

# **The Lass of Galway**

**Libretto for an opera in one act**

**by**

**David Evan Thomas**

**based on "The Dead," from *Dubliners*,**

**by**

**James Joyce**

### Cast of Characters

<b>Gabriel Conroy</b> , a middle-aged Dublin journalist.....	Lyric Baritone
<b>Gretta Conroy</b> , his wife.....	Mezzo-soprano
<b>Kate Morkan</b> , Gabriel's aunt.....	Soprano
<b>Julia Morkan</b> , Kate's frail older sister.....	Contralto
<b>Mary Jane</b> , Kate and Julia's unmarried 35-year-old niece, Gabriel's cousin.....	High soprano
<b>Lily</b> , the Morkan's young maid.....	Mezzo-soprano
<b>Freddy Malins</b> .....	Tenor buffo
<b>Molly Ivors</b> , a school teacher and Irish nationalist.....	Soprano
<b>Bartell D'Arcy</b> , a young, dark-complexioned opera singer with a mustache.....	Tenor
<b>Mr. Browne</b> , an elderly Protestant gentleman.....	Bass
<b>Michael Furey</b> , a seventeen-year-old boy from Gretta's girlhood.....	Lyric tenor
<b>a Porter</b>	
<b>Chorus</b> of guests	

## Prologue

A HOTEL ROOM. THE STAGE IS DARK.

**Michael Furey**

(OFFSTAGE AND IN THE DISTANCE, EMERGING AND RECEDING)

*"The rain beats on my yellow locks...  
My babe lies cold...."*

*The rain beats on my yellow locks  
and the dew wets me still;  
My babe lies cold in my arms.  
let me in, oh let me in."*

A PORTER, CARRYING A CANDLE, OPENS THE DOOR AND ADMITS GABRIEL AND GRETТА INTO THE HOTEL ROOM. THERE IS A DOUBLE BED WITH BRASS RAILING, A COAT TREE AND SMALL TABLE BY THE DOOR, A CHEST OF DRAWERS, AND A FULL-LENGTH MIRROR.

**Gabriel**

(pointing to the candle) We don't need that handsome article; there's light enough from the street.

THE PORTER EXITS. GABRIEL SHUTS AND BOLTS THE DOOR BEHIND HIM. A GHASTLY LIGHT FROM THE STREET LAMP LIES IN A LONG SHAFT FROM WINDOW TO DOOR. GRETТА TAKES OFF HER HAT AND CLOAK. GABRIEL HANGS HER THINGS UP, THEN REMOVES AND HANGS UP HIS OWN HAT AND COAT. GRETТА MOVES TO THE MIRROR AND STANDS BEFORE IT, UNHOOKING HER WAIST, LOST IN THOUGHT. GABRIEL CROSSES TO THE WINDOW AND LOOKS OUT, THEN MOVES TO THE CHEST WITH HIS BACK TO THE LIGHT AND WATCHES HER FOR A FEW MOMENTS BEFORE SPEAKING.

Gretta!

HE WALKS TOWARD HER.

You look tired.

**Gretta**

I am, a little.

**Gabriel**

Your don't feel ill, or weak?

**Gretta**

No, tired, that's all.

**Gabriel**

**Michael Furey**

By the way, you know that poor fellow Freddy Malins? He's a decent sort of chap, after all. He gave me back the money I lent him when he opened his little card shop, and I didn't expect it, really.

*"The rain beats on my yellow locks  
and the dew wets me still;  
My babe lies cold in my arms.  
let me in, oh let me in."*

SHE GOES AND STANDS BEFORE HIM.

**Gretta**

You are very generous, Gabriel.

**Gabriel**

PUTS HIS HANDS ON HER HAIR AND STROKES IT LIGHTLY.

My dear, what are you thinking?

HE TAKES HER HEAD IN HIS HANDS, THEN SLIPS AN ARM ABOUT HER BODY AND  
DRAWS HER TO HIM. SHE RESISTS A LITTLE.

Tell me what it is. I think know. *Do I know?*

**Gabriel**

Remember those moments of ecstasy.  
Forget these words, so dull, so cold,  
none tender enough to be your name!

**Gretta (to herself)**

How can I speak through the chill in my heart?  
A song draws me back over snow, through the rain,  
through the cold of the years to Galway....

