomás McDonagh and Tom Clarke.

Volunteer 1 The Brits never had tolerance for educated native men.

Volunteer 2 That's so they can call themselves 'Great'

Volunteer 1 This room is the pits. It's getting to my stomach! I think I'm going to be sick!

Volunteer 3 Ah! Not again! It's the putrid stink in here that does it.

Sound: Heavy approaching steps on stone stairs

(The door bursts open and two soldiers push their way in using their rifles to crush the space for three more arrivals – MacDiarmada, and the brothers George and Jack Plunkett who are pushed in at bayonet point by other soldiers)

Volunteer 2 Get him over to the tank lads!

Volunteer 3 It's full already!

(Soldiers back out the door which is then slammed shut and the Sound: sound of a bolt being hammered home is heard)

British Soldier *(Off)* Welcome to Richmond Barracks - you bastards.

Jack Plunkett God almighty, Seán. This is a bloody pigsty.

MacDiarmada What is causing that sickening smell?

Volunteer 2 It's the lavatory in the corner

MacDiarmada Show me!

Volunteer 3 *(Calling out)* Try and make a bit of room, lads.

MacDiarmada *(Moving through the volunteers who shake his hand as he goes)*

Christ! It's a rusted metal water tank full of shit and God knows what else.

(He storms back to the door and bangs his fist on it.)

Open this door!!

(No reply) (Bangs again repeatedly)

G. Plunkett Seán! Seán! Go 'asy!

MacDiarmada We are their prisoners as yet untried by any court. An open tank of excrement is part of no justice system. It's the same for all their 'loyal subjects: Africans, Aboriginals, Indian and Irish - that's why we are going to change them – they will never do it themselves – and mark my words we won't be the last to revolt.
(The door is pushed in and two bayonets are shoved into view)

Soldier 2 What do you want? You bloody Mick!

MacDiarmada You're not going to get away with your 'Coffin Ship' conditions here – We want buckets – ten buckets.

Soldier 2 *(Shouting out the door)* Sarge! He wants buckets Sir! Tank is overflowing! – *(A muttering voice is heard off)* Right Sir!

Ok squaddies! You heard him! Pass them fire buckets – (Pause) off the corridor wall! – you dummy!

(Clusters of buckets are passed in through the door)

- MacDiarmada Right lads! Empty that tank! That's it! Now pass them this way!
(Seán MacD. passes the first bucket out the open door and places it on the floor in the corridor)
- Volunteer 3 Now soldier take them away or we start throwing them!
- MacDiarmada And bring plenty of chloride and lime!
- Volunteer 2 *(Looking at the chain that has formed from the tank to the door)* Right lads keep them buckets coming!
(Cross fade to barrack yard at Richmond Barracks)
(MacDiarmada is among the new arrivals into the yard)
- Jack Plunkett By God Seán the caring schoolmaster broke out in you in there.
- MacDiarmada The days of taking their degrading treatment are over Jack.
(A large group of volunteers are standing in clusters eying each new arrival and the movement of the sentries. They chat in low tones and from time to time a piece of paper is passed and read by the recipient and swallowed)
- Volunteer A We're luckier than those poor lads shot last night. They seem to be getting us into the next batch to be shipped God knows where!
- Volunteer B Rumour has it that it's Wales or the North.
- Volunteer A They must be running out of bullets!
- Volunteer B England would run out of food before it would run out of bullets. Their forces get first go at putting their hand in the people's pocket.
- Volunteer A And it's always someone else's pocket. The Yanks caught them at it in the 1700s and threw them out.
- Volunteer B We caught them at the same time at the same thing, when the United Irishmen tried to get rid of them.
- Volunteer A Yea! We were too near to their arms supplies and too infiltrated by the Big Houses. *(Pauses looking around)* Hey! Look at the new arrivals from the holding rooms. They at least are going to be shipped out too.
- Volunteer B Signal to Seán T. O'Kelly.
- Volunteer A Where?
- Volunteer B Above in the cell window. *(Nods his head towards the arrivals)*. They don't know who they have – Thank God!
(Seán MacDiarmada is lined up in the ranks of four abreast awaiting the order to move out to the docks)
- Volunteer A It is him. *(Cautioning)* Don't even look at him! He'll make it after all.
(Three soldiers with fixed bayonets enter the yard accompanied by a man in long duster coat and a hat - who eyes up the ranks of deportees.)
- Love Soldier! *(Pointing towards the prisoners)*
Make them spread out more and stop that bloody moving! If they don't! Shoot them!
- Soldier *(Aiming rifle)* Yes Inspector Love! You heard the man! Spread out more and stop that bloody shuffling or I'll plug you where you are.
(Love looks into the face of each volunteer then stops abruptly when he reaches Seán MacDiarmada)
- Love Is that McDermott I see there?
(Grabs MacDiarmada under the chin)
Got you! You Leitrim bastard.
- MacDiarmada You have to do a lot of running about don't you.
- Love Right Sarge this bastard is for Kilmainham and sign the docket May 3rd.

