

ACT 1

Scene 1

Morning. Bedroom in a country house. Annie Boyle lays in bed cancer stricken. Small oxygen tubes in each nostril. A Morphine drip attached to her frail skinny arm. Eldest son Michael enters. He opens the curtains. Annie wide awake.

Michael: Right Dracula get the sunglasses on. Time to open the crypt.

Annie: Why do you have to say things like that?

Michael: Got to have a sense of humour.

Annie: So that's what it is. Billy Connelly must be shitting himself.

Michael: Harsh ma.

Annie moves, grimaces in pain. Michael pretends not to notice.

Annie: Anyway how could you have a sense of anything, all those funny cigarettes you smoke.

Michael: I've got feelings.

Annie: That's not a sense.

Michael: Well it should be.

Annie: Say you couldn't even name them.

Michael: Course I could.

Annie: Go on then.

Michael: How many is there?

Annie: You tell me Mr. Feelings.

Michael: Not going to bother now.

Annie: Because you can't.

Michael: No. Just too busy to be entertaining auld ones this hour of the morning.

Michael pretends to clean up.

Annie: Never had an ounce of sense, even as a kid.

Michael: Bit of a handicap, growing up round here.

Annie: Don't recall you having many feelings either, come to think of it.

Michael: Strong silent type, me.

Annie: Remember breaking a tennis bat across your legs when you were about twelve. Never moved a muscle. Didn't even flinch.

Michael: Ah! The auld corporal punishment days.

Annie: Deserved it too. Robbing the lights off the town Christmas tree. Was a pariah in the village for months.

Michael: Still get daggers from the Parish priest every time I meet him.

Annie: Used to enjoy going to see the switching on of the lights. Couldn't face it after that.

Michael: Sure I suppose if you've seen one, you've seen them all anyway.

Annie: Thing I could never get my head round, was why in the name of God would anyone steal lights off a Christmas tree?

Michael: They were flashy ones.

Annie: What sort of an explanation is that?

Michael: The lights. They flashed on and off.

Michael sits down on a chair beside the bed. Annie shakes her head, turns to her son.

Annie: So you stole the town Christmas lights, because they flashed on and off.

Michael: Exactly. Was going through my DJ phase at the time.

Annie: You went through more phases than David Bowie.

Michael: Good one ma.

Annie: Never stuck to anything either.

Michael: Hard job keeping things up, when you're good at everything.

Annie: Too busy sitting on your arse watching films more like.

Michael: Still do. Which if I'm not mistaken means I did stick to something.

Annie: So your greatest achievement in life is that you've seen every movie made.

Michael: Well nearly all.

Annie: Some qualification that is.

Michael: Film is art Ma.

Annie: Whatever you say Leanardo.

Michael: So in a round about way, that makes me an art expert.

Annie: Bullshit expert more like.

Michael: Always wanted to make movies. Might have a stab at it someday.

Annie: Wanted to be Bruce Lee too.

Michael: Legend was Bruce.

Annie: Used to stand in your bare belly for hours in front of the hall mirror, practicing the moves.

Michael: I was nine Ma.

Annie: Not sure what age, but what I do know is you smashed the shite out my lovely Waterford Crystal lamp with those Gunchuck yokes.

Michael: Nunchucks.

Annie: Whatever.

Michael: Wonder where they went?

Annie: Straight in the bin with the lamp.

Michael: Was starting to the get the hang of them too.

Annie: Then it was Clint Eastwood. And we won't go there.

Michael: Go where?

Annie: You know well. Cutting a hole in my best tablecloth to make one of those poncho things.

Michael: Worst day of my life. The coolest cowboy in town chased around the estate by his Ma, and all the neighbours looking on.

Annie: You'd have been the deadest cowboy in town if I'd got hold of you.

Michael: Clint went right out the window after that.

Annie: Yeah for Charles Bronson.

Michael: Some actor. Death Wish One, Two and Three.

Annie: One of the few things we agree on.

Michael: Bronson was the original Terminator.

Annie: Was. But in all fairness, how did you ever think you were going to be Charles Bronson? Sure wasn't he an Eskimo?

Michael: He was Lithuanian.

Annie: Close enough.

Michael: Not even the same continent.

Annie: Don't you cheek me. Watched a few films and now you're mister know it all.

Michael: Just saying.

Annie: Well don't. Not after your Tony Montana phase. Anyone who did what you did, has no business preaching to me.

Michael: We'll leave it there so.

Annie: Scarface me arse. You were some tool.

Michael: Okay, okay.

Annie: Cut the face off yourself.

Michael: Seven stitches.

Annie: Couldn't get the blood off the bread knife. Never used it after that.

Michael: Savage scar though.

Annie: And for what? By the time you got the bandage off, you wanted to be someone else.

Michael: Loved Scarface. *"Say hello to my little friend"*.

Annie uncomfortably raises her head. Tries to sit by up. Pain darts through her body and she gives up.

Annie: Help me with these pillows. Want to fix myself up a bit?

Michael jumps out of the chair, comes to his mothers aid.

Michael: Was going to say you're looking a bit rough.

Annie: Well don't. Ever. Not to any woman.

Michael: Right Ma.

Michael props his mother up on the pillows. He attempts to sit back on the chair bedside.

Annie: Need the brush. On top of that chest of drawers at the foot of the bed.

Michaels arse doesn't touch the seat and he's up. He grabs the brush, walks back and gives it to his mother. Sits down.

Annie: Mirror now. Top drawer on the left.

Michael rolls his eyes. Does what his mother asks.

Michael: Did that on purpose.

Annie: Did What?

Michael: Let me get the brush knowing you wanted the mirror as well.

Annie: Did not.

Michael hands Annie the mirror, sits. Annie beams a devilish grin. Michael checks the clock on the wall.

Michael: Doctor be here soon.

Annie: What do I need a doctor for?

Michael: Not allowed say Ma.

Annie: Why not?

Michael: Because you said not to.

Annie: What are you on about?

Michael: I rang the doctor because you were looking rough. Then a minute ago you told me I was never to say that. To any woman. You getting a touch of the Alzheimer's as well?

Annie: Trying to wind me up now.

Michael: Wouldn't dream of it.

Annie: There's a bad streak in you. God knows where it came from.

Annie and Michael smile. Annie grimaces in pain.

Michael: Can tell by the head on you, you're in more pain than yesterday.

Annie: A bit. Not as bad as giving birth to you though.

Michael: Don't start.

Annie: Gave me pains where I never had windows.

Michael: Heard it before, a thousand times.

Annie: Gabriel didn't.

Michael: Maybe Gabriel should be here looking after you instead of me so?

Annie: That man is minding the country. You leave him alone.

Michael: Going to ring him later.

Annie: Over my dead body!

Michael: Hoping it won't be.

Annie: I'm not having him traipsing all the way back here for nothing.

Michael: He should be here.

Annie: For what? I'm in a bit of pain, other than that, there's not a bother on me.

Annie not happy. She pulls herself up on the pillows. Michael attempts to help but is swatted away. He sits back down. Stony silence for a few beats. Michael picks up a book and reads. Annie stews. She looks at her son a few times and he ignores. Eventually...

Annie: Put that away. Want a talk.

