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Camden- a one act play about an artist's drive to stage a London Irish art exhibition

Brendan- 35-45. Irish accent

Barry 35-45- English accent

Female various – 2 actresses needed

Male Various – 1 actor needed

Grove Park- the story of two Irish nurses in wartime London who were decorated for bravery

Mary- Early- Mid 20s Irish

Aileen -Early 20s Irish

Bert- Mid 20s Londoner

Martin- Mid 20s Londoner

Cable Street- the story of how a family the Irish Dockers came to the aid of the Jewish community in the East End in the 1930s

Dessie- Early -Mid 20s Londoner- Second generation Irish

Jim- Early 20s Londoner - Second generation Irish

Maureen- 40 ish Irish

Ruth- 20 Jewish

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY SOME OF THE CHARACTERS ARE NOT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE VIEWS OF GREEN CURTAIN THEATRE.**

Contents

Camden_Brendan	2
Camden _ Barry	2
Camden_ Female Various	3
Camden_ Male Various.....	4
Grove Park_Bert.....	5
Grove Park -Aileen	5
Grove Park _ Mary	6
Cable Street _ Dessie	7
Cable Street _ Jim	7
Cable Street _ Maureen.....	8
Cable Street _ Ruth.....	9

Camden_Brendan

In an Irish Accent

I was in a pub, not me local. A quiet drink on me own. No one knew me there and after a few minutes I reached for the sketchpad. The locals had great faces. I wanted to get some of those lines down on paper .I was trying to draw without anybody noticing me but an old boy, he cottoned on. He knew what I was doing. I put the sketchpad away Came over. "Are you drawing me?" says he. I couldn't deny it. "I am." says I. "Let me see?" Says he. I took the pad out, found the page and "How much do you want for it?" says he. "It is not for sale" says I. "Ah now come on," says he. "There is a price for everything." He was a pensioner. Eking out halves of Guinness in the corner with a bunch of cronies. I looked at it again, He was right. It was a good drawing. One of me best. I caught something - you know. "Ah - you have it" says I. The page came easy outa the book. "I would not hear of it!" says he. Getting all superior about it and pulling out a handful of coins. "I insist" says I getting more superior. The pub had gone quiet. Everyone's watching us. I presented the portrait to him. "Keep your money" says I. He holds the drawing in his hands. Carefully. Like a new born chick fallen out of a nest and walks it around the room, showing the regulars. "He really caught you there Pat", says one, "A great likeness", says another. "That will become a family heirloom", says another. I'm swelling with feckin pride by this time...it comes before a fall. Then he does something I will never forget it and it's the story of my life on this earth. He takes the drawing, and in full view of everyone in the pub (*Danny re-enacts the actions*) he folds it in half, scoring along a new edge, And then he folds it again, And he folds it again punching it flat.

Camden_Barry

In an English accent

I am not an immigrant. I am only a witness to it. A witness to my father and mothers pain-their dislocation, their shame, their distress. I lived in a house where my mother spent her whole life wanting to go home. Back to Kilkenny. The whole family packed up sold the house and left once. It did not work out and eventually returned to London. Crying fits. Tantrums. Summer holidays in Ireland every year and tears on the boat back to London. It leaves its mark. Until I met you Danny, I thought that it was the job of "my" generation - the second generation, to document and mythologise my father and mother's immigrant generation before they trundle off

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into oblivion. You know - my school was 80 per cent London Irish. It was a catholic school in west London and every summer we'd ask each other "Are you going home this year?" to a country we were not born in and many never lived in? That myth of return was passed down to us. Ireland always had some kind of mysterious hold - some kind of curse maybe on our lives

My grandmother - in Co. Kilkenny, found a battery chicken. It had fallen out of the cages of a lorry on its way to slaughter. When she found it, it was battered and bruised and lying in a ditch. Barely alive. It was fat and anaemic. Lots of bald patches all over it. Not very healthy looking. It was reared to do one thing and it had lived out its expected life. We called it Big Chicken. My grandmother saved its life - or maybe I should say - gave it a life - in her garden. You would think that an incarcerated chicken, that had never seen daylight or ever roosted or scratched about in a garden, wouldn't know any better than to just sit and die. But after the initial shock of falling off the back of a lorry, it began to find its instincts again - got back the use of its legs and walked about the garden - pecking at the ground, looking for insects, spreading its wings. When it wasn't so heavy, it even began to roost in the trees. That always surprised me. You sometimes hear people say. "They don't know any better". "What they never had - they will never miss". But I knew that was not true. This chicken still had all its instincts. They were just latent. Supressed. Denied.