Sarge Detail! Secure the prisoner and quick march!
 (*MacDiarmada's hands are tied and he limps off under close guard.*)
 (*Inspector Love kicks away MacDiarmada's stick*)
MacDiarmada We will always be ahead of you lot - stick or no stick.
 Sound: The volunteers hum 'A Nation Once Again'

Lights fade

Scene 9: Rush to Justice – Rigging the Court Martial

Sound: Distant marching soldiers on parade

Soldier *(Reading from notebook)*
Three shot in the early hours of May 2nd. Sir!
Patrick Pearse, Thomas McDonagh and Thomas Clarke. Reports state that Clarke is a close friend of McDermott.

Maxwell I'll get through this rabble in quick time. Have they all been assigned a prison number?

Soldier Yes Sir!

Maxwell Has that Connolly arrived? What's his number?

Soldier He's number 90 Sir. He's at Dublin Castle. Badly wounded Sir! Leg! Can't walk Sir!

Maxwell Didn't stop him fighting – did it? Get him here even if he has to be dragged. Now who's next – show me the schedule.
(Soldier passes chart – Maxwell reads it quickly)
Bloody requests for relatives to visit – disruption tactics – and priests. Ballsy bastards expect to die? Right Sarge, issue an order – anyone coming to this jail will come in cars authorised by us and under armed escort. We don't want any surprises.

Soldier Your signature for that order Sir!

Maxwell *(Maxwell scribbles his name)*
And I want that other bloke MacD something.

Soldier *(Squinting at paper)* It's MacDiramada Sir. He's prison number 91, Sir. He was sentenced to be deported Sir!

Maxwell I want him back here in Kilmainham.
I want to see more action. I promised parliament in London to have the leadership dealt with by 12th May. I want MacD here! Court-martialled and shot! Oh! And his court-martial is at 11am in the morning.

Soldier But there is no defence council notified.

Maxwell He will have no defence council.

Soldier Right Sir!

Maxwell You can write up his sentence now but don't deliver it 'til he is back in his cell after the court martial.

Fast light fade

Scene 10: Visitor Before the Court Martial

Sound: Opening Silence

(A British soldier stands guard inside the cell door)

Min Ryan Oh! Seán I'm so sorry for delivering that awful message for MacNeill to so many. What was I thinking? Things could have been so different for the fighting.

MacDiarmada Don't reproach yourself, Máirín.

(Placing his arm around her shoulder briefly) You were following an order from your superior officer – as is fitting. It's that MacNeill who is unforgiveable.

Min Ryan But it left all of you without much support.

MacDiarmada He is not like Pearse - God rest his soul - who could mix the educational with the pragmatic. MacNeill insisted on going off on a solo run. From the day Tom Clarke, Pearse and myself worked out the best time to strike, MacNeill procrastinated. He caused so much confusion we had to hold his emissary Bulmer Hobson in a house up in Cabra Park. Hobson was totally against the Rising and egged on MacNeill to stop it. On Easter Monday night – once it had started –Tom Clarke, The O'Rahilly and myself discussed Hobson and decided to release him. Staff officer Seán T. O'Kelly was sent up with the release order. *(Pauses)* I sorely miss Tom Clarke. He was like a father to me. His great wife is so powerful and committed to the cause.

(Seán MacDiarmada pauses and takes Máirín's hand in his)

If things had only worked out different we could have been planning something big for ourselves.

(MacD turns away from Min)

They gave me the charge sheet just now Máirín, and I'm due for court martial at 11 o'clock tomorrow morning.

Min Ryan Oh! God you need to prepare.

MacDiarmada *(Lightening the mood)*

Yeah! I need to borrow a razor. I have to make a nice corpse you know.

(He pauses – trying to change the subject)

There'll be no more taking part in plays in Irish for me, Girl!

I'll be missing the fun of the rehearsals with Na hAisteoirí. Make sure ye keep it going! It's a great way of finding our real selves. You only have to look at what the Abbey are doing in reviving our true selves.

Min Ryan Oh, Seán! The pressure on the British is starting to come from all over the world –it might stall them.

MacDiarmada They executed Seán Heuston and Con Colbert and they didn't sign. No! Connolly and myself were willing signatories. We'll be shot. It's the only way that they know how to think.