Michael marks the page, closes the book and puts it down.

Michael: About?

Annie: Last wishes of the dying.

Michael: What about them?

Annie: I want one.

Michael: One? You've had at least twenty. How many do you get?

Annie: How many did you break more like?

Michael: Right. One more and that's it.

Annie: Doesn't matter now.

Silence for a few beats. Michael squirms uncomfortably in his chair. Annie goes in for the kill.

Annie: Sure what do the wishes of a dying old woman matter anyway.

Michael: Milking it now.

Annie: Be gone and forgotten soon.

Michael: Come on, just spit it out. One more is hardly going to make a difference now anyway.

Annie's tone changes completely.

Annie: As a last dying wish from a son to his mother, I'd like you to promise me, that you are not going to ring Gabriel. He's too much to be worrying about. All those men depend on him.

Michael contemplates much to Annie's annoyance.

Annie: Simple yes or no answer.

Michael: Okay.

Annie: Okay what?

Michael: I won't ring him.

Annie: Promise?

Michael: Promise.

Annie: And you're not going to break this one, like you did all the others?

Michael: Fine.

Annie: You're not the worst I suppose. One of them maybe, but not the worst.

Michael: Only woman I know, gives a compliment then takes it back in the one sentence.

Annie: Keep your promise and I'll be happy.

Michael: Said I would, now give it a rest.

Annie: Won't say another word.

Michael stands. He walks around to the other side of the bed and checks the equipment Annie is hooked up to.

Michael: Don't forget to tell Dr. Brennan about the bruising on your arm.

Annie: Waste of time bringing that man out here.

Michael: Ma you look like the wreck of the Hesperus.

Annie: Careful now.

Michael: Okay. A bit tired then.

Annie: I'm grand.

Michael: Upping the morphine will sort you out.

Annie: Expert now are we?

Michael: Might chance a dart myself. Heard it's right auld stuff.

Annie: Will not. Bad enough smoking that waccy baccy, never mind anything else.

Michael: Medicinal herb. Better than all that prescribed junk those doctors hand out.

Annie: Stinks the house out.

Michael: Heard it's supposed to be great for the pain as well.

Annie: That's what all those pot heads say. Just looking for any excuse so they can legalise it and spend all their time getting wasted.

Michael: Not just pot heads Ma. There's many a doctor who agrees as well.

Annie: My arse.

Michael: God's truth.

Annie: You'd say mass.

Michael: Do you remember that old British actor, Terry Thomas? Used to be in all those black and white Ealing movies.

Annie: Lad with a moustache and gapped teeth.

Michael: That's him.

Annie: Always played a rogue. A lovable one though.

Michael: He got diagnosed with Parkinson's when he was in his sixties.

Annie: Poor man.

Michael: Said the only thing that took the pain away, was a big fat joint. Used to have one every night.

Annie: You're making that up.

Michael: Am not. Didn't have a clue who Terry Thomas was until I read the article. Those auld movies were a bit before my time.

Annie: That's disgraceful. Man of his age.

Michael: If it took the pain away, which he said it did, sure where's the harm?

Annie: The harm is, it's illegal and I would have thought a man like Terry Thomas would have a bit more cop on.

Michael: Exactly. That's why he started smoking it. You should give it a go. Be better than all that stuff they're pumping into your veins.

Annie: Go away out of that. Bad enough there's one in the family who uses illegal substances. That stuff drives you mad. Although you'd probably like to see me losing the few marbles I've left.

Michael: Anything grows in the ground has to be better than the stuff they make in laboratories. It's common sense.

Annie: Says the man who tried to iron the cuffs of his shirt, while it was on him. You have no right to talk to me about common sense.

Michael: Jazus you've the memory of an elephant.

Annie: How could I forget. All night in A&E. Missed the bingo. Monster jackpot as well. Been going all year round and because of you I missed the big one.

The front door bell rings. It's opened and closed. A knock on the bedroom door. Dr. Brennan enters.

Doctor: Said I'd let myself in. Hope you don't mind.

Annie: Thank God you're here. This lad is trying to drive me around the bend.

Michael: Glad you could come at such short notice doctor. I know you're a busy man.

Doctor: Never too busy for Annie.

Annie: All Michael's fault. Making a fuss out of nothing.

Doctor: Better safe than sorry.

The doctor unpacks his gear. Puts on his stethoscope. Michael stands, moves to the front of the stage, back to his mother.

Annie nosily peers at her son around the doctor, as he examines her. Michael slyly removes a mobile phone from his pocket, furiously types a message and sends it. He puts the phone in his pocket and walks back to the chair, sits.

Doctor: How's the breathing?

Annie: Still doing it, but thanks for asking.

Doctor: Can turn the oxygen up?

Annie: I'm grand. Any more and I'll be floating around then ceiling.

Doctor: And the pain?

Annie: I've felt worse.

Doctor: That's not what I asked.

Annie: He'd no business dragging you out here.

Doctor: It's my job Annie.

Annie: I know but you've a much better chance of getting paid off the sick, than the dying.

Doctor: The bill will be paid. Rich woman like you can well afford it.

Annie: Rich, me?

Doctor: Anyway you'd be terrified I'd tell the whole town if it wasn't.

Dr. Brennan looks at Michael and they both laugh. Annie is not impressed.

Annie: Rich or not it's of no use to me now.

Doctor: Same for us all. No pockets in a shroud.

Dr. Brennan checks the drip.

Doctor: Michael says the pain is worse.

Annie: Your assistant now is he?

Doctor: I'm going to up the morphine.

Annie: Everyone is trying to pump me full of drugs.

Doctor: Go way out of that.

Annie: Had to listen to your man there earlier, extolling the virtues of those funny cigarettes he smokes. Then had the neck to say they'd be great for the pain. Told me some cock and bull story about that actor Terry Thomas swearing by it, after he got diagnosed with Parkinson's. Must think I'm a right fool.

Doctor: Never heard that story, but off the record I'd have to agree.

Annie: Surprised a man of your intelligence could be taken in by such nonsense.

Doctor: There's a fair bit of research to back it up. Supposed to be really good for treating all chronic pain ailments.

Annie: All lies. Just a bunch of hippy quacks trying to make a name for themselves.

Doctor: Tried it once or twice. All the rage back in Medical school.

Michael's ears prick up. His face wallows in smugness. Annie shows disgust at both men.

Annie: Dr. Brennan I'm shocked.

Doctor: Just harmless fun Annie.

Annie scowls at the doctor and he catches her drift.

Doctor: Mind you, that was when I was young and had no sense.

Annie: I'm surrounded by druggies.

Doctor: Say it will be made legal soon the way things are going.

Annie: You're as bad as Michael. And as for Terry Thomas. I'll never watch another one of his films again.

Doctor: Be a while before I'll be prescribing it though. Everything is controlled by big Pharma and they don't like the idea that anyone can grow it in their back garden. No money in it for them.

Annie: Well legal or not you won't catch me doing it.

An uneasy silence is interrupted when the phone in Michael's pocket starts to ring. Michael panics, jumps out of the chair. He glances nervously at his mother.

Michael: Just going to take this outside so I won't be in the doctors way.