DISSOLVE TO SCENE 1

**Scene 1**

THE MISSES MORKAN'S HOUSE—TWO FLOORS OF THE HOUSE ARE VISIBLE. ON THE GROUND FLOOR: A FRONT HALLWAY AND DOOR, DOWN STAGE LEFT, A STAIRWAY LEADING FROM THE HALLWAY TO THE UPPER LEVEL, A PANTRY UNDER THE STAIRS. ON THE SECOND FLOOR: A ROOM FOR LADIES' COATS AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS, A LARGE CENTRAL HALL WITH LARGE DOUBLE DOORS OPENING INWARD INTO THE DRAWING ROOM WITH A TABLE HOLDING REFRESHMENTS. A DOOR TO A BACK ROOM, RIGHT, WINDOWS, RIGHT, ON BOTH LEVELS. A PARTY IS IN PROGRESS. THERE ARE QUADRILLES IN THE DRAWING ROOM AND GUESTS MILLING ABOUT ON THE UPPER LEVEL. LILY, THE YOUNG MAID, ENTERS AND BUSTLES ABOUT, STRAIGHTENING AND DUSTING. SHE OPENS THE DOORS TO THE DRAWING ROOM AND ENTERS FOR A MOMENT. THE DOORBELL RINGS, AND LILY EXITS THE DRAWING ROOM, SHUTTING THE DOOR BEHIND HER, AND QUICKLY DESCENDS THE STAIRS TO ANSWER THE DOOR. LILY ADMITS MR. BROWNE AND TAKES HIS COAT.

Mister Browne.

Lily

I hope I'm not too late.

Browne

Oh no, sir.

Lily

Will there be music?

Browne

Oh yes.

Lily

Dancing?

Browne

Of course.

Lily

I'm the man for the ladies!

Browne

BROWNE CLIMBS THE STAIRS. HE OPENS THE DOORS TO THE DRAWING ROOM. THERE ARE EXCLAMATIONS AND APPLAUSE AT HIS ENTRANCE. LILY EXITS.

THE DOORS SHUT BEHIND BROWNE. LILY ENTERS. SHE STANDS QUITE STILL, LOST IN THOUGHT. THE DRAWING ROOM DOOR OPENS AND KATE COMES OUT, LEANING OVER THE BANISTER.

Lily, Lily, Lily!

Kate

**1st Man, 2nd Man, 1st Woman, 2nd Woman**

Tonight is always a great affair,  
with music, the Misses Morkan  
and their Christmas cheer.

GRADUALLY THE GUESTS FILTER INTO THE HALL AND JOIN IN THE SINGING.

**Men**

Everybody who knows them comes—

**1st Woman**

Old friends of the family—

**2nd Man**

Freddy Malins and his Mum.

**Kate**

Lily, has Freddy arrived? I *do* hope he's not tipsy. I wouldn't wish *for worlds* that any of Mary Jane's pupils should see him under the influence.

SHE GOES OUT.

**Men**

Everybody who knows them comes—

**1st Woman**

D'Arcy the *tenore* is here.

**2nd Woman**

Lovely voice, lovely voice!

**Chorus**

All Dublin is raving, all Dublin is raving about him.

**2nd Woman**

Julia's choir—

**3rd Woman**

—And Aunt Kate's pupils,—

**1st Woman**

—even some of Mary Jane's pupils—

**2nd Man**

—and nephew Gabriel and his Gretta.

**Kate**

Where is that boy? It's after ten. What could be keeping him?

**Chorus**

Tonight is always a great affair.  
For years it has gone off in splendid style,  
with music, with dancing, tonight—

THE GUESTS RETURN TO THE DRAWING ROOM. THE DOOR BELL RINGS. LILY RUSHES TO ANSWER IT. LILY ADMITS GABRIEL AND GRETTA. GABRIEL IS TALL AND STOUT, WITH GILT-RIM GLASSES AND GLOSSY BLACK HAIR. GRETTA WEARS A PANELED SKIRT. HER BRONZE HAIR IS GATHERED ATOP HER HEAD.

Lily

Oh, Mister Con-a-roy, Miss Kate and Miss Julia thought you were never coming.

Gabriel

Miss Kate and Miss Julia forgot that my wife takes three mortal hours to dress herself!

Lily

Miss Kate, here's Mrs. Con-a-roy.

Kate

You must be perished alive, my dear. My favorite nephew, Gabriel.

Lily

Is it snowing again, Mister Con-a-roy?

Gabriel

Yes, oh yes. They say we haven't had snow like this for thirty years, thirty years. Indeed, the snow is general all over Ireland.

LILY TAKES THEIR OVERCOATS AND EXITS.

Kate

You won't take a cab back to Monkstown tonight?

