

Excerpt terms and conditions



This excerpt is available to assist you in the play selection process.

You may view, print and download any of our excerpts for perusal purposes.

Excerpts are not intended for performance, classroom or other academic use. In any of these cases you will need to purchase playbooks via our website or by phone, fax or mail.

A short excerpt is not always indicative of the entire work, and we strongly suggest reading the whole play before planning a production or ordering a cast quantity.

Dramatic Publishing

FLANAGAN'S WAKE

An interactive comedy with music

by

Jimmy Binns

Amy Binns-Calvey

Geoff Binns-Calvey

Jack Bronis

Mark Czoske

Phil Lusardi

Patricia Musker

Bonnie Shadrake



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our Web site: www.dramaticpublishing.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, 311 Washington St., Woodstock IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR'S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

©MMVIII

Conceived by Jack Bronis.

Created by Jimmy Binns, Amy Binns-Calvey, Geoff Binns-Calvey,
Jack Bronis, Mark Czoske, Phil Lusardi, Patricia Musker
and Bonnie Shadrake.

Printed in the United States of America

All Rights Reserved
(FLANAGAN'S WAKE)

ISBN: 978-1-58342-564-0

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play *must* give credit to the authors of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The names of the authors *must* also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and *must* appear in size of type not less than fifty percent (50%) the size of the title type. Biographical information on the authors, if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. *In all programs this notice must appear:*

“Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois”

In addition, all producers of the play must include the following acknowledgments on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and on all advertising and promotional materials:

“Conceived by Jack Bronis. Created by Jimmy Binns,
Amy Binns-Calvey, Geoff Binns-Calvey, Jack Bronis,
Mark Czoske, Phil Lusardi, Patricia Musker
and Bonnie Shadrake.
Originally produced on March 19, 1994,
at the Improv Institute in Chicago.”

Flanagan's Wake was first performed on March 29, 1994, at the Improv Institute in Chicago. It moved to the Royal George Theater on November 11, 1994. The original cast was:

BRIAN BALLYBUNION Phil Lusardi
PATRICK BOYLE Jack Bronis
FIONA FINN Patricia Musker
SEAN FINN Geoff Binns-Calvey
FATHER DAMON FITZGERALD Mark Czoske
MOTHER FLANAGAN Paul Chapman
KATHLEEN MOONEY Amy Binns-Calvey
MAYOR MARTIN O'DOUL Jimmy Binns
TARA O'DOUL / pianist Bonnie Shadrake

FLANAGAN'S WAKE

CHARACTERS

MICKEY FINN
KATHLEEN MOONEY
FATHER DAMON FITZGERALD
BRIAN BALLYBUNION
MAYOR MARTIN O'DOUL
FIONA FINN
TARA O'DOUL / pianist
MOTHER FLANAGAN

PLEASE SEE extensive setting notes, set designs and production manual starting on page 74.

MUSICAL SELECTIONS

1. Toora Looa Looal
2. Mother's Entrance
3. Brian's Song
4. The Benediction
5. Kathleen Music
6. Fiona's Song
7. Mayor's Music - End Act I
8. Danny Boy
9. Flanagan's Favorite Song, by Brian
10. Flanagan's Favorite Song, by Mickey
11. The Killarney Dancers
12. The Parting Glass
13. The Little Person
14. To Flanagan

At this point in the wake, the mourners (audience) and residents of Graplin, Ireland, (cast members) have been mingling and reacquainting themselves with one another. All have arrived and are now seated and ready for the wake to officially begin. Mickey Finn, brother to Fiona Finn (Flanagan's fiancée) begins the proceedings.

MICKEY (*to pianist*). Thank you, Tara (*or DECLAN*)... *Faillte!* On behalf of Mother Flanagan, Flanagan's mother... (*indicates MOTHER*) ...and Fiona Finn, Flanagan's fiancée of thirty years... (*indicates FIONA*) welcome. And I must say, on behalf of the entire family, that it does our hearts a great deal of good to see all of you here. And wasn't he a grand man, for all of us to be here tonight—especially the American cousins, come all the way across the “big pond.” (*Points out a few.*) And Father, didja see who's here? (*Picks out a patriarchal type.*) There's Uncle (Roger) Patrick! Uncle (Roger) Patrick! D'ye remember the way he'd walk into a room—right? He'd fix you with the steely gaze...then he'd put out the big beefy paw and always say the same three words... (*Beat.*) Pull my finger!