That chicken reminded me of my dad - he brought up three children and kept a roof over our heads by the sweat of his brow - carrying all those poems all those voices, rising up from within him with no way to understand what they were. Suppressed. Denied

Camden_Female Various

In an American accent

Barry has told me all about Irish artists in London. I never knew there was such a thing. What with all those "Troubles" that were going on. I love The Beatles of course. They were Irish - right? Lennon, McCartney Great music. "Give Ireland back to the Irish" - Paul McCartney? That was banned in the UK right? I'd never heard of Irish "art". Never even imagined there was such a thing. It's funny - I know Joyce and Wilde and Shaw and Yeats - Seamus Heaney - great poets. The Clancy Brothers, the Dubliners and The Pogues - great music and then Riverdance -Michael Flatley - he was from South Side Chicago - Flatley.

In a posh English accent

I think Daddy has enough artists at the moment. But you can always send him a letter and ask him. He is on his yacht in the Med with my brother Rupert. Do you know Rupert?

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What do you think of the exhibition? A private collector bought the entire show! Can you believe it? He is SO hot! Stefan Huntsbury-Thompson - studied in Japan and Berlin. We love it. So neo-conceptual Very pre-post -modern.

In an Irish accent

And I am very taken by your painting. Myth of Return. The Irish monks in the boat. The water is God's beard and his eye lights up the moon and the stars and God's breath fills the sail. I love the title. Myth of Return It is so true. You can't go back, really, can you? It's powerful. How long did it take you to paint that picture?

Camden_Male Various

English- well spoken

You see - I'm a Time Lord. I've seen the ends of the universe and the beginning of time. Have you ever found yourself in a place where the laws of "everything you ever understood"-have been turned upside down? Nothing is what it seems. Reality and fantasy are no longer two states of mind but one. Our galactic cores are influencing the very genetics of all life on our planet. We are lining up with a black hole at the centre of the galaxy. Our perception of who and what we are, where we have come from and where we are goings about to take a giant leap forward as we awaken to a new era and cleanse the earthly hell that we blindly all live in. You understand me don't you Danny? (*He pulls Danny close to him and stares him in the face*) Can you see the hell? Can you see it?! Danny.

Irish accent

I see the Oak there. That's our local all right. That's Big John, Little John, Mick. Softy, Lofty, Quinn, Donkey Dave...Ha. They are all there. Has he done me? Oh look he has. I don't believe it. I should feel honoured really. And there's Danny - on the floor there. And that's a crucifixion. And that looks like Danny hanging from one of the crosses. I think he is Jesus. And that looks like Danny at the last supper. I never thought they were like this.

Grove Park_Bert

(Rolls and lights cigarette, spitting out stray strands of tobacco) Out with the night watch last night. Had to promise to stay well out of it - promise?- Bloody 'ell, had to nearly get down on me 'ands and knees before they took pity. Funny that, never thought this useless piece o' flesh would be so useful. (Hits leg) But it was the leg that did it. Can't say no to a bloody cripple. (Long draw on cigarette) Getting there was a right nightmare - almost bounced me head out of the ambulance the roads had so many craters... Nearly bloody caught it we did up Shoreditch way. Thought that was me done for....Got me story though. (Laughs) 'ave to 'and it to that woman driving the ambulance and her mate - soon as they got news about the bombin', they were drivin' hell for leather down the Mile End Road towards the scene. Leapt out like they were on fire, carrying stretchers.

Bloody carnage it was. Direct hit on couple of 'ouses. Smoke, dust, bricks, broken glass everywhere. Two big 'ouses, reduced to a pile of rubbish about six feet high. Police, wardens, firemen - swarming all over the place. Survivors. Sitting on piles of bricks and wood. Looking stunned. Two mile stares. Some totally covered in blood.

Out the corner of my eye, saw a little girl, just standing there. Dressed in filthy dusty old nightdress. Four or five. One little finger in her mouth. Other little finger holding on to this ragged blanket. She was cradling something in it - thought it was a baby for a second - tried to signal to Ruth - then I realised it was a little puppy. Terrier - whimpering. She started stroking it, covered in dust she was. From head to toe. Then she saw me. Funny that, isn't it? Stare at someone and they always notice. She looked at my face. Looked at my leg. Really looked at it. Most people look away. Not her. She just stared. Stroked the puppy and stared. Was just about to say something to her when Ruth rushed over to check she wasn't injured. Cleaned the blood off a wound in her knee - told her she was going to take her to hospital just to get a few stitches in her knee and she'd have to let go of the dog. She wouldn't do it - started wailing fit to burst.