Annie smells a rat. Michael makes for the door, exits. As the door closes, lights fade on the bedroom.

ACT 1

Scene 2

Scene two is a split scene telephone conversation between the brothers. Michael is up stage right and Gabriel up stage left. The scene opens with spotlights coming up on both sides of the stage at the same time. Michael is in the house bathroom and Gabriel in an army barrack room. Gabriel sits on his bunk, phone to ear. Michael closes the bathroom door, takes the phone from his pocket, answers.

Michael: Hope you time it better when you send all those lads into battle.

Gabriel ignores.

Gabriel: New phone? Didn't recognise the number.

Michael: Bit of a falling out with my last service provider.

Gabriel: Didn't pay the bill you mean.

Michael: That and their attitude. Client services my arse.

Gabriel: Say losing you will put a right dent in their profits.

Michael: What happened to the days when the customer was always right?

Gabriel: Times change. But then again, maybe not in your world.

Michael: Exactly why I prefer my world.

Gabriel: While it's always a pleasure discussing the pros and cons of modern consumerism, is there any other reason you were looking for me?

Michael: There is. And I get the feeling Annie's going to put a curse on me for it too.

Gabriel: How's she doing?

Michael: Her very best to drive me mad, as usual.

Gabriel: Things never change.

Michael: Creature of habit is Annie.

Gabriel: Pair of you in it so.

Michael: Other than that, she's not doing great at all.

Gabriel: Really?

Michael: Would I lie to a trained killer?

Gabriel: Still a comedian.

Michael: Terrible one according to her.

Gabriel: She's never been backwards, at coming forwards.

Silence for a few beats.

Michael: Anyway I messaged you because I think you should come home.

Michael pulls a spliff and lighter from his shirt pocket, lights up.

Michael: Doctor says it's only a matter of time and by the look of her, I don't think there's even much of that left.

Gabriel: Could you not have contacted me earlier?

Michael: And risked being put in the hole beside her. You know what she's like.

Gabriel visibly shaken, stands, places his hand on his forehead. Gathers his thoughts.

Gabriel: I do. Sorry that was out of order.

Michael: Made me promise not to ring you. When I said no, she blackmailed me, as only Annie can.

Gabriel: My fault. Should have kept in touch more than I have done.

Michael: Nobody's fault. She'd of lied anyway.

Gabriel: Suppose.

Michael: One thing you could do. When she asks if I rang, say no. Tell her you had a few days leave and decided to come home.

Gabriel: Of course but you know as well as I, she won't believe a word.

Michael: You could never tell her lies anyway.

Gabriel: No. When she looked in to my face I was always afraid she would know.

Michael: You were right. Only taken me a lifetime to realise. Weren't as dumb as you looked.

Gabriel: Be home by evening.

Michael: See you then.

Michael hangs up. Lights fade on Gabriel. Michael stubbs out half the joint. He places it and the lighter on the bathroom window sill. Makes for the door. Lights fade.

ACT 1

Scene 3

Lights come up on the bedroom.
Dr. Brennan finishes up his examination. He removes his stethoscope and puts it in his bag. Sits on the chair bedside.

Doctor: That's me done. No more calls. Going to head home, put the feet up and watch the match.

Annie: Well for some.

Doctor: Don't watch the Champions League that often.

Annie: Say you don't.

Doctor: What do you mean by that?

Annie: Suppose if I was in your shoes I don't think I would bother either.

Doctor: Not sure I understand what you're getting at?

Annie: Well, you being a West Ham United fan and all.

Doctor: What's that go to do with it?

Annie: You tell me the last time West Ham played in the Champions League? Actually come to think of it, when was the last time they played in any European competition?

Doctor: Doesn't stop me from watching it. Who says you're not allowed watch unless the team you support is playing?

Annie: Not the same though, is it? Why would you watch if it wasn't your team playing?

Doctor: For the love of the game.

Annie: Total crap that is. Football is tribal. Pick a side, nail your colours to the mast and go to war. Love has nothing to do with it.

Doctor: Think you're a bit confused. That's hooliganism.

Annie: Nothing of the sort.

Doctor: Surprised at you Annie Brennan.

Annie: Bit of rivalry now and again is good for everyone.

Doctor: Weather it is or isn't, still doesn't stop me from watching the Champions League.

Annie: Pointless though.

Doctor: To you maybe. But lets just say for arguments sake, if I wanted to sit and watch the Manchester United game on television tonight. What's to stop me? West Ham fan or not.

Annie nearly falls out of the bed in shock.

Annie: Say that again.

Doctor: I said who has the right to stop...

Annie interrupts...

Annie: No, no, no. The other bit. The bit about United playing.

Doctor: Thought with you being such a big fan you would know that.

Annie: Don't be facetious with me Brennan.

Doctor: Especially being one of the entitled few who has the right to watch.

Annie: Forget that. Who are they playing?

Doctor: Valencia. Michael not mention it?

Annie: That good for nothing. Lucky to remember his own name that lad. Wait till I get him.

Dr. Brennan panics as Annie vents her anger. He tries to calm the situation by changing the subject.

Doctor: Anyway forget about football. We need a heart to heart.

Annie: I'm listening.

Doctor: As your doctor and also as your good friend, I'm going to say it as it is.

Annie: Least I'd expect. The way doctors charge these days is bad enough, but if a man I've known all my life can't be honest, there's no hope for this world.

Doctor: I've done all I can Annie, but it's not going to be enough.

Annie: You have and that's all I'm asking.

Doctor: Let me get you into the hospital. Could at least make things easier on you. Might even buy us a bit more time.

Annie: Time in a hospital can't compare to being at home, no matter how long.

Doctor: What can I do then?

Annie: You can grant a dying woman's last wish and let her stay in the home she was born and raised in. The home she raised her family in. The home where she spent the best times of her life. That's worth more to me an extra few days of life, being miserable in some hospital.

Silence for a few beats.

Doctor: I know from old there will be no changing your mind no matter what I say.

Annie: First thing we've agreed on tonight.

Doctor: Never won an argument with you in my whole life.

Annie: And you're not going to start now.

Doctor: Home it is so.

Annie: Good. Just as well. If you had of insisted I'd have been back to haunt you.

Doctor: No doubt you would.

Michael enters. Annie watches his every move. Michael aware that his mothers eyes are on him, fidgets uncomfortably.

Michael: Cup of tea Dr. Brennan?

Doctor: I'm grand Michael.

Annie: He's got plans tonight. Do we have any plans for tonight Michael?

Michael: Plans Ma?

Annie: Yea. Is there something that we should be doing tonight as well?

Michael: Not that I'm aware of.

Annie: Is there anything you just might have forgotten to tell me about?

Michael: Not a thing.

Annie: Think now.

Michael: I am Ma.

Annie: Maybe something I might like to watch on the telly.

Michael looks relieved as he realises it has nothing to do with the phone call he received. Annie gets into inquisition mode.

Annie: Something I asked about earlier.

Michael: Like what?

Annie: You know what. The Manchester United match.

Michael: Oh that.

Annie: Yes that. I asked you earlier if they were playing and you said no.

Michael: I didn't say that.

Annie: You did so.

Michael: I told you there was a game on.

