

# Bloomsday

a play by  
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Post-Premiere Draft  
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Cast of Characters (2 women, 2 men)

CAITHLEEN - a young Irish woman, 20.

ROBBIE - a young American man, 20.

CAIT - Caithleen at age 55.

ROBERT - Robbie at age 55.

Time and Place

The present. And 35 years earlier.

Dublin, Ireland.

Setting

Depicted: a series of intimate locales, simply rendered. Rooms - benches - cafe tables - alleyways, etc. Changes from one to another are fluid and immediate.

Conjured: the deep, rich, formidable allure of Dublin.

For me it will always be the first city  
in the world.

*James Joyce*

And I ask you now  
Tell me what would you do  
If her hair was black and her eyes were blue?

*Steve Earle*

ACT ONE

Dublin. Early June.

*A 20 year old Irish woman is revealed. She wears a coat. She is holding a well-worn book. A thick book. She checks her watch. This is CAITHLEEN.*

*A 55 year old American man is watching her, from some distance. This is ROBERT.*

*ROBERT speaks to the audience.*

ROBERT

That one.  
That one there.  
That lovely girl will ask me if I'm here for the tour.

CAITHLEEN

*(calling to him)*

Good morning. Are you here for the tour?

ROBERT

And today I will say yes - oh, yes - I am most certainly here for the tour ---

CAITHLEEN

You're welcome. My name is Caithleen. If you'll just queue up with the others - we'll make a start at half-ten.

ROBERT

--- but I have not come back to Dublin for the tour she is giving - no, certainly not ---

CAITHLEEN

This tour is called:

ROBERT

I've no need to spend one more minute in what they like to call ---

CAITHLEEN

*(to the unseen GROUP)*

"James Joyce's Dublin".

ROBERT

As if the man built it. As if the hallowed old lecherous scribe created the town rather than cannibalized it.

CAITHLEEN

During the next ninety minutes we will see, first-hand, many of the very places Joyce depicted in his most famous novel - his masterwork ---

ROBERT

His doorstep of an opus ---

CAITHLEEN

--- a book widely considered the most important novel of the twentieth century:

ROBERT

--- a book he titled with typical hubris and pretension:

CAITHLEEN

Ulysses.

ROBERT

The most under-read and over-praised piece of doggerel ever hemorrhaged onto the world! Don't take my word for it.

CAITHLEEN

Joyce was a Dubliner by birth ---

ROBERT

Ask half the critics and every college sophomore on earth.

CAITHLEEN

--- and in Ulysses he set himself the task of describing a single day in the life of three residents of Dublin: a young writer named Stephen Dedalus; his friend Leopold Bloom; and Bloom's unforgettable wife, Molly. The day he chose was June the sixteenth, nineteen oh-four. This day has come to be known as "Bloomsday" - a day when Dubliners and people 'round the world dress up in turn-of-the-century clothing and re-enact moments from the novel, including Leopold Bloom's walk through Dublin. Today we shall walk in his footsteps.

ROBERT

And away they will go. And though I've already been on this tour once before, I will follow along. You see ...

CAITHLEEN

Now - before we begin - are there any questions?

ROBERT

... that girl there ... and would you - would you please - just for a minute - would you please see that girl there? ...

*The play stops here.*

And along with ROBERT, we look at  
CAITHLEEN.

ROBERT (cont'd)

... that is how she looked when I met her. Thirty-five years ago. She was twenty. A knowing, wise and vibrant twenty. And I was also twenty. A stupid, clueless and arrogant twenty. A boy she herself best described as a *feckin' eejit*.

CAITHLEEN

Joyce believed that if the Dublin of his time were destroyed - it could be reconstructed, street by street, from his own writings.

ROBERT

The tour lasted for nearly two hours.

CAITHLEEN

To criticism that his novel was not worth reading, Joyce said: "If Ulysses is not worth reading than life is not worth living."

ROBERT

But I didn't hear a word of it. Because after she first spoke to me ... something ... something in me ... happened.

And so that is the tour I am on today.

And that girl ... she is the perfect guide. Because to her - and this is something she told me 35 years ago that I only now begin to understand - to her, Time is not a series of neat single notes called "the present" - one played after another. No, to her Time is a chord: many notes, past-present-future, all real ... all alive ... and all played at once.

*A SHIFT: CAITHLEEN turns directly  
to ROBERT. The action is  
continuous.*

CAITHLEEN

May I speak to you for a moment ---

ROBERT

*(still to audience)*

It's impossible, of course - to return to another Time.

CAITHLEEN

Yes - you there - I'm talkin' to you ---

ROBERT  
(to audience, somewhat  
startled/amazed)  
And yet: here I am.

CAITHLEEN  
--- let's move over here - away from the others ---

ROBERT  
(to Caithleen)  
Yes - of course.

CAITHLEEN  
(calls OFF)  
DAVEY, WOULD YOU TAKE MY GROUP FROM HERE? - O'CONNELL  
STREET IS NEXT - I'LL CATCH UP WITH YOU.

*ROBERT is waving "goodbye" to the  
unseen group.*

ROBERT  
Good riddance! - right? That was a pretty dull group,  
if you ask me.

CAITHLEEN  
That "dull group" paid good money for this tour and got  
nothin' but interruptions and bluster from you.

ROBERT  
Oh, believe me - I have no desire to interrupt the tour.

CAITHLEEN  
You may be some great fan of James Joyce, but you can't  
just ---

ROBERT  
James Joyce is nothing but a trickster! - a charlatan  
peddling ten pounds of nonsense!

CAITHLEEN  
Yes - you told that to my group! ---

ROBERT  
I'm sorry - can't help myself.

CAITHLEEN  
--- an' you can think what you wanna think - but the  
fact is we're a group of fourteen people who don't need  
your rather pompous thoughts on the matter.

*She starts off.*

ROBERT

Thirteen.

*This stops her.*

CAITHLEEN

What?

ROBERT

Without me, you're a group of thirteen. And I know that troubles you.

CAITHLEEN

*(it does trouble her)*

Yes - it's thirteen now - you're right ...

ROBERT

I say let 'em go to the pub! -- that's where they'd rather be anyway. They haven't read a word of Ulysses! Don't kid yourself --

CAITHLEEN

You don't know that ---

ROBERT

*(overlapping)*

--- not ninety percent of the Americans here have read Huck Finn from start to end! - anymore than the Brits have read David Copperfield or the Russians have read War and Peace ---

CAITHLEEN

That is not the point ---

*He grabs her copy of Ulysses.*

ROBERT

*(overlapping)*

--- and so in our group there is only one of us who knows of the obsessive man with bad eyes from a poor family - all prick and no pence - the loner and jokester who will spend years of his life to create literature's One True Lasting Beast - with all its tangle of themes and its Homeric references and its debauchery and riddles and run-on sentences and the bad news for you is that in our group the one and only person who knows all this crap is me.

*He hands the book back to her.*

ROBERT (cont'd)

Here. Read me one phrase - anywhere at all.

*(off HER look)*

(MORE)

ROBERT (cont'd)  
Go on. I'll show you. Believe me: I'm not proud of  
this ---

CAITHLEEN  
I need to find my group.

ROBERT  
Please, Caithleen. Any page you like.

*She looks at him - then turns to a  
page early in the book.*

CAITHLEEN  
(reads)  
"Behold the handmaid of the moon.

*And ROBERT - in a surprisingly good  
Irish accent - is speaking along,  
and slightly ahead of her. He is  
not reading.*

ROBERT  
"In sleep the wet sign  
calls her hour, bids her  
rise. Bridebed, childbed,  
bed of death,  
ghostcandled. Omnis caro  
ad te veniet.

CAITHLEEN  
"In sleep the wet sign  
calls her hour, bids her  
rise. Bridebed, childbed,  
bed of death ..."

*CAITHLEEN is reading along silently  
now - but ROBERT closes the book in  
her hands, saying ...*

ROBERT  
Just listen. It's for the ear. Not the eyes.  
Remember? You're the one who told me that.  
(he continues)

*"He comes, pale vampire, through storm his eyes, his bat  
sails bloodying the sea ... mouth to her mouth's kiss."*

*Pause.*

CAITHLEEN  
We get a lot of you here. The so-called experts.  
Making the pilgrimage.

ROBERT  
Yes ---

CAITHLEEN  
Ready to catch us out.

ROBERT  
--- of course.

CAITHLEEN

And anyway I only say what they've trained me to say.

ROBERT

I think you're quite good, actually - didn't I tell you that?

CAITHLEEN

No, you didn't.

ROBERT

I meant to tell you that this time around.

CAITHLEEN

This time around?

ROBERT

I teach that book, Caithleen! Twenty-plus years now and pity the poor students who have to listen to me soldier on about something I have grown to loathe. I wrote my *feckin' thesis* on that beast! And yes I know my kind is a dime a dozen - but, believe me, it wasn't always like this.

(before SHE can respond)

In your next group today - the one p.m. tour - in that group not a single person will have read this book.

CAITHLEEN

I beg your pardon.

ROBERT

Your next group will look like a cliché of a tour group: the noisy woman from Texas - the plodding Germans and photo-happy Japanese - the usual sandy-haired Australians who seem to travel the earth in search of some form of *tension*.

CAITHLEEN

How do you know who's in my next tour?

ROBERT

And finally, in that group, there will be a young man. He's twenty.

CAITHLEEN

You're travelling with him?

ROBERT

Yes - I suppose I am stuck with him.

CAITHLEEN

And his name?

ROBERT

Robbie. Robert. Same as mine. At first you'll think he's cute, or amusing, or harmless.

But he's not harmless.  
And neither are you.

*Beat.*

CAITHLEEN

It's my lunch hour. Excuse me.

*She starts off ---*

ROBERT

They won't have the rolls you like.

*--- but this stops her.*

ROBERT (cont'd)

At Finnerty's. You'll be too late. They'll be sold out of the rolls - like they sometimes are if you get there much past noon. You'll buy a packet of crisps instead. But you won't like them. You'll give them to Robbie. He'll eat anything. He'll offer to go with you - to get a roll somewhere else. But you'll say: "Oh, Robbie - nothin' compares with Finnerty's."

*She gives him a hard stare.*

CAITHLEEN

*(sharp, with purpose)*

Okay - you tell me. Right now ---

ROBERT

What?

CAITHLEEN

--- you tell me to my face: how do you know these things about me? I bet my Da put you up to this! ---

ROBERT

I don't know what you're talking about ---

CAITHLEEN

*(overlapping)*

--- he as much as admitted to it - the other night - my Dad - rolled home from the pub stinkin' of smoke and the perfume of some Hatch Street whore. Said "Don't tempt me, Caithleen - cause I'll do it! I'll drum up a way to scare you straight - so you won't end up like your lunatic mother." He had her committed, you know. They hauled her away to St. Brendan's. My Da - my Dad did that to her! - but I bet you know that - I bet he told

(MORE)

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)  
you things about me - things to make me scared - make me  
feel like I'm going mad like my Ma did ---

ROBERT  
If you'd let me explain ---

CAITHLEEN  
*(overlapping)*  
--- that's how it started with her, you know: Time  
stopped behavin' like it should. Things in the past or  
future refused to stay where they belonged. People  
started showin' up in her days and they'd be the *wrong*  
age.