Lights fade

Scene 11: May 9th 1916 – MacDiarmada’s Court Martial

MacDiarmada is surrounded by four soldiers with fixed bayonets.

President of the Court Colonel Douglas Saptre (out of retirement)

Lieut. Col. Philip Bent (gung ho)

Major FW Woodward

Col. Douglas Saptre enters and salutes the Union-Jack

Saptre Right Gentlemen! I’ve better things to be doing with my retirement time. Let’s get it over with. Today is May 9th 1916. There will be NO jury – no note taking – save for the verdict. This court is in session in the name of his gracious Majesty the King. Lieut. Col. Bent (*Eying him*) All revved up as usual, I see! Read the charges.

Bent ‘Did an act, to wit did take part in an armed rebellion and in the waging of war against His Majesty the King.

Such act being of such a nature as to be calculated to be prejudicial to the Defence of the Realm and being done with the intention and for the purpose of assisting the enemy.

Did attempt to cause disaffection among the civilian population of His Majesty.’

Woodward Heinous bastard! We dealt swiftly with these lesser types in our African colonies.

Saptre Quite so! Major Woodward – but do carry on!

Woodward Calling witness for the prosecution! Detective Daniel Hoey.

Hoey (*Standing quickly – produces a note book*)

I have known this MacDiarmada for over three years. Back in 1914 he was the chief speaker at the Irish Volunteer meeting in Tralee – inciting people to act against His Majesty by reminding them of the Manchester Martyrs and that bloke Robert Emmet. On last Saint Patrick’s Day he was rabble rousing in Limerick. He is a recruiting officer and one of the leaders of this Rebellion against the Empire. Permission to call a witness sir!

Saptre Only for the prosecution.

Hoey Of course Sir!

(*Signals to a man seated and wearing a heavy civilian greatcoat who stands immediately*)

You! Do your King’s Duty!

Witness This is the man whose name is on that so-called proclamation now appearing all over the city and across the country.

Saptre Have you anything to say in apology to your King.

MacDiarmada You don’t have kings and queens in a Republic and so every little girl can be a princess. Just because your King of England can’t get on with his German cousins you start a war of useless savagery where you can both kill off the manhood of your dependent countries because they are disaffected by your suppression and wasteful taxation systems. You are two years now pouring men and metal into the soil of Europe. That you had so much killing materials ready before you declared war is a measure of the murderous practices of your Crown forces – evil in intent towards mankind. Your embedded journalists accuse us Irish of inviting in the German Army and stabbing you in the back – that is the squeal of the bully who is just getting his ear clipped from his intended victim. Yes! We invited German arms in – rifles – bullets and any other bits like binoculars that would fit in small boats sailed by courageous women and men

despite your great navy – who killed hundreds of our citizens and fire bombed the centre of Dublin. But we did not and would not invite the Germans in as conquerors – no more than we want you here. You should have listened to Robert Emmet - 200 years ago - when he answered your same charge then of seeking the assistance of the French.

Bent *(Interrupting)* Canny Irish Bastard – let’s move this on to the next case.

MacDiarmada You scoff at our brave gesture and see it as a tiny pebble barely causing a ripple in the vast and putrid ocean of your Empire. The ripples are - even now as we stand here - spreading all over the world. You had better prepare for the massive backwash that will tear your corrupt Empire apart. The great peoples of Asia and Africa are taking heart from our small but honest gesture for freedom. You look at our nation just as you look at me – and you only see my limp – but I know that I can walk. Your corrupt parliament spent 35,000 pounds corrupting Irish men to be your spies between 1795 and 1803 to stop us becoming a free nation. When that didn’t kill our desire for nationhood you gave us ethnic cleansing through the Great Famine - a litany of evil.

(Pauses)

I ask to see Fr. Eugene McCarthy!

(MacDiarmada is lead away under guard)

Hoey Right soldier get that civvie’s coat off you and get back on duty!

Witness *(He stands takes a military cap out of the coat pocket and puts it on his head. Throws the coat over the chair – revealing a fully uniformed British soldier. He salutes the colonial and marches off.*

Lights fade

Scene 12: Execution in the Morning

(The walls of Sean MacDiarmada's small narrow cell are grey-black in colour from the dampness and lack of light. On the rough wooden table is a single candlestick with a yellowish candle spluttering as it flickers. There is a crude wooden chair. Against the wall is a low plank structure which could be used as a bed. On the table are some sheets of paper and on some of which notes have been written. At the opening of the scene MacDiarmada is crouched writing. A British soldier stands in the shadows inside the door).