FATHER FITZGERALD. And we would!

KATHLEEN. Like a clap a thunder!

FATHER FITZGERALD. 'Tis a magical gift you have.

MICKEY (*picks out a younger man*). Do you recognize that fella? Know who that is? (*To audience member*.) Stand up! (*As audience member stands*.) That's little (Timmy) Patrick, all grown up! Little Timmy...I'm sure we all remember him this big... (*indicates*) always runnin' around naked.

MOTHER FLANAGAN (*crooks little finger at audience*).
{Remember how it wiggled?...}

MICKEY (*toasting*). To the Wiggler!

ALL. To the Wiggler!

MICKEY. It just goes to show you how little things've changed... Now I suppose I should introduce meself, my name is Mickey Finn, and I'm brother to Fiona Finn. As the only writer of any note in town, I've taken it upon meself on this sad occasion to write an epic poem about the man himself. It's entitled "The Man Himself"... I'd like to share it with you all now... (*He centers himself, takes a deep breath, and with great passion, declaims:*) Like a Splendid River—Flanagan did flow...! (*Pauses for breath, for effect.*) ...That's what I've got so far. (*He salutes the audience with his bottle, subtly inciting applause.*)

MAYOR O'DOUL (*with great pride*). Stand aside, Mr. Joyce!

MICKEY. Thank ye now. Well, I'm still workin' on it. Now, I suppose this is time for me to read the eulogy, which I've carefully crafted over the last few, sad days, and put on little cards, and ah, left on my kitchen table.

BRIAN. Aw, Mickey, ye dozer... (*All respond reproachfully.*)

MICKEY. No, no, it's all right—because we have all the cousins here and each and every one of ye knew the

man. You know his dreams, his desires. You can fill in the blanks, as it were. F'r instance, the way he died... So unusual!

BRIAN. Bizarre!

FATHER FITZGERALD. Strange!

KATHLEEN. Freakish!

MICKEY. How did he die?... You remember, you were there... It was the most bizarre, strange, freakish way for a man to die...and now, I can't say it meself, but you know it, shout it out...

MICKEY coaxes a suggestion of how Flanagan died from the audience. There is agreement from the cast that this was an especially terrible way for him to go. All of the suggestions will be woven into the story of Flanagan. (For purposes of stories later in this script, we'll assume that the suggestion is that Flanagan died in a "vat of Guinness.")

MICKEY (*cont'd*). Right. A vat of Guinness. That is no way for a good man to die. A man like Flanagan should've died peaceful and easy...in his sleep (*to FIONA*) ...like our Grandda!

FIONA. Ah yes, Grandda!

MICKEY. Now Grandda, there was a man who died peaceful and easy...in his sleep... (*Significant pause.*) Not like those four poor bastards Grandda was drivin' at the time!

MAYOR O'DOUL. Now THAT was a wake! We had 'em stacked five high! (*He indicates "five high" over the casket.*)

FATHER FITZGERALD. I made money at that wake... and I warned the boys—you should not hire a narcoleptic taxi driver! But they didn't listen... They were frugal...

MAYOR O'DOUL. They were Scottish.

MICKEY (*composes himself*). But you know, we come to celebrate his life, and we can all be thankful that Flanagan managed to go on the one holiday, the one vacation in his life, this was the only time that he ever left the island, and that was to that vacation place...now what's it called?... You remember...

MICKEY solicits suggestion of Flanagan's vacation spot (for example, "Cuba"). Cast members agree on the beauty of the spot, and on Flanagan's wisdom for choosing such an idyllic place to vacation.

MICKEY (*cont'd*). (That's right, Cuba—gateway to Barbados!) But you know, we're saddened because Flanagan was not able to fulfill his life's dream before he went, his ambition. His dream was to...

Solicitation of Flanagan's dream (for example, "to be a bungee jumper").

MICKEY (*cont'd*). Right. A bungee jumper! If you're gonna dream, dream big... At this time, I feel it'd be appropriate to bring up Flanagan's best friend an' drinking mate, Brian Ballybunion! Brian! Up you go!

CUE #3: BRIAN'S SONG. *The cast acknowledges BRIAN, who kisses MOTHER, then grimaces.*

BRIAN. Father! Can you shave her closer next time!