Annie: You never mentioned it.

Michael: Stall the ball old woman. You asked earlier if there was any football on tonight and I told you there was two shit teams playing.

Annie: And?

Michael: Not my fault you didn't know that one of those shit teams was United.

Annie: How dare you.

Dr. Brennan leaps from the chair, quickly gathers his things.

Doctor: I'm heading away now.

Annie: Might as well stay. I'm going to need a doctor to pronounce him dead in a few minutes.

Doctor: I'm off the clock. Dr. Byrne is your man now.

Dr. Brennan makes hastily for the door. He opens it.

Doctor: I'll see myself out. Will call tomorrow and see how you're doing.

Before Annie or Michael can get a word out the Dr. Brennan exits, closes the door behind him.

Annie: Some excuse for a son you are. I can't believe you weren't going to say anything. And me a dying woman.

Michael: Don't be like that Ma.

Annie: I'll be whatever way I like you disrespectful little shite.

Michael: I'll put the match on and you can watch.

Annie: Be the least you will do, mark my words.

Michael: Now can we forget it. All this talk about United is making my stomach sick.

Annie: We will. Only because I want to ask you about something else.

Michael: Good. Now what's on your mind.

Annie: Sit down there in that chair. I want you close so as I can see your face.

Michael sits. Annie gets close in to her son.

Michael: Fire away old woman.

Annie: The phone call earlier. Who was that?

Michael: What call?

Annie: The one you got while Dr. Brennan was examining me. The one you said you'd take outside so as you wouldn't bother us.

Michael: Oh that call. Just one of the lads.

Annie: Which one?

Michael: You wouldn't know him.

Annie: Do you not think by now that I can tell when you are lying.

Michael: I'm not lying. And even if I was, how could you tell?

Annie: Your lips move.

Michael: Very good.

Annie: What did I say to you?

Michael: About what?

Annie: You know well what. About Gabriel.

Michael: Oh that. You told me not to call him.

Annie: And?

Michael: I didn't.

Annie: Sure?

Michael: One hundred percent.

Annie: And you wouldn't lie to a dying woman.

Michael: Correct.

Annie: You'd be cursed for that.

Michael: Be no curse on my head.

Annie: I know it was Gabriel you were speaking to.

Michael: Okay. If you really must know, he rang me.

Annie: Called just out of the blue did he?

Michael: Did. Said he had a few days leave and decided to come home. Tell you himself when he arrives.

Annie: You must think I came down in the last shower. I saw you on that phone earlier. I can't believe it took you less than a couple of hours to break my dying wish.

Michael: I didn't break your dying wish actually. I promised I wouldn't ring Gabriel and I didn't. I sent him a text.

Annie: Right smart ass. If you are going to be like that I'm having another wish. And low behold you break it. This one is going to be special. Something Gabriel can do as well, seeing as he's coming home. Break it and I wont just curse you for life, I'll curse you for all eternity.

The blood in Michael's face drains. Lights fade.

ACT 1

Scene 4

Kitchen in Annie's house. Gabriel sits at the table cup of tea in front of him. He looks around at his surroundings, deep in thought. Michael enters, joins his brother at the table. He takes a spliff from his tobacco tin, puts the tin on the table in front of him. Michael lights up, much to Gabriel's distaste.

Gabriel: Can't have too many brain cells left at this stage.

Michael offers the spliff. Gabriel declines.

Gabriel: Prefer reality these days.

Michael: So running around the mountains in camouflage playing war is reality?

Silence for a few beats.

Michael: Enjoyed it yourself once. Many's the night we got out of the head.

Gabriel: Did. Then came the mushrooms. That tore the arse out of it for me.

Michael: The auld magic mushies. Best buzz I've ever had, still to this day.

Gabriel: Not at sixteen. Mind isn't ready for that sort of stuff.

Michael: You had a bad trip. Happens.

Gabriel: A bad trip is getting dizzy and puking. I saw the gates of hell. Lay in that back yard for hours thinking, I'm not coming back from this.

Michael: Kept an eye on you, didn't I?

Gabriel: You left the back door open, partied on and glanced out every now and again. How am I ever going to repay the kindness?

Michael: Might just have a way as it happens.

Gabriel: Something tells me I'm not going to like this.

Michael: We all have to do things in life we don't like. If it's any consolation I'll be doing it as well and I'm not too keen either.

Gabriel: No consolation whatsoever.

Michael: Then look at it this way. You'll be making a dying woman happy.

Gabriel: Sounds better.

Michael: I'd wait and hear what it is first, before I'd become a judge of that.

Gabriel: Sure how bad could granting the wishes of a dying woman be?

Michael: It's Annie we're talking about.

Gabriel: Making me nervous now.

Michael: Know the feeling brother.

Michael opens his tobacco box and takes out another spliff.

Gabriel: Go on then lets have it.

Michael: Do you want the good or the bad news first?

Gabriel: Our mother is dying. Can't see any good news in that.

Michael: Fair point. I'll rephrase. Do you want the bad news first or the terrible news first?

Gabriel: Better start with the bad news. Might help soften the terrible news.

Michael: The bad news is that Annie wants the three of us to watch the Manchester United/Valencia game on telly tonight.

Gabriel: Could probably manage that.

Michael: However the terrible news is that she wants us to support and cheer for Man United.

Gabriel is shell shocked. Michael sticks the spliff in his mouth. Gabriel rips it from his lips and puts it between his. He grabs the lighter from the table, lights up, takes a few hard drags. He coughs his guts up, hands the spliff to his brother.

Michael: Thought you were only interesting in reality these days?

Gabriel: Fuck reality. This is s nightmare.

Michael: Not often we agree, but I'll second that.

Gabriel: Not doing it. No chance.

Michael: Way I see it, we don't have much choice.

Gabriel: That's just fucked up.

Michael: No that's just Annie.

Gabriel: Still is. Even by her standards.

Michael: She always plays to win.

Gabriel: And you agreed to this shit.

Michael: Seemed the lesser of the two evils at the time.

Gabriel: Well I agreed to nothing, so she can go and shite.

Michael: Small problem there.

Gabriel: Which is?

Michael: I agreed on your behalf.

Gabriel: You did what?

Michael: She's dying Gabriel.

Gabriel: So?

Michael: So I had to, I'd no choice.

Gabriel: You could have asked me first.

Michael: Didn't get a chance. She was on me like a shot.

Gabriel: Feeble excuse.

Michael: She has us by the balls.

Gabriel: Speak for yourself.

Michael: What type of sons would we be, saying no to the last wishes of the woman, who brought us into this world.

Gabriel: Starting to sound like Annie now.

Michael: Maybe I am, but it's true.

Gabriel: She's ran circles round you. That's for sure.

Michael: Done now and there's no going back. Unless you fancy saying no and can deal with the thoughts of her haunting us for the rest of our lives.

Gabriel: Can't get any worse.

Gabriel hangs his head. Michael gathers up his stuff and stands. Michael walks to the door, turns.

Michael: With Annie things can always get worse.

Gabriel: That's what scares me.

Michael: Match starts in half an hour.

Michael exits. Gabriel beaten and bruised is left to contemplate for a few beats. Lights fade.

