#1 - Opening (Part 1): Love’s Never Lost

ACT ONE

AT RISE: The Social Hall, adjacent to St. Imelda’s, a small parish church in a quiet neighborhood of Dublin.

It is 1964. It is spring. The room, a large one, is dark now but a little sunlight manages to filter through the windows which are both dirty and made of an opaque-ish glass.

Though we cannot see into the room very clearly, we are very aware of the sound of a flute playing a somewhat melancholy air. We bask in it a moment. It’s a beautiful tune.

This continues a beat, even as we hear sounds from outside. The door is opened and a little more sunlight comes into the hall.

A man has come into the room. His name is ALFIE BYRNE. He is in his 40’s, average looks and build. He wears a Dublin bus conductor’s uniform, cap and ticket-dispensing gear.

He does not turn on the lights at first, but stands there, silhouetted against the door.

ALFIE BYRNE

“How beautiful is the Princess Salome tonight! She is like the shadow of a white rose in a mirror of silver. She is like a dove that has strayed. She is like a narcissus trembling in the wind. She is like a silver flower.”

FATHER KENNY

(off)

Who’s there? Is somebody in there?

(ALFIE ignores this. He doesn’t even seem to hear it. The flute music continues)

ALFIE

“You are always looking at her. You look at her too much. It is dangerous to look at people in such a fashion. Something terrible may happen.”

FATHER KENNY

Would that be you down there, Alfie Byrne?

ALFIE

“Ah! I have kissed thy mouth, Jokanaan, I have kissed thy mouth. There was a bitter taste but what matter? What matter? I have kissed thy mouth.”
FATHER KENNY

It’s not the end of the world, you know.

ALFIE

It’s the end of mine, father.

FATHER KENNY

Alfie, I hope you won’t take this the wrong way but the Abbey Theatre, St. Imelda’s Players were not. Hell, you weren’t even the Gate. You were bloody awful.

ALFIE

You may be right but we had a grand time thinking we were bloody wonderful. Didn’t you ever want to go on the stage, father?

FATHER KENNY

I do, every Sunday. It’s called High Mass. Are you coming or not?

ALFIE

Ging’s Theatrical will be wanting Herodias’s crown back before closing time or it’s another week’s rent.

FATHER KENNY

I’ll see you in confession.

ALFIE

No you won’t, Father.

FATHER KENNY

Kindly pull the door when you go.

(FATHER KENNY goes.)

#1A – Opening (Part 2)

ALFIE

WELL, I’LL SEE YOU, ST. IMELDA’S.
WHAT IS THERE TO SAY?
PULL THE DOOR AND PACK UP
THE CART.
WILL YOU MISS US, ST IMELDA’S?
MISS OUR LITTLE PLAY?
MISS OUR SMALL PRETENSIONS
TO ART?

(He begins to look through some remaining props)
(We see another man's figure come into the room. He quickly turns on the overhead lights and we see that we are in a large church hall with scattered chairs and tables in general disarray. Most importantly, there is a small stage at one end of the hall for amateur theatricals. The shabby red curtain is closed)

FATHER KENNY

Standing here in the dark like a ghost! You should be outside. It's the first sun we've had all spring.

ALFIE

Being Ireland, it's probably the last. Have you come to gloat, too, father? Watch the wretched man gather up his paper crowns and cardboard sandals?

FATHER KENNY

Nobody's gloating, Alfie. I know how much this place meant to you.

ALFIE

No, you don't, father.

FATHER KENNY

I went to the Archbishop myself. "Surely," I told him, "There's another punishment to fit the crime."

ALFIE

Spare me your Gilbert and Sullivan, man!

FATHER KENNY

"Don't put him out," I said. "That little theatre is a holy place to Alfie Byrne. He loves Saint Imelda's the same way some men love women."

ALFIE

I'm sure he had a fine smirk on him when he heard that one.

FATHER KENNY

The truth be told: You brought this on yourself, Alfie, no one else did. You should have told me this SALOME was a dirty play.

ALFIE

It's not. It's art, father, art!

FATHER KENNY

Why don't you leave this for later, and come to the cine with me?

ALFIE

A movie's cold comfort for a man who's lost his theatre. "Blessed are the poor of imagination for they shall inherit the cinemas."
(ALFIE)

AH, BUT WHAT WE HAD WAS SOMETHING.
WHAT WE HAD WAS RARE.
NO ONE WOULD DENY IT WAS GRAND
ONCE THEY STOOD ON THIS STAGE
WITH A PROP IN THEIR HAND...

(During this we are aware of the red stage curtains stirring
behind him. ALFIE is not.

The curtains slowly part.

What is revealed -in a striking tableau-are the St. Imelda's
Players.

The costumes are tacky, the lighting is crude but there is a
spirit of innocence and purity, theatre at its most basic level

Looking at the props and artifacts of his many seasons as
artistic director of The St. Imelda's Players)

#1B – Alfie’s Introduction (Part 3)

ALFIE

MRS. GRACE'S FAN
WHEN SHE PLAYED LADY BRACKNELL

MRS. GRACE

"Mr. Worthing! Rise, sir, from this semi-recumbent posture."

ALFIE

MISS CROWE'S DIadem.

MISS CROWE

"Oh, Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain."

ALFIE

MRS. CURTIN'S PARASOL.

MRS. CURTIN

(Struggling to open it)

Damnit, you’re supposed to open! Props!

ALFIE

ERNIE LALLY'S COAT.
RASHER FLYNN'S OLD HAT.
BALDY

Can we get started? Curtain going up!

(The actors have begun to arrange the chairs in the hall into two rows with an aisle in the middle. They will soon become the #3 bus.)

#1C – Opening (Part 4)

ALFIE

What are you doing, Baldy?

BALDY

We’re putting on our own play.

RASHER

It’s about time, too.

MISS CROWE

And you’re the leading man this time. No standing out front telling us where to go and how to speak and when to pick up a prop.

MRS. CURTIN

We get to be ourselves this time. So do you.

MRS. GRACE

You need a little powder, luv, your brow is shiny.

(She powders ALFIE vigorously)

Stand still!

ALFIE

I don’t believe I know this play, Mrs. Grace.

MRS. GRACE

You will, Mr. Byrne.

ERNIE

We’re all in it, taking all the parts.

RASHER

What are we gonna call it?

MRS. CURTIN

THE TRAGEDY OF ALFIE BYRNE, A DUBLIN COACHMAN or A MAN OF NO IMPORTANCE.

(They begin to dress ALFIE in his bus conductor’s gear)
ERNIE
I think you mean THE COMEDY OF ALFIE BYRNE.

BALDY
Beginners to the stage, on the double. Curtain going up. Cue the rain. I said, cue the rain! Break a leg, Mr. Byrne.

(Our play has begun!)

#2 - A Man of No Importance (Part 1)

TROUPE MEMBERS
IT'S A RAINY DUBLIN MORNING.
SKY A LEADEN GRAY.
BLACK UMBRELLAS PASSING.
JUST YOUR NORMAL DAY.

LILY
A WOMAN IS SLIDING TWO EGGS ON A PLATE,
CALLING HER BROTHER:

"Now, Alfie,
YOU'RE LATE!"

TROUPE MEMBERS
AND A MAN
IS BRUSHING THE LINT FROM HIS VEST.
JUST A MAN
HIS UNIFORM DUTIFULLY PRESSED.
NOW THE MAN
REMEMBERS A POEM THAT MAKES HIS HEART YEARN...

LILY
BUT HIS SISTER SAYS
"Straighten your tie!"

CARNEY
THEN THE BUTCHER NEXT DOOR WAVES GOODBYE

ALL (BUT ALFIE)
TO A MAN OF NO IMPORTANCE

(We hear the bell of a Dublin bus as ROBBIE FAY takes his place in the driver’s seat)
ROBBIE FAY

ENTER ROBBIE FAY.
DRIVER OF THE BUS.
JUST ANOTHER DAY
FOR THE TWO OF US.

ALFIE

Me darlin' Bosie.

ROBBIE

Don't start! I got a head on me. We were playing snooker till all hours.
(He is already combing his hair in the bus mirror)

ALFIE

Golden hair, glinting in the winter sun.

#2A - A Man of No Importance (Part 2)

ROBBIE

It's raining, it's March, me hair's not golden and me name's not Bosie. It's Robbie, I'll thank you very much.

(Starts the bus motor)

ALFIE

Drive on, fair Apollo. Race your engines, oh rare Athenian youth.

ROBBIE

So what are you giving them this morning?

ALFIE

Well, I propose to give them a treat today. They may choose any piece they like from my repertoire.

ROBBIE

I got a request for you. Do us that one, you know, "The dead are dancing with the dead."

ALFIE

You like that one, do you?

ROBBIE

I do, indeed.

ALFIE

That's my poet!
ROBBIE

Bollocks!

(During this section, the other ACTORS simply sit down in the chairs, taking their customary places on the bus. ALFIE goes among them, collecting fares)

TROUPE MEMBERS

NOW THE MAN
GREETs PASSENGERS BOARDING THE BUS
AND THE BUS
BECOMES SOMETHING MORE THAN A BUS
AS THE MAN
TAKES TICKETS AND GIVES THEM
A VERSE IN RETURN....