FATHER FITZGERALD. Why don't you try shavin' her? She keeps bitin' at the razor! (*Aside.*) It's like shavin' a duck...

BRIAN greets FIONA, and turns to the mourners. MUSIC ENDS.

BRIAN. I will! I will stand before my dear friend and speak of 'im. It's not right!

ALL. No!

BRIAN. I tell you it's not right to see my friend laying here in this box! (*BRIAN rubs one side of the coffin.*) Tonight we see our friend as we've seen him many times before... (*whistles*) flat out! (*Reverently.*) Only tonight he's face up... As we look upon him this evening for the last time on this earth, I ask you not to take this memory with you. However, we must all know now that he's gone, that when the sun comes up tomorrow morning and warms the roads of Ireland, Flanagan won't be lyin' in one... That little dog'll never come along and piddle in his ear, causing him to do that dance we all know so well... (*BRIAN demonstrates the one-legged, head-shaking dance.*)

ALL. Good morning, Flanagan!

KATHLEEN. Ah, sure but didn't that man have CLEAN ears!

FATHER FITZGERALD (*wistfully*). His head would whistle when he'd run!

BRIAN. It's not right. And you know I feel responsible for how he died...

FATHER FITZGERALD. Don't blame yourself...

BRIAN. No, no. It's true... Just a few nights ago, Flanagan and I were sittin' in the pub...

BRIAN makes reference to however it is that Flanagan died, and improvises a story about the last night of Flanagan's life, including the audience's suggestion of how he died. There are several criteria for a successful Brian story: 1) The story should be no longer than five minutes. 2) Flanagan should die a cartoon death—too realistic a death turns off the audience. 3) Guinness should be a motivating factor for Flanagan. 4) There should be a twist on audience expectations. 5) There should be an “if only” element in the story—if only we hadn't run out of Guinness, or if only the chimpanzee weren't so fast... The following example story is based on the suggestion of “drowned in a vat of Guinness”:

BRIAN (*cont'd*). ...an' Flanagan turns to me an' says, “Brian, where's it come from?” An' I said, “What's that, Flanagan?” An' he says, “The Guinness.” And I told him, “Everyone knows, Flanagan. It comes from St. James Gate, in Dublin. They've a brewery. You can even take a tour of it.” An' with that, Flanagan's up like a shot. “A tour? We've got to take it!” So, what could I do? You knew Flanagan, a man like that, he gets an idea in his head, you've got to go along with it. So we went to Dublin. An' the whole way there Flanagan is tellin' me how beautiful it'll be. So, of course, I'm thinkin' he'll be disappointed. When we got there though, it was the happiest I've ever seen 'im. He was just beside himself with joy. (*Beat.*) And then he saw the vats. Gleaming copper vats full of Guinness. His eyes went wide an'

he just stood there for a while in admiration. (Beat.) That's when everything went into slow motion. He turned to me and said, "Brian, I'm home." An' then he dived into the nearest vat of Guinness. So I threw in a life preserver they had there on the side (apparently this type of thing happens quite often in a brewery), but he just pushed it away and dived to the bottom of the vat. After a while though, I saw—blup! blup!—the level of the Guinness in the vat going down. You could see the distinctive rings that Guinness leaves. And the level kept going down and down until you could make out the murky figure of Flanagan down at the bottom. He was drinking all the Guinness in the vat! The level kept goin' down until he had only a few inches to go when it happened... (Beat.) Ka-BOOM! Flanagan exploded from drinkin' all that Guinness! And that's how he died—drowned in a vat of Guinness!

KATHLEEN. But, Brian! Why didn't you HELP him?

BRIAN. Well...I was laughin' like hell! (*BRIAN allows the commotion to die down.*) But that's not how I'm goin' to remember this dear man... I'm not going to remember him by... (*Restates verbatim the manner of Flanagan's death.*) Drowned in a vat of Guinness. No. The way I'll remember him is by the noise.

FATHER FITZGERALD. Aye, the noise.

BRIAN (*lets out a blood-curdling howl*). AAAAAAAAAA-
AAARRRRRRRRRRGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHH!!!!

FATHER FITZGERALD. That's it!

MAYOR O'DOUL. It's like he were here!

BRIAN. That was the noise Flanagan would make each night it was time for the pub to close. (*Looks to the audience.*) So help me remember my dear friend... Mayor?

MAYOR O'DOUL. Aye?