An' no matter how much I told her "it's a dream Mama,  
it's an odd stray thought of a thing" - no, she wouldn't  
be put off the idea - not at all - till she was so  
scared - scared of people showing up *with no regard to*  
*the time it was in their lives*. An' she kept seein' a  
*boy with wild black hair* - an' she kept sayin' "*I know*  
*what that boy's gonna do one day!*" - oh, she'd pray an'  
she'd moan an' that's when my Da would come in an' put  
an end to things with a hard open hand.

*Pause.*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)  
I don't want to be her. End up like her.

Do I?

*He stares at her.*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)  
Do you know? If I end up like her?

ROBERT  
No.

CAITHLEEN  
No, I don't?

ROBERT  
No, I don't know.

*ROBERT offers CAITHLEEN a  
handkerchief from his pocket.*

*She looks at him - takes the  
handkerchief - wipes her eyes.*

ROBERT (cont'd)  
I was here. Years ago. I took this tour.

CAITHLEEN  
How many years?

ROBERT  
Thirty-five.

CAITHLEEN  
Wow. You're old.

ROBERT  
*(a smile)*  
Yes.

CAITHLEEN  
I wasn't here. I wasn't born, you know.

*He says nothing.*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)  
There was a girl. She was like me. I remind you of her. Is that what you're saying?

ROBERT  
Yes. I guess that's what I'm saying. She was like you.

CAITHLEEN  
I doubt that.

ROBERT  
Why?

CAITHLEEN  
Thirty-five years?! Boys here don't remember me for more than an hour.

ROBERT  
Oh, that's not true ---

CAITHLEEN  
Take one look - turn their heads - and poof: I'm gone. It's all right. I'm "cool" with it. But oh my, what must she have been like ... *this thirty-five year girl?*

*Pause. He is staring at her.*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)  
Stop please.

ROBERT  
What?

CAITHLEEN  
You're starin'. Felt sorta good at first but now ---

ROBERT

Oh, yes, of course.

CAITHLEEN

--- now I feel like a framed picture or an animal in the zoo.

ROBERT

Sorry.

*She gives the handkerchief back to him.*

CAITHLEEN

So you took this tour, years ago. And now you teach this book. And all these years later - you've come back to ... what?

ROBERT

You'll laugh.

CAITHLEEN

Hope so. I like to laugh.

ROBERT

No ---

CAITHLEEN

Used to laugh a lot more.

ROBERT

--- you'll think I'm mad.

CAITHLEEN

Better you than me.

*(leans in)*

Why are you here, Robert?

*ROBERT looks at her.*

ROBERT

Well, the truth is ---

*He stops, and turns to the audience, as ---*

*CAITHLEEN is frozen, in place.*

ROBERT (cont'd)

... I can't tell her. Not really. Can't tell her about the birthday party I had a few weeks back. Some friends arranged it. My sons couldn't get away from work - both are real busy with their own families - but they sent along a funny video they'd made. Even my ex-wife sent a

(MORE)

ROBERT (cont'd)

card.

We ate and drank. Candles were blown out. Cake was eaten. And it should have been ... I mean as I sat there, taking in this very sweet, very fun, nice little event in my honor - it should have been, I should have felt ... warm. Content. Grateful. But ...

It was then I realized that there is a ... coldness in me. Masked - yes. Managed well - to be sure. But that night I knew ... down deep, at the center of me ... I am made of something cold.

And I think that started here.

In Dublin.

With her.

And I can't tell her that.

*ROBERT turns back to CAITHLEEN - as she unfreezes and repeats the exact question:*

CAITHLEEN

*(as before)*

Why are you here, Robert?

ROBERT

Well, the truth is ... I'm meeting someone. Someone I haven't seen in thirty-five years.

CAITHLEEN

*(a smile, enjoying this)*

Is it a woman - a lady-friend?

ROBERT

Yes. I wrote her a letter.

CAITHLEEN

With a flower pressed inside?

ROBERT

Well - yes - as a matter of fact ---

CAITHLEEN

Oh, that's so romantic ---

ROBERT

Maybe - I'm not ---

CAITHLEEN

*(overlapping)*

--- but has no one told you?

*(before HE can respond)*

It's impossible! To go back to a time. A place, maybe.  
But not a time.

ROBERT

*(beat)*

I guess we'll find out.

CAITHLEEN

An' anyway - can I ask you somethin'?

ROBERT

Of course.

CAITHLEEN

Do you know for sure they're out of my rolls at  
Finnerty's?

ROBERT

It's half-twelve already.

CAITHLEEN

Truly?

ROBERT

I could buy you a coffee.

CAITHLEEN

Or a pint.

ROBERT

Or a pint, yes. Shall we do that now?

CAITHLEEN

I should catch up with Davey. Have my lunch.

*She is packing her book inside her  
bag.*

ROBERT

You mean "Darlin' Davey"?

CAITHLEEN

Yes - but I don't know how you know that. He could care  
less about Joyce or Dublin - he'll tell you straight to  
your face that he's in it for nothin' but the "pretty  
tourist snatch".

*(off HIS look)*

What?

ROBERT  
You've got a mouth on you.

CAITHLEEN  
So I hear.

ROBERT  
Like Molly Bloom.

CAITHLEEN  
*(proudly)*  
Molly Bloom is the hero of that book.

ROBERT  
*(laughs)*  
Are you kidding? The hero of Ulysses is the reader!  
Whoever can make the great slog to the end.

CAITHLEEN  
But the end is the best part!

ROBERT  
And the only chapter you ever read, I bet. Molly Bloom,  
left all alone. Eight sentences that changed the world.

CAITHLEEN  
If only they had.

*CAITHLEEN starts to go.*

ROBERT  
When you meet Robbie, don't ask him if he's serious.

CAITHLEEN  
If he's "serious"?

ROBERT  
Yes. Serious about you.

CAITHLEEN  
Why would I ask him that?

ROBERT  
And when you reach out your hand to him - if he  
hesitates at all: break his heart. Take him and  
shatter him. Leave him in a thousand pieces, so he'll  
never want to look back on this day and remember.

CAITHLEEN  
But ---

ROBE  
You'll be doing me a favor.

CAITHLEEN

--- I thought he was your friend.

ROBERT

He's a *feckin' eejit*. You'll call him that and he'll deserve it. Deserve that and more. For being gutless ---

CAITHLEEN

*(sharp)*

Excuse me.

ROBERT

--- for letting you walk away.

*And CAITHLEEN is walking away, not looking back.*

ROBERT (cont'd)

The cold bastard. He watched you walk down Grafton - even saw you slow down - like a sign - saying "*you can still catch me - I'm not gone yet!*" - but he just stood there, cold to the bone.

*CAITHLEEN is gone.*

ROBERT (cont'd)

All for pride. Fear and pride.

If I could meet him ... oh, man, if only I could have five minutes alone with him ...

*ROBBIE enters. He wears beat-up jeans and a t-shirt. Carries a weathered backpack.*

*ROBERT is surprised by what he sees.*

ROBBIE

Hey.

ROBERT

"Hey"?

ROBBIE

Yeah - hey - did you see a girl here?

ROBERT

I saw a lot of girls here.

ROBBIE

She was the tour guide - for that Joyce thing?

ROBERT

"That Joyce thing"?

ROBBIE

Hey - c'mon, man - her name is Caithleen ---

ROBERT

What did she look like?

ROBBIE

I don't know - she's real pretty - she has a kind of ---

ROBERT

*(overlapping)*

You don't know?! How can I help you if you don't know?

ROBBIE

Okay - forget it ---

*ROBBIE starts off ---*

ROBERT

I might have seen her at Davy Byrne's - just a while ago - havin' a real tiny sandwich.

*--- but this stops him.*

ROBBIE

Yeah - we were there ---

ROBERT

But she stormed out, I think.

ROBBIE

--- yes, she did, but how ---

ROBERT

I think it was something you said.

ROBBIE

--- how do you know that?

ROBERT

Then I saw her on a bench in St. Stephen's green - but the thunder started, so the two of you ran through the rain to McDaid's. A good pub, that one.

ROBBIE

You've been following me?!

ROBERT

Americans go to Europe to find their ancestors. That's what I'm doing. You are my ancestor!

ROBBIE  
What the hell, man?

ROBERT  
You - what you did - what you will do here today - *you are what gave birth to me.*

ROBBIE  
Which way is the river? Is the river west of here?

*ROBBIE pulls out a map and tries to make sense of it.*

ROBERT  
God - look at us! It's the ultimate *deja vu!*

ROBBIE  
This city ---

ROBERT  
*(to audience)*  
Who gets a chance like this?!

ROBBIE  
*(re: the map)*  
--- this city makes no sense at all!

ROBERT  
You and me - face to face - Time as we know it be damned!

*ROBBIE shoves the map at ROBERT ---*

ROBBIE  
Just tell me where the hell I am!

ROBERT  
You are in the thick of it, my friend! - and you are *fantastically unprepared!*

ROBBIE  
Look - if you've seen her ---

ROBERT  
You know - when I was your age I swore that when I got older I would not hate young people. And now I'm older. And I hate young people.  
*(with a laugh)*  
God I hate 'em so much! ---

ROBBIE  
Hey, listen ---

ROBERT

*(overlapping)*

--- I hate the trivial crap you talk about - and how little you worry - and how nothing is expected of you!

ROBBIE

If you've SEEN HER you've got to HELP ME ---

ROBERT

And worst of all - I hate that you TAKE IT ALL FOR GRANTED.

ROBBIE

FORGET IT - OKAY?!

ROBERT

Caithleen is WASTED ON YOU: you and your cocky nonchalance and your stupid firm body and your messy full head of hair - I hate the sight of you, you fucker!

*ROBERT starts off, saying ---*

ROBERT (cont'd)

And TUCK YOUR SHIRT IN - you look AWFUL.

*--- ROBERT is gone, as ---*

*CAIT appears, opposite. Her clothes are modest, casual, worse for wear. She has an old umbrella and a bag from the market.*

*CAIT removes a roll and some jam from her bag.*

CAIT

You did the right thing, Robbie. Lettin' that girl get away. I say let 'er go - and get on with your life.

*ROBBIE turns to her.*

CAIT (cont'd)

It's Caithleen you're talkin' about, am I right?

ROBBIE

*(how do you know this?)*

I'm sorry?

CAIT

Say you run after her - what then? People are too sugary. Makin' sweet little movin' pictures in their head. You think you're gonna catch upta her - an' pour out your heart - like that's a good thing! - like people truly want to see the drops an' dregs of somebody's

(MORE)

CAIT (cont'd)  
bloody ol' organs! An' then you're thinkin' all is forgiven an' you put your lips together with fireworks over the river behind you - cute little unicorns shittin' out rainbows across the sky that's all a-twinkle with the sugary sweet endings that're never really there at all ...

*CAIT takes an enormous bite of her roll. She enjoys it immensely.*

CAIT (cont'd)  
You hungry?

*She holds out some roll and jam.*

CAIT (cont'd)  
All you've eaten is those crisps - I know that.

*ROBBIE pulls an empty packet of crisps from his pocket - and looks at CAIT. How does she know that?*

CAIT (cont'd)  
Nasty things. Don't know what I ever saw in 'em. But you snarfed 'em down like they were god's own manna from heaven.

ROBBIE  
You were watching me eat?

CAIT  
It wasn't the most pleasant thing I've done.

ROBBIE  
But that's not possible - it was just me and Caithleen ---

CAIT  
Right there at Davey Byrne's. Yes, I know.