ALL

AND A FEw SIMPLE HEARTS ARE THUS WARMED
AS A GRAY DUBLIN DAY IS TRANSFORMED
BY A MAN OF NO IMPORTANCE...

(Everyone freezes. Time is suspended. Now ALFIE sings to these friends of his imagination, but also to us. We are inside his mind)

ALFIE

WHAT WE HAD WAS SOMETHING.
WHAT WE HAD WAS RARE.
POETRY AND ART IN THE AIR.
AND FRIENDS...

(Back into reality)

Good morning, my dear friends.

ALL

Good morning, Mr. Byrne.

ALFIE

With your permission, I will begin today’s reading with “The Harlot’s House” by Dublin’s own immortal Oscar Wilde. That is, if you won’t be telling the Sodality, Mrs. Patrick.

MRS. PATRICK

My lips are sealed, Mr. Byrne.

ALFIE

It was requested by our very own coachman, Mr. Robbie Fay.
MRS. PATRICK
You should be ashamed of yourself, Robbie Fay.

(He opens a small book of poetry and begins to read. The others
listen intently. This is their favorite part of their day)

ALFIE

“We caught the tread of dancing feet,
We loitered down the moonlit street,
And stopped beneath the harlot’s house.”

#2B - A Man of No Importance (Part 3: First Bridge)

ALL BUT ALFIE

PICTURE THE BUS
AS IT MOVES DOWN A STREET
PAST A WINDOW OF FISH
AND A PRIEST ON A BIKE.
A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE

ALL BUT ALFIE

WITH JOURNEYS TO MAKE
LEAVING THE EVERYDAY
WORLD IN THEIR WAKE...
THEN IT’S BREAK.

(The bus empties of its passengers. ALFIE takes out a brown
paper bag and offers ROBBIE a sandwich and a Guiness)

#2C - A Man of No Importance (Part 4: Lunch)

ROBBIE

ONE LITTLE GUINNESS.
IT’S ALWAYS THE SAME.

ALFIE

A GUINNESS A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY.

ROBBIE

You sound like my old man.

SAFE AND SOUND,
THAT’S THE NAME OF YOUR GAME.
ALFIE

It's good for you. Build up your muscles.

ROBBIE

It hasn't done much for you.
    THERE'S GOT TO BE MORE TO LIFE
    THAN ONE PINT OR THE POPE!
    TOO LATE FOR MY DA,
    BUT FOR YOU, MATE, THERE'S HOPE!
    AND WHAT KIND OF SANDWICH IS THIS?

ALFIE

Cucumber.

ROBBIE

Cucumber?

ALFIE

An ordinary sandwich immortalized in THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, on February 14, 1895 - a night the mundane became sublime. That was a first performance, my friend.

ROBBIE

Were you there? I'm kidding. How old are you anyway?

ALFIE

Old enough to know a gentleman doesn't ask another gentleman that question.

ROBBIE

I'm not a gentleman and I thought it was ladies you weren't supposed to ask.

ALFIE

Eat your cucumber sandwich.

ROBBIE

Not much substance.

ALFIE

Eat!

(He gets ready to read/recite another poem. It is clear this is one of their lunchtime rituals)

ALFIE

"Symphony in Yellow" by Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde.

ROBBIE

(Making himself comfortable)

I'm listening.
ALFIE

"An omnibus across the bridge
Crawls like a yellow butterfly,
And, here and there, a passery-by
Shows like a little restless midge."

ROBBIE

"Midge"! "Midge" is good, I like midge. You don't have to know what it means to
know what it means, you know what I mean, Alf?

ALFIE

That's because we feel poetry here, in our hearts. That's better than understanding
with our minds. You're learning, that's good, you're learning.

CARSON

What's going on here?

ALFIE

Damn, it's Carson!

(They quickly get the bus moving again)

You look like you could use a Guiness, Mr. Carson!

CARSON

You're eight minutes behind schedule! The Dublin Transit System doesn't take this
laxness lightly. I'm warning you Byrne.

#2D - A Man of No Importance (Part 5: Second Bridge)

ALL BUT ALFIE

PICTURE THE BUS
AS IT MOVES DOWN A STREET
PAST A NUN WITH A SACK
AND A BOY WITH A DOG.
A BUS IN THE RAIN
AND THE HUMBlest OF MEN
BRINGING HIS PASSENGERS
HOME ONCE AGAIN...

#2E - A Man of No Importance (Part 6: Adele)

ALFIE

Good afternoon, my dear friends.
ALL

Good afternoon, Mr. Byrne.

ALFIE

With your permission, I will continue with “The Harlot’s House”.

(He reads)

“Then turning to my love I said
The dead are dancing with the dead.
The dust is whirling with the dust.
But she, she heard the violin,
And left my side, and entered in;
Love passed into the house of Lust.”

ADELE RICE

A BLUE COATED GIRL
NO ONE’S NOTICED BEFORE
ENTERS THE BUS,
TAKES A SEAT BY THE DOOR...

(All eyes are on the newcomer)

ALFIE

My friends, we have a new face. Permit me on your behalf to welcome her into our little circle. Welcome, my dear, welcome. Miss?

ADELE

Rice.

ALFIE

Miss Rice. Miss Rice’s entrance matches perfectly the lines of our poem, our little rhyme.

“Then suddenly the tune went false.
The dancers wearied of the waltz.
The shadows ceased to wheel and whirl.
And down the long and silent street,
The dawn with silver sandaled feet,
Crept like a frightened girl.”

(He puts his hand to his heart. The passengers applaud)

ERNIE

Fair play to you, Mr. Byrne, fair play!
#2F - A Man of No Importance (Part 7: Last Chorus)

ALL BUT ALFIE

JUST A MAN
CONDUCTING HIS BUS THROUGH THE DAY
BUT THE DAY IS NOW SOMETHING MORE THAN A DAY
AS THE MAN TAKES TICKETS
AND LOOKS AT THE GIRL DRESSED IN BLUE

ROBBIE

THEN HIS DRIVER YELLS,

Alf, you ok?

ALL BUT ALFIE

AND THE BUS LUMBERS OFF ON ITS WAY
(The passengers begin to exit again)

GROUP 1

AS A MAN OF NO
IMPORTANCE

A MAN OF NO
IMPORTANCE...

ALL BUT ALFIE

A MAN OF NO IMPORTANCE
ENDS HIS DAY ...
(The bus is empty again. It's the end of their day. ALFIE puts his feet up)

GROUP 2

A MAN OF NO IMPORTANCE

A MAN OF NO IMPORTANCE

ALFIE

Home, James. Take the scenic route. Through Phoenix Park, past Parliament House and straight on to Dreamland.

#2G - A Man of No Importance (Part 8: Robbie & Alfie End of Day)

ROBBIE

YOU AND YOUR FANCIES.
THEY'RE ALWAYS A GRIN.
I wish I had your imagination, mate.
ALFIE

You do. You just don’t use it.

(They “arrive” at their terminal garage)

ROBBIE

I’LL BET YOU FANCY
THAT GIRL WHO GOT IN.

ALFIE

Never mind the girl. And I’ve done the report.

ROBBIE

FOR A FELLA WHO’S GOT HIS HEAD
IN THE CLOUDS SUCH AS YOU,
YOU’RE DAMN FINE TO WORK WITH
AND I’M GLAD I DO.

ALFIE

Thanks Robbie. I like you, too.

ROBBIE

I’M OFF TO THE PUB THEN.

ALFIE

GOOD LUCK AT THE SNOOKER.

ROBBIE

DON’T WALK INTO WALLS, ALF.
THAT GIRL IS A LOOKER.

ALFIE

I’LL SEE YOU TOMORROW.

BOTH

AT SEVEN

(ROBBIE goes)

#2H – A Man of No Importance (Part 9: Alfie Alone)

ALFIE

IT’S A RAINY DUBLIN EVENING.
LAMPS ARE GOING ON.
BLACK UMBRELLAS PASSING
PEOPLE COME AND GONE.
A UNIFORMED MAN
HURRIES HOME THROUGH THE NIGHT
THREE BLOCKS DOWN COLLINS,
A LEFT, THEN A RIGHT.
AND NOTHING IS DIFFERENT
SAVE ONE RAY OF LIGHT
FOR A MAN OF NO IMPORTANCE.

(ALFIE wends his lonely way home)

#21 – Transition to the Kitchen

LILY AND ALFIE’S APARTMENT

(We are in the small apartment LILY and ALFIE share next
door to Mr. Carney’s butcher shop)

LILY

Alfie, who are you cooking for? The Queen of England? What’s the occasion, anyway?

ALFIE

(off)

Close your eyes! Are they closed?

LILY

Hurry up, will you? I’m starving!

(She sits at table as ALFIE enters with a steaming bowl of food
for them)

ALFIE

Eccola, mia sorella. Aprite gli occhi. Open your eyes, Lil.

(LILY eyes the bowl suspiciously)

LILY

Merciful hour! I couldn’t eat that.

ALFIE

You had it before, you liked it. It’s spaghetti - with a Bolognese sauce

LILY

It’s not curry, is it?

