

Peter Fallon

**TARRY  
FLYNN**

*A play in Three Acts  
based on the novel  
by Patrick Kavanagh*



Gallery Books

## *Characters*

*in order of appearance*

CHARLIE TRAINOR, calf-dealer, 30\*

HUGHIE COYLE, late 20s

TARRY FLYNN, late 20s

EUSEBIUS CASSIDY, late 20s, but younger than Tarry

MRS FLYNN, a widow, Tarry's mother

BRIDIE, nearly 30

AGGIE, 21

FR MARKEY, curate of Dargan

MARY REILLY, 18

PATSY MEEGAN, 60s

TOMMY QUINN, early 20s

UNCLE PETEY

\*Looks a little more well-to-do than Hughie and Tarry and Eusebius.  
Newer suit, shined shoes? His work takes him further afield.

## *Time and Place*

The townland of Drumnay, in Dargan, County Cavan, Ireland.  
The Feast of Corpus Christi, 1935, and the weeks afterwards.

*Tarry Flynn* by Peter Fallon, based on the novel by Patrick Kavanagh, was first produced by the Selkie Theatre Company at The Ice House in Bethlehem, PA, on Friday, 10 September 2004, with the following cast:

CHARLIE TRAINOR	Kevin Winter-Deely
HUGHIE COYLE	Graham P Stanford
TARRY FLYNN	Patrick Kelly
EUSEBIUS CASSIDY	Peter Sanchez
MRS FLYNN	Sharon McGinnis
BRIDIE	Jean Sidden
AGGIE	Rebecca Levine
FR MARKEY	Whitt Brantley
MARY REILLY	Madeline T Hoak
PATSY MEEGAN	Dan Sigley
TOMMY QUINN	Aaron Coyle
UNCLE PETEY	Steve Hatzai

<i>Director</i>	George B Miller
<i>Producers</i>	Kate Scuffle and George B Miller
<i>Design</i>	Jeff Reidy and Michael Schofield
<i>Original Music</i>	L E McCullough
<i>Dialect Consultant</i>	Yvonne Molloy

*to the memories of*

*Katherine B Kavanagh  
(1928-1989)*

*and my uncle  
Peter Mullan  
(1913-1983)*

## PROLOGUE

*Begin: Air of 'The Dawning of the Day' quietly melting into late spring/early summer's evening, near dark.*

CHARLIE TRAINOR, HUGHIE COYLE, TARRY FLYNN and EUSEBIUS CASSIDY are sitting near a gate by the ditch on the side of Drumnay lane, where it joins the main road. Smoking, probably. First see the lights from their cigarettes and their various outlines/silhouettes. They are passing the time as they obviously do many evenings. The scene is stylized. It should move formally at first and then, after concluding exchange and TARRY's outburst, seem to end abruptly, as if frozen. TARRY's other-ness should be established: he can stand aside, look only half-interested etc.

CHARLIE (*Continuing; his turn*) So your man walks into the butcher's shop and says he to your man, Have you a pig's head? And the butcher says, Wha'? I said, Have you a pig's head? And the butcher says, No, it's just the way I comb me hair.

*The others, except TARRY, gesture their acknowledgement, approving.*

Isn't that a good one, wha'?

HUGHIE It's a good one alright.

*No response from TARRY.*

I never heard better.

CHARLIE What do you think, Tarry?

TARRY (*Without conviction*) Great. Great. It's a great one.

CHARLIE (*Thrilled with himself*) It's just the way I comb me hair!

EUSEBIUS Listen. (*He has told this before, and most of them have heard it before, but that stops nothing*) We'd an old clock in our house once — Father bought it second-hand for half-a-crown thirty years earlier, and the old woman *he* bought it from had herself bought it second-hand forty years earlier still. (*Rehearsed, as if he's remembering something and is reciting it*) That clock was as touchy as a spoiled child; it would only go for Father. Not even Jock Brickle could make it keep time. Once indeed, Father did let Jock try his hand at the old time-piece. He took it asunder, and when he put it back together there was one wheel for which the clock repairer could find no place. He tried to fix that wheel in sideways, anglewise, backwise, and while he was at it, the old clock started *Tick-tock, tick-tock*.

'There's a wheel too many in your clock,' says Jock.

HUGHIE Wha'? What was that, Eusebius?

EUSEBIUS He said, There was a wheel too many in your clock.

HUGHIE Oh, that's a good one, a right good one.

CHARLIE What do you think, Tarry?

TARRY (*Withering*) It was always a good one.

*Pause.*

CHARLIE Did you hear anything about the other thing, Tarry — no developments?