BRIAN. Mayor, would ye ring the time bell once more for Flanagan, and we'll all make the noise.

FATHER FITZGERALD. We will!

MAYOR O'DOUL. Time, gentlemen!

MAYOR—or another townspeople—rings the time bell. BRIAN motions for everyone to make the sound with him.

ALL. AAAAAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRRGGGGGGGGG-GGHHHHHHHHH!!!!

BRIAN. To Flanagan!

ALL. To Flanagan!

As BRIAN BALLYBUNION steps down, FIONA, inconsolably sobbing, bangs on coffin lid. MICKEY runs up and tries to dissuade her, but he's having little success. FATHER admonishes FIONA.

MICKEY. Father! Father! Instead of yellin' at her, why don't you give her some words of comfort?!

Beat. FATHER considers this. He walks over to FIONA. Beat.

FATHER FITZGERALD *(to himself)*. Words of comfort... *(To FIONA.)* Fiona Finn, be glad you're not the dead one. *(He walks away.)*

MICKEY. Father? I was thinkin' more along the lines of the benediction...

CUE #4: THE BENEDICTION.

FATHER FITZGERALD. Good idea. The benediction. That will give you the comfort you seek, Fiona. Keep us in our seats. (*FATHER takes out a prayer missal.*) *In nomine patris et filii et spirituum sancti. Amen!*

ALL. Amen!

FATHER FITZGERALD. Flanagan...you're dead. And as we all know, death is a poor man's doctor... (*Long beat.*) Amen!

ALL. Amen!

MUSIC STOPS.

FATHER FITZGERALD. This was a good man. Kind. Generous. Flanagan was the type of man who would give you the shirt off his back. His life on this earth was like a Bible story. Truly was. And with his passing, I'd like to share a Bible story with you now. The story I'm thinkin' of is from the gospel...from the Book of Kevin...and in it is a story about the time that Jaysus and Kevin are walking along a watershore, and Kevin turns to Jaysus and says, "Why only the one set of footprints?" And Jaysus says, "Well, you're walking too damn close to the water! Ye eejit."

MICKEY. Beggin' your pardon, Father, the Book of what?!

FATHER FITZGERALD. The Book of Kevin!

MICKEY. I'm sorry, Father, but... (*Indicates audience.*)

We've none of us here heard of the Book of Kevin...

FATHER FITZGERALD. It's the fifth gospel!

MICKEY. There's but four!

FATHER FITZGERALD. Five!

MICKEY. Four...

FATHER FITZGERALD. Five! Matthew, Mark, Luke, Jerry and Kevin! That's five! (*Looks to mourners.*) None of you have heard of it?! None?!

MICKEY (*darkly muttering*). Nor Jerry...

FATHER FITZGERALD. Well, I'll tell ye why you've not heard of it...the pope's been hiding it from us... (*Indignant cries from the others.*) It's true. All the popes have been hidin' the Book of Kevin from us. It's sitting in a vault in the Vatican, been there for centuries... The popes have just been waitin' for the right time to unveil it, the time when their accountants, the Jesuits, come runnin' in and say that "the Vatican coffers are running low, Your Holiness, there's no more money comin' in, Your Holiness," and then you watch what'll happen: the pope'll run to the telly and make an announcement: (*FATHER sings the following sentence in religious sing-song.*) "Look what we've discovered this week in a cave in Israel!—the Book of Kevin!" (*He continues.*) ...And then we'll have to go out and buy all new Bibles, all new missals, Book of Kevin Microsoft XP! And don't think the pope's not getting a cut of it all, 'cause he is. Shame on 'im. That's why I want nothin' to do with 'em: the popes, the cardinals, the bishops, they're management, I'm labor, we don't mix. And this is why I love Kevin so much—because he was not like that. He was not thinking of puttin' coin in his pocket... He was only thinking of the Spirit! And that's because he was the only chronicler of Jaysus' life from the time he was twelve until he was thirty. If you look at your other four gospels, there's no mention of Christ's life during that