ALFIE

Curry’s Indian, the fellas with the turbans.
LILY

Never eating curry again, not after the last time.

ALFIE

This is Italian.

LILY

Yeah, well, they’re all darkies to me.

ALFIE

The Genoveses are Italian, Lily. The De Santees, the Volpes. They buy their vegetables off you.

LILY

Yeah, and look what they do with them.

(She toys miserably with her food)

Suppose I’ll have to eat something to keep body and soul together.

(Suddenly)

All right, tell me. I know you’re up to something. I’m not your sister for nothing, Alfie Fintan Byrne. I can read you like a book.

ALFIE

It’s lucky for me you can’t.

(He sits opposite. Then, confidentially)

Remember this morning I said I - I had a feeling.

LILY

Oh, yeah, one of your premiumnitions.

ALFIE

Well, I was right. Someone I was waiting for, praying for even, got onto me bus out of the blue. A girl.

LILY

A girl! Oh, Alfie! Well, that is the power of the nine weeks of St. Jude for you! Excuse me while I faint.

#3 - The Burden of Life (Part 1)

(LILY)

No, while I holler it out the window: Mum, Dad, wherever you are up there: tell Gabriel to blow his mighty horn. My own dear sweet little brother’s in love!

HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN
I’VE BEEN DOWN ON MY KNEES
SAYING ROSARIES INTO MY SLEEP?
ALFIE

Lil!

LILY

THE CANDLES I’VE LIT!
THE NOVENAS I’VE SAID
IN THE HOPE ST. LAURETTA WOULD WEEP!

ALFIE

Lil!

LILY

THE GIRLS AT SODALITY
CALL ME A MARTYR
BUT THAT’LL BE ALL IN THE PAST
NOW HEAVEN HAS LIFTED
THE BURDEN OF LIFE:
AND HAS BROUGHT YOU A SWEETIE AT LAST!
OH...
YOU HAD BETTER PROPOSE TO HER FAST!

ALFIE

Are you through, Lily?

LILY

I’m all ears, Alf. Speak, lamb. Say sweet words to me, my only angel.

ALFIE

She’s not for me. She’s for me play.

LILY

Oh God, you’re not starting that up again, are you? Wasn’t last time enough for you?

ALFIE

If you’re talking about “The Importance of Being Earnest”!

LILY

I’m talking about you making an utter fool of yourself.

#3A – The Burden of Life (Part 2)

ALFIE

A play like “Importance” needs more than a single performance to get it right. This
time I intend to stage -for four performances- Oscar Wilde’s masterpiece, SALOME.

LILY

SALOME? Is that out of the Bible?
ALFIE

It's nothing to do with the Bible or nine weeks on your knees to St. Jude. It's to do with art.

LILY

Art! Who puts these notions in your head? You're an unmarried bus conductor, Alfie, in case you haven't noticed.

I THINK OF THE TIMES
WE WAS BOTH OF US KIDS.
IT WAS ME WHO WOULD STAND UP FOR YOU.
I'D BEAT ANYBODY WHO'D
PICK ON MY BROTHER.
I'D PUMMEL 'EM PURPLE AND BLUE!
BUT, HERE I AM NOW, LOOKING AFTER YOU STILL!
THE GIRLS SAY I'M OUT OF MY HEAD,
AND PITY A WOMAN
THE BURDEN OF LIFE
WITH A BROTHER WHO'S NEVER BEEN WED.
OH, IT'S A BLESSING OUR PARENTS ARE DEAD!

ALFIE

Lil!

LILY

ST. LAURETTA
I DON'T EVEN MIND IF THE GIRL ISN'T VIRGINAL.
FAT CHANCE, THESE DAYS.
THERE'S PROBABLY THREE OF US
LEFT IN ALL IRELAND.
ST. LAURETTA
WITH ALL OF THE SCANDAL
YOU HEAR AND YOU READ OF TODAY,
OH, WHAT'S THE WHOLE WORLD COMING TO
ANYWAY?
AND NOW AND AGAIN, MR. CARNEY PROPOSES
AND ALL I CAN SAY IS — NOT YET.
MY BROTHER, HE NEEDS ME.
WHO ELSE HAS HE GOT

LILY

BUT SOME GIRL WHO HE STILL HASN'T MET!
AND NOW AND AGAIN I SEE GRAY IN YOUR HAIR
AND I NOTICE THE GRAY IN MINE, TOO.
OH, PITY A WOMAN THE BURDEN OF LIFE—
HOW MUCH MORE DO I HAVE TO GO THROUGH?
GOD SENT YOU THIS GIRL
ALFIE GIVE IT A WHIRL
OR I’LL BASH IN YOUR BRAINS WITH MY SHOE!
ST. LAURETTA IS COUNTIN’ ON YOU!

ALFIE

While you and St. Lauretta are up here planning my future, I’ll just go next door and
tell your Mr. Carney we’re going up again.

LILY

Mr. Carney’s as bad as you. You’re both bewitched. There should be a law against
it.

ALFIE

What? The theatre?

LILY

No, your theatre, St. Imelda’s. Well, while the two of you are going up, I’ll be sitting
down, watching Lucille Ball, a true talent, someone who is funny on purpose!

#3B – Scene Shift After “Burden of Life”

CARNEY’S BUTCHER SHOP

(CARNEY is waiting on a customer when ALFIE enters the
shop.)

CUSTOMER

Tie it up good and tight, Mr. Carney.

CARNEY

No one trusses up a roast like William Carney.

ALFIE

Or lights up the stage at St. Imelda’s either.

CARNEY

I try. I am the humble servant of the playwright, nothing less, nothing more.

ALFIE

We’re going up.

CARNEY

We’re what?

ALFIE

You heard me. We’re going up again.
CARNEY

No!

ALFIE

First rehearsal early Monday evening. They want us out before the Bingo begins. Can I count on you?

CARNEY

You may indeed, sir. It’s been too long entirely. I know we’ve had our differences - personal and artistic - but this time I will give you an Algernon for the ages.

CUSTOMER

What about my roast?

CARNEY

Take your bleeding roast.

CUSTOMER

It’s not trussed properly.

ALFIE

The thing is that...

CUSTOMER

I need a pound of your breakfast sausage.

CARNEY

(To customer)

We’re closed, woman. Can’t you see we’re going up?

CARNEY

(To ALFIE)

You have made me the happiest of men. I’m what they call a creature of the theatre. Keep me off the stage too long and I start to shrivel up. My soul needs the exercise, Mr. Byrne.

ALFIE

Have no fear, Mr. Carney. No matter what play we do, you’re still my star.

CARNEY

God bless you, Alfie Byrne.

ALFIE

The...er... refreshments...

CARNEY

Oh, no, no, don’t worry. I will provide the ham for the rehearsal sandwiches. We’ll let some of the others provide the ham for the performance.
ALFIE

Seven o'clock, Monday. St. Imelda's. You're the first to know. I'll go tell the others.
Mr. Carney? He doesn't hear me.

(CARNEY has been unaware of him since the magic words "Going up". ALFIE goes)

#3C — Going Up! (Introduction)

CARNEY

"The St. Imelda's Players have the distinct privilege of presenting for your play-going perusal and dramatic discernment THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST with Mr. William Carney in the leading role of Algernon. Mr. Carney, a familiar and beloved member of the St. Imelda's Players, is best known for his performances as Denny O'Connell, the irate father, in A NIGHT ON THE TOWN, and Long John Silver in his own adaptation of TREASURE ISLAND, for which he also provided additional staging."

#4 — Going Up! (Part 1)

CARNEY

YOU'RE AT THAT DAILY GRIND
WHEN YOU SUDDENLY COME TO FIND
THAT YOU'RE GOING UP!
WHO GIVES A SAUSAGE THEN
FOR THE ORDERS OF MORTAL MEN
WHEN YOU'RE GOING UP!
WHEN LIFE'S ALL MEAGER SCRAPS,
DON'T YOU LOSE HEART, SIR.
DROP THAT CLEAVER,
GRAB THE OLD TAPS, AND PERHAPS
YOU'LL LAND A MEATY PART, SIR!
YOU BUTCHER, BUSMAN, CLERK!
THERE IS NO LINE OF WORK
THAT MAKES THE OLD MARROW GLOW
LIKE GOING UP!

(Lights come up on MRS. GRACE at home)
MRS. GRACE
Margaret Grace returns to St. Imelda's after a brief absence brought on by her husband's condition. Maggie is perhaps best remembered for her Katisha in THE MIKADO and her portrayal of St. Joan. Her water colors may be seen in the lobby. They are for purchase.

(Lights come up on BALDY)

CARNEY
ONE MOMENT LIFE IS SLOW.

MRS. GRACE
YOU'RE PAINTING PANSIES.

BALDY
FATE SHOWS UP
AND HANDS YOU A SHOW
AND HELLO!

ALL
YOU'RE GOING UP!

BALDY
James Michael O'Shea, (or "Baldy" as he is known to one and all), has stage managed every production at St. Imelda's since its founding. His late wife, Mary, will be remembered for her many performances on our stage. Mr. O'Shea is a retired publican.