TARRY Heard she went to the Big Man about it.

CHARLIE Holy God! To Father Markey?

HUGHIE She was seen going up to the Parochial.

EUSEBIUS (*Relishing*) There'll be sport about this, there'll be sport alright.

TARRY (*Abruptly*) They can all go to Hell!

*Hold. Return to outlines/silhouettes. Their passing the time continues.*

## ACT ONE

### Scene One

*Early morning. Feast of Corpus Christi. Kitchen of Flynn's relatively comfortable farmhouse. Lights up on TARRY standing on a stool searching on the top of the dresser.*

MRS FLYNN *sits barefoot by the fire with her shoes on the floor beside her, fondling a corn on her little toe. Her husband has died some years previously. All she says modulates between rage/exasperation and a restrained wish to love. She knows no way to express this feeling. She has worked too hard. She has been too hurt. Her outbursts of rage should rise and fall, rise and fall, like the tide. She is desperately conscious of her — and her family's — place in the eyes of the world. Though he breaks her heart, she dotes on TARRY.*

TARRY Where the devil did I put me cap? (*To nobody in particular*) Did any of ye see me cap?

*He lifts an old schoolbook lying in the dust of the dresser-top and takes a quick glance at the tattered pages. Then, after a while, to himself, clearly*

God is in the bits and pieces of every day.

MRS FLYNN (*Not hearing, because she doesn't understand*) What in the name of the devil's father are you looking for at such an hour in the morning? Are you going to go to Mass at all? (*She swings around*) Looking on top of the dresser! Mind you don't put the big awkward hooves on that tray of eggs that's under you.

TARRY A fine bloody place to lave (*leave*) them.

MRS FLYNN They'll make more money nor you anyway.

*Pause. Kitchen activity, tidying, brushing the fire-*

*place with a goose's wing, fussing.*

(Quieter) What was that you said about God and the —

TARRY I said, God is in the bits and pieces of every day.

MRS FLYNN Lord protect everyone's rearing. The things you do say about religion and the priests.

*Pause.*

(Starting up again) Well of all the mane (*mean*) men that ever was, you're the manest. Of a holy-day morning to be looking for the oul' cap at twenty-five past eight. Anything to be late for Mass. And if it wasn't the cap it'd be something else — the stud, or there'd be a button off the coat. Just like your Uncle Petey that never gave himself more nor five minutes to walk to Mass. He'd keep looking at himself in the looking glass till, honest to God, it'd make you sick to see him.

TARRY (*He's heard it all before*) Ah, don't be bothering me.

MRS FLYNN That's your Uncle Petey all over. Nobody could talk to him; he knew it all and everything. He'd take on to put a leg on a horse — and the whole country laughing at him.

Will you get down to hell out of that and go to Mass! On the blessèd day of Corpus Christi to think of a man sling-slanging about the house and first Mass near half-over.

TARRY Amn't I taking the bicycle?

MRS FLYNN (*Reciting her litany of woes*) Hens not fed, the pot not on for the pigs — and you washed in the well water!

*Pause.* MRS FLYNN *sticks her feet in her shoes. She stands up and looks out the window.*

Where's this one?

BRIDIE (*Entering from upstairs, with a bucket*) I'm here.

MRS FLYNN Lord God of Almighty, but you're another of the

Sunday girls. Lying up there in bed like a churn a-drying. Have you no shame at all? If it's not this man here it's one of yours. That's what left the Carlins where they are — getting up, one at eight and the other at nine, making two breakfasts. If they had one breakfast now they wouldn't be as hard to talk to.

MRS FLYNN *looks out the window again. She likes to keep an eye on things.*

Ours was a united house. There was only one purse, let it be full or empty. One purse, and one breakfast. There, it's half-eight now and no sign of you (TARRY) going.

TARRY Haven't I bags of time? Bags of it. Don't I know right well you put that clock on half an hour last night?

BRIDIE *goes to the door, glances up and down, rushes out, and returns with the bucket empty.*

BRIDIE (*Yawning, stretching*) A terrible close morning.

MRS FLYNN Did you look to see if the hen in the barrel broke any of the eggs?

BRIDIE None, so far as I could see.

MRS FLYNN I wouldn't put it past you but you didn't look at all. Will you try and get this fellow his cap and get him away to Mass — the oul' haythen.

TARRY, *sitting on the side of the table, starts fumbling with a cigarette.*

Lord! Lord! Lord! Starting to puff at the curse-o'-God fag at such an hour of the morning.

BRIDIE *lifts an old newspaper on the window sill.*

BRIDIE There's the oul' cap. He must be blind that he couldn't get it.