

Jim Nolan

DREAMLAND



Gallery Books

Dreamland

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from the Arts Council.

Characters

JOHNNY KINNANE
DINNY CONNOLLY
DOC CONNOLLY
GRACE CONNOLLY
STEFAN HENSCHEL
JAMES CASSIDY
TEDDY REILLY
BEATE HENSCHEL

Time and Place

The summer of 1934 in the village of Seafield on the south coast of Ireland.

ACT ONE

Saturday morning. The interior of Kinnane's General Store and Public Bar. Double doors lead to the village's only street; another opening leads off to the premises' domestic quarters. The overall impression is of some disarray and there is the sense of the place having seen better days.

ACT TWO

The following day and night in the front yard of Kinnane's.

Dreamland was first produced, by Garter Lane Theatre, Waterford, on Friday 7 February, 2014 with the following cast (in order of appearance):

JOHNNY KINNANE	<i>Brendan Conroy</i>
DINNY CONNOLLY	<i>Conall Keating</i>
DOC CONNOLLY	<i>Des Keogh</i>
GRACE CONNOLLY	<i>Catherine Walsh</i>
STEFAN HENSCHEL	<i>Michael Power</i>
JAMES CASSIDY	<i>Karl Shiels</i>
TEDDY REILLY	<i>Michael Quinlan</i>
BEATE HENSCHEL	<i>Holly Browne</i>

<i>Direction</i>	Jim Nolan
<i>Design</i>	Dermot Quinn
<i>Lighting Design</i>	Barry McKinney
<i>Sound Design</i>	Jamie Beamish

ACT ONE

Scene One

in memory of Jim Daly

We open on the empty space. After a moment or two JOHNNY KINNANE sweeps in from the inner sanctum, his sidekick, DINNY, trailing in his wake. JOHNNY is in his mid fifties but is wearing well. Thirty years in New York have left a strong impression on his accent and he has the appearance of a man with a purpose. DINNY is sixteen and precocious, neither boy nor man but on the turn. He wears a peaked cap, peak to the back. A sleeveless off-white vest exposes his skinny white arms. And this morning, as JOHNNY and he turn down the stools and prepare to open for business, he has the air of a boy who would prefer to be elsewhere.

JOHNNY *Balaena . . . optera physalus!* Also known as . . . the Greyhound of the Sea!

DINNY Greyhound me arse — it's a feckin' whale.

JOHNNY Not just a whale, Dinny. The Finback! Fastest mammal in the ocean deep.

DINNY And the smelliest. Stinks like a badger's scutter, so it does.

JOHNNY You'd stink too — if you were lying dead on the strand the last fourteen days! *Putrescence*, Dinny — the way of all flesh!

DINNY How yer man stands it, I'll never know.

JOHNNY Who's that?

DINNY Jack the Ripper below on the beach.

JOHNNY Jack the Ripper is being well paid for his services.

He fetches chessboard from behind the bar and places it on one of the tables.

And thirty years in a slaughterhouse has left its mark

— a skunk could run up one nostril and down the other, that guy wouldn't smell a thing.

DINNY Lucky him! It's an *awful* stink, Johnny.

JOHNNY Okay, okay, I get the message! Damn weather doesn't help. You spend the whole summer praying for a fine day and, just when you don't need it, along comes a heat wave.

DINNY Never mind the heat wave! Along comes the Cemetery Sunday Horse Races on the beach tomorrow! Only there's sixty foot of rottin' blubber stuck bang slap in the middle of the course. Talk about feekin' timin'!

JOHNNY Jesus! You're worse than the County Council. (*Fetches a letter from shelf*) I got this with my porridge yesterday. 'Dear Mr Kinnane. With reference to the deceased mammal recently deposited on the beach at Seafield — and for which I understand you have acquired the salvage and disposal rights — I am instructed to inform you that the removal and safe disposal of the carcass must be completed no later than Saturday, June 18th, at 5 p.m. Failure to honour this deadline will result in the commencement of legal proceedings with immediate effect. (*Crunches the letter and volleys it in DINNY's direction*) I remain, yours sincerely, Thomas J Flynn, Department of Bluff and Bluster!'

DINNY June 18th. That's today, Johnny.

JOHNNY I'm painfully aware of that, thank you very much. The epistle inspired no doubt by the Clerk of the Course for tomorrow's races. I would have thought Mister Cassidy would have more on his mind this morning.

DINNY You seen the fire at the Parochial Hall then?

JOHNNY Be hard to miss it!

DINNY Feekin' Shiners.

JOHNNY What?

DINNY Shiners! Republicans! Ye couldn't be up to them.

JOHNNY Indeed you could not.

DINNY That's the Blueshirt Dance scuppered tomorrow night, so.