(Lights come up on MISS CROWE)

MISS CROWE
Oona Crowe was Miss Prism in last season's performance of THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST but her favorite role remains the title one in our centennial production of PETER PAN.

MISS CROWE, CARNEY, MRS. GRACE, BALDY
YOUR SKY IS PAINTED BLUE

MISS CROWE
YOU CAN FLY LIKE YOU'RE TWENTY-TWO
ALL

'CAUSE YOU'RE GOING UP!

(ERNIE enters)

ERNIE

Ernest Lally will be remembered by St. Imelda's audiences for his sterling portrayal of Mustard Seed in "A Midsummer Night's Dream".

ALL PLUS ERNIE

YOU MAY PLAY ROYALTY

ERNIE

OR JUST SPEAR-BEARER NUMBER THREE

ALL FIVE

BUT YOU'RE GOING UP!

(RASHER enters)

RASHER

Rash Flynn is a founding member of St. Imelda's and appeared in our inaugural production of PYGMALION as Colonel Pickering. In his youth, Rash was an all-Ireland gymnast.

(He takes a drag on his cigarette and coughs)

SULLY O'HARA

Sully O'Hara, currently unemployed, is making his theater debut with this production. Thank you.

ALL PLUS RASHER AND SULLY

THE HOUSE MAY NOT BE PACKED
BUT DON'T LET GO, SIR.
YOU'VE GOT SCENES TO PLAY!

CARNEY

Oh, that this too too solid flesh should melt.

ALL

YOU'VE GOT LINES TO SAY!

CARNEY

(Holding a pig's head)

"Alas poor Yorick, I knew him Horatio!"

ALL

YOU'VE GOT FANS WHO WANT TO GET CARRIED AWAY!

(MRS. CURTIN enters, tap dancing madly)
MRS. CURTIN
Maureen Curtin was a child star of the Dublin Music Hall and has kept her skills well-honed. This performance marks her return to the stage after some years. The Curtins' have 9 children: Deidre, Padric, Rosaline, Fintan, Rebecca, Juliet, Anton, George Bernard, and Portia.

ALL
THE HOUSE MAY NOT BE PACKED
BUT EVEN SO SIR.

CARNEY
Bow to the highest ring. That's where you used to sit. Let them see your eyes, let them take you in, and then, with humility, the tip top of your head. You were good tonight Carney. You're right, I was damn good!

#4C – Going Up! (Part 4)

ALL
YOU BUTCHER, BUSMAN, CLERK!
THERE'S JUST ONE LINE OF WORK
THAT MAKES REAL LIFE
SEEM SO
LONG AGO
AND IT'S GOING UP!
GOING UP!
WE'RE GOING...

CARNEY
Fellow thespians, prepare to meet your public.

ALL
UP!

#4D – Scene Change After “Going Up!”

THE BUS
(The actors reassemble the bus. They are waiting for ALFIE to tell them what their next production will be)

MISS CROWE
What play are we doing, Mr. Byrne? Why are you keeping us in suspense?

BALDY
My vote is for AN IDEAL HUSBAND.
MRS. GRACE

We just did that one.

BALDY

You'll do it till you get it right.

ROBBIE

What are we waiting for, Alfie? We're already behind schedule. Carson will have a stroke.

ALFIE

Here she comes now.

(ADELE hurries onto the bus)

ADELE

I'm sorry, I was at the doctor's. Thank you for waiting.

(She opens her purse. ALFIE puts up his hand)

ALFIE

A princess of Judea does not pay to ride a Dublin motor coach.

ADELE

I don't understand.

(CARSON, the bus line supervisor, approaches, watch in hand)

CARSON

Behind schedule you are again and it's not even noon. That's my last warning.

ALFIE

And good morning to you, Mr. Carson.

CARSON

Tickets, please.

(He stops in front of ADELE)

This woman has no ticket.

ALFIE

Why, I must have overlooked the young lady. There you are, miss.

(He dispenses her a ticket from the machine)

CARSON

The bus company is not a charity. If you want to provide free transport for wasters, that's up to you. But if I come on and find a tinker without a ticket, I'll put you off the bus - not them. Mark me now, Byrne.

(CARSON exits.)
Good morning, my dear friends.

Good morning, Mr. Byrne

Our next production—and I will need your support, hard work and talent as never before—will be Oscar Wilde’s masterpiece, THE TRAGEDY OF SALOME, PRINCESS OF JUDEA.

MRS. GRACE

That’s the play with the immodest dancing in it, is it not, Mr. Byrne?

ALFIE

It is the play with the sublime Dance of the Seven Veils, Mrs. Grace. It is not immodest. It is art.

MRS. GRACE

Mr. Grace would never allow me to exhibit myself undulating in flimsy garments.

ALFIE

And for that we are grateful to Mr. Grace. We need your majestic talents to embody the role of Herodias, wife of Herod, mother of Salome.

Does she dance?

ALFIE

Not a muscle.

Thank God.

MRS. GRACE

Exactly my sentiments, Mrs. Grace.

MRS. GRACE

Who’s playing Herod? I have to know who my partner is.

BALDY

No one gives a rat’s ass who’s playing Herod when you’re putting on SALOME. If anyone on this bus is playing a 16 year old virgin, I want to be first in line to buy a ticket for the comedy of the century.

ALFIE

“How beautiful is the Princess Salome tonight”.

(He gets down on one knee in front of ADELE)
ADELE

What are you all looking at?

ALFIE

"How pale the Princess is! Never have I seen her so pale. She is like the shadow of a white rose in a mirror of silver."

ADELE

I didn’t move to Dublin to be made fun of! Go to hell, all of you, I’ll walk.

ALFIE

Miss Rice!

ADELE

(Whirling around)

I expected more from city folk, but I guess human nature is what it is, big city or village: mean spirited and vile. A single girl is the butt for anyone’s jokes.

ALFIE

I meant no offense. That was my inappropriate way of asking you to be in our little play.

ADELE

Play? What play?

ALFIE

Salome by Oscar Wilde. She’s a beautiful princess, like you Miss Rice.

ADELE

I’m not an actress.

ALFIE

We’re an amateur group. We do it for fun, for love. We’re all friends. You’d just be one of us. The moment I set eyes on you, Miss Rice, I knew I’d found my Salome.

ADELE

I’m too shy. I’d get the giggles or I’d faint.

ALFIE

No, you wouldn’t. You’d be in another world entirely: a world of your creation.

ADELE


#5 – Princess (Part 1: Intro)

ALFIE

Oh, no. Dear Lord, no. I’m no leading man, onstage or off.
I'm hoping Robbie, my partner in crime on the bus, our driver, I'm hoping he'll play...well, Jokanaan's not really a prince, but you are in love with him.

**ADELE**

That wouldn't be too hard. He's a looker.

**ALFIE**

Yes, he is, and no, it wouldn't. What do you say?

---

#5A - **Princess (Part 2)**

**ADELE**

HOW CAN A GIRL WHO'S FROM
A SOMEPLACE NORTH OF NOWHERE
BE A PRINCESS?
WHAT IN THE WORLD
WOULD MAKE YOU THINK THAT I WAS QUALIFIED
FOR PLAYING THE PART?

**ALFIE**

I have an instinct for talent.

**ADELE**

I'M FROM ROSCOMMON, WHERE
THE MAJOR ENTERTAINMENT
IS TO SIT OUTSIDE THE PUB
AND WATCH A FLY ON DOG SHITE-(I'M NOT JOKING!)
THEY HAVE THEIR FOOTBALL AND THEIR BIBLES
AND THEY DON'T BELIEVE IN ART.

**ALFIE**

I'll help you. I'll take you through it line by line.

**ADELE**

HERE STANDS A SHOPGIRL WHO PUTS PRICES
ON THE PRODUCE,
NOT A PRINCESS.
MY ROYAL PALACE IS
THE BACK ROOM OF A BOARDINGHOUSE.
BRICK WALL FOR A VIEW.
I DON'T PRETEND TO BE A THING BUT
PLAIN AND COMMON.
WHEN YOU'RE BROUGHT UP IN ROSCOMMON,
WHAT'S THE USE PRETENDING?
I LEAVE THE FAIRYTALE ENDING
TO THE PEOPLE SUCH AS YOU.

**ALFIE**

Miss Rice...

**ADELE**

THEY DON'T RAISE DREAMERS IN ROSCOMMON
ONLY ONIONS AND POTATOES.
YOU CAN ONLY TALK ABOUT POTATOES SO LONG.
NO ONE THERE COULD EVER SEE
WHAT YOU SEEM TO SEE IN ME

**ALFIE**

WELL, POSSIBLY, ROSCOMMON
WAS WRONG...

It can be beautiful out there, playing a part, losing yourself in another person. Just for once, Miss Rice, being somebody new. I'm throwing myself at your feet, your royal highness.

**ADELE**

I DON'T SUPPOSE I'LL EVER
HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE TO PLAY
A PRINCESS.
AND HERE IN DUBLIN IT APPEARS
THAT THE PREVAILING MINDS
ARE NOT QUITE SO SMALL.
I SPOKE I WOULDN'T SPEND MY LIFE
BACK IN ROSCOMMON,
I'D BE SOMEONE GOING SOMEPLACE
THEY WOULD NEVER DREAM OF...
THE ONLY DREAMER THAT ROSCOMMON
WILL BE ABLE TO RECALL.
SEEMS LIKE ROSCOMMON
RAISED A PRINCESS AFTER ALL.