Gabriel

No, tonight will be a special occasion, a night to be long remembered. We had quite a cab ride last year. Cab windows rattling all the way and the east wind blowing in. Very jolly it was. Gretta caught a dreadful cold. No, tonight we take a room in Dublin's finest: the Hotel Gresham.

Gretta

Oh, don't you mind him Aunt Kate. He really is an awful bother. You'll never guess what he makes me wear now: galoshes! Whenever it's wet under foot I must put on galoshes. Tonight he wanted me to put them on but I wouldn't. Next thing, he'll buy me a diving suit!

GABRIEL LAUGHS NERVOUSLY AND PATS HIS TIE. KATE LAUGHS, BUT THE SMILE SOON FADES.

Kate

And the children, you're not anxious about them?

Gretta

Oh, not for a night. Besides, Bessie will look after them.

Kate

What a comfort it is to have a girl like that, one you can depend on! I don't know what has come over that Lily lately. She's not the girl she was at all.

THEY DISAPPEAR INTO THE POWDER ROOM. LILY REAPPEARS.

Gabriel

Tell me, Lily, do you still go to school?

**Lily**

Oh no, sir. I'm done schooling this year and more.

**Gabriel**

I suppose we'll be going to your wedding one of these fine days with your young man.

**Lily**

(bitterly) The men that is now is only all palaver and what they can get out of you.

GABRIEL AVERTS HIS EYES. KATE LEADS GRETTA INTO THE DRAWING ROOM, CLAPPING HER HANDS EXCITEDLY.

**Kate**

Quadrilles, quadrilles!

GABRIEL KICKS OFF HIS GALOSHES, REVEALING PATENT LEATHER SHOES. HE FLICKS AT THEM WITH HIS MUFFLER. DISCONCERTED, HE TAKES A COIN OUT OF HIS POCKET.

**Gabriel**

Oh Lily, it's Christmas time, isn't it? Just...here's a little...

**Lily**

Oh no, sir! No, really, I wouldn't take it!

**Gabriel**

Christmas time! Christmas time!

GABRIEL TROTS TO THE STAIRS. HE WAVES HIS HAND TO HER IN DEPRECATION AS SHE RUNS OFF. A MAN'S HIGH-PITCHED LAUGHTER IS HEARD FROM OUTSIDE. THE BELL RINGS ONCE. KATE REAPPEARS ON THE LANDING.

**Kate**

Be a good fellow Gabriel and see if it's Freddy, and don't let him up if he's soused. I'm sure he's soused. I'm sure he is!

SHE EXITS. THE BELL RINGS AGAIN. GABRIEL ANSWERS THE DOOR, ADMITTING FREDDY MALINS. HIS HEAVY EYELIDS AND TOUSLED HAIR GIVE HIM A SLEEPY APPEARANCE. HE IS QUITE DRUNK.

**Gabriel**

Freddy, how good to see you. You're looking in fine shape. The world of enterprise surely agrees with you.

GABRIEL TAKES FREDDY'S COAT AND HANGS IT IN THE COATROOM.

**Freddy**

Is my mum here?

**Gabriel**

Indeed she is.

FREDDY STRAIGHTENS HIS HAIR.

**Freddy**

Have you heard, my friend the one about the gent, who, in the way of exiting O'Kelly's, finds himself face to the dust in the gutter?



**Gabriel**

Now my good man, let's fix you a good glass of lemonade.

**Freddy**

Up comes a pig and parks right by his side. Not wishing to offend, he offers the porker a seat, when loud and clear, from 'cross the street, a lady passing by is heard to say: "You can tell a man who boozes by the company he chooses!" (laughs) So the pig gets up and walks away!

HE BREAKS INTO HIGH-PITCHED, BRONCHITIC LAUGHTER WHILE RUBBING HIS EYE WITH HIS KNUCKLES.

Did you hear that now? The pig walked away, the pig!

GABRIEL TAKES FREDDY'S ARM. FREDDY SHAKES HIM OFF.

**Gabriel**

A glass of lemonade will buck you up.

GABRIEL TAKES FREDDY'S ARM AND PILOTS HIM SLOWLY UP THE STAIRS. GABRIEL FIXES FREDDY'S GLASS.

**Freddy**

"You can tell a man who boozes by the company he chooses!"

GABRIEL GIVES FREDDY HIS LEMONADE AND THEY ENTER THE DRAWING ROOM. THE DOOR SHUTS. THE SCENE FADES.