END OF ACT 1

INTERMISSION

ACT 2

Scene 1

Bedroom. Annie asleep. The brothers enter. Annie wakes, welcomes Gabriel with open arms, shuns Michael. The lads make sure the TV is all ready to go. Both men sit and relax.

Michael: Brings back memories of when we were kids.

Annie: Still are Michael.

Gabriel: Hasn't changed a bit.

Annie: True son, but I've hopes for you.

Michael: Wouldn't get them too high. Growing up doesn't run in this family.

Gabriel: Don't mind him Ma.

Annie: Did Michael call you earlier?

Michael: Knew she was going to ask that.

Annie: But it's not you I'm asking, so mind your own business.

Gabriel: As it happens, I rang him. Few days leave. Decided to come home and visit my lovely Ma.

Annie: I see.

Michael: Exactly as I said.

Annie: Between a rock and a hard place now. I'm a hundred percent convinced Michael is lying, but with you it's fifty, fifty.

Michael: That's not fair.

Annie: Why?

Michael: If we're both telling the truth that's fine, but if you think I'm lying, he must be lying as well, since both of us are saying the same thing.

Annie: And?

Michael: How then, can you be a hundred percent sure with me, but only fifty, fifty with him?

Annie: Past crimes and misdemeanors fuck you up son.

Gabriel: What does it matter. Just good to see you Ma.

Annie: And you too. Glad to have you home. Not often the three of us get together.

Gabriel: Lets just make the most of it.

Annie: You're right son.

Michael: Exactly.

Annie: And make the most of it I will.

Michael: Felt a shiver down my spine there.

Annie: Don't mind him, will be grand.

Gabriel: Will Ma.

Annie: I take it he broke the news?

Gabriel: About what?

Annie: My dying wish?

Michael: Half of me got pleasure out of it. Does that make me a sadist or a masochist?

Annie: No. Just a gobshite.

Gabriel: He did Ma. I'll be honest, it's a fair ask.

Michael: I don't see fair at all.

Gabriel: Bit sadistic too, don't you think?

Michael: Better word.

Annie: Where in the rule book does it say it can't be?

Gabriel: Hard to change the habits of a lifetime though.

Annie: Is. But I don't die very often.

Michael: Knockout blow by Annie.

Annie: Ignore him.

Gabriel: Gobshite is right.

Annie: Thought with you being a soldier, you'd know all about honour and duty?

Gabriel: Do Ma. But mine lie elsewhere. Michael's too. All our lives United have been the enemy.

Annie glares at her youngest son.

Annie: Not tonight.

Annie turns to her eldest son.

Annie: Am I right Michael?

Michael: Yes Ma. Anything for an easy life. Or death.

Silence for a few beats.

Gabriel: Okay I'll try. All I can promise.

Annie: Good. Sign this.

Annie takes a pen and a sheet of paper from under her pillow. She opens it in half and hands it to Michael. He reads two lines, gets bored and signs it at the bottom of the page. Michael passes it to Gabriel who studies it carefully.

Gabriel: Binding Agreement. The last wishes of Annie Boyle. We Michael and Gabriel Boyle do solemnly swear to carry out the last wishes of our mother Annie Boyle. We have agreed on this date, twenty first of February 2001, to wholeheartedly support Manchester United in their Champions League match against Valencia.

Annie: Signature at the bottom of the page beside your brother please.

Gabriel: Trust issues or what.

Annie: Blame Bill Clinton beside you.

Michael: Just sign it. Having to go through ninety minutes of hell is bad enough, but listening to the moans of her if you don't, is a bridge too far. Gabriel reluctantly signs. He hands the pen and paper to his mother who places it back under her pillow.

Annie: Two saints. Named you well.

Michael: Milking it now Ma.

Annie: Only getting started Michael. Fetch me that bag in the bottom drawer Gabriel.

Gabriel stands and fetches the bag as his mother asked. He sits back down. Annie rummages through the bag and pulls out a Manchester United scarf. She hands it to Gabriel. She rummages again and picks out another scarf and hands it to Michael.
Takes one more out for herself.

Annie: Get them on.

Michael: Taking the piss. No way.

Gabriel: I'm with him. Gone a bit too far.

Annie: If you check the agreement you will find wearing the team scarf is covered in the "wholeheartedly support" section. So I'm well within my boundaries.

Michael: Totally out of order. You'll go down below for that.

Annie: Always playing the victim. Bitching earlier that I unfair to you.

Michael: You were.

Annie: I was too. And I'm sorry.

Michael: First time in my life I ever heard you saying, you were wrong.

Annie: Honest woman, what can I say?

Michael: You could say it again but this time let Gabriel record it on his phone?

Gabriel: Not getting involved.

Annie: Is a dying woman's word not good enough?

Michael: I suppose. Apology accepted.

Annie: And make it up I've given you my most prized scarf.
From the triple winning 1999 season.

The scarf on Michael's lap burns a hole in him.

Annie: Bet Gabriel won't start bitching about being second best.

Gabriel: Not in the slightest Ma.

Annie: Always said. No favorite's in my house.

Michael: Never ceases to amaze me.

Annie: Just get the scarves on. Kick off soon.

Like two condemned Michael and Gabriel hang the scarves around their necks. Annie puts on hers. Pre match time commentary from the TV begins as Manchester United and Valencia walk out the Old Trafford tunnel, on to the pitch.

TV Host: Victory and a place in the quarter final awaits the men from Manchester.

Annie: Be like ninety nine all over again. What do you reckon Michael?

Michael: Will Satan.

The commentary continues in the background at a low volume. Match starts. Annie's eyes glued to the screen. Michael is bored ten seconds in and Gabriel follows suit not long after. Annie is not impressed.

Annie: Our year. Can feel it in my water.

Michael: Stop will you.

Annie: Reminds me, can someone change my bag before the night's out?

Michael: Ma please.

Annie: Just saying. Be like Noah's Ark here in the morning if it isn't.

Michael: Gabriel's turn.

Annie: Don't care, long as it's done.

Gabriel: Might need you to show me. Not too sure about the new plumbing.

Michael: Best way to learn is get the hands wet first time I reckon.

Annie: Jump in at the deep end as it were.

Michael: Take the plunge.

Michael and Annie burst out laughing. Gabriel disgusted.

Gabriel: Sick, the pair of you.

Annie: Sure if you didn't laugh you'd cry.

Gabriel: What will I do if I spring a leak?

Gabriel laughs. Michael and Annie stone faced.

Annie: That's a terrible thing to say.

Michael: Imagine wishing that on your poor mother.

Gabriel: I'm joking Ma.

Annie: Two comedians in the family now.

Michael: Good one.

Annie's football nose kicks in and she fixes on the TV. The commentary gradually gets louder. Annie moves to every pass the commentator describes.

TV Host: Keane commanding in midfield as always. He plays the ball to Giggs. Giggs finds Cole 20 yards out, Cole returns it, Canizares thinks that Giggs is about to shoot and shapes up just as Giggs passes to the on-running Cole again for the United striker to slide the ball home with his right foot at the near post.

GOAL! MANCHESTER UNITED 1, VALENCIA 0.