Grove Park -Aileen

In an Irish accent

(Tapping against a hypodermic needle and then squirting liquid into the air) D'you know, sometimes I feel - I feel like opening that door over there and howling out into the darkness. Howling the breath out of me till there's nothing at all left. The unfairness of it - the chances snatched away at the last minute. Can't be doing it, o' course. Blackout curtains got to stay right where they are. Other nurses would have me packed up and rushed to the asylum. It'd put the fear o' God into the patients too. As if they haven't got enough to cope with just now. TB's a cruel master. Poor souls. Not many walk out of here on their own two feet.

(Drops hypodermic as she turns back) Oh would you look at that? What a waste. Starts clattering enamel kidney dishes, piling them up. Sticks her head on one side)

Could have all been so different, you know. Was all set to go to Philadelphia. Companion to me Aunt Jane. She was the wise one. Left Dublin twelve years ago - caught herself some rich man who owns a biscuit factory and she wanted me to come over as her (puts on posh voice) companion. Companion indeed! Can you see me striding down First Street wearing me fine American clothes! Like the girls who came back to show off their fine suits and coats. Like Annie O'Mara. Talking as loud as she could so everyone would look at her, parading her fancy peach dress - peach she called it! And her little fancy jacket - nipped at the waist she called it! And stockings! And wearing real lipstick (laughs, makes kissing noises to the air and mimics catwalk sashay). Carried on like she was the Queen of Sheba, or something....Anyway, that could have been me too. Money, pouring out me ears by all accounts. Beautiful dresses, trips to the cinema, eating out in restaurants - wouldn't that have been something! Wouldn't have picked a peach dress though - made Annie O'Mara look as washed out as a dishcloth! Ha!

Grove Park _ Mary

In an Irish accent

Ma and da were so proud I was going to train as a nurse - Me da pressed five pounds into me hand just before I got on the bus, in Sligo Town. Made sure no one else saw, not even me ma....Whole family came, and even me sisters were crying as I left. Got me self a seat at the back, so I could look at them as we started off, waving like mad things, getting smaller and smaller as we headed off.

Saw me Cousin Logan and his family in Dublin before ferry left for Holyhead. Won't be visiting them again in a hurry. Miserable as sin. Didn't even offer me one cup of tea or a biscuit! Train to London after the ferry - was so glad to get off that. Sick as a sick dog I was. Couldn't eat a thing even though mammy had made me sandwiches and put in a slice of her apple cake. I was so tired by the time we pulled into Euston but all the time I was thinking "This is an adventure!" Even the mucky buildings in London, the smoke, the red buses, the people with their heads down, rushing to somewhere, anywhere....

Mr Peters and his wife met me at Euston - ran the pub opposite the hospital and had some sort of deal about picking up nurses from the station. They were lovely. Really friendly. Took me to the hospital in their old van - it was all right though. Mrs Peters let me ride up front so I could see all the London sights as we drove past - Mr Peters said he'd take us through Trafalgar Square - don't think I've

ever seen so many people all in one place at a the same time! And the pigeons! Hundreds of them - swooping around like right demons. And I knew, straight away, that I was going to like it.

Cable Street _ Dessie

Slight cockney accent

An idiot is what he is. He talks about the Jews as if they're the victims when they control everything, newspapers, banks, the movie houses, the politicians, they've got it all in their back pocket-

Dad fought for his own. Why would he take up weaponry for them that has no right to be here, that don't belong here, and that don't belong anywhere? They have no place being here and yet they arrive and steal our employment, and how? By undercutting the wage of the honest Christian worker. These imports need to be taught a lesson on who's boss of the East End. The British Union is the only party standing up for the rights of Gentiles.

You there who hasn't had a day's work in three months. Well maybe if the Jew boys hadn't taken the jobs maybe you'd be in a position where you could afford to buy your own supper rather than cadging of us.

Cable Street _ Jim

In a slight cockney accent

It were mad pop. Thousands, tens of thousands. They filled Whitechapel, You could hardly walk up Leman Road. We got caught up in the mass of it and practically dragged up to Aldgate- A tram driver drove up and halted his bus right in the middle of the crowd, then he jumps down, causal like, and just strolls off, disappears into the mass leaving the lane blocked. And there wasn't a jot the police could do to move it.