**Scene 2**

THE STAGE IS DARK. MARY JANE'S CONSERVATORY PIECE IS HEARD. WHEN THE LIGHTS COME UP, GRETТА STANDS IN A GROUP WITH MR. D'ARCY. GABRIEL STANDS RIGHT, OBVIOUSLY PAYING NO ATTENTION TO MARY JANE. MOLLY IVORS APPROACHES HIM. GABRIEL GLANCES ABOUT THROUGHOUT THE CONVERSATION.

**Molly Ivors**

Mr. Conroy, will you come for an excursion to the Aran Isles this summer? We're going to stay a whole month. Mr. Clancy is coming, and Mr. Kilkelly, and dear Mr. Kerrigan, and Kathleen Kearney.

**Gabriel**

The fact is, I have just arranged to go for a cycling tour of France and Belgium.

**Molly Ivors**

To France and Belgium?

**Gabriel**

To France and Belgium—

**Molly Ivors**

—instead of visiting your own land?

**Gabriel**

—to keep in touch with the languages.

**Molly Ivors**

And haven't you your own language?

**Molly Ivors**

Mr. Conroy, haven't you your own language to keep in touch with?

Mr. Conroy, isn't Gretta, your own wife, from Galway?

Mr. Conroy—and haven't you your own land to visit, your own people, your own land?

**Gabriel**

Miss Ivors, Irish is not *my* language

Miss Ivors, Miss Ivors.

I'm sick of my land, I'm sick of my country, I'm sick of my own people,

Sick of it! Sick of it!

**Molly Ivors**

Why?

SEVERAL PEOPLE LOOK OVER.

Why? Of course, you've no answer. West Briton!

SHE WALKS AWAY. GRETТА APPROACHES GABRIEL.

**Gretta**

I'm trying to get Mr. D'Arcy to sing. He's full of conceit, I think. What row had you with MOLLY IVORS?

**Gabriel**

She wanted me to go for a trip to the west of Ireland, and I said I wouldn't.

**Gretta**

GRETТА CLASPS HER HANDS EXCITEDLY AND GIVES A LITTLE JUMP.

Oh, do let us go.

THE LIGHTS SOFTEN. GRETTA IS DRAWN INTO MEMORY.

On Hallow Eve in Galway, we used to play old-fashioned charms. We'd steal a head of cabbage, a silver head of cabbage, then through the moonlight run to a fallow field. I'd eat that cabbage, eyes wide to a mirror in hand, hoping to catch the face of my husband to be.

THE LIGHTS GRADUALLY COME UP.

I'd love to see Galway again.

**Gabriel (curtly)**

You can go if you like.

SHE LOOKS AT HIM, TURNS AND GOES.

APPLAUSE FROM THE GUESTS AS MARY JANE'S PIECE CONCLUDES.

**Kate**

Mister D'Arcy, will you sing one of your operatic airs, after dinner perhaps? I would love to hear "*Di quelle pira.*"

**D'Arcy.**

I have a dreadful cold, Miss Morkan, and must decline tonight.

A MURMUR OF EXCITEMENT. MR. BROWN ADVANCES FROM THE DOOR, ESCORTING JULIA, WHO LEANS UPON HIS ARM, SMILING AND HANGING HER HEAD. HER HAIR IS GRAY, HER FACE DARK, AND, THOUGH HER CARRIAGE IS ERECT, SHE MOVES WITH SOME DIFFICULTY. HER SLOW EYES AND PARTED LIPS GIVE HER THE APPEARANCE OF NOT KNOWING WHERE SHE IS AND WHERE SHE IS GOING. AN IRREGULAR MUSKETRY OF APPLAUSE ESCORTS HER AS FAR AS THE PIANO. THE APPLAUSE DIES AS JULIA TURNS TO FACE THE AUDIENCE. SHE HOLDS WITH SOME DIFFICULTY A LARGE, LEATHER-COVERED BOOK.

**Kate**

Ah, it's time for Julia's old favorite: "Arrayed for the Bridal." Do you know it?

**D'Arcy**

I do; (aside) there are other chestnuts I'd rather roast.

**Kate**

What's that, you'd like to toast? But wait, she's about to begin.

**Julia**

*Arrayed for the bridal, in beauty behold her,  
A white wreath entwineth a forehead more fair.  
I envy the zephyrs that softly enfold her  
And play with a lock of her beautiful hair.*

GREAT APPLAUSE. FREDDY CLAPS LOUDLY AFTER THE OTHERS HAVE CEASED. HE STANDS UP SUDDENLY AND HURRIES ACROSS TO JULIA, SEIZES HER HAND AND HOLDS IT IN BOTH HANDS, SHAKING IT WHEN WORDS FAIL HIM.