**ALFIE**

My friends, our princess Salome.
#5B – Transition After "Princess"

ST. IMELDA'S SOCIAL HALL

(ALFIE, BALDY and FATHER KENNY and PETER. Later, MRS. PATRICK.)

FATHER KENNY
So you're trying it again this year? Your little drama group?

ALFIE
The muses of the theatre are calling, Father Kenny.

FATHER KENNY
Do you think you will manage it this time?

ALFIE
We're quietly confident, father.

FATHER KENNY
And will it be the same play? You're not changing it are you?

ALFIE
No, it's another one. It's about John the Baptist.

FATHER KENNY
John the Baptist. You'll need lots of water then, Mr. Byrne, a river Jordan, so to speak.

ALFIE
No water. His beheading. It's a very dry play we'll be doing, Father Kenny. No mopping up after us, Peter.

FATHER KENNY
That's a relief. Water and bingo, that's not a good mix. But it's a biblical theme. That's a good thing, a fine thing. Here's Mrs. Patrick with the keys. Wonderful woman. Don't know what the sodality would do without her. She'd make you a fine wife.

MRS. PATRICK
I'm married, Father Kenny.

FATHER KENNY
Ah yes. All the good ones usually are.

ALFIE
Could I have the keys now, father?
FATHER KENNY
John the Baptist - isn’t there a dance in there somewhere? Would it be immodest dancing? The Archbishop is very strong on immodest dancing.

ALFIE
Not immodest, Father Kenny. It’s art.

FATHER KENNY
Ah, art. Well, here are the keys. And you might drop up the script sometime.

ALFIE
We’ll do that.

MRS. PATRICK
The archbishop is very strong on a lot of things. It must be exhausting.

(They go. PETER gets a broom and begins to sweep)

ALFIE
We can’t perform in a dark theatre, Baldy. Have you fixed the lights, yet?

BALDY
Unfortunately for you, I have. That’s what was wrong with your last production. People could see it. Here goes nothing.

(He throws the switch. The lights come on)

ALFIE
You’re a genius! You are the rock on which the St. Imelda’s Players are built.

BALDY
Don’t tell Carney that! Does he know what play you’re doing?

ALFIE
He doesn’t care about the play. He only cares about the size of his part.

BALDY
He’s in the Sodality of the Sacred Heart, remember.

ALFIE
Carney has a starring role, that will go a long way to mollify his Catholic principles. Give us a hand, will you, Peter? You still saving up your coppers to go to London and become the fifth Beatle?

PETER
I’m going to start my own band: The Annihilators. Irish music for Irishmen!

ALFIE
Art is for everyone, Peter. And if it’s not, it should be.
PETER
Don't take this personal, Mr. Byrne, but art is for old fogies. Rock and roll is the future.

ALFIE
I hope you're wrong.

PETER
I'll get more chairs.

(He goes as they begin to set up chairs)

ALFIE
Ah. Baldy, as many times as I've done this, the first reading is still in some ways the most magic time of all in the theatre.

#6 - First Rehearsal (Part 1)

(ALFIE)
Our first encounter with the playwright's words. Our tongues fumbling with the poetry of his heart. No preconceptions. True creativity reigns.

ALFIE
THIS ROOM IS THE TETRARCH'S TERRACE.
THAT LIGHTBULB, THE EVENING STAR!
THOSE OLD LEATHER BOOTS YOU'RE WEARING-

BALDY
Roman sandals!

ALFIE
YES, THEY ARE!
IN OUR EMPIRE VAST, A COOL NIGHT BREEZE IS BLOWING ACROSS THE SAND AND IN TWENTY SECONDS, AT THAT DOOR, THE EMPRESS HERSELF WILL STAND!

BOTH
OH, THE EMPRESS HERSELF WILL STAND!

(The St. Imelda's players are arriving.)

MRS. GRACE
"Give me my robe, put on my crown, I have immortal longings in me."

ALFIE
A wonderful reading, as usual, Mrs. Grace, but wrong play.
(He hands her a script)

Wonderful to have you back Mrs. Curtin.

**MRS. CURTIN**

When I left the house, the 8 year-old was strangling the 4 year-old, the dishes were stacked to the ceiling and the old man was watching the telly with his trousers open. And people ask why I love the theatre.

(She takes her script)

**ALFIE**

I HAVEN'T BEEN HALF SO HAPPY
SINCE I DON'T REMEMBER WHEN
MY FRIENDS IN THE ROOM TOGETHER
ALFIE AND MISS CROWE
WE'RE BACK ON THE BOARDS AGAIN

**ALFIE**

Miss Crowe!

**MISS CROWE**

(Inhaling mightily)

There's something about a theatre, even this one. You can almost smell it.

**ALFIE**

Especially this one.

(He hands her a script)

**PETER**

Coming through.

**ALFIE**

Gentlemen.

(He starts passing out scripts)

**CARNEY**

I just want someone to tell me why we're not doing THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ERNEST again.

**BALDY**

Because we found someone new. People are tired of looking at your old mug.

**ALFIE**

Mr. Carney, you are to play King Herod, a magnificent dramatic role. Quite a change for you, I think you'll find it.
CARNEY

I like a good challenge, mind you, I like a good part, too.

(ADELE is the last to arrive)

ADELE

Is this the right place?

ALFIE

Here's our Princess Salome. Welcome to our little theatre, Miss Rice. We're about to begin.

(Polite applause for ADELE. The men are more enthusiastic than the women.)

ALFIE

As for our Jokanaan, our John the Baptist, the young man I have in mind has not yet agreed to perform but I'm confident he will. Today, with your permission, I'll be reading his lines. Are we ready? Shall we form our circle. Mr. Carney, will you do us the honor?

CARNEY

Let us pray.

#6A – First Rehearsal (Part 2)

(CARNEY)

SAINT IMELDA,
SMILE ON OUR FIRST REHEARSAL DAY.
BLESS THIS HUMBLE SEMI-PROFESSIONAL PLAY!

ALL

SAINT IMELDA
HELP US CREATE A THING OF ART.
AS WE START OUR FIRST
REHEARSAL...

ALFIE

Mr. William Shakespeare said it best. "O for a muse of fire, that would ascend/The brightest heaven of invention! A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,/And monarchs to behold the swelling scene". Language like that almost makes you think the man was Irish! When he spoke for his rounded O of a theatre, he spoke for all of us. What is the difference between the Globe and this church social hall? None. We are both infinite.
(ALFIE)
FEEL THE MAGICAL RING SURROUND US
TRANSFORMING US AS WE ARE
FROM GIRL ON A BUS TO PRINCESS,
A LIGHTBULB TO A STAR!
IT’S AS IF WE WERE THREE OR FOUR YEARS OLD
AT OUR FIRST PUNCH AND JUDY SHOW
ON THIS MAGICAL DAY
WE ENTER OUR PLAY
AND WHO KNOWS WHERE WE MAY GO
ALL
WHO KNOWS WHERE WE MAY GO.

ALFIE
At rise. The terrace of Herod’s palace. A bloody moon.
(THE ACTORS begin to read through actual lines from top of
play)

#6B – Transition After “First Rehearsal”

THE BUS DEPOT/GARAGE

(ROBBIE is stripped to the waist as he works to put a tire on a
rim. ALFIE is with him)

ROBBIE
Stop your nattering, man, and give us a hand.
(ALFIE tries to help ROBBIE with his work)

ALFIE
Why do you say “no” to something you’ve never tried?

ROBBIE
There’s a lot of things I’ve never tried that I never intend to and play acting is one of
them. Use some strength, man!

ALFIE
I am!

ROBBIE
So you can stop trying to get me in tights and a wig and spouting poetry! Your audi-
ence would be in stitches but no one would be laughing harder than me. Alfie, didn’t
you never get a look at me skinny legs when we was changing?
ALFIE

No one would be laughing, including you, if you spoke the words of a great writer from the heart. The tights, the wigs: that’s the role of theatre. In the theatre, it’s your heart we’re after.

ROBBIE

Well my heart is set on getting to a pub. To hell with this tire. The rim’s all bent. Carson can fix it himself. I got you all dirty. Come on, we’ll put on a clean shirt and call it a day. Don’t look so crushed. I’m not an actor. I don’t know about your sort of stuff, art and all. I’m an ordinary bloke.

(They will change into their civvies during this)

ALFIE

You’re not ordinary, Robbie.

ROBBIE

You just say that ’cause you like me. Come out with me and me mates some evening, you’ll see how ordinary I am.

ALFIE

All of your scenes would be with Miss Rice. None with Mrs. Grace. Salome’s the key. Miss Rice will be splendid. She’s like a dove that has strayed.

ROBBIE

She acts innocent.

ALFIE

She is innocent. She is a virgin. She has never defiled herself. She has never abandoned herself to men like other goddesses.

ROBBIE

Jesus, is that what you think?