time. Am I right? And isn't that curious? Four different writers, and they all happen to miss the same exact years? Well, all those years are in the Book of Kevin—because Kevin was there with Jaysus writing it all down—he was one of Jaysus' mates! They were actually in a gang together! (*Cries of indignation from the others.*) Oh, it was nothin' serious, they were children! And there were only three in the gang: Jaysus, Kevin and John the Baptist...and I'll tell you this right now, Jaysus never held nothin' against John for bein' Baptist; he loved him like he loved all the Roman Catholics of the time... But Joseph still wanted to throw Jaysus out the house! (*More cries of disbelief and indignation from the others.*) And you can't blame him. Well, look at it. What with Jaysus almost thirty years old and still livin' at home, he's got no job to speak of! "Fisher of Men"! Who signs THAT paycheck? And the worst part is he's running 'round every other night with the apostles! And you really can't blame those boys. I mean, you've got a friend can turn water into wine, (*FATHER mimes knocking on a door*) you're GOING to be callin' him out every damn night!... And Jaysus would come out—he couldn't say no— Good-time Jaysus, they called him! And they'd follow him down the road like ducklings, just PRAYIN' that he'd walk on a lake or a river. His skin touched water, they'd all dive in—it's Happy Hour for the boys! Now Joseph saw all this and it made him angry... Well, you might not know this, but Joseph was a bitter man...for many reasons—first—his profession... (*To mourners.*) Which was what?

MOURNER. A carpenter.

End of excerpt. Following are production notes...

Set and Set Dressing:

The set should be warm and cozy, like an Irish pub. Lots of wood, wainscoting, wood trim and shelves with knickknacks—dark oak wainscoting up to 4 feet', with a wide rail (for glasses) on top, and rough plaster/faux stone walls above, punctuated with posters for boxing matches, local concerts, photographs, tin Guinness signs, notices for local events and auctions, bar and carriage licenses, etc. Shelves up high allow for placement of interesting set props, out of audience's reach. But avoid the temptation to make it look like a T.G.I.Friday's.

The coffin:

The coffin is a packing crate with a hinged lid and open back. See pages 76-79 for dimensions. The top must be shellacked or varnished, and sanded very smooth.

Lights:

Flanagan lighting is simple.

1) You need general lighting onstage. Stage lighting should be up full as the audience enters.

2) You need the ability to raise and lower houselights to half or three-quarters during show.

3) The only other lighting requirement is one special, pointed slightly above center of coffin. (A "little person" about 3½ feet tall appears on the coffin—general lights should go down when that special goes up.)

Light cues involve raising and lowering houselights at the beginning and end of the show, and for moments of audience interaction; and the one cue at the end of the show for the appearance (then disappearance) of the "little person."

Sound:

Pre-show music, intermission music and post-show music. See script for specific music suggestions. Pre-show is more mellow Irish music (such as the Cheiftans' "Celtic Harp"), intermission is livelier traditional dance music (such as Altan's "Island Angel"), and the post-show music contemporary Irish music (such as Black 47's "Fire of Freedom," cuts "Rockin' the Bronx" and "Funky Ceili.")

Draw on our years of experience! The authors of *Flanagan's Wake* are available to direct your production, or to answer any questions you might have. To contact the authors, email us at info@flanaganswake.com

NOTES FOR THE DIRECTOR

It is essential that the actors performing *Flanagan's Wake* maintain their Irish brogues throughout the play. If the actors stay in character, their improv will ring true and move the show forward. The actors drop the dialect only after the last audience member leaves the theater.

For purposes of the show, we are not in the United States, or Canada, or Australia or New Zealand. *Flanagan's Wake* takes place in Ireland. Once the audience enters the theater, it is magically transported to the Emerald Isle, specifically, the town of Grapplin, County Sligo (population 47).

We are Irish, born and bred in (the Republic of) Ireland. Consequently, we have only a tangential, peripheral knowledge of Americana. We, for example, are aware of American football, but we do not have expert knowledge of its inner workings. For us, Notre Dame is a cathedral in France and has nothing to do with Ireland. We use euros, not pounds or dollars.

PRE-SHOW

Audience is greeted as family and friends. Cast members should converse with audience members. The mood should be casual; there should be small conversations, not room-wide bits. *It should not turn into a joke-fest, with actors holding court.* The scripted pre-show bits should start 5-7 minutes before Fiona's entrance *on the stage manager's cue.* If pre-show bits end up silencing the entire audience before the stage manager's cue, it feels as if the show has started too soon and the audience will sit quietly instead of interacting with the cast. If a pre-show bit does silence the audience prematurely, it is up to the cast to regain the casual atmosphere.