**Freddy**

I was just telling my mother, I never heard you sing so... so well. Would you believe that now? That's the truth. I never heard your voice sound so clear, so clear, so fresh, never!

BROWNE, LAUGHING, EXTENDS HIS OPEN HAND TOWARD JULIA.

Thomas, *The Lass of Galway*, p. 12

**Browne**

Miss Julia Morkan, my latest discovery!

**Freddy**

Well, Mister Browne, if you're serious you might make a worse discovery. All I can say is, I never heard her sing half so well.

**Browne**

I think her voice has greatly improved.

**Julia**

Thirty years ago I hadn't a bad voice as voices go.

**Kate**

I have often told my sister that she was simply thrown away in that choir. Slaving there, night and day, six o'clock on Christmas morning! And all for what?

**Mary Jane**

For the honour of God, Aunt Kate?

**Kate**

I know all about the honour of God, but I think it's not at all honorable for the Pope to turn the women out of the choirs that have slaved there all their lives and put little whippersnappers in their place.

**Mary Jane**

Now Aunt Kate, you're giving scandal to Mister Brown, who's of the other persuasion.

**Kate**

Oh, I don't question the Pope's being right. I'm only a stupid old woman and wouldn't presume to do such a thing.

**Kate**

But there's such a thing as common everyday politeness and gratitude. And if I were in Julia's place, I'd tell that Father Healey straight up to his face

**Mary Jane**

And besides, we really are *very* hungry. And when hungry, we are quarrelsome, so that we had better go. We had better go to supper and finish the discussion afterwards.

THE GUESTS MOVE TO THE DINNER TABLE, WHERE THE LIGHTS DIM. GABRIEL MOVES TO THE WINDOW IN THE HALL, WHERE THE LIGHTS GRADUALLY COME UP.

### Scene 3

GABRIEL STANDS AT THE WINDOW, GAZING OUT.

**Gabriel**

How cool it must be outside! How pleasant it would be to walk out alone by the river or through the park.

HE RETRIEVES HIS NOTES FROM HIS POCKET AND LOOKS THEM OVER.

Hospitality...sad memories...the Three Graces....

*"Ladies and Gentlemen, It has fallen to my lot this evening to perform a pleasing task for which my poor powers are all too inadequate. We live in a skeptical, thought-tormented age. I fear that the new generation will lack those qualities of humanity, humour, hospitality, which belonged to an older day.*

*"Listening tonight to the great composers of the past, it seems to me that we are living in a less spacious age. Let us hope that in gatherings such as this we shall cherish in our hearts the memory of those dead and gone great ones, whose fame the world will not willingly let die. Were we to brood upon them, we could not find the heart to go on bravely with our work upon the living.*

HE BECOMES MORE ANIMATED AND CAUGHT UP.

*"Therefore, I will not linger on the past, I'll not let any gloomy moralizing intrude upon us. We are gathered together for a brief moment from the bustle and rush of our everyday routine. We are met here in camaraderie, as the guests of, what shall I call them, the Three Graces of the Dublin musical world!*

*"For when I view them in turn: our chief hostess, Miss Kate, whose good heart, whose too-good heart has become a by-word among us. Or her sister, gifted with perennial youth, whose singing was a sweet revelation to us all. Last but not least, I consider our youngest hostess: talented, cheerful, and the best of nieces, I confess, Ladies and Gentleman, I confess: I do not know to whom I would award the prize!"*

HE FINISHES WITH A GRAND GESTURE, LOOKS ABOUT SHEEPISHLY, THEN LAPSES INTO HIS EARLIER POSE AT THE WINDOW.

How much more pleasant it would be by the river, through the park, more pleasant than at the supper table.

**Kate (offstage)**

Where is Gabriel? Where on earth is Gabriel? There's everybody waiting in there, stage to let, and nobody to carve the goose!

**Gabriel**

Here I am Aunt Kate, ready to carve a flock of geese, if necessary!

HE HURRIES OUT.

Scene 4

A LARGE DINING TABLE WITH THE GUESTS SEATED, IN THE LAST STAGES OF DINNER. NUTS AND SWEETS ARE BEING PASSED.

**Browne**

Why don't they play the grand old operas now? *Dinorah, Lucrezia Borgia*? They can't get the voices to sing them, that's why!

**D'Arcy**

I presume there are singers today as good as those of yesteryear.

**Browne**

Where are they?

**D'Arcy**

In London, Paris, Milan. I suppose Caruso, for one, is quite as good, if not better, than any of the men of your Golden Age.