The celebrations vary from Annie who is ecstatic, down to Gabriel who is pleased for his mother, to Michael who in his own mind, gave up supporting United twenty seconds in to the match. The Fans on screen chant...

THERE'S ONLY ONE ANDY COLE. ONE ANDY COLE,
THERE'E ONLY ONE ANDY COLE.

Michael: Thank God for that.

Annie: Great player, isn't he Gabriel.

Gabriel: He's not too bad Ma.

Michael: Goal hanger.

Annie: Always pops up in the box at the right time

Michael: A one legged lad wouldn't miss from there.

Gabriel: Actually a one legged lad would fall over.

Annie: Exactly.

Michael: Tap in's, that's all he scores. I'd say he'd get dizzy if he went outside the penalty area.

Annie: How would you know?

Michael: How dare you. I was the Robbie Fowler of my day.

Gabriel: In your head maybe.

Annie: Couldn't kick snow off a rope.

Michael: Tell you what I do know.

Gabriel: Go on Maradona, enlighten us.

Michael: Heard the fans at Old Trafford have started a petition. Supposed to be loads signed it already.

Annie: Oh. For what?

Michael: They're looking to have the goalposts at Old Trafford moved two feet either side.

Gabriel: Can't do that.

Michael: Thought so too.

Annie: Sure why would they want to anyway?

Michael: They reckon if they do, Andy Cole is odds on to be top scorer this year.

Annie: Little shitebag. You're on thin ground for a slap.

The commentary gets louder and they all focus on the TV.

TV Host: Sheringham wide on the left releases Cole through the middle. Cole gets behind Pellegrino despite an unlucky bounce but shoots straight at Canizares. Possibly a better chance than the one that led to his goal.

Michael: See told you. Absolutely useless. Old King Cole would have scored that.

Annie ignores. The commentary fades. Annie starts coughing. Gabriel panics. Michael comes to his mothers aid. Coughing subsides. Michael gives Annie a sip of water. Sits.

Gabriel: You okay Ma?

Annie: I'm grand.

Gabriel: Will I get Dr. Brennan?

Annie: Leave him be. Doesn't often get the chance to watch a good team playing football.

Michael: Think we should all have a good dart of that morphine.

Annie: Waste of time at this stage. Maybe just as well Michael broke his promise and contacted you.

Michael: Gabriel rang me.

Annie: After you text him.

Gabriel: He did right Ma. And that doesn't happen often.

Annie: Must think I'm blind.

Michael: Texting is not the same. You made me promise, not to ring Gabriel and I didn't.

Gabriel: True.

Annie: I'm disappointed in you Gabriel. You never told porkies.

Gabriel's expressions confirm Annie's words.

Annie: Not like your man there who can't even lie straight in bed. Doesn't matter now. Forget it. I want to talk arrangements.

Gabriel: For what?

Annie: For when my time comes. Got to be done right. So that's why I'm appointing you chief organiser. Michael will help but the less the better. I've visions of that Father Ted episode when Dougal takes charge of the funeral, so don't let him out of your sight.

Michael: Love that episode.

Gabriel: Whatever you want Ma.

Annie: Didn't make a complicated will. Everything will be split down the middle.

Michael: So we have to saw everything in half like?

Annie: Already glad I didn't make it complicated.

Gabriel: Can't help himself.

Annie: How about you try and break a personal record, by listening attentively for more than ten seconds.

Michael: Okay, go on.

Annie: I left things this way because there is no need for me to work out who gets what. Even though you are like chalk and cheese, your bond as brothers is unbreakable. You have always looked out for each other you always will. All those times you had my heart scalded Michael, Gabriel was there with you, every step of the way.

Michael: Hold on, so I'm right after all.

Gabriel: About what?

Michael: That you were her favorite.

Annie: Shite talk. Nothing to do with it at all.

Michael: So why did he never get in trouble for anything?

Annie: Purely because he was younger. Luck of the draw, nothing else. I've never put one above the other and it will remain the same, in this life or the next.

Annie tears up and an unusual tender moment is felt by all. The half time whistle blows and the moment is gone. All relax.

Annie: Same again next half and hopefully job done. Never know though.

Gabriel: Think you're looking good Ma.

Annie: We're looking good son.

Gabriel: We are.

Annie: That Valencia Manager. What's his name?

Gabriel: Benitez Ma.

Annie: That's him. He's not too bad. Anyone who wins the Spanish League without managing Barcelona or Real Madrid deserves respect.

Michael: Can see him at Liverpool one day.

Annie: Beatles fan is he?

Michael: Not sure. Why?

Annie: Because the only time he'll be in Liverpool is to visit the Cavern.

Michael: We'll see.

Annie: Doubt it. Why would a man from Spain move to a pissy wet Merseyside, when he could stay in the sun and manage a good football team.

Gabriel: Time for a toilet break.

Gabriel stands, exits.

Annie: Been a strange first half. Could have been two up after fifteen minutes. Then Valencia get themselves together and look the best team for long periods. United took the foot off the gas a bit. Gave away too many set pieces as well. What do you reckon?

*Silence. Annie sits up gingerly, looks at her son. She shakes her head when she realises Michael is asleep, eyes closed and snoring. She watches him for a few beats, then pulls out the agreement and begins to write furiously. When she is finished she grabs an envelope from the bedside locker and places the agreement inside. Annie writes Dr. Brennan's name on the envelope and puts it on the bedside table. Lights fade.
Michael snores resonate in the darkness.*

ACT 2

Scene 2

Lights up on Bathroom. Gabriel puts down the toilet seat. Flushes. He opens the window and spies a lighter and half smoked joint on the sill. He contemplates, shakes his head. Turns to exit, turns back, picks up the spliff and lights it up. Gabriel stands blowing smoke out the window. He looks around fixing his gaze on a large dent near the bottom of the bathroom door. He smiles and begins to dream.

DREAM SEQUENCE BEGINS

Bathroom door opens. Teenage Michael struggles in the door carrying a completely wasted teenage Gabriel, arm over his shoulder. Michael pauses for breath.

Michael: Nearly there kid.

Gabriel: Where?

Michael: Five more minutes and you'll be in the bed.

Gabriel: Longest walk home of my life.

Michael: Walk? Carried you most of the way.

Gabriel: All your fault.

Michael: How's that?

Gabriel: Never taking mushrooms again.

Michael: Made a pig of yourself and it's all my fault.

Gabriel: You gave them to me.

Michael: Never said to take them all in one go though. There was at least two trips in that.

Gabriel: How was I supposed to know. Why didn't you say something?

Michael: Thought you were trying to be the big man and show off to the lads.

Gabriel: What? First time I took them?

Michael: Then Frank arrived. Went completely out of my head when he came over for a chat.

Gabriel: Makes two of us. Never been as wasted in my whole life.

Michael: Some whack off them alright. I wonder do the sheep get buzzed like that when they eat them.

Gabriel: Like getting hit with a shovel. One minute I was grand, next thing the ground feels like rubber and my hands are webbed.

Michael: Never got that but I thought I was a chicken once. Started walking around sticking my neck out clucking like a mad fucker.

Michael takes his brothers arm from around his neck and tries to stand him up straight. Gabriel complies after a few attempts.

Michael: Need you to keep it together for just a few more minutes.

