

Marina Carr

# MARBLE



Gallery Books

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was first published  
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and in a clothbound edition  
on the day of its première,  
17 February 2009.

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*for Dermot,  
William, Daniel, Rosa, Juliette  
and for Fiona Shaw  
who told me a story*



## *Characters*

ART  
BEN  
CATHERINE  
ANNE

## *Set*

One space. One couch. One table. Two chairs. One drinks cabinet. One lamp. All use this space as if it is their own. A backdrop that can be flooded with light and indigo sky for the 'marble' passages. There should be an emptiness to the set which can take on great beauty at times. De Chirico's painting 'Melancholy and Mystery of a Street' is the mood and landscape I would like to catch: the near absence of people, the dream shadows, yet full of vibrant colour and intrigue.

## *Music*

To underscore the 'marble' passages and to create mood during scene crossovers: possibly clarinet and strings, chant and strings. Haunting.

## *Time*

The present.

*Marble* was first performed at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, on 17 February 2009, with the following cast:

ART	Stuart McQuarrie
BEN	Peter Hanly
CATHERINE	Aisling O'Sullivan
ANNE	Derbhle Crotty

<i>Director</i>	Jeremy Herrin
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	Paul Keogan
<i>Composer</i>	Conor Linehan
<i>Set and Costume Designer</i>	Robert Innes Hopkins

# ACT ONE

## Scene One

*ART and BEN sit outside restaurant puffing on cigars and drinking brandies.*

ART And what age is she now?

BEN She'll be forty-five in December, why?

ART No reason, I dreamt about her last night.

BEN Was it a good dream?

ART It was fantastic.

BEN How so?

ART I was making love to her.

BEN Were you?

ART I never dream or I never remember them but this was so vivid. The sheets were gleaming, her legs perfect against the dazzling white.

BEN Was it in your bed or mine?

ART I've never seen your bed. It was just a bed, a room, marble somewhere, yeah marble, the floor, the windows.

BEN Marble windows?

ART Well, it was a dream.

BEN Why can't you dream about your own wife?

ART She was beside me. Why should I dream about her? Are you going fishing this weekend?

BEN I don't know. Catherine has booked tickets for the theatre.

ART What are you seeing?

BEN I forgot to ask her. She sorts all of that out. She has good taste. Generally I enjoy her choices.

ART Yeah, I read somewhere ninety per cent of theatre tickets are booked by women.

BEN Yeah, they seem to do everything. Are you planning a fishing trip?

ART I was, but the young fella's Communion is on this Saturday. But it was an amazing dream. Tell Catherine. It'll amuse her. It was so real, that's the extraordinary thing. I don't believe I've ever spoken to Catherine for more than three minutes together. But there we were as happy as — Oh God — She's a good-looking woman.

BEN She is.

ART But I've never fancied her.

BEN I would hope not.

ART Do you not like other men fancying your wife?

BEN I don't mind them looking, but any conversation on the topic I find distasteful, I suppose.

ART I love when men give Anne the once-over; feel I've made the right choice.

BEN A bit late now if you haven't, what are you, twenty years married?

ART Eighteen. We were very young. Men now are start-ing off at my age, older.

BEN Are you going to leave Anne?

ART Why would I do that?

BEN Well, you're dreaming about it.

ART But that's nothing. Do you mind me saying I dreamt I made love to your wife last night?

BEN I'm not sure you shouldn't have kept it to yourself.

ART You're very old-fashioned.

BEN Am I?

ART I didn't realize you were so repressed. Have you never dreamt about Anne?

BEN Would you like me to?

ART Why not? As long as it's just a dream what do I care?

BEN I never dream about sex.

ART Come off it. It was fantastic, the light was beautiful. I couldn't stop looking at her. It'll never happen again. Why do I suddenly feel guilty?

BEN Are you going to have an affair with Catherine?

ART I can't help what I dream — I was such a powerful man in that marble room.

BEN Were you?

ART It was so male and female, so clear — that was the thing about it, not like when I'm awake — Does Catherine have affairs?

BEN Not that I'm aware of.

ART Are you telling me you're not sure?

BEN I'm not sure about anything.

ART But you love her?

BEN And Anne? What do you feel about Anne?

ART What do I feel about Anne? That's an odd question. She's one moody wagon, I'll tell you that much.

BEN Have you told her about your dream?

ART God, no, it would only upset her. Why should I upset her like that for no reason?

BEN You don't mind upsetting me.

ART Have I? Ah, forget it! I should've kept it to myself. I thought we could say anything to one another.

BEN There is no one you can just say anything to.

ART Is there not?

BEN No, there's isn't.

ART Then I've blundered.

BEN Ah, it doesn't matter.

ART No, I'm out of line. If you'd dreamt about Anne like that I'd probably never speak to you again.

BEN What exactly were you doing to her?

ART Nothing, I swear. There was a beautiful room — The door is open and I walk along this grey panelled hallway and come to this door and the light and the smell and the sound from it is intoxicating. I walk into the room holding my breath, afraid I will sully this beautiful space, that it's not for me, but someone far more deserving. And the marble glistens all around her as she lies there on the bed. I'm sorry, Ben — but just thinking about her. All of this for me? Her hair was a star-shot, splintered gold. Does Catherine dye her hair?

BEN Yes, she does her roots. Sometimes I do them for

her. She hates hairdressers, they waste her time.

ART So her time is precious. I love that about women, they sit around doing nothing, complaining about never having a minute. But in the dream her hair was natural, a waterfall of spun gold, I was climbing all over it, I had to resist the urge to eat it.

BEN Maybe it was someone else.

ART No, it was Catherine. And her hair was golden.

BEN She's never been golden. Catherine is dark. I don't think she'd like us talking about her like this.

ART Why not?

BEN Look, we're very happy.

ART I'm not disputing that for a minute.

BEN You are. I am a good husband and father. You have no right to speak about her like that.

ART I was just telling you a dream I had.

BEN I am the one should be dreaming about Catherine.

ART But you're not. It was my dream.

BEN About my wife.

ART What's wrong, Ben?

BEN I need to go home and see her. Make sure she's still there. Will you take care of the bill?

ART Of course — I'm sorry if I —

BEN (*Exiting*) It's nothing — nothing — It's nothing.

ART *looks after him, takes last puff of cigar, exits.*