ALFIE

I do, I do.

ROBBIE

Then you’re more innocent than she.

ALFIE

I thought you were interested in Miss Rice.

ROBBIE

Why would I be interested in Miss Rice?

ALFIE

She’s young, she’s beautiful, she’s a girl.

ROBBIE

Well I’m not. There must be something wrong with me!
ALFIE

Who... who are you interested in?

ROBBIE

(Good natured teasing)

That’s for me to know and you to find out.

ALFIE

I meant.

ROBBIE

I know what you meant. Stop trying to fix me up with a bird neither of us knows the first thing about. Come to think of it, I don’t know much more about you. We work together but who are you? What do you do at night? Where do you go? What fires burn in your loins, Mr. Byrne?

ALFIE

St. Imelda’s is my life. Putting on plays. Those are my friends.

ROBBIE

I’m talking about reality. Out there. It’s a real world, Dublin is. You’re coming with me tonight.

ALFIE

My sister will be waiting supper for me.

ROBBIE

You’ve been taking tickets too long.

ALFIE

She’ll take my head off.

ROBBIE

It’s time you opened your eyes, man.

(ROBBIE and ALFIE head for the pub, and we open onto)

#7 – The Streets of Dublin (Introduction)

ROBBIE

I DON’T WANT TO STAND
ON A STAGE WITH A SWORD.
I WENT TO THE PANTOMIME ONCE.
I WAS BORED.
I’M NOT A POETICAL SORT OF A PERSON LIKE YOU.
WHEN I NEED A POEM,
THE STREETS AND THE GUTTERS WILL DO.
(ROBBIE)

THERE’S TOMMY FLANAGAN WHO LIGHTS THE GAS LAMPS-
A HUNDRED NINETY LAMPS IN PHOENIX PARK ALONE.
HE’S DONE IT DRUNK FOR OVER FIFTY-SEVEN YEARS
IN DUBLIN!
AND DOWN ON HENRY STREET IS MAD JOHN MAHER—
OLD RAMBLIN’ JOHNNY WITH A FACE LIKE HAMMERED MEAT,
BUT JOHNNY’S SINGIN’ BRINGS A DUBLIN MAN TO TEARS...
I DON’T KNOW
THE WORDS TO TELL YOU HOW IT FEELS
OR HOW TO PUT IT IN A RHYME
BUT IF YOU COME WITH ME YOU’LL KNOW
HOW THE LAMPS IN THE PARK
LOOK LIKE GOD IN THE DARK
AS THEY GLOW
ON THE STREETS OF DUBLIN.

#7B – The Streets of Dublin (Part 2)

THE DEALERS HAWKIN’ AND THE DOCKERS YELLIN’,
THE BUSKERS BANGIN’ AND THE RAGMEN RINGIN’ BELLS,
AND THERE’S MAUREEN WHOSE DOOR IS ALWAYS OPEN FOR
ALL DUBLIN!
AND TONY KIELY WITH HIS RACING PIGEONS.
IT’S LIKE RELIGION HOW HE LIVES TO FLY THOSE BIRDS—
HE SWEARS THEY TRAVEL FOR A HUNDRED MILES OR MORE...

I DON’T KNOW
THE KIND OF WORDS THAT YOU MIGHT SAY
BUT I CAN PUT IT MY OWN WAY,
AND IF YOU COME WITH ME YOU’LL KNOW
THAT THOSE BIRDS ON THE WING
ARE A BEAUTIFUL THING
AS THEY BLOW
THROUGH THE STREETS OF DUBLIN.

(And at once we are in a noisy, smoky Dublin pub. The
PEOPLE IN THE PUB are singing along as ROBBIE finishes
his song.)
AND THERE'S MUSIC LIKE NOTHIN' YOU'VE HEARD,
IF YOU KNOW THE RIGHT JUKEBOX TO PLAY!
THERE ARE GLASSES TO RAISE IN THE PRAISE
OF SURVIVIN' THE DAY...
DOWN WHERE...
MISS KITTY FARRELLY IS POURIN' WHISKEY
AND FRANKIE DONAHUHE IS LIGHTING HER CIGAR.
A SMOKEY DEN WHERE WORKIN' MEN DON'T BRING THE
WIFE...
IT'S THE LAUGHTER OF FELLAS WITH STORIES TO TELL,
MEN WHO LOVE TO GET DRUNK AND RAISE TRUE FECKIN'
HELL!
AH, YOU COME OUT WITH ME AND YOU'LL SEE
WHAT YOU'RE MISSIN' IN LIFE

ROBBIE
ON THE STREETS
OF DUBLIN
ON THE STREETS
OF DUBLIN
ON THE STREETS
OF DUBLIN
DUBLIN

GROUP #1
ON THE STREETS
OF DUBLIN
ON THE STREETS
OF DUBLIN
ON THE STREETS
OF DUBLIN
DUBLIN

GROUP #2
ON THE STREETS
OF DUBLIN
ON THE STREETS
OF DUBLIN
ON THE STREETS
OF DUBLIN
DUBLIN

GROUP #3
ON THE STREETS
OF DUBLIN
ON THE STREETS
OF DUBLIN
ON THE STREETS
OF DUBLIN
DUBLIN

A CROWDED PUB
(The publican is KITTY, an attractive blonde in her 40's)

ROBBIE
Ladies and Gentlemen: I have the pleasure of introducing my work partner,
theatrical producer extraordinaire and general hell raiser, Mr. Alfie Byrne. Drinks on
me. Don't take his money, Kitty.

(ROBBIE is very popular and very at home at the pub)
Kitty

(Aside)

He’s a queer looking tulip.

Robbie

He’s all right. I’ll take the usual.

(To Alfie)

Kitty thinks you’re weird. She’s right, you are! What’ll you have, mate?

Alfie

A Virgin Mary, please.

Kitty

I can get you a Mary, luv, but I don’t know if she’s gonna be a virgin.

(Laughter from the patrons)

Robbie

Where do you think you are, Alf? The Ritz? This is a working man’s pub. You and me are working men. Now what do you want that they might serve in a working man’s pub?

Alfie

I’ll have a pint.

Robbie

That’s more like. A pint for my mate, Kitty. Come meet me mates.

(They join Robbie’s friends who are shooting billiards)

Alfie

Hello.

Robbie

Alfie is me conductor. We’re the Holy Terrors of the Dublin Transit System. I told you about him.

Mate #1

The one who likes the theatre. Good a place as any to pick up a bird.

Mate #2

You gonna sing something for us, mate?

Alfie

What?

Mate #2

We all sing here. We’re Irish, we’re drunk, what else are we gonna do?
ROBBIE
Cheer up, Alfie. It's only a song they're wanting. Singing is a window to a man's soul. Give 'em a look. It's sort of a ritual here. We all have to do it.

ALFIE
I'll do my best. I'm not really a... There is one I like.

#7D – Love's Never Lost

ALFIE
IT WAS ON A MISTY SUNDAY
WE SAID OUR GOODBYE
AND I STILL CAN SEE HER SMILING,
A TEAR IN HER EYE.
SHE SAID SON, PLEASE REMEMBER,
NO MATTER THE COST
YOU MAY TRAVEL FAR,

ALFIE
BUT LOVE'S NEVER LOST.
SO I TRAVELED DOWN THE HIGHROAD
AND FAR FROM TRALEE

(This is met with much hostility and derision by the patrons)

MATE #3

What kind of Irish shite is that?

MATE #2

I thought John McCormack was dead.

ROBBIE
Good try, Alfie. Wrong century that's all!

MATE #1

Robbie, you in this round or not?

(ROBBIE and his MATES take up cuesticks and prepare to shoot pool. ALFIE is suddenly alone in the pub)

KITTY
They're only having fun with you, luv. Boys will be boys. Give 'em time: their hearts will ripen. Jesus, that's an awful shake you have there, mister. Would you like a Woodbine to steady your nerves?

ALFIE
No thanks.
KITTY
I find them very soothing. Very handsome young chap that, your Robbie Faye.

ALFIE

Yes, very.

KITTY
More’s the pity then.

ALFIE
What is?

KITTY
Someone like him getting involved with someone like that. It won’t come to a good end. How can it?

ALFIE
I don’t understand.

KITTY
I thought you were his mate. You and your big mouth, Kitty Farrelly!

(BRETTON BERET, a bad sort, has sidled up to ALFIE)

BRETTON BERET
I liked your song, mate. You’re a regular nightingale.

ALFIE
You’re the only one who did.

BRETTON BERET
I like the old stuff. Very warm, it is, very dear. What’s your name?

ALFIE
Alfie. Alfie Byrne.

BRETTON BERET
They call me Breton Beret - for me headgear. So? What’s up, Alfie Byrne?

ALFIE
Up? Nothing’s up.

BRETTON BERET
I saw you looking at me.

ALFIE
I wasn’t looking at you.

BRETTON BERET
You were, Alfie. I was looking at you and you were definitely looking at me.
ALFIE

I have to go. My sister will be waiting dinner. Tell Robbie I'll see him tomorrow.

(He starts to hurry away)

BRETON BERET

I'm here every night, Alfie Byrne.