Gabriel: I feel sick Mike.

Michael: In a minute. I'm bursting.

Gabriel: Not sure I can wait.

Michael: Work with me bro.

Gabriel: Feels like the mushrooms are crawling back up the inside of my neck.

Michael: Ah that's normal. Happens to me all the time as well.

Gabriel: Fucked up is what it is. How can that be normal?

Michael: It's just a sensation you get sometimes. They aren't really crawling up your neck.

Gabriel spews in the sink.

Gabriel: Not now anyway.

Michael: Lovely.

Gabriel: Feel better after that.

Michael: Good. Start cleaning up the evidence.

Michael satisfied turns and prepares to go to the toilet. As he is about to begin, Gabriel's eyes roll. He becomes rigid.

Gabriel: Mike.

Michael: Hang on.

Gabriel: Not sure I can.

Gabriel stiff as a board falls backwards, like a tree being felled in the forest. He smashes his head half way through the bottom of the bathroom door. A loud female scream resonates throughout the house. Michael panics, pulls his brother up off the floor and opens the door with his foot, He holds him by the shoulders and turns him around quickly and frogmarches him out of the bathroom. Door closes.

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE.

Gabriel smiles walks toward the bathroom door. He bends down and places his hand on the dent, tracing its pattern with his fingers. He smiles and shakes his head. After a few beats he stands and walks back to the window. He takes a final puff from the joint and throws it out the window. He places the lighter on the sill and makes for the exit. Lights fade.

ACT 2

Scene 3

Bedroom. Gabriel enters,
sits down. Michael snores.

Annie: Give Sleeping Beauty there a nudge.

Gabriel prods Michael, who slowly opens his eyes.

Michael: Is it over? Have I missed it?

Gabriel: Second half just about to start.

Michael: Must have dozed off for a bit.

Annie: Surprised you didn't wake yourself up the noise you were making.

Michael: Glad something did. Was having a nightmare that this mad auld one had me trapped in a room and she was melting the head off me, babbling on about football.

Annie: Right. A few words before the game restarts. So far you have failed miserably to honour the agreement you singed. Both of you.

Gabriel: Bit harsh.

Annie: My arse. Don't know which is worse. Him faking or you not being able to.

Gabriel guilt ridden. Michael oblivious.

Gabriel: Not easy.

Michael: I thought everything was going well.

Annie: Useless. The pair of you.

Gabriel: Ah Ma, we're trying.

Annie: Not hard enough for a dying woman. Better change in the next forty five minutes. Tell you that.

Match commentary interrupts and becomes louder.

TV Host: Players are out for the second half. Doesn't look to be any changes made on either side.

Whistle sounds and the second half begins.

Annie: Before I forget. There's a letter there on my locker for Dr. Brennan. Will one of you see that he gets it in the morning?

Michael: Bit auld to be writing love letters aren't you?

Annie: Just a note asking if he'd consider having you looked at. Do us all a favour.

Gabriel: Have a few things in town I need to get in the morning, so I'll drop it in on my way.

Annie: Thanks Gabriel. Maybe give him a ring before you leave, he might have calls to make. Have you got his number?

Michael takes out his phone and texts.

Michael: Just sent it to you there now.

Gabriel: Grand. I'll give him a buzz before I leave.

Annie: Seeing as though we're all together be nice to get a photo. What do they call those ones you take yourself?

Michael: Selfie Ma.

Annie: That's the word. But of the three of us. Hopefully your big fat head will fit in son. Gabriel will you take it?

Gabriel reluctantly agrees. He and Michael sit either side of the bed. They all pose and Gabriel takes the photo. The brothers sit back down.

Annie: God I hope I don't look to ill in that?

Gabriel: Don't worry you look fine.

Annie: Maybe take another just to be sure?

Gabriel: You look grand Ma.

Annie: Can you show me, put my mind at rest?

Gabriel takes out his phone. He opens it and hands it to his mother. Annie hurriedly begins pressing buttons while Gabriel is distracted by the match. Annie finishes, hands the phone back to Gabriel.

Annie: Not my best but I suppose will have to do.

The commentary gets louder.

TV Host: Keane pulls the ball back for Butt to shoot from 20 yards out. Gets deflected clear. Ball comes back to Sheringham who finds Keane in the middle of the park. Keane allows Silvestre to get away and cross from near the by-line. Cole gets on to the end of it and puts it two foot the wrong side of the near post.

Gabriel: Great effort.

Annie: Tight angle. Think the keeper had it covered.

Michael: One more they're home and hosed.

TV Host: It's all United now. Valencia have conceded a corner. Beckham crosses for Sheringham who gets a head on it and forces a point blank save from the goalkeeper.

Annie: Come on United that's the stuff.

Gabriel: Keano! Keano!

Michael: What he said.

TV Host: Beckham avoids rising to the challenge after Carboni hacked him down and earned himself a booking. Neville does well to get the better of Vicente near the by-line and cross through the six-yard box. Cole unable to get a touch.

Gabriel: All over them now.

Annie: What time is played. I can't see the clock on the screen.

Gabriel: Eighty two minutes Ma. Nearly there.

TV Host: Long ball up the pitch from the goalkeeper. Carew gets his head to it first but Scholes clears off the line. Michael comes to life then realises he's

cheering for the wrong side. To control himself he puts his hand on Annie's bed.

TV Host: Carboni plays a one-two with Aimar deep on the left for Valencia, puts in great cross across the face of goal. Carew gets on to it but fires it wide. Michael clenches the bed clothes but doesn't notice the oxygen drip leading to Annie's wrist lying under the covers. His legs shake. Michael clenches again. Annie suddenly finds it hard to catch her breath. She panics with the lack of air but notices Michael's hand has cut off the tube to her nostrils. The brothers don't notice as they are engrossed in the game. Annie really struggles to breathe. With her last breaths she manage to put her good hand under her pillow and pulls out a pen. She raises her arm and with all her might stabs the hand Michael has placed on the bed. Michael jolts, pulls his hand off the bed in agony. Gabriel turns, looks puzzled as Annie begins to breathe more easily and Michael shakes the pain from his hand.

Michael: That hurt.

Annie: So it should you muppet. Your hand was on my oxygen tube and I couldn't breathe. Nearly smothered.

Michael: Sorry Ma, the excitement of the game got to me.

Annie: And nearly killed me in the process.

Michael: What's left, can be long.

Gabriel: Couple of minutes.

Annie: Thank God. Blow it up ref.

Michael: Take us all out of our misery.

Gabriel: Won't be much stoppage time and we're into the eighty eight minute. Nearly home.

The game becomes interrupts and gets louder. All eyes on the screen and ears on the commentator.

TV Host: Ayala sprays a ball wide to Aimar who races down the right hand side. Ahead of him is Mendieta who has found space. Aimar sees Carew. Stam races from the centre to cover Carew but Aimar plays in Mendieta who finds Vicente. Vicente runs into the box

surrounded by United players and strikes the ball. Schmichel dives as Wes Brown sticks out a foot and puts the ball into his own net. GOAL! It's a goal for Valencia. Wes Brown has just knocked the ball past his own goalkeeper.