**Mary Jane**

Oh I'd give anything, anything to hear Caruso.

**D'Arcy**

Quite as good or better. Quite as good.

**Browne**

Maybe so, but I doubt it. Maybe so, but I doubt it strongly.

**Kate**

For me there was only one tenor, but I suppose none of you ever heard of him. His name was Parkinson.

**D'Arcy**

I've never heard of him.

**Kate**

He had the sweetest voice, the purest tenor that ever was put into a man's throat, a beautiful, pure, sweet, mellow, *English* tenor!

**Mary Jane**

I've never heard of him.

**Kate**

...sweet, mellow, beautiful, an English tenor!

**D'Arcy**

Surely you would agree, Miss Morkan, that such qualities are more descriptive of an Irish tenor.

**Browne**

I remember hearing of old Parkinson, but he's too far back for me.

**Freddy**

I heard, at the Gaiety Pantomime, one of the best tenor voices, one of the best tenor voices that I have ever heard, and that's the honest truth.

**Freddy**

Have you heard him? ...because I'd be curious to hear your opinion. I think he has a grand voice.

**D'Arcy (stiffly)**

I do not frequent the Gaiety Pantomime. A grand voice would not be heard, could not be heard at the Gaiety.

**Browne**

It takes Teddy to find out the really good things.

**Mary Jane**  
Oh, I'd give anything to hear Caruso.

**Kate**  
For me, there was only one tenor, Parkinson, a pure, sweet, mellow, English tenor.

**D'Arcy**  
Singers are as good today, if not better, but sweetness is to be found only in the Irish tenor.

**Freddy**  
One of the best tenor voices, a grand voice. Campanini, Trebelli, etc..

**Browne**  
I remember the old Italian tenors: Campanini, Ravelli, the great Trebelli. Those were the days when there was something like singing to be heard in Dublin.

LILY ENTERS WITH A FLAMING PUDDING.

**Mary Jane**  
How lovely!

**Kate**  
The pudding!

**D'Arcy**  
Ah!

**Freddy**  
Hurrah!

**Browne**  
Magnificent!

**Gabriel**  
I never eat sweets. Celery is quite sweet enough for me.

LILY CONTINUES TO BUSTLE ABOUT THE TABLE, THEN EXITS.

**Freddy**  
I have heard that celery is a capital thing for the blood.

Freddy goes to Mt. Melleray next week.

**Gabriel**

To take the cure?

**Kate**

How bracing the air is there!

**Gretta**

And how hospitable the monks are.

**Mary Jane**

They never ask for a penny.

**D'Arcy**

**Browne**  
Do you mean a chap can put up there, live off the fat of the land, and come away without paying?

Oh, most leave a donation.

**Mary Jane**

**Browne**  
I wish we had an institution like that in our church.

**Julia**  
The monks never speak. They get up at two in the morning. They sleep in their coffins.

**Browne**

Why, on earth?

**Julia**

They are trying to make up for all the sins committed by all the sinners in the world outside.

**Browne**

I like that idea, but wouldn't a good spring bed do quite as well?

**Julia**

The coffin, Mr. Browne is to remind them of their last end.

**Kate/Mary Jane/Gretta/D'Arcy/Freddy/Browne/Gabriel**

The monks never speak. They get up at two in the morning. They sleep in their coffins to make up for the sins of the world, to remind them of their last end.

**Julia**

...their last end.

THERE IS AN UNCOMFORTABLE SILENCE. THE MORKANS ALL LOOK DOWN AT THE TABLECLOTH. GABRIEL PUSHES BACK HIS CHAIR AND STANDS UP.

**Gabriel**

*"Ladies and Gentlemen..."*

GABRIEL'S VOICE IS IMMEDIATELY DROWNED OUT BY THE ORCHESTRA. HIS SPEECH CONTINUES IN GESTURE AS THE SCENE FADES SLOWLY.

## **Interlude I**



## Scene 5

THE STAGE IS DARK. D'ARCY'S VOICE IS HEARD FROM THE CLOSED DRAWING ROOM.

**D'Arcy**

*Go back from these windows  
and likewise this hall,  
lest dapping in the sea  
you should find your downfall.*

THE LIGHTS COME UP SLOWLY. GRETTA IS DISCOVERED STANDING ON THE STAIRS, LISTENING.

*Remember, oh remember,  
on that night in my father's hall,  
when you stole away my fond love,  
and that was worst of all.*

**Gabriel**

What grace, this womanly mystery shadowed on the stair!