ACT ONE

The general arch of all the characters should be that the residents of Grapplin are doing their best to be respectable for the out-of-town cousins. All characters should be on their best behavior. We are also turning the story of Flanagan into a fable, larger than life. Any qualities he had in life are now embellished to mythological degree. Any conflicts between characters emerge slowly. By the end of Act One, we should know who is allied with whom.

ACT TWO

Status, status, and more status. Characters are angling not only for the land, but also to prove that they were the most important thing in Flanagan's life. Conflict between characters reaches its peak during Fiona's confrontation with Father over St. Larry's. At that moment, the residents of Grapplin are challenging the parish priest who holds power over their immortal souls. That's a big moment. Of course, when Flanagan reappears, life in Grapplin has once again found its natural balance. No one is upset about losing the land, because Flanagan is back!

GENERAL NOTE

The improv and audience interaction in the show is greatly enhanced by a cast well versed in Irish culture, both contemporary and historical. Encourage your cast to do their research and explore Irish history, geography and slang. (Irish proverbs and toasts are also a rich resource.)

INTERACTION WITH THE CROWD

Because *Flanagan's Wake* is a unique blend of script, improvisation, and audience interaction, the following suggestions are given for productions.

Cast members should treat the audience as fellow performers. The “yes, and” rules of improv apply to audience members. If an audience member shouts something to an actor, it is much funnier and furthers the piece if that actor agrees and heightens the suggestion, no matter what it is. This is particularly important if the audience member is “heckling.” A confrontation with that audience member will not only stop the progress of the show, it will antagonize the heckler, and make the rest of the audience fearful of interaction. Let’s avoid ever antagonizing our audiences, especially at the beginning of the show, as that can make for a long night.

An example of this:

During Father’s “Book of Kevin” monologue, an audience member shouts out, “I’ve seen the Book of Kevin!” If Father responds with, “Then you must’ve seen that room at the Vatican, too,” the audience laughs and he can continue with the monologue. The heckler feels like a hero.

If instead, Father responds with, “That’s impossible, you couldn’t have!” the audience member will often continue to argue his point, and it will take longer to get back to the script, and everyone will be frustrated.

If audience members are overly rowdy, there are four progressive steps to take—

1. The cast does its best to “yes, and” the audience member. “Yes, you owned a pair of his trousers, we all did.”
2. Cast requests the audience member to quiet down in a supportive way. “I’m sorry. Was I speakin’ while you were speakin’?” or “We need you to grieve quieter, Mary Maureen...”
3. Cast member personally, not from stage, but still in character, quietly requests the audience member to quiet down. “The other cousins need to hear what’s goin’ on, Mary Maureen. Please quiet down.”
4. Cast member or stage manager contacts house staff and they remove audience member, after which the cast can comment, for example, “Oh, Mary Maureen’s ride is here. Thank God she has a deaf driver.” Or something to that effect.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

Kathleen Mooney - Town eccentric. Found on the steps of the church as a baby and is now housekeeper for Father Fitzgerald. She could have been left by the “Travelers” or “Tinkers,” the gypsies of Ireland. She has confused the rich history of Irish myth and legend with contemporary culture, which she has picked up from the telly in the bar. She takes things very literally and is therefore at times, childlike. She is kooky, but also at times mystical and quite capable of issuing curses, which do stick. As much as everyone would like to dismiss her, she does get predictions right—twisted, but right.

Fiona Finn - Flanagan’s long-suffering fiancée of thirty years. She hasn’t married Flanagan because Mother Flanagan has never approved of the union. She is the quintessential strong Irish woman. She is very conscious of her high status in Grapplin. Fiona has the demeanor of someone who was once a teacher. If you get into a fight with Fiona, keep your right up; she’s a “natural lefty.” She is very proper, correct and Catholic and yet, or perhaps because of that, she has a simmering, frustrated sensuality that occasionally bubbles to the surface.

Mother Flanagan - Flanagan’s mother. Her accent is so thick it is now gibberish only Flanagan and Brian have been able to understand. Mother has never thought that anyone, least of all Fiona, could be good enough for her son. She is cantankerous and shrewd. Her Gaelic gibberish is often punctuated with threatening waves of her walking stick.

Father Fitzgerald - Parish priest. Authoritative. He is responsible for the immortal soul of everyone in the town of Grapplin and takes that holy responsibility seriously. He is not crazy; he has seen the Book of Kevin. Former boxer, spent some time in

the Congo as a missionary, likes to gamble. Can be found in the pub knocking back a couple with Brian.