ROBBIE  
You've been following me too?!

CAIT  
Oh, Robbie - don't be troubled by it. It's nothin' but the *shifting*.

ROBBIE  
The what?

CAIT  
An' it's nice to meet you at this age. Don't know what I'd do if you were grown old like me. Don't expect we'd have much in common then.

ROBBIE

What are you talking about?

CAIT

Used to trouble me so. This *shifting*. People not stayin' their right ages around me. Same thing happened to my Ma. But I think you an' I at these ages are a pretty good fit. Wanna buy me a pint across the way?

ROBBIE

If you know Caithleen, tell me where she lives - I need to find her!

CAIT

Do you now?

ROBBIE

Yes!

CAIT

Then why'd you get distracted by an old lady with a day-old roll?

ROBBIE

But she gives the same tour tomorrow? - at the same time?

CAIT

Oh, Caithleen's given her last tour.

ROBBIE

No ---

CAIT

She's tossed that big book o' hers right into the trash - which you'd a seen if you'd truly followed her ---

ROBBIE

But how am I ---

CAIT

*(overlapping)*

--- you *stupid, stupid boy* - you've no idea how long she waited for you. Crouched down in a doorway, outside a tourist shop ---

ROBBIE

Where?! - tell me where?!

CAIT

*(overlapping)*

--- an' as she's waitin' there, she's thinkin' it's all her fault - that she's done it all again - ruined everythin' just like she did with Michael Finnerty!

ROBBIE

She didn't ruin anything ---

CAIT

Woulda been nice for her to know that!

ROBBIE

I didn't know what to say - she kept talking about the future ---

CAIT

She can't help that.

ROBBIE

--- and she said she could "see it all" - but that's got to be impossible, right? - no one can "see it all", so why do girls always say that? *Why do girls use the "future" to break up with you?!*

*(before CAIT can respond)*

There was a girl I knew at home who did the same thing - saying we had "no future" because she didn't think I was serious.

CAIT

And were you?

ROBBIE

Of course I was! We'd been together almost a year - we had planned a trip to London!

CAIT

London?

ROBBIE

Yes ---

CAIT

What had this girl done to be punished so?

ROBBIE

--- but a few days before we're gonna leave, I got a letter from her.

CAIT

Maybe a love letter ---

ROBBIE

No, it wasn't ---

CAIT

--- with maybe a nice flower pressed there inside.

ROBBIE

--- it was a letter telling me she saw no "future" for us. Telling me her parents didn't I was good enough for her. She said: "Why are we pretending, Robbie, when we both know you are not serious?"

*Pause.*

CAIT

An' you froze right then, I bet. Had nothin' to say.

ROBBIE

*(beat)*

Yes.

CAIT

Cause what's a boy to say to somethin' like that? Askin' a boy to see his future is askin' a mole to see the stars.

*Pause.*

CAIT (cont'd)

How was London?

ROBBIE

I didn't go. I couldn't. I asked the guy at British Air if there was another place I could go. He said he had a flight to Dublin. What's Dublin like, I asked. He said: "Grey. Sad. Bunch of losers and drunks."

I said: sign me up.

*Pause. ROBBIE picks up his map and folds it, slowly.*

CAIT

Caithleen had a boy she was serious about.

*This gets ROBBIE'S attention.*

ROBBIE

Who is it?

CAIT

Sit down an' let me tell you.

ROBBIE

No - I've got to ---

CAIT

*(takes his arm)*

She'll be back, Robbie! She's a lot closer than you

(MORE)

CAIT (cont'd)  
think. Before you know it, she'll be sittin' right 'ere  
on this bench.

ROBBIE *hesitates.*

CAIT (cont'd)  
C'mon now - sit an' have a bite o' roll. It's from  
Finnerty's.

ROBBIE  
Caithleen talked about that - about Finnerty's ...

CAIT  
Smart girl.

*She offers him a good portion of  
the roll. He looks at her. Then  
... he takes it and eats. He's  
hungry.*

CAIT (cont'd)  
*(the roll)*  
How's that now?

ROBBIE  
*("thumbs up", mouth full  
of roll)*  
Mmm-hmmm.

CAIT  
*(smiles)*  
Gotta be somethin' 'bout that great basin where they  
stir the dough. The thousands of days that've made a  
start in that oven. Somethin' there at Finnerty's still  
knows how to make a roll.

ROBBIE  
Mmm-mmm.

CAIT  
Their eldest - their Michael - he fancied Caithleen for  
a time, an' she played it so cool, you know - didn't  
want to make him think she's easily won.

ROBBIE  
When was this?

CAIT  
This was before you, Robbie. I'm told he'd drop off  
some rolls at the house. Even a cake or two - for  
Caithleen an' her Ma. Her Ma was never so happy as when  
she was eatin' those little cakes and knowin' a boy from  
a good family like the Finnerty's was sweet on her girl.

ROBBIE

So what happened?

CAIT

I'm told he'd tap on her window so early - an' they'd walk away of a mornin' - side by side down those still-dark streets. An' Caithleen kept lookin' down at his shoes - the enormous shoes of Michael Finnerty - an' her shoes were takin' steps right along with his! An' the smell of that place, Robbie! ... an' the heat of that big oven ... the flour all over my hands like perfect white dust. An' Michael Finnerty's Ma hands me a roll that's just outta the oven ... and Michael takes his two fingers - just like this he takes 'em - and dips 'em into a big tub of butter - an' with his fingers he drops that butter onto that roll.

ROBBIE

Wait ...

CAIT

An' I watched it melt there ... an' I felt him lookin' at me and wantin' so much to kiss me ...

ROBBIE

... you were telling me about Caithleen.

CAIT

... an' I put that warm buttered roll in my mouth. An' the tears came to my eyes. Stupid that was - to be cryin' after takin' a bite o' that lovely buttered roll ... in that warm and friendly kitchen ... on that most perfect of all mornings.

But I knew what those tears were. I knew a life with Michael Finnerty would never get better than that moment there. Because he'd *find me out*. Find my mother's craziness down in me. My father's cold heart an' dull rage. An' there'd be no place for those things among the Finnerty's. They were all ... sorta ... golden people.

So I played it "cool". An' I ate that roll. And when it was time to go, Michael took my hand - an' I gave him my very best smile ... knowin' I'd never see Michael Finnerty again.

As I walked home, the sun was just comin' up. An' the air smelled everywhere like bread.

*A long silence.*

CAIT (cont'd)

But girls like Caithleen, Robbie - they always come back.

ROBBIE

Why should I believe you?

CAIT

Cause it's true! Did your mother not teach you to believe in things?

ROBBIE

Yes - she did, but my Mom is ---

CAIT

Oh, that's right. She's gone. I knew that. I'm sorry.

*Pause.*

ROBBIE

What do you mean you knew that?

CAIT

An' where is she now? Where are you keepin' her?

*(off HIS look)*

Oh lord what a look on your face! - like I'm gonna shrink your head into a rattle.

ROBBIE

What kind of question ---

CAIT

We decide, Robbie. We have to decide where to put these people in our heads 'n hearts. It's not up to the dead to find their place. It's up to us.

I've put my Da behind a nice strong door. I'm glad to know he's there. But I'm also glad for that door, an' the good lock on it.

My dear brother Paddy - passed a few years back, done in by pneumonia - but I've put him for eternity in a nice warm bath. With a good mystery to read an' a jigger of rye at the ready.

My Ma I put in a chair near the south window, with our good quilt on her lap - not too close, I don't want her grabbin' at me every time she needs something - but near enough that I can hear her sweet laugh.

It's something you've got to do for your own Ma, Robbie. If you don't, there's no end to it. She'll wander around inside you, keepin' you unsettled, long as you live.

*ROBBIE stands.*

ROBBIE  
Look - you don't know me ---

CAIT  
Oh that's where you're wrong. I know you so well now -  
better than I ever did before --

ROBBIE  
--- I've never met you in my ---

CAIT  
*(overlapping)*  
--- an' if you stay another minute, she'll be here,  
Robbie!

ROBBIE  
You don't know that! ---

CAIT  
She'll come walkin' back - thinkin' her wild thoughts -  
thinkin' she's the only girl on earth's ever had wild  
thoughts of that kind.

*CAIT grabs at ROBBIE'S arm - pulls  
him to her ---*

ROBBIE  
Let go of me ---

CAIT  
Let me tell you her thoughts ---

ROBBIE  
--- just leave me the hell ALONE.

*ROBBIE pulls away from CAIT, and  
rushes off, as ---*

*CAITHLEEN appears, opposite. She  
wears her coat. She carries a  
small, simple blue suitcase.*

*ROBBIE and CAITHLEEN do not see  
each other here.*

CAIT  
--- her devil-may-care thoughts about the grand things  
she's gonna do with her life. An' all of it - ALL OF IT  
- is tied up in a boy she barely knows. A boy she's  
come crawlin' back for.

*CAIT turns to CAITHLEEN.*

CAITHLEEN  
Hello.

CAIT  
Hello.

*Pause.*

CAITHLEEN  
Were you talkin' to someone? Was someone just here?

CAIT  
Oh, I suppose. Now I suppose they're gone.

*Pause. CAITHLEEN is looking  
around, looking OFF ...*

CAIT (cont'd)  
Can I help you? You needin' somethin'?

CAITHLEEN  
Oh, no - thank you.

*Pause.*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)  
Are you needin' something?

CAIT  
Oh, not a thing. I've more than I need already. Ask anyone.

*Pause.*

CAITHLEEN  
Got your umbrella. That's smart. Shoulda brought mine.  
Gonna be fierce rain, I heard.

CAIT  
Did you hear that?

CAITHLEEN  
Yes.

CAIT  
Hmm.

*Pause.*

CAITHLEEN  
It's not what you heard?

CAIT

I heard you were lookin' for a boy. A boy you snared into your group so there wouldn't be thirteen of you. Made him come on one of your "tours". I heard you gave him a packet of crisps an' then you poured out your whole future on 'im an' asked if he was "serious".

*CAITHLEEN says nothing.*

CAIT (cont'd)

No matter. Easier this way. Won't have to swallow your pride. Tell him how you came runnin' back for him.

CAITHLEEN

That's not what I've done.

CAIT

Of course it is! Just look at you!

CAITHLEEN

You don't know anything about ---

CAIT

I know you are *starvin'*. Hungry as can be for the affections of *anyone*. Someone to see you - really see you - cause for too long you've been the invisible girl in your home, an' at your church, an' everywhere you ever thought to go ---

CAITHLEEN

No ...

CAIT

--- *you are starvin', Caithleen.*

An' that boy ... you don't know him from Adam. But he *saw you*, didn't he? An' you came runnin' back ... with Momma's suitcase. Where on earth did you ever find that?

*CAITHLEEN is staring at CAIT. We think she might leave. But instead ... she sets her suitcase down. And she stands there. Lost.*

*CAIT pats the seat next to her on the bench ... but CAITHLEEN does not move.*

CAITHLEEN

How long?

CAIT

Hmm?

CAITHLEEN

How long will it feel like this?