**D'Arcy**

*If you be the Lass of Galway,  
as I trow you are not she,  
Oh give me some tokens  
that passed 'tween you and me.*

**Gabriel**

Were I a painter, I would paint her thus,  
Were I a painter, I would call it: "Distant music."

**Gabriel**

Like distant music,  
moments of our life together  
burst like stars upon my memory,  
like distant music.

Birds chattering in the ivy.  
A sunny web of curtains  
along the shimmering floor,  
like music.

Your first letter by my teacup,  
scented still with the seal of your kiss.  
The first touch of your body, strange, perfumed,  
like distant music.

Moments, like the tender fire of stars,  
like distant music, break upon my memory.

**D'Arcy**

*Do you remember the rings we exchanged  
on that night of love within?  
Mine of gold was... was new...was true and  
trusty,  
yours was false and made of tin.*

*Go back from these windows  
and likewise this hall,  
lest dapping in the sea  
you should find your downfall.*

**Gabriel**

Gretta, remember those moments of ecstasy,  
remember, remember.  
Forget these words, so dull, so cold,  
none tender enough to be your name.

When the others have gone,  
in the hotel alone,  
will I hear desire in your voice?  
Will I see desire in your eyes?

THE FRONT DOOR OPENS AND MARY JANE, KATE AND JULIA ENTER, LAUGHING NOISILY, FROM OUTSIDE. GABRIEL HOLDS UP HIS HAND FOR THE OTHERS TO BE SILENT AND POINTS TO THE STAIRS WHERE GRETТА STANDS.

**D'Arcy**

*Oh, the rain beats on my yellow locks  
and the dew wets me still;  
My babe lies cold ...*

THE LIGHTS BRIGHTEN AS MARY JANE MOVES TO THE STAIRS.

**Mary Jane**

Oh, it's Mister D'Arcy singing, and he wouldn't sing all night,  
I'll get him to sing a song before he goes. Oh, what a pity. Is he coming down, Gretta?

D'ARCY HURRIEDLY COMES OUT OF THE BACK ROOM, FOLLOWED BY MARY JANE.  
HE BRUSHES PAST GRETТА AND DESCENDS THE STAIRS.

Mr. D'Arcy, it's downright mean of you to break off like that when we were in raptures listening to you.

**D'Arcy (roughly)**

Can't you see I'm hoarse as a crow?

D'ARCY MOVES QUICKLY TO THE PANTRY TO GET HIS COAT. GABRIEL FOLLOWS HIM.

**Julia**

It's the weather.

**Kate**

Yes, everyone has colds, everyone, everyone.

**Mary Jane**

They say we've not had snow like this for thirty years.

**Julia (sadly)**

I love the look of snow.

**Gretta**

Mr. D'Arcy, what was the name of that song you were singing?

**D'Arcy**

"The Lass of Galway," but I couldn't remember it properly. Do you know it?

"The Lass of Galway..."

**Gretta**

GABRIEL RETURNS

**Gabriel**

Well, good night, Aunt Kate, and thanks for a pleasant evening.

**Kate**

Good night, Gabriel.

**D'Arcy**

Good night to you all.

**Kate**

Mr. D'Arcy, good night. Good night, dear Gretta.

**Mary Jane/Kate/Julia**

May a smooth road lead you to your door.

**Kate**

Good night, all. Safe home.

GABRIEL GRETТА AND D'ARCY EXIT. KATE SHUTS AND BOLTS THE DOOR.

## Interlude II

**Scene 6**

THE HOTEL ROOM. THE ROOM IS DARK. THE LIGHTS COME UP ON THE SCENE SET AS IN THE PROLOGUE. GABRIEL STANDS BY THE CHEST WITH HIS BACK TO THE LIGHT. GRETTA FACES HIM. THEY ARE IN THE SAME POSITIONS AS IN THE PROLOGUE, SIX MEASURES BEFORE REHEARSAL NO. FIVE.

**Gabriel**

HE PUTS HIS HANDS ON HER HAIR, STROKING IT LIGHTLY.  
My dear what are you thinking? Tell me what it is. I think I know.

HE TAKES HER HEAD IN HIS HANDS, THEN SLIPS AN ARM ABOUT HER BODY AND DRAWS HER TO HIM. SHE RESISTS A LITTLE.

**Gretta**

Oh, I am thinking of that song, "The Lass of Galway!"

SHE BREAKS LOOSE FROM HIS GRASP AND RUNS TO THE BED, THROWING HER ARMS ACROSS THE BED-RAIL AND HIDING HER FACE. GABRIEL STANDS STOCK-STILL FOR A MOMENT.

