

DANCING AT LUGHNASA

Brian Friel

CHRIS and GERRY enter L. He enters backwards pulling CHRIS who holds the end of his walking stick. Throughout the scene he keeps trying to embrace her. She keeps avoiding him.

GERRY: No false modesty. You know you're a great dancer, Chrissie.

CHRIS: No, I'm not.

GERRY: You should be a professional dancer.

CHRIS: You're talking rubbish.

GERRY: Let's dance round the garden again.

CHRIS: We've done that; and down the lane and up again—without music. And that's enough for one day. Tell me about signing up. Was it really in a church?

GERRY: I'm telling you—it was unbelievable.

CHRIS: It was a real church?

GERRY: A Catholic church as a matter of interest.

CHRIS: I don't believe a word of it.

GERRY: Would I tell you a lie? And up at the end—in the sanctuary?—there were three men, two of them with trenchcoats; and between them, behind this lectern and wearing a sort of military cap, this little chappie who spoke in an accent I could hardly understand. Naturally I thought he was Spanish. From Armagh, as it turned out.

CHRIS: I'm sure he couldn't understand you either.

GERRY: He described himself as the recruiting officer. "Take it from me, comrade, nobody joins the Brigade without my unanimity."

(She laughs—and avoids his embrace.)

CHRIS: It's a wonder he accepted you.

GERRY: "Do you offer your allegiance and your loyalty and your full endeavours to the Popular Front?"

CHRIS: What's the Popular Front?

GERRY: The Spanish government that I'm going to keep in power. "I take it you are a Syndicalist?" "No." "An Anarchist?" "No." "A Marxist?" "No." "A Republican, a Socialist, a Communist?" "No." "Do you speak Spanish?" "No." "Can you make explosives?" "No." "Can you ride a motor-bike?" "Yes." "You're in. Sign here."

CHRIS: So you'll be a dispatch rider?

GERRY imitates riding a motor-bike.

And leave on Saturday?

GERRY: First tide.

CHRIS: How long will you be away?

GERRY: As long as it takes to sort the place out.

CHRIS: Seriously, Gerry.

GERRY: Maybe a couple of months. Everybody says it will be over by Christmas.

CHRIS: They always say it will be over by Christmas. I still don't know why you're going.

GERRY: Not sure I know either. Who wants salesmen that can't sell? And there's bound to be something right about the cause, isn't there? And it's somewhere to go—isn't it? Maybe that's the important thing for a man: a named destination—democracy, Ballybeg, heaven. Women's illusions aren't so easily satisfied—they make better drifters. *(He laughs)* Anyhow he held out a pen to sign on the dotted line and it was only when I was writing my name that I glanced over the lectern and saw the box.

CHRIS: What box?

GERRY: He was standing on a box. The chappie was a midget!

CHRIS: Gerry!

GERRY: No bigger than three feet.

CHRIS: Gerry, I--

GERRY: Promise you! And when we were having a drink afterwards he told me he was invaluable to the Brigade—because he was a master at disguising himself!

CHRIS: Gerry Evans, you are—

GERRY: Let's go down to the old well.

CHRIS: We're going nowhere. Come inside and take a look at this wireless. It stops and starts whenever it feels like it.

GERRY: I told you: I know nothing about radios.

CHRIS: I've said you're a genius at them.

GERRY: Chrissie, I don't even know how to—

CHRIS: You can try, can't you? Come on. Michael misses it badly.

(She runs into the kitchen. He follows.)