CAIT

You mean what feels like a tap on your shoulder an' you turn to find someone holdin' out a lovely present wrapped in blue paper just for you, but when you go to open it they yank it away an' you never even saw it - never knew what it was but now that it's gone you want it more than anything ---

CAITHLEEN

Aye, but ---

CAIT

*(overlapping/interrupting)*

--- but it's gone - an' the summer too is gone - an' the warm light always goes with it - an' Momma says the rain will always find the wedding, the bride, the mud, the dull lace dragging like gaps of blue earth into carriages gone to hazard - into the horses bespeckled with steam an' slop - into the sound of hoofs poundin' like a lost ancient music in the catacombs of dull-hearted girls named Caithleen.

Is that what you mean?

CAITHLEEN

Aye. How long will I feel that?

CAIT

Only always. Only then.

*Pause.*

CAITHLEEN

You talk strange.

CAIT

You get used to it.

CAITHLEEN

An' you're old.

CAIT

I plan to be older - no thanks to you. You coulda spared me all this, you know.

CAITHLEEN

How?

CAIT

Are you havin' me on here ---

CAITHLEEN

No, I'm only ---

CAIT

*(overlapping)*

--- can you really not venture a guess 'bout the road that gets traveled between you an' me?!

CAITHLEEN

But you can't know the future! - no one can.

CAIT

Every woman knows the future if she's got the nerve to look!

Aye, it's a fact beyond dispute: women can see an older version of themselves walkin' across the road an' say "oh look what's to become of me!"

Can you imagine a man sayin' such a thing?! Not on your life! If a man saw his older self across the road, he'd say "thanks be to St. Patrick that I'm never gonna end up like *that!*"

*Silence, and then ...*

*CAITHLEEN slowly walks over and sits down beside CAIT.*

*They sit there for a good long while.*

CAITHLEEN

What time is it?

CAIT

It's none. It's No o'clock.

CAITHLEEN

There's no such time.

CAIT

Sure there is. An' when there's no time there's time enough for a girl an' herself. An' that's infinite, you know. There's no end to a girl when she's left alone with her thoughts. Like Molly Bloom. Like you sittin' here with me, Caithleen. Right in the endless here an' now. Here where it's No o'clock.

*Pause.*

CAITHLEEN

It's sorta nice.

CAIT

'tis.

*Pause.*

CAITHLEEN

I can ask things, I suppose.

CAIT

That you can. But be smart about it. There's a lot in the future that no one should want to know.

CAITHLEEN

What happens to Michael Finnerty?

*(off CAIT'S look)*

You said I could ask things.

CAIT

Michael Finnerty is robbed in north London. Beat up by hooligans. Left for dead.

CAITHLEEN

It's awful ...

CAIT

*O this nuisance of a thing - I hope they'll have something better for us in the other world - for the love of Mike I don't care what anybody says it'd be much better for the world to be governed by the women in it - you wouldn't see women going and killing one another and slaughtering - when do you ever see women rolling around drunk like they do, or gambling every penny they have? - because a woman, whatever she does, she knows where to stop*

CAITHLEEN

He was so kind to me. He'd wait out on the road. Just to walk with me.

CAIT

Michael Finnerty's in a better place now. I've put him down by the Liffey on a warm day. Danglin' his big feet - remember how big his feet were? It was truly strange the size of that man's feet. But I've got him right there, wearin' his good blue jumper, the sun nice upon his face.

CAITHLEEN

Is the bakery still there?

CAIT

Just the name. Fella named Stimson runs it now, with his wife. Say they are kin to the Finnerty's - but they're not. They're just in there. Usin' that big

(MORE)

CAIT (cont'd)  
beautiful oven. Makin' those rolls under an assumed  
name.

*Pause.*

CAITHLEEN  
An' Robbie?

CAIT  
Do you really not know?

CAITHLEEN  
He was gone when I came back.

CAIT  
Aye. An' you don't hear another word from 'im. You go  
back to Sweny's an' McDaid's - you look for him all over  
Dublin - it's embarrassin' really how you make a scene  
over some boy we only kissed that one time.

CAITHLEEN  
What do you mean "we"?

CAIT  
I was there, Caithleen.

CAITHLEEN  
No, you were not!

CAIT  
I kissed 'im right along with you!

CAITHLEEN  
No, you most certainly did not!

CAIT  
Suit yourself.

CAITHLEEN  
Robbie wants *me* - wants to take me home with him ---

CAIT  
*(a laugh)*  
Oh, there'll be plenty o' that, after this day! Plenty  
a goin' home with the boys ---

CAITHLEEN  
What are you ---

CAIT  
*(overlapping)*  
--- cause you become a bit of whore, Caithleen.  
*(off HER look)*  
Yeah. There's no denyin' it. For so long you were such  
(MORE)

CAIT (cont'd)  
a good girl. Stupid, that. To be good for a world that  
takes no notice of it.

CAITHLEEN  
An' then?

CAIT  
Then you make up for it - and how! Dublin boys.  
Tourists. Young 'n old. Married 'n not.

CAITHLEEN  
No - that can't be true ---

CAIT  
*Let him have a good eyeful to make his micky stand for  
him - serve him right - if that's all the harm ever we  
did in this vale of tears, God knows its not much! -  
what else were we given all those desires for, I'd like  
to know*

CAITHLEEN  
I won't do that. Won't whore around like you said.

*CAIT just smiles.*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)  
It would kill our Ma to know I did that!

CAIT  
She won't know. She'll die at St. Brendan's just a  
month from now. Our Da won't tell you for two weeks.  
You'll hear the news from a neighbor, askin' "Are you  
ever gonna hold a wake for your dear Ma?"

CAITHLEEN  
No ...

CAIT  
You'll like where they bury her. On the good side of  
the hill. Her grave gets the most lovely light.  
Later they bury our Da up there, too - but there's  
somethin' about the hill and the trees nearby ... even  
in summer, his gravestone never gets the least bit warm.

*Pause.*

CAIT (cont'd)  
I'm in her room, you know.

CAITHLEEN  
In our house? We still have it?

CAIT

Listen to you! "In our house?!" The house, Caithleen, is long gone. It's a car park now.

CAITHLEEN

But you said ---

CAIT

I'm in her room at St. Brendan's.

*(off HER look)*

Yeah. Committed. Just like our Ma.

Oh would you look at you ...

*She gently touches CAITHLEEN'S face. They are eye-to-eye.*

CAIT (cont'd)

Not for years, Caithleen. You won't be in that room for years. And when you go ... when your friend Davey and his nice wife take you to St. Brendan's ---

*(off CAITHLEEN'S look)*

Yeah, Davey becomes a great friend to you - christens his little girl with your name. An' when you go there an' you get settled in ... you'll be truly glad. Not every day, but most. There's no one glad for all their days, is there?

CAITHLEEN

But I'll get out, yes? I'll get out one day an' come here.

CAIT

Aye, that's the good news, Caithleen: I'm gettin' out!

CAITHLEEN

That's good.

CAIT

On Bloomsday. This year. That's the day I'll be leavin' St. Brendan's. Wearin' my whole Bloomsday get-up - which I just love to do. Goin' to the festivities. All the folderol.

CAITHLEEN

That sounds nice.

CAIT

An' I'll be meetin' someone. Someone who found me. All these years later. Wrote me a letter, of all things. With a flower pressed inside ...

*DISTANT THUNDER and the SOUND OF RAIN, as ---*

A light gradually reveals ROBERT.  
The year for Robert is the Present -  
but he now wears his commemorative  
"Bloomsday" clothing: he looks  
like a cultured Edwardian  
gentleman, circa 1904.

In one hand he holds a walking  
stick, also of the era.

In the other hand he holds a small  
gift - wrapped in blue paper.

ROBERT is looking into the  
distance. Waiting for someone.

CAIT (cont'd)

... he said I was a flower of the mountain - that was  
why I liked him - because I saw he understood what a  
woman is - and I gave him all the pleasure I could -  
leading him on - till he asked me to say yes - and I  
wouldn't answer first - only looked out over the sea and  
the sky - thinking of so many things he didn't know of

CAITHLEEN

But who is he? Someone we know?

CAIT

Who can say, Caithleen, if we know him or not, anymore.  
It's been years.

CAIT opens her umbrella, as ---

The lights fade.

End of Act One

ACT TWO

A day in June. Same as Act One.

*ROBERT - still wearing his commemorative Edwardian clothes, but no longer holding the gift - speaks to the audience.*

ROBERT

The one p.m. tour started with a group of twelve:

A loud woman with a Dallas Cowboys sweatshirt and a hat that read "Happily Divorced". A quiet family from Minnesota - with a Dad who never lifted his head from the map. A retired German couple - cheerful and chubby. Three Japanese college students - cousins, as it turned out. And the usual sandy-haired Australians - boyfriend and girlfriend, impossibly relaxed.

*CAITHLEEN is revealed. She seems to be speaking to ROBERT - but is in fact looking over his shoulder and OFF.*

CAITHLEEN

Good morning!

ROBERT

And I had no idea who she was talking to.

CAITHLEEN

Yes, you there - I was wonderin' if you had any plans for the next hour or so?

*ROBBIE appears behind ROBERT.*

ROBERT

But she was ---

ROBBIE

*(to CAITHLEEN)*

--- Talking to me?

CAITHLEEN

I thought you might enjoy our tour.

ROBBIE

What kind of tour?

CAITHLEEN

Do you know James Joyce? His famous book, Ulysses?

*ROBBIE stares blankly at CAITHLEEN,  
as ROBERT speaks ---*

ROBERT

Ummm ...

ROBERT (cont'd)

And never was a face more blank than my face at that moment. Not only because I had no idea what she was talking about ---

ROBBIE

*Ummmmm ...*

ROBERT

--- but because I was looking at her. And would you? Would you please just ... *look at her.*

CAITHLEEN

I wonder if you might tag along with us? No charge. If you'd just stand in back while I give my tour, I'd be so pleased ---

ROBERT

And right when I thought she was interested in me ---

CAITHLEEN

--- because you see, the thing is:

ROBERT

--- the truth came out:

CAITHLEEN

I've got a group of twelve. And with me leadin' it: that's thirteen of us. And thirteen *won't do.* Thirteen'll be the ruin o' me.

So, I wondered if you'd please be my *fourteen?*

*ROBBIE and ROBERT stare at her.*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)

You're Robert, aren't you? Robbie.

ROBBIE

Yeah - how do you know that?

CAITHLEEN

I've heard about you.

*She reaches out her hand to him,  
saying ---*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)  
Will you join us?

ROBBIE  
That would be great.

*He takes her hand.*

ROBERT  
And away we went.

*A SHIFT: CAITHLEEN is now speaking to the [UNSEEN] GROUP.*

*ROBBIE stands at some distance from her. He holds a cheap camera of the era. During the following, he takes numerous photos - the subject of which seems always to be Caithleen.*

*ROBERT looks on.*

CAITHLEEN  
... an' that's why June sixteenth has come to be known as "Bloomsday" - a day when Dubliners dress up in turn-of-the-century clothing and re-enact moments from the novel ---

ROBERT  
Especially the drinking moments.

CAITHLEEN  
--- including Leopold Bloom's walk through Dublin. All right - stay close so you can hear me. We will begin where Bloom begins his day:

ROBERT  
Number 7, Eccles Street.

*She gestures to ROBBIE - who is taking her photo.*

CAITHLEEN  
If you want to get a picture of the plaque, I can move to the side. Shall I do that?

ROBBIE  
No, stay right there - you're fine.

CAITHLEEN  
You're sure then?