JOHNNY Purpose of the exercise, I presume. No concern of ours, Dinny. I was down at the beach earlier and am pleased to report that — stink or no stink — the Butcher of Ballybricken's labour has not been in vain. Seventy tons of blubber off to the knacker's yard at midday. And one almost pristine skeleton ready to be lifted at low tide!

DINNY You're goin' ahead with it then?

JOHNNY I most certainly am.

DINNY You're feekin' mad, Johnny!

JOHNNY You think so?

DINNY I do. And I'm not the only one. You're the laughin' stock of the village.

JOHNNY The price of genius — we'll see how it falls. And at least Grace Connolly has more faith in me than her son.

DINNY How d'you mean?

JOHNNY She not tell you?

DINNY Tell me what?

JOHNNY I've commandeered your mom's tractor and trailer for the lift. She'll be here any minute now.

DINNY Sweet Jesus in Heaven! Bad enough me mother's the only oul' wan in the County of Waterford drives a tractor — without haulin' a feekin' rotten whale through the main street in broad daylight. I declare to God, that woman'll be the death of me.

JOHNNY If it's any consolation, she says just the same about you.

JOHNNY *takes an apron from a hook and puts it on counter.*

Now, we're all set! Get that on ye.

DINNY What for?

JOHNNY How long you been knocking around this place, Dinny?

DINNY Too feekin' long!

JOHNNY Ever since you was a kid, right? I'm not a wet day back from New York when your mom stops in here

looking for something I probably didn't have. And who's she got with her only this snotty nosed little kid eyeing up the sweet jars, so small I can hardly see him over the counter. What have we got here, I ask — who is this guy? And your mom said, *this* is Denis —

DINNY Dinny. Me name is Dinny.

JOHNNY Denis, Dinny — whatever! The point is, a quarter of Pear Drops later and you're anybody's. You've been hanging your cap here ever since.

DINNY So?

JOHNNY So . . . As long as I've known you, you've been badgering me about putting on that apron and serving behind my bar. Well, this is your big day. I gotta oversee operations down at the beach and I'm leaving you in charge here.

DINNY Sorry, Johnny. But it's no can do.

JOHNNY What d'ya mean it's 'no can do'?

DINNY I have other plans.

JOHNNY You're *sixteen* — you can't have other plans.

DINNY They're markin' the course for the races below on the beach tomorrow. Mister Cassidy has a posse of men lined up — and yours truly is one of them.

JOHNNY Is that so?

DINNY It is. I asked Teddy Reilly could I give a hand and he asked Mister Cassidy and Mister Cassidy said I could.

JOHNNY A signal honour! Only as you rightly point out — and James Cassidy is patently aware — there's the minor impediment of seventy tons of blubber to be dealt with first.

DINNY Mister Cassidy said there's plenty to be going on with while we're waitin'.

JOHNNY Did he indeed?

DINNY He did. There's the startin' line and the finishin' post. There's the parade ring to be railed and the posts to be knocked up for the bookies. And that's just the half of it. Teddy Reilly said we're to meet the far end of the strand for our orders. I'd better be getting down there now.

JOHNNY Heh, Dinny! Hang on a sec, will ya?

DINNY We have to meet at low tide. I don't want to be late.

JOHNNY You can't do this to me. I got men on that beach too. I got seventy tons of whale meat to load on the knacker's yard truck. I gotta figure out how to raise a sixty-foot skeleton on to your mom's ten-foot trailer — all before the tide comes in again. I gotta be *down there* to do that, Dinny.

DINNY Don't open the shop so.

JOHNNY I can't do that. I got customers to look after.

DINNY The Doc, you mean.

JOHNNY The Doc for one! It's ten-twenty-eight. Three minutes time, he's going to be sailing through that door.

DINNY And fifteen minutes later, he'll be sailin' back out again. Can't ye lave him the keys and tell him to lock up when he's finished.

JOHNNY Perish the thought — the Doc is my best customer.

DINNY He's your *only* customer — near as dammit.

JOHNNY You been going around with your eyes closed, Dinny. You not seen the crowds been coming through this village since old Walter the Whale landed? Hundreds of sightseers trailing in from all over, these past two weekends.

DINNY I didn't see too many of 'em in here.

JOHNNY I got one or two! And you're forgetting what day we got. Tomorrow is Cemetery Sunday, right? Which means *today* is holiday time! The homeward bounders, Dinny! They'll be pouring off the Waterford bus within the hour —

DINNY And headin' straight for Lawlor's the far end of the strand — same as they do every year.

JOHNNY Maybe not this year. Listen to me, Dinny. As long as I know you, have I ever asked you for anything? That's right. Not so much as a biscuit. I think I can say I been a good buddy to you. But today the shoe, as they say, is on the other foot. I need your help, Dinny. So now you got a choice to make.

DINNY Some feckin' choice!

JOHNNY (*Takes apron from counter and puts it on* DINNY) I knew you wouldn't let me down.