MacDiarmada *(Picking up the sheet of paper and reading it back to himself aloud.)*

Kilmainham Prison
Dublin
May 11th 1916

My Dear Brothers and Sisters

I sincerely hope that this letter will not come as a surprise to any of you, and above all that none of you will worry over what I have to say. It is just a wee note to say that I have been tried by court martial and sentenced to be shot –to die the death of a soldier. By the time this reaches you, I will, with God's mercy, have joined in heaven my poor father and mother as well as my dear friends who have been shot during the week. They died like heroes & with God's help I will act throughout as heroic as they did.

(We hear the following as a voice over - while he writes)

I only wish you could see me now. I am just as calm and collected as if I were talking to you all or taking a walk to see Mick Wrynn or some of the old friends or neighbours around home. I have priests with me almost constantly for the past twenty-four hours. One dear old friend of mine, Rev. Dr. Brown, Maynooth, stayed with me up to a very late hour last night. I feel a happiness the like of which I never experienced in my life before, and I feel that I could not describe. Surely when you know my state ...

(His eyes switch quickly to the soldier who has moved quickly to the peephole in the door. The sound of a heavy bolt is heard being drawn and the door creaks open. Two young ladies enter sobbing. (Phyllis Ryan is dressed as if she expects to be a bridesmaid – white gloves and hat and best two-piece suit)

MacDiarmada *(Extending his hands)*

Well, welcome to the Ryan sisters! It's great that you could make it. I didn't know whether their response to a request would be granted. My last request is for Fr. McCarthy to be here for the very end. I hope he comes.

(He puts his arms around the shoulders of the two ladies consolingly and in a comic teacher's voice.)

Will the two Ryan sisters – Phyllis and Mary! Please stop sobbing! I would offer a handkerchief if I had one of course.

(The ladies begin to smile)

MacDiarmada You are brave girls to come into this place. Máirin was here already but I wanted to say my thanks in person for all the help the Ryans have been to me. How is Tom Clarke's wife doing after his execution? God love her.

And my mind flies to John Daly and all his care down in Limerick.

Phyllis Ryan More important, Seán! How are you?

Mary Ryan God! It's hard to say anything in a way. But the crowds of people keeping vigil outside the jail is heartening.

MacDiarmada There is a great clarity come over me. They have stopped shelling the city at least and their killing goes on in here now. *(Changing the mood)*

Where's my manners gone to at all? Take a seat, the chair isn't great, you could try the bench there.

(The three of them sit on the 'bed'. The soldier leans nearer to observe)

Min Ryan *(Facing the soldier)* We've been searched three times already – at home before we entered the car, after we left the car and then just inside the gate. Are ye so stupid or just bad?

(The soldier stands to attention again inside the door)

MacDiarmada I didn't get a chance to thank the Cumann ladies who, seeing my limping plight, walked beside me the whole way from Richmond Barracks to this prison. They are wonderful brave people - but sure you two are all well aware of their commitment to the cause.

Speaking of saying thanks and goodbyes there is something I want help with – the making of keepsakes for some friends.

I don't have anything save for that yellow scarf that some old woman threw to me as we walked here.

Do you have any coins?

(The ladies search their pockets and a few coins are dropped on the table.)

MacDiarmada moves excitedly to the chair and taking up the first coin starts to scratch it with the end of a stubby spoon.)

Phyllis What in God's name is he at Min?

Min *(Looking over his shoulder)* He is putting his initials on them.

MacDiarmada When you give these ask the person to think of me and say a prayer for my soul and tell them that I died proudly for Ireland.

Is that all the things we have?

Min Well now Seán we were searched so thoroughly on the way in.

MacDiarmada Don't fret I have more for signing.

(He rips the buttons off his jacket and scratches his initials on them)

The three giggle at the ingenuity and the laughter comes to an abrupt stop when the bolt of the door is loudly drawn. A priest in priestly robes enters and stands quietly)

MacDiarmada Is it that time Father McCarthy?

Fr. McCarthy Close enough, Seán.

MacDiarmada (*Gathers up the mementoes and hands them to the girls.*) Thank you so much for coming and give my thanks to all who know me.

Min Ryan This brave priest married Joseph and Grace! Thank you for that Father.
(*Before anything more can be said two fully armed soldiers enter the cell and move the girls out unceremoniously*)

(*MacDiarmada kneels before the priest who blesses him. MacDiarmada rises.*)

MacDiarmada Thank you, Father! You and your fellow priests have been here for us all. Your work will always be remembered.

Fr. McCarthy I will be at your side through this, Seán.

MacDiarmada I'm fully ready! God Save Ireland!

(*He limps briskly out of the cell.*)

Sound: Voices off: The rosary can be heard in the distance from the crowds who gather every time word of an execution leaks out. As it gets louder a volley of shot is heard.

End