*ROBBIE gestures: "I'm sure."*

ROBERT

I was sure.

*SOUND OF CHURCH BELLS, as ---*

*ROBBIE keeps taking pictures.*

CAITHLEEN

We are walking with Bloom now as he leaves Eccles Street an' heads along Hardwick Place - toward St. George's Church. One of the finest examples of Georgian architecture in Dublin. The bells you are hearing are from St. George's - and, yes, they are heard in Ulysses.

ROBERT

And that is when Caithleen caught me talking to the family from Minnesota.

CAITHLEEN

Is there a question near the back? Don't be shy - I see several of you whispering back there - if you have a question I'm glad to answer it.

ROBBIE

No question. Please go on.

CAITHLEEN

Sure then?

*ROBBIE nods.*

ROBERT

I was sure.

CAITHLEEN

All right - we are going to cross here an' head down Gardiner street. Remember to "look right" when you cross.

ROBERT

And it was at this point that the family from Minnesota turned and walked away ---

CAITHLEEN

*(calling OFF)*

This way now ---

ROBERT

--- with Mom and Dad muttering under their breath.

CAITHLEEN

*(calling OFF)*

--- where are you goin'?!

ROBERT

And while she called after the Minnesotans, I set my sights on the Germans.

CAITHLEEN

*(to the GROUP)*

It looks like we are ten now. On our right here, you will see Belvedere College - where Joyce went to school.

ROBERT

And she caught me once again.

*She points again to the back of the GROUP.*

CAITHLEEN

I'm sorry - is that a question you have?

ROBERT

No.

ROBBIE

*Nein.*

CAITHLEEN

Can you hear me all right?

ROBERT

Yes.

ROBBIE

*Ja.*

CAITHLEEN

An' you got your photo taken?

*ROBBIE: two thumbs up.*

ROBERT

Dozens of them.

CAITHLEEN

Okay then - this way please ---

ROBERT

And on we went in the fictional steps of Leopold Bloom: toward Mountjoy Square - through Beresford Place ---

CAITHLEEN

--- crossing Butt Bridge now ---

ROBERT

--- always good for some tourist snickers ---

CAITHLEEN

--- to the Southside of Dublin 'til we reach City Quay.

ROBERT

And this is when the Germans bade us "*Danke schon!*" ---

ROBBIE

*Auf Wiedersehen!*

CAITHLEEN

(*to the GERMANS*)

Pardon me - hello?! - *Damen und Herren?!*

ROBERT

--- and vanished into a nearby pub. Now we were eight.

CAITHLEEN

(*soldiering on*)

Here we go onto Lime Street and right again onto Hanover!

ROBERT

And that's when we lost the Australians, who found an open cafe table and just started necking ---

CAITHLEEN

This way! - up Lombard and onto Pearse.

ROBERT

--- as I resorted to hand signals with the Japanese girls.

CAITHLEEN

All right: there's only the six of us now - a nice small group. An' it is just past ten a.m. in the novel when Leopold Bloom is standin' right here at the General Post Office on O'Connell Street. He will pick up a letter here: a very flirtatious letter from a woman who is not his wife. Excuse me?

(*a QUESTION*)

Yes - this is the "real tour" - why would you ask that?

ROBERT

And there went the Japanese girls.

CAITHLEEN

--- no - please - wait! - hold on!

ROBERT

They left - saying thank you and I'm sorry ---

ROBBIE

*Arigato!*

*Gomen' nasai!*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)

Where are you going?! ---

ROBERT

--- and disappeared into the crowd.

CAITHLEEN

--- please - I don't understand!

ROBERT

It was just me and the Texan now. The Texan wanted to know about the flirtatious letter.

CAITHLEEN

*(in a broad Texas accent)*

That letter, ma'am, ain't part o' this here TOUR!

*CAITHLEEN moves on, as ---*

*ROBBIE smiles and follows, loading more film into his camera.*

ROBERT

By the time we had reached our next stop, the Texan had fallen into conversation with a Dublin policeman who liked her hat. They never noticed as Caithleen kept walking and I kept taking her picture. Five rolls of film. One hundred and eight photos - none of them of Dublin. All of them of her.

*ROBERT exits.*

*A SHIFT: a simple Counter of some kind, which will represent Sweny's Chemist Shop.*

*CAITHLEEN, very frustrated, drops her book on the counter.*

CAITHLEEN

*Shite!* I've never had a day like this. People just leavin'. I don't do well with people leavin'!

ROBBIE

I thought you did great.

CAITHLEEN

Yeah - well - I think that's the end of our tour. Thanks for bein' my fourteen. I'll point you back the way we came - it's not far.

ROBBIE

We don't have to stop. I don't have anything else to do.

CAITHLEEN

*(beat)*

Well that makes me feel very special - thank you so much.

ROBBIE

What happened here?

*(off HER look)*

In the book.

CAITHLEEN

Oh now you're havin' me on ---

ROBBIE

I'm not.

CAITHLEEN

--- actin' like you want to know these things just to make me feel better.

ROBBIE

I want to know what happened in this shop.

*She considers him. Then ...*

*CAITHLEEN plops a wrapped bar of soap in front of ROBBIE.*

CAITHLEEN

Soap. Lemon soap.

*Pause.*

ROBBIE

And ...?

CAITHLEEN

And that's what happened here. This is Sweny's Chemist Shop. In the book, Leopold Bloom buys a bar of lemon soap in this shop.

This is when I have everyone pick up the soap an' smell it.

*She gestures for him to do this.*

*He does.*

ROBBIE

Lemon.

CAITHLEEN

'tis.

You're American.

ROBBIE *nods.*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)

From where? I'd like to go. Anywhere in America.

ROBBIE

Seattle. Washington. Well, outside Seattle. Renton.

CAITHLEEN

Is it nice there?

ROBBIE

It's okay.

CAITHLEEN

Sounds like it would be beautiful. Like all those movies about America. Lovely Renton, Washington. There on the ocean, with the dolphins an' the whales an' the sunsets. Is it like that?

ROBBIE

*(a smile)*

Renton is not like that. But we have a little house - kinda beat up. No yard really. Not a great part of town. But sometimes it can be kinda nice. Not nice like a postcard. Just like a day.

CAITHLEEN

What kind of day?

ROBBIE

I don't know.

CAITHLEEN

Tell me about a nice American kind of day.

ROBBIE

Just ... a day you get a coffee - shoot some hoops with your friends - wash your Dad's car when the sun is out and the radio's on ...

I think most places - even Renton - can be pretty great on days like that.

CAITHLEEN

An' you'll stay there forever.

ROBBIE

Forever? God, who can think like that?

CAITHLEEN

I can think like that. That's exactly how I think.

*ROBBIE looks at her.*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)

Is there a big wide road you can walk down?

ROBBIE

I guess - but you'd probably drive.

CAITHLEEN

You know someone with a car?

ROBBIE

Well - yeah - I mean, I have a car ---

CAITHLEEN

You have a car?! A car of your own?!

ROBBIE

Just an old beater - but yeah, I mean ---

CAITHLEEN

Oh that would be the greatest thing. Drivin' in a car of your very own!

ROBBIE

Yeah, I guess it's pretty cool ---

CAITHLEEN

Where would you take me? In beautiful Renton, Washington - where would we go?

ROBBIE

Well - it depends - what do you like to do?

CAITHLEEN

*(sharp)*

How would I know that?

ROBBIE

Well ---

CAITHLEEN

How would I know what I like to do when I've never done somethin'?!

ROBBIE

We could drive into Seattle - go look at the water - go down to the Market - get something to eat, if you're hungry ---

CAITHLEEN

Oh, I'm hungry, yes - I'm very hungry and I want to eat and see the water and drive - I want to drive a lot - how far can we drive? Can we drive across the whole state? ---

ROBBIE

Yeah ---

CAITHLEEN

--- the whole country?!

ROBBIE

--- I guess we could ---

CAITHLEEN

Oh I would love that. I'd love to travel like that! Have you done that with anyone?

ROBBIE

I had a ticket to go to London.

CAITHLEEN

With a girl, I bet.

ROBBIE

Yes - but things changed ---

CAITHLEEN

Well, more's the pity for her. London's so nice.

ROBBIE

You've been there?

CAITHLEEN

No. Want to. Haven't yet. But I've a girlfriend who moved to London. Outside London. Croydon. Her bloke works construction. Maybe something electric, I forget. She packs him sandwiches every day. They might be gettin' a cat, sometime soon. It will be a boy - always get a boy cat if you're gonna get a cat. The husband - Peter - wants to start up a family but Mary - that's my friend - Mary's wriggled out of that so far. Good Catholic girl. Has to be creative.

Anyway ... *they like where they are.* It's an *ordinary life.* An' doesn't that sound grand?

ROBBIE

Sounds nice.

CAITHLEEN

Not like here. It's all dyin' here but nobody knows. Do you ever think you're the only one knows that all of

(MORE)

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)

it is dyin'?

Sorry. No one likes a complainer. *"I hate people that have always their poor story to tell."* Molly Bloom says that. She's right, don't you think?

ROBBIE

Yeah, I guess.

Who's Molly Bloom?

CAITHLEEN

*(with a laugh)*

Have you not heard a word I've said on this tour?! She's the woman in the book! Her husband is walkin' 'round Dublin like we are. An' she's home - lyin' in bed - havin' the tea he made for her - waitin' for her lover to show up.

ROBBIE

And her husband knows this all along?

CAITHLEEN

He does.

ROBBIE

And he just walks around?!

CAITHLEEN

What else is he gonna do?! He doesn't have a car like you! So, he picks up a letter - buys some soap - goes to a funeral, a bathhouse, a pub - watches a baby get born - an' ends where they all end up.

ROBBIE

Where's that?

CAITHLEEN

The brothel.

ROBBIE

Is that part of our tour?

CAITHLEEN

Could be. Play your cards right.

*(of HIS look)*

I'm jokin' with you. I'm not that kind a girl. Not right off the bat, at least.

*(before HE can respond)*

An' now I wish I hadn't started in. "Your mouth'll be the end of you, Caithleen" - is what my Da is always sayin'. "Your mouth 'an the stories that come out of it - they're gonna do you in just like they did your Ma."

(MORE)

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)  
I'm shuttin' up now.

Anyway - that's what happened in this shop.

*ROBBIE lifts the soap.*

ROBBIE  
Can I keep this?

CAITHLEEN  
You'll just carry it around and forget about it. Same  
as he does in the book.

ROBBIE  
Tell me about the letter. The flirtatious one.

CAITHLEEN  
It had a flower pressed inside.

ROBBIE  
From his mistress.

CAITHLEEN  
Only in his dreams. Nothin' ever happens with her.

ROBBIE  
That's too bad.

CAITHLEEN  
Oh, you're takin' his side then?

ROBBIE  
His wife is cheating on him!

CAITHLEEN  
Yeah - go on - call Molly Bloom some kinda whore ---

ROBBIE  
*(with a laugh)*  
That's not what I'm doing! ---

CAITHLEEN  
*(overlapping)*  
--- I don't know why everyone does that - I don't know  
why you *can't kiss a man without going and marrying him*  
*first? - I wish some man or other would take me*  
*sometimes and kiss me in his arms - there's nothing like*  
*a kiss - long and hot down to your soul - almost*  
*paralyzes you - O Lord to let myself go and come again*  
*like that*

*CAITHLEEN stops.*

ROBBIE

Is that Molly Bloom?