#7E - Transition to "Books"

LILY AND ALFIE'S APARTMENT.

(LILY is with CARNEY. They have been drinking. CARNEY pacing with the script of SALOME in his hand; LILY appalled at what she is hearing.)

CARNEY

This is filth, unadulterated pornographic filth. Just listen to this. Are you ready? Close your ears.

(He reads)

"I was a virgin and thou didst take my virginity from me. I was chaste, and thou didst fill my veins with fire."

LILY

Mr. Carney, I may have to ask you to leave, sir.

CARNEY

It's not me, Lil, it's his play. Wait, it gets worse.

(He looks for another offensive passage)

"Thou wert beautiful, Jokanaan. Thy body was a column of ivory. There was nothing in the world so white as thy body."

LILY

Is she talking about you, Mr. Carney?

CARNEY

Of course not, woman, I'm Herod. This is a 16-year old girl speaking to John the Baptist who was the first Roman Catholic priest practically. And if that weren't bad enough, these words are spoken to a dead papier-mache head.

LILY

I've stopped breathing. Here. This will steady our nerves.

(She pours them each a sweet cordial)
CARNEY
You know, Lily, I didn’t realize until now what you’ve been put through by that brother of yours.

LILY
Oh, he was very strange from a child. A solitary boy, you know?

CARNEY
I’m not surprised.

LILY
Always off by himself, doing something strange. Puppets, he liked.

CARNEY
Puppets! What kind? Hand puppets or marionettes?

LILY
Both. He made them with his own little fingers.

CARNEY
Oh, Lily!

LILY
That room of his - it’s always locked.

CARNEY
There’d be no locks if it was me. You must always have access. Without access you get salaciousness.

LILY
Do you know what’s in his room? Books.

#8 - Books (Part 1)

(LILY)
Hundreds of books under lock and key.

CARNEY
Well there it is!

LILY
Mind you, he told me that they’re all about railway trains.

CARNEY
I doubt it, Lily.

(During the following song, the pouring and consuming of raspberry cordial continues)
CARNEY

BOOKS.
THEY'RE AT THE ROOT OF IT.
BOOKS.
YOU KNOW, THEY'RE DANGEROUS—
ALL THAT JUNK PILED UP IN YOUR FLAT!

(He tops up LILY'S glass)

HERE. HAVE SOME MORE.

LILY

(Accepting)

NOT ONLY THAT,
HE...
COOKS
REVOLTING FOREIGN THINGS.

CARNEY

COOKS!

LILY

CAN YOU IMAGINE IT!
PLATES OF STUFF WITH PARSLEY ON TOP!
HERE. LET ME POUR.

CARNEY

I'LL HAVE A DROP.

BOTH

BUT BOOKS!

CARNEY

IT ISN'T NATURAL!

BOTH

JUST THINK HOW BAD IT LOOKS
TO PEEK THROUGH THE CRACK
AND MEET WITH A STACK
OF BOOKS!

LILY

He changes the locks continuously. He does it to thwart me.

CARNEY

We should attempt to keep him out of harm's way.
LILY
But you don't mean like St. James' hospital, do you?

CARNEY
No, Lily. I didn't mean to have him committed - but that's a fairly good idea. No, was talking about marriage, Lily, my dear.

LILY
By rights, Mr. Carney, Alfie should be married and out of the house.

CARNEY
My sentiments exactly. And then, it will just be us. Mr. and Mrs. William Carney. Lily. I wouldn't stay out of the house.

#8A - Books (Part 2)

IF IT WAS ME
I'D BE HOME AT FIVE
WITH SOME CHOPS OR LIVER OR HAM.
AND EVERY SINGLE SUNDAY WE'D HAVE LAMB.

LILY
Lamb.

CARNEY
WE'D TAKE A STROLL,
WATCHING PEOPLE PASS
AND AT MASS, WE'D SHARE THE SAME PEW
OH, THAT'S WHAT I'D LIKE TO DO,

Lily...

LILY
DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD
NOT TILL HE'S WED...

(ALFIE enters, visibly shaken from his episode in the pub)

LILY
Where have you been? I waited supper.

ALFIE
I went to the pub with a mate. I'm not hungry.

LILY
That lovely boiled cabbage you like.
I said I'm not hungry.

*He goes into his room and closes the door*

**LILY**

SOME DAYS
I WONDER WHERE HE GOT
SUCH QUEER AND FOREIGN WAYS.

**CARNEY**

HE GOT IT FROM ALL
THAT SMUT THAT HE READS.
YOU KNOW WHERE SMUT
EVENTUALLY LEADS!

**LILY**

HIS MANLY IMPULSES
ALL BOTTLED UP!

**CARNEY**

WELL, THAT'S WHY
THE POOR SOD COOKS!

**BOTH**

THE MAN NEEDS A WIFE
TO RUIN HIS LIFE
NOT BOOKS!

Books!

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**#8B - Transition After “Books”**

**ALFIE’S BEDROOM**

**#9 - Man in the Mirror (Part 1)**

*(ALFIE sits looking at himself in his bedroom dresser mirror)*

**ALFIE**

You’ve come to a pretty pass, Alfie Byrne. Take a good look at yourself, if you dare. Why would someone care for you when you care so little for yourself!
ALFIE

MAN IN THE MIRROR
STARING BACK,
YOU’RE AS GOOD AS A TOTAL STRANGER.
HAIR GETTING THIN
AND CHIN GONE SLACK,
AN ANONYMOUS LITTLE MAN.
OSCAR WILDE HAD A BITING WIT:

“One should always be in love. That’s the reason one should never marry."

AND A POET’S HEART.

“O Singer of Persephone! In the dim meadows desolate
Dost thou remember Sicily?”

What is my wit? My poetry? “Change here for the Malmut Street Line! Have your fares ready! Next stop Nightingale!” That’s not it, Alfie. Be honest. Look, it’s in the eyes. The dead eyes of a man who does not know who he is.

HERE IN THE MIRROR
EVERY NIGHT
IS THE FACE OF A MAN IN PRISON.
OSCAR, YOU BURNED
SO BRAVE AND BRIGHT
BUT THERE’S SOME OF US NEVER CAN.
THERE’S SOME OF US NEVER CAN.

#9A - Man in the Mirror (Part 2)

(OSCAR WILDE, played by CARNEY, comes forward)

Oscar Fingal O’Flahertie Wills Wilde. You wouldn’t have noticed me either.

OSCAR WILDE

“There is no hell but this, Alfie Byrne, a body without a soul; or a soul without a body.”

ALFIE

I’m frightened.

OSCAR WILDE

I know, I know.
#9B - Man in the Mirror (Part 3)

ALFIE

WHERE IS MY GOLDEN LOVE?
WHERE BUT IN MUSTY PLAYS?
WHO IS THIS MAN IN THE THICKENING BODY
RIDING A BUS
TO THE END OF HIS DAYS...

OSCAR WILDE

"Sins of the flesh are nothing, Sins of the soul alone are shameful."

ALFIE

MAN IN THE MIRROR
STARRING BACK,
YOU'RE AFRAID OF YOUR OWN REFLECTION,
ALL THAT YOU WANT
AND DREAM... AND LACK
AND THERE'S NO ONE BUT YOU TO BLAME.
AFRAID OF THE WORLD,
AFRAID OF MYSELF
AND THE LOVE THAT DARE NOT SPEAK
ITS NAME...

OSCAR WILDE

AND THAT NAME IS...

ALFIE

ROBBIE,

#9C - Scene Shift After "Man in the Mirror"

ST. IMELDA'S HALL

(A rehearsal is in progress. Everyone is present but CARNEY. ALFIE is working with ERNIE while the others practice words and gestures among themselves.)

MISS CROWE

My dear, may I make a suggestion? When you're speaking to me, always be sure to face away from the audience. That's right, your back to them. It's called upstaging.

ADELE

Thank you, Miss Crowe.
MISS CROWE.
Just little tricks of the actor’s craft, my dear. You’ll catch on.

ADELE
My instinct is to face front.

MISS CROWE
(motherly)
I know. It’s a common error beginners make.

MRS. CURTIN
(projecting)
Can you hear me, Mr. Byrne?

ALFIE
Perfectly, Mrs. Curtin.

MRS. CURTIN
(dramatically lower)
Can you still hear me?

ALFIE
Yes! Please, we’re rehearsing.

MRS. CURTIN
I have a famous stage whisper, Miss Rice. Took me years.

MRS. GRACE
She’s a little old for me daughter, Mr. Byrne. Could she be me sister?

ALFIE
Out of the question, Mrs. Grace. Again, Mr. Lally.

ERNIE
“You must not look at her. You look too much at her.”

ALFIE
Mr. Lally, would you mind if we did it just once more?

MRS. GRACE
When do we get our John the Baptist?

ALFIE
Soon, Mrs. Grace. Now silence, all of you. Not a pin. We’re working here. Again, Mr. Lally.

(Giving him his cue, as Naraboth)
“How pale the princess is. Never have I seen her so pale. She is like the shadow of a white rose in a mirror of silver.”
ERNIE

"You must not look at her. You look too much at her."

ALFIE

Um, Mr. Lally, a moment.