Michael and Gabriel instinctively leap from their seats and jump around the place cheering like lunatics. They hug each other and cheer for a while. Annie is distraught. As the brothers celebrate it slowly dawns on them what they have done. The cheering stops and both stand, head down in shame. The whistle blows for full time and there is a silence for a couple of beats. Gabriel raises his head.

Gabriel: Ma...

Annie: Ma nothing.

Michael: Completely forgot. Then the adrenalin kicked in and did the rest.

Gabriel: We're so sorry.

Annie: My last dying wish you make a complete bollox of it.

Gabriel: Please Ma. We tried.

Annie: Must have a touch of that mad cow disease to think you'd would do anything I asked.

Gabriel: First time I ever seen Michael try hard at anything.

Michael: We let you down. Both of us. Which at least makes a change.

Annie: You did, but at the end of the day you are not the reason United didn't win the match.

Gabriel: Thanks Ma.

Annie: Make me a cup of tea Gabriel and we'll say no more about it.

Gabriel walks towards the door. Michael follows behind.

Michael: I'll have one too if you're making it. Better water the horse as well.

The brothers exit. Lights fade and a spotlight comes up on Annie. She relaxes, smiles, closes her eyes and peacefully passes away. Spotlight fades.

ACT 2

Scene 3

Lights come up on the kitchen.
Morning after the night before.
Gabriel stands at the sink in a
world of his own.

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE

The kitchen door opens. Teenage Gabriel enters, bag in hand and dressed for school. Two packed lunches sit on the kitchen table. Gabriel puts his bag on the table, opens it and puts one of the lunches inside. As he is about to close the bag he recoils. He slowly puts his hand in the bag and pulls out a piece of paper. Gabriel sits, reads the piece of paper and begins to panic. Teenage Michael enters also dressed for school. As he passes his brother he slaps him around the head.

Gabriel: Stop will you.

Michael: Was only a tap.

Gabriel: Get lost.

Michael: Climb out of the wrong side of bed this morning did we?

Gabriel: Just leave me alone.

Gabriel gets upset. Michael is surprised. He notices the piece of paper in Gabriel's hand. Michael sits down beside his brother, tries to look at the paper in Gabriel's hand. Gabriel hides it.

Michael: What's that?

Gabriel: Nothing.

Michael: Don't get upset like that over nothing.

Gabriel: Not upset.

Michael: Come on show me.

Gabriel: Go away Michael.

Michael: Only trying to help.

Silence for a few beats.

Michael: Come on. Even though you're a complete muppet, you're still my brother. Don't like to see you upset, unless I'm the one doing it.

Gabriel: Don't matter now. I cant go.

Michael: Where?

Gabriel: On the trip to the Abbey to see The Field. I had to get the permission slip signed and it's too late. Ma is half way to Dublin by now.

Michael: Sure there's loads of fields around here.

Gabriel: Knew you'd just take the piss.

Michael: Show me the note?

Gabriel reluctantly hands Michael the note. Michael takes a pen from his pocket and scribbles on the page. Hands the page to Gabriel.

Michael: As close as Annie would get herself. Half the notes in school look the same anyway, amount I've signed.

Gabriel: Thanks. But I still can't go.

Michael: Why not?

Gabriel: It costs twenty euro and I've don't have any money. Have to pay getting on the bus.

Michael searches his pocket, hands Gabriel a ten and a twenty euro note.

Michael: Saw the film and it's deadly. The scene in the parochial house made me cry.

Gabriel: Thanks Michael I'll pay you back. Don't know how, but I will.

Michael: We'll sort something. Come on or we'll be late and you'll be looking at no field.

Both brothers make for the door and exit. Grown up Gabriel watches as they leave. He stands at the sink through the window.

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE

Gabriel stares into space. He is back in the room when Michael enters. Michael sits and his brother joins him.

Gabriel: How's things?

Michael: Didn't sleep a wink. You?

Gabriel: No. Can't believe she's gone. Just happened so quick.

Michael: It's what happened before that worries me. Going to haunt us forever.

Gabriel: She forgive us so I think we're okay on that score.

Michael: When was that?

Gabriel: Just after we danced around the sick bed and before we left the room. Said we were useless and that she knew we couldn't do it anyway.

Michael: If you say so.

Gabriel: You heard her too.

Michael: Ah yea I did.

The front door is opened and closed. Footsteps in the hall. Annie's bedroom door is opened.

Michael: She's back.

Gabriel: Don't be a fool.

Annie's bedroom door closes.

Michael: Must have forgot something. That or she's had a row and got barred by St. Peter already.

Knock on the kitchen door. Dr. Brennan enters, bag in hand. He offers condolences to Michael and Gabriel.

Doctor: Sad morning. We've lost a great woman.

Gabriel: Thanks Dr. Brennan.

Doctor: Was proud of you both. Used to make me promise not to say. Always afraid of the consequences if I betrayed her. I'll miss her dearly.

Gabriel: You were good to her always Dr. Brennan. Appreciate you calling round.

Dr. Brennan places the bag on the table.

Doctor: I've made a copy of the picture she wanted for the coffin. Left it in her room on top of the drawer.

Gabriel: Great. Didn't know which one to use.

Doctor: The letter she left. It seems to be some Agreement you made last night.

Michael: Wha?

Doctor: Before the match?

Gabriel: An agreement.

Doctor: Has both your signatures. Did you sign it?

Michael and Gabriel panic, guilty look on both. They look around for Annie's ghost.

Michael: Someone saying we didn't?

Doctor: No, no, no.

Gabriel: We did Dr. Brennan. It was her dying wish.

Doctor: And her wicked sense of humour. I'm going to read it just to make sure.

Michael: We're both happy but if it makes you feel any better, read away.

Gabriel: Whatever you say Dr. Brennan.

Doctor: Binding Agreement. The last wishes of Annie Boyle. We Michael and Gabriel Boyle do solemnly swear to carry out the last wishes of our mother Annie Boyle. We have agreed on this date of the twenty first of February 2001, to wholeheartedly support Manchester United in their Champions League match against Valencia. It is also agreed that when I pass away my sons will as chief pallbearers wear Manchester United jerseys.

Michael interrupts, attempts to speak but Gabriel gets there ahead of him.

Gabriel: Don't remember that. The first bit yea but the jersey bit wasn't in the agreement.

Michael: I only read the first line but I listened to when he read it aloud and there was no jerseys mentioned.

Dr. Brennan hands the agreement to Gabriel. Gabriel reads. Each line makes him shrink smaller and smaller. Michael looks to his brother.

Gabriel: She's stitched us up bigtime.

Doctor: Sent me a text last night along with a photo too.

Dr. Brennan walks to the table, opens the bag and takes out two United shirts. He hands one to Michael and one to Gabriel.

Doctor: Hope they fit.

Gabriel and Michael in shock. Dr. Brennan makes for the door.

Doctor: See you tomorrow.

Dr. Brennan exits. Lights fade.

ACT 2

Scene 4

Bedroom. Spotlight opens on Annie who has gone to meet her maker. She has a smile on her face. Spotlight fades and comes up on a framed picture on the locker at the foot of her bed. The selfie of Annie, Gabriel and Michael from the night before. Spotlight fades. Curtain closes.