CAITHLEEN

That's the both of us, Robbie. I'm somedays a jumble of her an' me.

ROBBIE

How did you know my name? When you first saw me.

CAITHLEEN

A friend of yours. He told me I was gonna meet you.

ROBBIE

What friend?

CAITHLEEN

Older guy. Said he was travelin' with you.

ROBBIE

I'm not traveling with anyone.

CAITHLEEN

Told me to make sure you never thought of me again.

ROBBIE

Impossible.

*(off HER look)*

I mean ... how could anyone do that? I don't care what some old guy told you: I plan to think of you for a really long time, whether you like it or not.

CAITHLEEN

You can't know that, Robbie.

ROBBIE

Why not?

CAITHLEEN

You can't know the future.

ROBBIE

And you can?

*They are eye to eye for a moment.  
Then ... she turns away, looks at  
the sky.*

CAITHLEEN

Wish I could find my umbrella.

ROBBIE

No need. Sun's comin' out.

CAITHLEEN

I doubt that.

ROBBIE

Comin' out and shinin' just for you.

*CAITHLEEN considers him.*

CAITHLEEN

Why do you say things like that? *Hopeful* things like that? We don't say those kinda things 'round here.

ROBBIE

Why not?

CAITHLEEN

We prefer the ache. A sunny day is nice enough. But a rainy one - when you get to *ache for that sunny day* - that's even nicer.

*She walks away.*

*When she is gone, he sees the soap.*

*He puts the soap in his pocket - then follows her off.*

*A SHIFT: they're at a Small Table with plates in front of them - Gorgonzola sandwiches with mustard. Each has a small glass of burgundy.*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)

This is Davy Byrne's. 21 Duke Street. And that is the lunch he eats in the book.

ROBBIE

This tiny little sandwich?

CAITHLEEN

Gorgonzola with mustard.

ROBBIE

And a miniature glass of wine.

CAITHLEEN

Burgundy, yes. You can read the placque on the wall.

ROBBIE

*(devouring it instantly in a couple bites)*

This is not a sandwich.

CAITHLEEN

Not to you, I know ---

ROBBIE

A sandwich is a two-handed thing with roast beef and cheddar cheese - lettuce and tomato ---

CAITHLEEN

*(playfully)*

Sorry - but that's not the sandwich in the book. Here, take a look.

ROBBIE

I'm never gonna read that thing!

CAITHLEEN

*(re: the book)*

Ooh - this is the part about the love letter from his mistress. You'll like this.

*She puts the book in front of him.*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)

Well, go on, then. An' be sure to do the accent.

ROBBIE

No way am I going to do this!

CAITHLEEN

You can't do Joyce without the accent! It's for the ear you know - this writing - not for the eye. It's like this - read along with me:

*(demonstrates)*

*Are ya not happy?*

ROBBIE

Oh, come on -- I can't ---

CAITHLEEN

You can do it, Robbie - c'mon!

ROBBIE

*(beat, he tries, it's bad)*

*Are you-a not haw-ppy?*

CAITHLEEN

Oh god, that's bad - that's so bad! ---

ROBBIE

I told you!

CAITHLEEN

--- but go on - go on ---

CAITHLEEN leans in close to ROBBIE  
as he reads - their faces hovering  
together right above the book.

ROBBIE  
(continues, still trying)  
"Are you not happy in your home you poor ---

CAITHLEEN  
(the accent)  
"Pahr" ---

ROBBIE  
"POOR" ---

CAITHLEEN  
"PAHR" ---

ROBBIE  
"--- you PAHR little naughty boy?"

CAITHLEEN  
You are truly terrible at this. But keep going.  
(prompting him)  
"I do wish I could ..."

He continues, doing his best - and  
having fun. She corrects him,  
whispering pronunciations in his  
ear, during the following ...

ROBBIE  
" ... I do wish I could do something for you. I think --  
-

CAITHLEEN  
"Tink"

ROBBIE  
"TINK" ?

CAITHLEEN  
Yes - "I tink" ---

ROBBIE  
"I TINK of you so often you have no idea. Please write  
me a long letter and tell me more.

CAITHLEEN  
"Mahr".

ROBBIE  
"MAHR. Remember if you do not I will punish you.  
Goodbye now, naughty darling."

*Relieved to be done, he downs his  
tiny glass of wine.*

CAITHLEEN

There's a postscript.

*(shows him)*

"P.s. ..."

ROBBIE

"P.s. - Do tell me what kind of perfume does your wife  
use ..."

ROBBIE (cont'd)

... I want to know."

CAITHLEEN

... I want to know."

*They are very close to one another.*

ROBBIE (cont'd)

Oh, that's good.

CAITHLEEN

Good 'n dirty.

ROBBIE

And then?

CAITHLEEN

And then ... he never meets this woman. Never sees her  
face. Can you imagine?

ROBBIE

Impossible.

CAITHLEEN

Never once.

*They are close enough to kiss.*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)

Will you write me a letter?

*(before HE can answer)*

Am I a fool to ask that? - I don't even know you. But  
*I wish somebody would write me a loveletter - true or  
no, it fills up your whole day*

ROBBIE

What would this letter have in it?

CAITHLEEN

It would have a flower.

ROBBIE

Okay. And what else?

CAITHLEEN

It would have some kissing.

ROBBIE

Kissing, okay. Kissing is good.

CAITHLEEN

*It never entered my head what kissing meant till he put his tongue in my mouth - his mouth was sweetlike young - I put my knee up to him a few times to learn the way - I had that white blouse on - open in the front to encourage him as much as I could*

ROBBIE

More - tell me more ...

CAITHLEEN

*I tormented the life out of him - I loved rousing that dog in the hotel - I liked him like that - moaning - I made him blush a little*

ROBBIE

I like Molly Bloom.

CAITHLEEN

Be careful, Robbie.

*Very close. About to kiss.*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)

When Molly Bloom kisses a man ...

ROBBIE

Yes ...

CAITHLEEN

... it makes a pocket watch stop, cold.

ROBBIE

Impossible.

CAITHLEEN

An' it's not the watch of the man she kissed ... it's the watch of her own husband, clear across town.

ROBBIE

She can stop Time.

CAITHLEEN

Aye ... that she can.

ROBBIE

Maybe you can, too.

*CAIT appears, watching them. She speaks to the audience.*

*CAITHLEEN and ROBBIE are not aware of her.*

CAIT  
(to audience)

An' right there! - if you'll look right there ... that's when I shoulda kissed 'im. Instead o' pourin' out my whole sob story later on, in the rain, in front o' McDaid's. I shoulda kissed 'im, right there 'n then.

*CAITHLEEN turns away, changes the subject. The moment is gone.*

*They do not kiss.*

CAITHLEEN  
I bet you're still hungry.

ROBBIE  
*What?*

CAIT  
Foolish damn girl.

*CAIT is gone.*

CAITHLEEN  
Bet that sandwich didn't fill you up.

ROBBIE  
Oh, it doesn't matter ---

CAITHLEEN  
I've seen American boys eat.

Here.

*She reaches into her bag and pulls out a bag of crisps.*

ROBBIE  
Chips.

CAITHLEEN  
*Crisps.*

*She hands him the packet of crisps. He does not open it. He keeps staring at her.*

ROBBIE  
Is something wrong?

CAITHLEEN  
*(sharp)*  
I wanted a roll from Finnerty's - but they were all out.

ROBBIE  
We can go somewhere else ---

CAITHLEEN  
Oh, Robbie - nothin' compares to Finnerty's.

*ROBBIE does not move.*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)  
*(sharp)*  
Well, eat if you're gonna eat.

*Pause. Then, ROBBIE opens the packet of crisps and eats.*

*CAITHLEEN finishes her wine.*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)  
What were you whisperin' about? Before. With the others.

ROBBIE  
When?

CAITHLEEN  
You'd be standin' in back when we walked - an' you were always whisperin' to someone in the group.

ROBBIE  
Just making small talk.

CAITHLEEN  
In German and Japanese?

ROBBIE  
Very small - lots of gestures.

CAITHLEEN  
About what?

ROBBIE  
About the tour.

CAITHLEEN  
What about it?

ROBBIE

All that walking around - lookin' at stuff. Isn't this better?

CAITHLEEN

Robbie ---

ROBBIE

Sittin' here together - just you an' me?

CAITHLEEN

--- yes, but I want to know what you were talkin' about.

ROBBIE

We were talkin' about you.

CAITHLEEN

But you didn't know me.

ROBBIE

And that's what I told 'em! Said for all we knew you were a fraud! That this might not even be real tour - that you might be havin' us on. I told 'em it was a scam that happened a lot in Dublin and they should go back to the hotel and get their money returned.

*She is staring at him.*

ROBBIE (cont'd)

I know - I'm sorry. But it's kinda funny though, right?

CAITHLEEN

You *FECKIN' EEJIT!*

*And SHE SLAPS HIM - good and hard across the face.*

*She leaves, as ---*

*ROBERT appears.*

ROBERT

"Kinda funny"?

ROBBIE

Huh?

ROBERT

Did you really think that was "kinda funny"? Running off the others ---

ROBBIE

Look ---

ROBERT

--- telling them lies so you could have her all to yourself!

ROBBIE

--- who the hell ARE you? This is none of your business, okay? ---

*(re: Robert's clothing)*

--- why don't you just go to your little COSTUME PARTY and leave me the hell alone?!

ROBERT

Your girl from home went to London after all, you know. Went with a college boy she met at a party.

ROBBIE

How do you know that?

ROBERT

I just do.

ROBBIE

Are you a friend of my Dad?

ROBERT

Yes. Yes, I am. I've known your Dad my whole life.

ROBBIE

What's your name?

ROBERT

You should keep an eye on your Dad when you get back. He's not well. Soon you'll need to find a place for him. It's something you've got to do.

ROBBIE

What are you talking about? My Dad is fine.

ROBERT

I found a place for him. I've got him fly-fishing. Up on the Wenatchee river. He loved it up there. A thermos of coffee. A big roast beef sandwich. Just him and that river and the whole day ahead of him.

*This lands with ROBBIE. He is  
staring hard at ROBERT.*

ROBERT (cont'd)

It's not too late, Robbie. She's not far - she's at St. Stephen's green - and don't complicate it. Don't promise the moon. Go for a drive - eat a meal - *risk the simple things* - the ordinary days - that's what matters - that's what you've got to learn!

*ROBBIE seems about to say something, but ---*

*ROBERT shoves him off and sends him on his way, saying:*

*ROBERT (cont'd)*  
Every idiot will tell you that a young man has "so many options" - that there are "lots of fish in the sea" - what HOGWASH.

*We get one chance.*

*A SHIFT: CAITHLEEN sits on a Bench in the park. She has not let go of her anger.*

*ROBBIE appears at a distance, behind her.*

*ROBERT is gone.*

*ROBBIE*  
Caithleen.

*She does not turn.*

*ROBBIE (cont'd)*  
I'm sorry.

I was an idiot.

*No response.*

*ROBBIE (cont'd)*  
Caithleen - please ...

*CAITHLEEN*  
I've a slippery mind, Robbie. I'm like my mother that way. Things don't happen in a neat row - like notes - one after the next. They happen in a jumble - like a loud chord - all sorts of times in my mind, playin' all at once. An' I try to keep it all together in my head ...