(He takes Lally aside)

This is art, Mr. Lally, you understand, art. And art never expresses anything but itself.

ERNIE

What does that mean, Mr. Byrne?

ALFIE

It means... quieter, Mr. Lally. Try it once more. "She is like the shadow of a white rose in a mirror of silver."

ERNIE

"You must not look at her. You look too much at her."

ALFIE

Better. Better. Much better. I believe that's as much as we can do this evening without our Herod.

ERNIE

You were very good as Herod tonight, Mr. Byrne.

ALFIE

Thank you, Mr. Lally, but that's not the point.

ERNIE

Mr. Carney spits when he acts. Got me all wet last play.

MRS. GRACE

I certainly hope Mr. Carney will favor us with his presence. I cannot rehearse my scenes alone.

ALFIE

When an artist like Mr. William Carney is unable to assist at rehearsal, I'm sure it's for a very good reason, Mrs. Grace. I will see you all tomorrow evening at 7:00. Good evening, my dear friends.

#10 - The Burden of Life: Reprise (Introduction)

ALL

Good evening, Mr. Byrne.

(LILY enters. ALFIE doesn't see her)
LILY

Excuse me—are you Miss Rice?

ADELE

I am.

LILY

I'm Mr. Byrne's sister, Lily. I knew it was you right away.

#10A – The Burden of Life: Reprise (Part 1)

LILY

MY BROTHER WAS TELLING THE TRUTH
WHEN HE SAID
THAT A PRINCESS GOT ONTO HIS BUS.
HE'S TALKED ABOUT GIRLS IN THE PAST NOW AND THEN,
BUT HE'S NEVER MADE QUITE SUCH A FUSS.
HE BAKED YOU HIS OWN SPECIAL SCONES
AS A TREAT.
IF ONLY YOU KNEW HOW HE TOILED!
THAT BOARDINGHOUSE FOOD MUST BE AWFUL TO EAT.
BUT HIS COOKING COULD GET A GIRL SPOILED.
OH! THERE'S SOME EGGS IN THE BAG,
WHICH I BOILED.

ADELE

I'm not much of a cook either, Mrs...

LILY

Miss. That's something else we have in common.

ADELE

What's the other?

LILY

My brother.

LILY

NOW, ALFIE IS CRIPPLED WITH SHYNESS, AND SO
INVITATIONS ARE ALL UP TO ME.
AND HEARING HIM TALK ABOUT YOU I JUST KNEW
HE WOULD LOVE TO INVITE YOU FOR TEA.
IT'S SAD WHEN A FELLA SO DECENT AND NICE HAS SPENT HALF HIS LIFE ON THE WING. LET'S MAKE IT FOR DINNER THIS SUNDAY, MISS RICE. AND I PROMISE I WON'T COOK A THING.

ALFIE

Lily, what are you doing here? Where's Mr. Carney?

LILY

It's his sodality night. He's the secretary. You know that. I'm just telling Miss Rice what a bang-up cook you are. We'll put some meat on your bones, dear. No one likes a skinny Salome.

ALFIE

Don't mind my sister, Miss Rice.

ADELE

Well, I'm off.

LILY

Alone? At this time of night? You're not in the country anymore, Miss Rice. You're a single girl in Dublin. Anything could happen, believe me. My brother will walk you home.

ADELE

Really, I'm fine.

ALFIE

What about you?

LILY

I'm waiting for Mr. Carney. I'm fine. Go on.

ALFIE

All right, Miss. Rice. We can talk about the play.

LILY

Forget the play, for once. I'm sure Miss Rice has other things she would like to talk about. Sunday dinner then, Miss Rice.

(ALFIE and ADELE leave LILY alone in the theatre.)

#10B - The Burden of Life: Reprise (Part 2)

(LILY)

THIS SAFE LITTLE WORLD WHERE HE LIVES IN HIS FANCIES
(LILY)
AS IF HE WERE STILL EIGHT OR NINE.
IT'S TIME TO GROW UP, ALF.
IT'S TIME TO STEP OUT.
AS FOR FANCIES,
IT'S TIME I HAD MINE.
SHE'S YOUNG AND SHE'S PRETTY
AND READY TO DANCE.
AND THERE IN HER EYES I COULD SEE
A HOPEFUL YOUNG THING
ON THE BRINK OF HER CHANCE
VERY MUCH LIKE THE GIRL THAT WAS ME.
GOD SENT YOU THIS GIRL.
ALFIE, GIVE IT A WHIRL.
FOR THE SAKE OF THE GIRL THAT WAS ME.

TRANSITION: PHOENIX PARK

(ALFIE and ADELE are strolling. There are other couples, lovers, walking in the park)

ADELE
You don't really want to, do you?

ALFIE
I'm sorry, I'm on another planet when I'm rehearsing a play. What?

ADELE
Go out with me.

ALFIE
Of course I do. I enjoy your company.

ADELE
No, no, I mean, step out with me. Like your sister said. She's trying to fix us up.

ALFIE
I know.

ADELE
Listen, Mr. Byrne. There's something I wanted to tell you but I never got the chance. You see...

ALFIE
You have a boy. You have a fella.

ADELE
Yes. You see, you know very little about me, really. I think you think more of me
than I deserve.

**ALFIE**

You seem to me perfect, Adele. And your young fella: are you fond of him?

**ADELE**

Yes.

**ALFIE**

Ah! Young love is a lovely thing. Or so I'm told. And is he here in Dublin?

**ADELE**

No.

**ALFIE**

And what's he called, this lucky young man who's loved by a princess?

**ADELE**

John.

**ALFIE**

That's a coincidence. Just like our play. He's a very lucky fella, this John of yours.

*ADELE suddenly gets tearful. Surprised ALFIE gives her a handkerchief*

**ADELE**

It's all right. I'm just being stupid. People are very harsh judges you know.

**ALFIE**

Why should anyone judge you, my princess?

**#11 - Adele & Alfie (Underscore)**

**ADELE**

Oh, I'm far from a princess, far from it. But I know you won't judge me too harshly.

Who is anyone to judge you?

**#11A - Love Who You Love**

**ALFIE**

I'M NOT ONE TO LECTURE.
HOW COULD I DARE?

*(ALFIE)*

SOMEONE LIKE ME
WHO'S BEEN MAINLY NOWHERE.
BUT, IN MY EXPERIENCE,
BE AS IT MAY,
ALFIE
YOU JUST HAVE TO LOVE
WHO YOU LOVE.
YOU JUST HAVE TO LOVE
WHO YOU LOVE.
YOUR COMMON SENSE TELLS YOU
BEST NOT BEGIN,
BUT YOUR FOOL HEART
CANNOT HELP PLUNGIN' IN,
AND NOTHING AND NO ONE
CAN STAND IN YOUR WAY.
YOU JUST HAVE TO LOVE
WHO YOU LOVE.
YOU JUST HAVE TO LOVE
WHO YOU LOVE.
PEOPLE CAN BE HARD SOMETIMES,
AND THEIR WORDS CAN CUT SO DEEP.
CHOOSE THE ONE YOU CHOOSE, LOVE,
AND DON'T LOSE A MOMENT'S SLEEP.
WHO CAN TELL YOU WHO TO WANT?
WHO CAN TELL YOU
WHAT YOU WERE DESTINED TO BE?
TAKE IT FROM ME...
THERE'S NO FAULT IN LOVING.
NO CALL FOR SHAME.
EVERYONE'S HEART
DOES EXACTLY THE SAME.
AND ONCE YOU BELIEVE THAT,
YOU'LL LEARN HOW TO SAY:
I LOVE WHO I LOVE
WHO I LOVE.
THEN JUST GO AND LOVE
WHO YOU LOVE.
ADELE

Here's where I'm staying. I'd invite you in, but I only have one room and they don't allow guests.

ALFIE

I understand.

ADELE

Thank you for walking me home.

ALFIE

My pleasure entirely, Miss Rice. Adele.

ADELE

You're very nice. Mr. Byrne, I hope you're not cross about John.

ALFIE

No, no. That's a source of joy to me. To know that you love someone and that they love you in return. Adele—the love that dare not speak its name. Do you know what that is?

ADELE

I don't, Mr. Byrne, to be honest.

ALFIE

Till tomorrow, Princess Salome.

ADELE

Till tomorrow, Mr. Byrne.

TRANSITION: THE STREET

(We follow ALFIE as he begins his solitary walk home. ALFIE is very aware of his loneliness.)

Suddenly, out of the shadows steps the BRETON BERET.)

BRETON BERET

It's the nightingale. You got another tune for us, luv? No? Then how about a cigarette?

ALFIE

Sorry. I don't smoke.

BRETON BERET

Neither do I. Filthy habit.

ALFIE

I don't understand.
BRETON BERET

Oh, I think you do, Alfie Byrne!

(ALFIE hurries on)

What's your hurry, man? The night is young and so am I. You know where to find me!

(BRETON BERET disappears in the shadows as quickly as he appeared)

ALFIE stands for an undecided moment. OSCAR WILDE appears.

OSCAR WILDE

The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it.

(The sounds of Dublin rise as lights dim on ALFIE. BLACKOUT)

END OF ACT ONE