Brian Ballybunion - Flanagan's best friend and drinking buddy since childhood. Charming. He makes it clear that he is "in between opportunities," not "unemployed." Spent the majority of his life in the company of Flanagan, mostly at the pub. Constantly devising plans to make money without actually seeking employment. He is a rascal who pours on the charm around the opposite sex, but he is not a cad nor a womanizer. Should he meet a woman who is attached, he does not compete for her attentions, but makes fast friends with her "fella." Never crude, very respectful, especially of Fiona, Mother Flanagan and Father. Would defend Flanagan to the end of time. It would never occur to him to "hit on" Fiona because she was engaged to Flanagan. Cannot imagine a day without Guinness.

Mickey Finn - Fiona's younger brother. Mickey looks out for Fiona but is also wary of being hit by her. As the town writer (publisher and editor and sole staff member of the *Grapplin Times*), he seeks the literary life and wants to follow in the footsteps of other Irish literary stars such as Yeats (also born in County Sligo). Mickey is constantly looking for poetic allusions ("Life is like..."). Mickey has the most education of anyone in town—he "went to university for nearly two weeks."

Mayor Martin O'Doul - Grapplin's only elected official and bartender. He is a perpetual politician and glad-handing host. Martin, like his pub, is friendly, warm and inviting. He knows everyone and has a talent for making strangers feel like a member of the family. Openhearted and genuine, Martin can't say no. He has been married for twelve years and has fourteen children, you do the math. Extremely important person in town because not only does he know all your secrets, he holds your bar tab.

Whenever there are disputes, we turn to the Mayor as a voice of reason.

Tara O'Doul (f. pianist) or **Declan Faloon** (m. pianist) - Plays piano and organ for all occasions in town. Provides the music for all weddings, holidays, school concerts, wakes, etc.

Tara is married to Mayor O'Doul. They have fourteen children.

Declan Faloon is a musical savant. Several years ago, Declan lost the ability (or desire) to speak and was mute for four years. No one knows why, and Declan's not talking.

Grapplin, County Sligo, Ireland - Located in the northwest of (the Republic of) Ireland, Grapplin has a population of forty-seven. It is smack dab in the center of County Sligo, about fifty miles from Sligo Town. The Celtic Tiger economic boom of recent years has not bypassed Grapplin. For many years, the main industry in Grapplin had been fish scaling. Now, it is also north-central Ireland's premier manufacturer of green computer mouse pads. Grapplin should figure as a character in the stories told throughout the proceedings. It is a beautiful, mystical, lyrical place, in addition to being cold, foreboding and desolate. In other words, we can make Grapplin whatever we need it to be for the purpose of our stories.

Flanagan - Our protagonist. An unusual, fascinating man, for reasons we will discover together with our audience. Similarly to the town of Grapplin itself, we can make Flanagan (first name unknown) anyone we need him to be.

Costumes

Father Fitzgerald

- Priest shirt, collar, stole, black pants, black dress shoes, black sweater

Mother

- Long black dress with high collar and long sleeves, very large.
Large enough for a man with big fake boobs.
- Big “boobs” for Mother (king-size pillow tied in the middle)
- Black tights and black shoes
- Gray ladies wig, scarf and glasses
- Lipstick and wipes
- Breakfront shirt and tie and jacket as Flanagan

Fiona

- Black dress and black veil
- Black tights and black shoes

Kathleen

- Earth-toned, bag-ladyish ruffled outfit
- Red wild wig and scarf
- Boots (Wellingtons if possible)

Mayor

- Dark pants, vest, white shirt and tie

Brian

- Dark pants, colored shirt, vest and cap

Mickey

- Dark pants, tweed jacket or Irish sweater, colored shirt (not same color as Brian’s)

Pianist

- Dark, subdued clothing. Nothing too flashy or trendy

*The “Little Person,” dead cat and St. Larry’s poster can be purchased by authorized costume and propmakers in Chicago
info@flanaganswake.com

**Artwork can be purchased from the authors
info@flanaganswake.com

Production Notes also include:

Specific Beats/General Blocking
Stage Designs
How to Tell a Brian Story
How to Tell a Kathleen Story
How to Tell a Mayor Story
Notes on Fiona’s Song
Props
How to Make a Dead Cat