*But when people go away for no reason - I don't do well.*

*I'm not sorry I slapped you. I'd do it again. Just so you know.*

*ROBBIE nods.*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)

*(a challenge, a need)*

Tell me about the States. Anything at all. About you. Your family. Maybe your girl.

I don't know people.

I'd like to know another person. Just one even.

ROBBIE

My Dad's a machinist. Used to work on airplanes till jobs got cut. Now he's a journeyman. Lathes, mills, industrial work - whatever he can get. He works his ass off.

CAITHLEEN

An' your Mom?

ROBBIE

She died when I was six. My Dad's never gotten over it.

CAITHLEEN

I bet you miss her.

ROBBIE

I don't know what I miss. I'm not sure what part of it is real ... if I remember her ... or just remember my Dad telling me about her.

CAITHLEEN

It's all real, Robbie. Anythin' you truly feel. How could somethin' like that not be real?

*He is staring at her.*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)

An' your girl from home. Are you still with her?

ROBBIE

No. That's over.

*Pause.*

CAITHLEEN

Thanks for not sayin' "no big deal". That's what the blokes here say when somethin' like that ends: "no big deal." Like it was nothin' to 'em. An' probably it wasn't.

This is St. Stephen's Green, by the way. Good place to sit. Rain comin' though. Wish I knew where my umbrella was.

ROBBIE

I like the rain.

CAITHLEEN

You'll do fine in Dublin.

*ROBBIE moves in closer. Sits next to her.*

ROBBIE

Your friend in London. This guy she married. How long had she known him?

CAITHLEEN

Before they got married? Oh - maybe a few months. Maybe not even. Why are you askin' that, Robbie?

*Pause.*

ROBBIE

How long do you think it takes?

CAITHLEEN

Hmm?

ROBBIE

Before people know.

*She stares at him.*

*SOUND OF THUNDER.*

ROBBIE (cont'd)

Do you like thunder? I kinda love it.

CAITHLEEN

They say James Joyce hated thunder. Hated thunder and hated dogs.

ROBBIE

I love dogs. We could get a dog. A girl. Always get a girl when you're getting a dog.

CAITHLEEN

*(with a laugh)*

What are you goin' on about?

ROBBIE

I like dogs and I like thunder and I like rolls from a place called Finnerty's!

CAITHLEEN

Robbie ---

ROBBIE

I like this park but I want to get out of here - I want to take you places - name me some places and we'll go there!

CAITHLEEN

--- slow down - there's no hurry ---

ROBBIE

Cause this is all *real* - just like you said! - *how could all of this not be real?!*

CAITHLEEN

Down the alley is McDaid's. A good pub, that one.

ROBBIE

Let's do it! - let's go right now ---

CAITHLEEN

But Robbie ---

*MORE THUNDER, and ---*

*A SHIFT: they settle onto some tall stools around an old oak barrel - in the front of McDaid's Pub. Two pints of beer are already in place.*

*ROBBIE is lit up and full of a buoyant energy.*

ROBBIE

--- Okay - McDaid's! - this is great!

CAITHLEEN

It'll keep us out of the rain.

ROBBIE

*(lifting a pint)*

Cheers!

CAITHLEEN

How's the beer in America?

ROBBIE

The beer in America is cold. And the "pubs" are called bars - and the "crisps" are called chips - and "shag" is a kind of rug and not the name for doin' another kinda thing ---

CAITHLEEN

You got strange, Robbie. All in the last five minutes.

ROBBIE

Yes! And it's great. Isn't it great? And when you're ready, we can get out of here - I want to go somewhere!

CAITHLEEN

You said that already - an' I brought us here!

ROBBIE

I want to show you beautiful Renton, Washington! I want to take you fishing and make you a real sandwich and drive you all the way to the coast! Why can't we do that? Who do we need to ask? ---

CAITHLEEN

But, Robbie ---

ROBBIE

--- *cause everything's dyin', right?* - just like you said - so let's get away. And if you get sick an' tired of me, just say so. I won't go all weird on you. I'll let you do whatever you need to do in your life - but just come with me.

And I don't know how those boys could say it's no big deal - cause you are ... you're a big deal ... you're a big deal to me, Caithleen.

*There are tears in her eyes.*

CAITHLEEN

I was told to break your heart.

ROBBIE

You couldn't. You won't. You never will.

CAITHLEEN

I've known you for *one day*.

ROBBIE

And that's ALL days - right? Do you see how well I'm paying attention to the tour?! All sorts of days are part of this ONE day ---

CAITHLEEN

No - that's not it ---

ROBBIE

*(overlapping)*

--- and so according to that: I've known you forever and ever.

CAITHLEEN

--- *you will find me out, Robbie.*

ROBBIE

What does that *mean*?

CAITHLEEN

Oh, you are sweet - the kindest boy of all the tours -  
I'm so ---

ROBBIE

No no no - don't - I won't let you ---

CAITHLEEN

What?

ROBBIE

*(overlapping)*

--- that's not going to work - you saying nice things is  
not going to get you out of this ---

CAITHLEEN

Please ---

ROBBIE

*(overlapping)*

--- if you don't want any part of me, just say it ---

CAITHLEEN

--- listen -- just let me ---

ROBBIE

*(overlapping)*

--- just say *leave me the hell alone you American freak* -  
and I'll go - but please don't think that being nice to  
me is doing me a favor!

CAITHLEEN

I will not be nice to you!

ROBBIE

Okay - thank you!

CAITHLEEN

I promise you: *bein' with me will not be nice!* ---

ROBBIE

You don't know that - you can't say that!

CAITHLEEN

*(overlapping)*

--- you stupid, stupid boy - have you really not heard  
anything I've said?! You are here - you are right here  
at McDaid's pub off Grafton street - but *I AM SHIFTING*.  
Right now while I'm talkin', I am here an' I am  
somewhere else - *that is how it works with me - I'm here*  
---

ROBBIE

But, Caithleen ---

*She takes his face and kisses him  
good and strong on the lips.*

*She continues to hold his head -  
talking with passion into his eyes.*

CAITHLEEN

--- an' I'll remember this - I'll remember this kiss ...  
but I'm also sittin' at another table in another year -  
and your hair is goin' grey - an' I can see the blue  
veins in my hands an' the dander on the collar of your  
favorite shirt. I can see our plates an' our cups - the  
ones we've had forever and never will part with, long as  
we live - an' oh, Robbie, it's a nice picture when it's  
not shiftin' - an' I see all that - an' I'm still right  
here with you ---

*She kisses him again, as ---*

*CAIT enters - now wearing her  
commemorative "Bloomsday" clothing,  
circa 1904, elegant and refined.*

*CAIT moves toward them and stands  
behind CAITHLEEN, speaking to  
ROBBIE.*

*ROBBIE is not aware of her.  
Through this section he will only  
always see "one" Caithleen.*

CAIT

--- an' I'll remember this kiss - but not the way I want  
to ---

CAITHLEEN

--- not the way I wish I could - one day and then the  
next - an' the only day that'd be inside this day would  
be today ---

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)

--- an' I'd be with you -  
only in the here an' now -  
an' there could be no  
shifting.

CAIT

--- an' I'd be with you -  
only in the here an' now -  
an' there could be no  
shifting ---

\*

\*

*CAITHLEEN kisses him again, as ---*

*CAIT continues, moving in closer  
behind CAITHLEEN.*

CAIT

--- an' that way I wouldn't see what becomes of all our plates an' cups an' the shirt you loved to wear ---

CAITHLEEN

--- I wouldn't see the woman we don't know who comes an' opens our door with a key - where did she get a key to our house, do you imagine?! ---

CAIT

--- an' now I'm seein' her throw away all our shoes an' box up all our plates and cups ---

CAITHLEEN

--- for we've no children, Robbie! ---

CAIT

--- no one to look after our things when we're gone ---

CAITHLEEN

--- no one to pull the shade an' lock the door behind us a final time ---

CAIT

--- no one to make the arrangements ---

CAITHLEEN

--- no one to follow the coffins through the rain ---

*And now CAITHLEEN takes a few steps back and away, as ---*

*ROBBIE is now staring at and listening to CAIT (as though she were CAITHLEEN).*

CAIT

--- an' one night I saw a boy with wild black hair - an' I knew that wild-haired boy was gonna grow up an' hold a shovel in his hands - an' that shovel was gonna find a piece o' good Irish soil an' cut into it - an' there were gonna be two holes there - two holes in that soil - side by side they'd be, an' that's not so bad if you don't see it all comin' ---

*And now CAIT - like Caithleen before her - kisses ROBBIE, good and strong.*

CAITHLEEN

--- you've got to be able to pretend - pretend the future is never gonna happen - or there's no way to live! ---

CAIT

--- but I can't do that, Robbie!

CAITHLEEN

--- I know it is comin' - an' so it is ---

CAITHLEEN & CAIT

--- so it is ---

CAIT

--- so it is - an' I see it all, Robbie. Do you know?  
Do you know now?!

*CAIT looks hard into his eyes.*

CAIT (cont'd)

I can't help it. I see it all.

*ROBBIE is speechless, still staring  
at CAIT in front of him.*

*Silence. Then ...*

*CAITHLEEN gently puts her hand on  
CAIT'S back ... and CAIT, still  
looking at ROBBIE ... takes a step  
back and away. Then ...*

*CAITHLEEN steps back into place in  
front of ROBBIE.*

CAITHLEEN

But if you'll have me ... if you'll truly have me ...  
knowin' what you know ... I'll get my things together.  
I've no one to say goodbye to.

I'll get my Ma's blue suitcase. She wanted to take it  
when she left for St. Brendan's but Dad said to leave it  
be. Said it wasn't really travellin' where she was  
goin'.

But with us, Robbie - it'll be real travellin', won't  
it? If you're not teasin' me. Please don't tease me.  
Tell me it's real. Tell me you're serious.

*CAITHLEEN reaches out her hand.*

CAITHLEEN (cont'd)

Are you, Robbie? Are you serious?

*CAITHLEEN'S hand is extended.*

*ROBBIE is staring at her ... at her  
eyes ... at her outstretched hand.*

And the play stops here:

ROBBIE and CAITHLEEN do not move -  
this moment between the two of them  
is frozen in time.

ROBERT appears, at a distance,  
watching. He still wears his  
"Bloomsday" attire. He is once  
again carrying the small gift we  
saw earlier.

In silence, ROBERT sets the gift  
down.

He walks up and looks at ROBBIE,  
closely - like he is inspecting a  
statue.

CAIT looks on, saying nothing.

It is June. The Present.

ROBERT  
(looking in Robbie's eyes)  
There. See it. The coldness. It's already there.  
(whispers in Robbie's ear)  
Idiot.

ROBERT is looking at the frozen  
CAITHLEEN.

ROBERT (cont'd)  
And look how long you waited! - how much time you gave  
me to take your hand!

CAIT  
Oh, who can remember such things? Are you gonna sit  
down or no?

ROBERT  
I couldn't do it. I couldn't take your hand. All I  
could think of ... all I could hear was your question,  
that question ...

CAIT  
Don't do this, Robbie.

ROBERT  
And still you were waiting! Look at you! No - get up! -  
come here! - we need to look at this while we still can!

CAIT

You've made us old, Robert. That's what you've done. Till I saw you - till you were standin' here in that get-up - till just now ... you were a boy in my mind. A boy I spent a day with. A day that didn't fade. But now ...