They sent in horses dad, but some of the small boys had pocketful's of marbles and they showered them under the hoofs and sent them crashing- They're building a blockade dad, right in the middle of the road. The neighbours are emptying out their households. And right on time, here come the police. Christ they look like they mean business.

Cable Street _Maureen

For Maureen's audition piece we have chosen two pieces from Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller plus a small piece from the play itself. We would like you to submit either Piece 1a or Piece 1b plus Piece 2.

Maureen is very like Linda Loman in Death of a salesman in that she expects her sons to respect their father. Although the piece has been written for an American voice, for the purposes of the audition we would like to hear it read in an Irish accent.

Piece 1b

I don't say he's a great man. Willy Loman never made a lot of money. His name was never in the paper. He's not the finest character that ever lived. But he's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid. He's not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog. Attention, attention must be finally paid to such a person.

A lot of people think he's lost his – balance. But you don't have to be very smart to know what his trouble is. The man is exhausted. A small man can be just as exhausted as a great man. He works for a company thirty-six years this March, opens up unheard-of territories to their trademark, and now in his old age they take his salary away. And you, Now that you get your spending money someplace else you don't trouble your mind with him.

Piece 1a

Are they any worse than his sons? When he brought them business, when he was young, they were glad to see him. But now his old friends, the old buyers that loved him so and always found some order to hand him in a pinch – they're all dead, retired. He used to be able to make six, seven calls a day in Boston. Now he takes his cases out of the car and puts them back and takes them out again and he's exhausted.

Instead of walking he talks now. He drives seven hundred miles, and when he gets there no one knows him anymore, no one welcomes him. And what goes through a man's mind, driving seven hundred miles home without having earned a cent?

Why shouldn't he talk to himself? Why? When he has to go to Charley and borrow fifty dollars a week and pretend to me that it's his pay? How long can that go on? How long? You see what I'm sitting here and waiting for? And you tell me he has no character? The man who never worked a day but for your benefit? When does he get the medal for that? Is this his reward – to turn around at the age of sixty-three and find his sons, who he loved better than his life?

Piece 2

I didn't hear you come to bed this morning. (Beat) How did the union meet go, last night?

Is it true that some of the boys, the hot heads, the reds, talk about taking to the streets tomorrow? I know that the Communists are not staying home, did you see The Daily Worker today? (Beat) Mrs Lenski was sat beside me in the picture house, she said they got the horses out. Trotting down Royal Mint Street they were. The polis were getting them used to the lanes.

Cable Street _Ruth

Ruth is a Jewish girl living in the East End who falls in love with Jim from an Irish, Roman Catholic family. We would like you to submit Piece 1 and Piece 2.

It is the night after the Labour landslide in 1945, Miss Julie the highly strung daughter of a labour peer is left behind with the servants while her father goes to London to celebrate. She was drinking at the celebrations and finally succumbs to the advances of the family chauffeur.

Did I tell you about my mother? She was quite common you know....she had this thing about women's emancipation... .she swore she'd never marry so she told my father that she would be his lover but never his wife. But then I was born, I was ...a mistake really ... So they got married and my mother brought me up as a child of nature, she used me to demonstrate the equality of the sexes. She used to dress me up in boy's clothes and made me learn about farming- she made me kill a fox when I was.... and then she reorganised the estate the women had to do the men's work and the men's the women's'. We were the laugh of the whole county. Finally my father snapped and she fell in line. But she began to stay out all night ... she took lovers, people talked, she blamed my father for the failure of her brave new world.... Her infidelities were her revenge. They rowed constantly and fought, she often had gashes and bruises ...he did too, she was as strong as ever and she was angry....and then there was a rumour that my father had tried to kill himself.... he failed....obviously. I didn't know whose side she was on....maybe I learnt all my emotions by the age of ten and never developed anymore.... A child experiences the world so deeply....without the sophistication to protect itself...it's not fair really. (Pause). Anyway, my mother almost

on her deathbedno one her deathbed made me swear that I would never be a slave to any man.

From Moseley

Put him there. What's it like out there? (Beat) We're had a stream of battered people through all morning. What is his name? (Pause) How many fingers do I hold up? Do you remember what happened to you? Did you get laid into the fascists Mr Duffy? I think he might be concussed- It's important he rests.. He's concussed. Is his lodgings far? He's concussed. Are his lodgings far? He needs rest and we haven't the space here. (Pause) Me? I'm not a nurse, I'm a librarian. My mother was a midwife.