**Gabriel**

Why does that make you cry?

HE MOVES TO THE BED.

Why, Gretta?

SHE RAISES HER HEAD AND DRIES HER EYES WITH THE BACK OF HER HAND.

**Gretta**

I remember a person long ago  
who used to sing that song.  
He was a young boy I used to know.  
His name was Michael, Michael Furey.  
He was a delicate boy.  
I can see him so plainly!  
Such eyes he has—big dark eyes!—  
and such an expression in them, an expression!  
We used to go walking in Galway...

**Gabriel**

That's why you wanted to go to Galway! You've not forgotten him. Have you been seeing him?

**Gretta**

He is dead. He died at seventeen. Isn't it horrible to die so young?

**Gabriel**

I suppose you were in love with this Michael?

GABRIEL TURNS AWAY AGAIN SLIGHTLY, BUT CONTINUES TO CARESS HER HAND.  
GRETTA LOOKS AWAY AGAIN TOWARD THE WINDOW.

**Gretta**

It was winter. I was leaving my grandmother's house  
to come here to the convent. He was in decline, they said.  
The night before I left, I was in my room packing.

MICHAEL FUREY'S VOICE IS HEARD IN THE DISTANCE, APPROACHING.

**Michael Furey**

*Oh lie down, you foolish one,  
oh lie down and sleep,  
For 'tis long ago my foolish locks  
were wetting in the deep.*

**Gretta**

I heard gravel thrown against the window.  
The window, I cannot see out of the window.  
Michael?

MICHAEL APPEARS, DIMLY LIT. THE  
SLANTING OUTLINES OF A WALL  
APPEAR, A TREE AT THE UPSTAGE END.

I will come down, Michael.  
I will come down to the garden.

**Gretta**

Go home, go home at once, Michael Furey. You will get your death in the rain!

**Michael**

Let it rain. Let it rain my death.

**Gretta**

I will be back in the summer. You will be better then.

**Michael**

I do not want to live.

**Gretta**

Think of your singing!

**Michael**

I do not want to sing. I want to walk with you as we have always walked, in the country.

**Gretta**

Michael, you're shivering!

**Michael**

I want to walk as we have always walked, in the summer morning.

**Gretta**

Michael, go home, go home at once. Go home, Go  
home, etc..

**Michael**

Walk with me, Gretta. Walk, walk, walk with  
me, Gretta!

SHE TURNS FROM THE WINDOW. MICHAEL, THE WALL AND THE TREE FADE.

**Gretta**

When I was only a week in the convent, he... I think he died for me.

SHE STOPS, CHOKED WITH EMOTION.

Oh, the day I heard that, that he was dead!

SHE FLINGS HERSELF FACE DOWN ON THE BED. GABRIEL HOLDS HER HAND FOR A TIME. HE LETS HER HAND FALL AND QUIETLY WALKS DOWN STAGE. HE WALKS BACK AND FORTH A BIT, THEN LOOKS FRONT, AS IF OUT OF A WINDOW.

**Gabriel**

How many nights has she lain beside me,  
his dark eyes locked in her heart?  
How many nights has she listened to his light voice...

How lovely she would have been then, how lovely,  
how lovely would she have been  
in her first girlish beauty!

Is she still beautiful?  
I fear this is not the face  
for which Michael Furey braved death.

He died for her; the boy died for her sake.  
When have I felt such a feeling?  
When have I felt such a love?

Better to pass boldly, blaze into that other world,  
in the full glory of some passion,  
than fade and wither dimly with age.

GABRIEL TURNS FROM THE WINDOW, LOOKING AT THE SLEEPING GRETТА, THEN AWAY AGAIN. THERE ARE SEVERAL LIGHT, RANDOM TAPS AT THE WINDOW PANE. GRETТА RISES FROM THE BED. SHE JOINS GABRIEL AT THE WINDOW, BUT DOES NOT FACE HIM.

**Epilogue**

**Gretta/Gabriel**

Snow is falling. Snow is falling,  
falling on every part of the dark central plain,  
on the treeless hills, falling  
softly on the bog of Allen, softly falling  
into the dark, mutinous Shannon waves.

**Gabriel**

Snow is falling on the lonely churchyard  
on the hill where Michael Furey lies.  
Snow, thickly drifted, is falling  
on the crooked crosses and headstones,  
on the spears of the little gate,  
on the barren thorns.

**Gretta/Gabriel**

Snow is falling, falling faintly through the universe,  
faintly falling through the universe,  
faintly falling,  
falling,  
falling ....