Why would you want to make us old like this?

I mean ... look at me.

ROBERT

Yes. That's all I'm asking.

*He turns to the still-frozen  
CAITHLEEN.*

ROBERT (cont'd)

Would you ... please ... just look at you.

*CAIT stares at ROBERT, and sighs.*

*She stands and moves toward the  
CAITHLEEN. Inspecting her.*

CAIT

I never could do nothin' with my hair. Then or now. Look at that ol' witch's mop. What a joke.

ROBERT

You're gorgeous. Then and now.

CAIT

An' you're daft. But look there. Oh, my.

ROBERT

Hmm?

CAIT

Look how nice my nails used to be.

*CAIT takes hold of CAITHLEEN'S hand  
- gently. She interlaces her  
fingers with those of CAITHLEEN.  
Then ...*

*CAIT does a simple and odd thing:  
she gives CAITHLEEN a kiss on her  
hand.*

*Then, she turns CAITHLEEN so she is  
facing away from ROBBIE.*

*She whispers in CAITHLEEN'S ear.*

CAIT (cont'd)

(quietly)

Away now. You know what you're gonna do.

*CAITHLEEN begins to walk away - but after only a few steps, she pauses ... but does not turn back.*

CAIT now gently puts her hand to CAITHLEEN'S back and gives her a gentle but firm push ... just enough to get her walking again ... walking away.

*CAITHLEEN - never looking back - walks away and is gone.*

*CAIT watches her go. Then she turns and sits.*

*ROBERT turns to ROBBIE, who is still frozen in place.*

ROBERT

And you? You don't know shit. Gutless little eejit.

CAIT

That boy did you a favor, Robbie.

ROBERT

How can you say that?!

CAIT

Have you any idea what life with me woulda been like?

ROBERT

No - I don't ---

CAIT

No - you surely don't!

ROBERT

--- but I know what I did instead. I made sure my life didn't *cost me anything* - made sure *nothing ever happened to me at all!*

CAIT

(*indicates ROBBIE*)

He don't need your bile. An' he don't need to be stuck there, in that one moment. It's not fair to the both of you.

Let him go, Robert. He can't be here when I come back.

ROBERT

*You came back?*

CAIT

*Embarrassin', I know. But I came back. Suitcase in hand. Lookin' for you.*

*I stood right there for hours.*

*Pause.*

ROBERT

*I never knew that.*

CAIT

*Well, of course not.*

ROBERT

*But why?*

CAIT

*Why do you think?*

*Let him go now.*

*ROBERT approaches ROBBIE. He circles him, considering.*

*He sees something that we don't see - perhaps peeking out of a pocket:*

*It is the empty packet of crisps.*

*ROBERT pulls this from ROBBIE'S pocket. Holds it.*

CAIT (cont'd)

*Nasty things, those crisps.*

*Pause. Then ... ROBERT folds the empty packet of crisps and places it in his own pocket.*

*ROBERT takes a few bills out of his wallet and shoves them down into a pocket of ROBBIE'S.*

*Now, ROBERT leans his head forward - touching ROBBIE'S forehead. He closes his eyes for a moment. Then ---*

*He gives ROBBIE a strong,  
unceremonious slap on the back,  
saying ---*

ROBERT  
Move along now! Party's over!

*ROBBIE moves with a start ---*

ROBBIE  
*(as before)*  
Hey - did you see a girl here?

*--- and he turns to ROBERT and  
CAIT, who both shrug: "No idea."*

ROBERT  
*(brightly)*  
No - I don't think we have. Good luck to you.

*ROBBIE grabs his backpack and  
rushes out ---*

ROBERT (cont'd)  
And tuck your shirt in!

*--- and ROBBIE is gone.*

*CAIT nods. Lifts her pint.*

*ROBERT joins her. He lifts his  
pint.*

*They toast and drink.*

*DISTANT SOUND OF THUNDER.*

CAIT  
You haven't said how you found me.

ROBERT  
One of those online search things. Lots of rigmarole  
but then I heard from a friend of yours.

CAIT  
My darlin' Davey.

ROBERT  
Yes. He wouldn't give me your address - but said if I  
wanted to send him a letter, he'd pass it onto you.

CAIT

It was a nice letter. You've still very good penmanship, Robert. An' a flower pressed inside, you big flirt.

ROBERT

I knew you liked flowers. You and Molly Bloom.

CAIT

*"The sun shines for you" he said*

You wrote that, Robert. In your letter: "The sun shines just for you."

*Pause.*

*They sip their pints.*

CAIT (cont'd)

I see a lot of things, you know. Do you remember that about me?

ROBERT

The "shifting".

CAIT

Aye. But I never saw this. You an' me sittin' outside McDaid's pub. Thirty-plus years later.

*Pause. They sip their pints.*

CAIT (cont'd)

You married someone.

ROBERT

Yes. It didn't work. But two good sons came out of it.

And you? You didn't say much in your letter. No return address.

CAIT

I'm a person of mystery, as you know.

*(looks around)*

I don't know where everyone is. Usually on Bloomsday this place is just black with people. McDaid's is very well thought of, you know. But here it is Bloomsday an' there's not a soul.

*(off HIS look)*

What?

ROBERT

You'll laugh.

CAIT  
I hope so. I like to laugh.

ROBERT  
It's a week away.

CAIT  
Hmmm?

ROBERT  
Bloomsday. It's next week.

CAIT  
No.

ROBERT  
Today's the ninth. The ninth of June.

CAIT  
That can't be.

ROBERT  
*(a smile)*  
'tis.

*Pause.*

CAIT  
Oh this explains all the looks I got on the way here.

*ROBERT laughs.*

CAIT (cont'd)  
But still you dressed up for it.

ROBERT  
All for you. In your letter you said you were gonna wear your "Bloomsday" finest. And you did.

*They sip their pints.*

ROBERT (cont'd)  
I teach that book now.

CAIT  
And I suppose you blame me for that.

ROBERT  
Yes, I do. Did you ever read the whole thing?

CAIT  
No. 'Fraid not.

ROBERT

Don't bother. Were it up to me, I'd throw out the whole book and keep seven words. Seven words only. Leopold Bloom is watching a man be buried. And he imagines what the man in the coffin might be thinking:

*"Wait, I wanted to.*

*I haven't yet."*

*Pause. They both seem to listen to these words as they hang there in the air.*

CAIT

It's there, isn't it? It's all right there.

*Pause.*

ROBERT

Did you ever make it back to Galway?

CAIT

Wanted to. Haven't yet. Never left Dublin.

I do miss Galway. The lights on the water down at the quay.

ROBERT

I've got a car, Caithleen.

CAIT

Cait. I'm called Cait now.

ROBERT

I thought maybe we could take a drive. It's only three hours, or a little more, to Galway. Why wouldn't we do that?

I'm sorry if that's too pushy, but I've - all these years I've ---

CAIT

It's not that. It's ... I'm needed back home tonight. Wish I could. Thank you though.

ROBERT

Is someone waiting for you?

CAIT

You could say that. I'm on the clock, so to speak. It was all I could do to get away for one day.

ROBERT  
Your husband? - family?

CAIT  
Robbie ---

ROBERT  
No - I'm sorry - but you haven't given me a reason. Why can't we do this?! We'll drive and talk and I'll bring you back first thing Monday.

*She looks at him for a long time.*

CAIT  
There's no husband. No kids. But I've a decent place to be. And a few friends - Davey, his wife and family - they come visit. They've been so kind to me.

ROBERT  
Good ...

CAIT  
But I've a curfew. A curfew at St. Brendan's. Six p.m. tonight.

It's no small thing they let me out to see you. I begged them - begged the doctor who smells like apples. Pleaded with 'em like I'd never pleaded before. All to see you for a few hours. No matter what else ... please know that.

*Pause.*

ROBERT  
Since when?

CAIT  
Comin' on fifteen years.  
(*off HIS look, quiet*)  
Aye.

You're lookin' for Caithleen. She's not here, Robert.

I've put her in a nice place though. Put her just outside the door of our old house. She's wearin' her spring coat. Lookin' west. Down the main road. She loved to do that. Look down that main road an' see what might be comin'.

*Silence.*

CAIT (cont'd)  
Let's finish our pints an' that'll be enough. That'll be a full day for me.

*She lifts her pint, saying:*

CAIT (cont'd)  
To You. To my Fourteen.

*He touches his glass to hers, and  
they drink, as ---*

*Her eyes fall upon the gift Robert  
brought.*

CAIT (cont'd)  
(a hint)  
I've brought nothin' for you.

ROBERT  
Oh, this is just a small thing. Will you open it?

CAIT  
Thought you'd never ask.

*She eagerly opens the small box and  
discovers two items: the first is  
the bar of soap we saw earlier.  
Still wrapped, never used.*

CAIT (cont'd)  
My lord. You kept the soap.

ROBERT  
Yes.

CAIT  
(smells it)  
The lemon ... oh that takes me back.

*And now she sees the second item:  
a large number of photographs. As  
she lifts them, they spool out of  
the box "accordion style" in a very  
long plastic sleeve.*

CAIT (cont'd)  
And these. So many photos ...

ROBERT  
One hundred and seven of 'em. I kept one - my favorite.  
But the rest are yours.

CAIT  
But they're all just of me!

ROBERT  
Yes.

CAIT

You'd never even know you were in Dublin! - what kinda dolt takes a hundred pictures of one foolish girl?!

ROBERT

If you don't want them - fine - I can just ---

CAIT

I'm not sayin' that. It's odd, is all: I remember precisely how that girl felt back then.

But, as for how she looked - how she *really* looked - well, would you just look at that girl there ...

*SOUND of THUNDER, closer now, as ---*

*CAITHLEEN appears - at a distance. Her coat is on. She carries the small blue suitcase. She stands, waiting, expectant.*

*CAIT and ROBERT do not see her.*

*Their tone in this section is one of certainty, not regret.*

CAIT (cont'd)

We can't make it happen another way, Robbie. It's a fool's errand to try.

ROBERT

*(nods)*

What's done is done.

*And now ROBBIE appears - standing across the stage from CAITHLEEN, looking down at his map. He wears a coat and carries his backpack. His shirt is tucked in. He has been running.*

*CAIT and ROBERT do not see him.*

*ROBBIE looks up from his map ... and sees CAITHLEEN. Her back remains to him. He does not move.*

*It BEGINS TO RAIN.*

CAIT

Best to not think about it - what mighta happened if you'd taken my hand an' said yes.

ROBERT  
I'm not thinking about that.

CAITHLEEN turns now. She sees  
ROBBIE.

They stare at each other - the full  
stage between them.

CAIT and ROBERT remain unaware of  
them throughout.

CAIT  
Cause I may have said yes - an' put my arms around you -  
my heart goin' like mad - an' we might have kissed ...  
'an yes, I might of said - just like Molly Bloom: Yes,  
I will. Yes.

And now ... CAITHLEEN and ROBBIE  
start toward each other ---

CAIT (cont'd)  
You're sure you're not thinkin' that?

ROBERT  
Not thinkin' that at all.

--- and throw themselves into each  
other's arms. They kiss and  
embrace with passion.

CAIT  
Good. Me neither.

CAIT and ROBERT stare front,  
sipping their pints, as ---

CAITHLEEN and ROBBIE hold each  
other - tightly, fiercely.

The lights fade to black.

End of Play