

THE LADS

An Adult Irish Folk Tale

Circa 2000

by Jean Blasair

Copyright © March 2022 Jean Blasair and Off The Wall Play Publishers

<https://offthewallplays.com>

This script is provided for reading purposes only Professionals and amateurs are hereby advised that it is subject to royalty It is fully protected under the laws of South Africa, the United States of America, the British Empire including the Dominion of Canada and all other countries of the Copyright Union. All rights including but not limited to professional amateur film radio and all other media including use on the worldwide web and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved and any unauthorized use of the material may subject the user to any and all applicable civil and criminal penalties. For any information about royalties or to apply for a performance license please click the following link :

<https://offthewallplays.com/royalties-and-licensing-of-plays-sold-by-off-the-wall-plays/>

STORYTELLER

(male or female; Irish accent or none;
never seen; backstage; VOICE ONLY)

THE LADS who jointly owned THE PUB in Queens were:

Sean Cleary, age 30. Sean passed the bar after completing
a correspondence course on the law, paid for by Mick Flaherty,
the leader of The Lads. Some say that Sean never passed a bar,
but then some say that the Irish have no sense of humor, at least
that anyone not Irish can understand.

Then there was Eddie O'Brien (age 28) who managed the pub and
managed to live upstairs rent free from The Lads in the initial contract.

And Brian Doyle, mid-20's, the baby of the Lads, some called him
Gabriel, the messenger. Brian is afraid of Mick.

And finally, Mick Flaherty the oldest, age 36, who led the Lads in
everything they did and even thought of doing; plays the one drum
in the pub with one hand with one too many.

The setting is the very, very small (900 sq. ft.) pub in Queens.

A bass fiddle is gathering dust in one corner of the two seater bar. The pub (aka known as Sean's office,
has two tables, one of which Sean has confiscated for his legal files.

AT RISE, EDDIE O'BRIEN (the bartender and general manager) is polishing glasses and steins behind the
bar.

Two barstools are in front of the bar, the radio behind the bar is tuned always to an Irish music station.

The front door opens.

BRIAN DOYLE sticks his head in.

BRIAN

Eddie, you open?

EDDIE

(exasperated)

You want an engraved invite, Brian?

Brian takes off his hat and enters.

BRIAN

Evening, Sean. I thought I might find you here. I was hoping anyway.

SEAN

(without looking up from what he's reading)

What is it, Brian? Make it quick. I'm meeting Mick in twenty minutes.

BRIAN

Sure, sure.

Brian comes over to Sean's table and sits down across from him.

BRIAN (cont'd)

There's rumblings down at the wharf. I thought you should let Mick know, him thinkin' of running for Union Leader himself some day.

SEAN

What kind of rumblings?

BRIAN

About that trouble they blamed on Jimmy.

SEAN

Tell me.

Brian whispers, looks around to see if anyone else can hear, like Eddie.

BRIAN

Seamus Dowd's boys said they're gonna be takin' care of things their way. He's braggin' about the gruesome things they're gonna do to Jim.

Sean starts to pick up his papers and put them into his briefcase.

SEAN

Where'd you hear this?

BRIAN

A friend from Saint Bonaventure's. He heard one of Seamus's goons on the wharf braggin' about nabbing Jim when he gets out, chopping off a finger for fingering two of Seamus's boys in a lineup last month.

Sean picks up his briefcase and heads for the front.

SEAN

Brian... don't tell anyone what you heard.

BRIAN

I wouldn't, Sean.

SEAN

Did you tell anybody else?

BRIAN

No. I swear. I knew you'd know what to do.

Sean checks his watch and EXITS.

Brian plops himself down at the bar on a stool.

BRIAN

Give us a drink, Eddie. Make it a double, on the house.

EDDIE

You nuts, Brian, tellin' Sean what you heard?

You know what Mick's going to do when he finds out.

Brian nods. Sips the double shot Eddie poured for him.

BRIAN

I'm more afraid of Mick than I am of Seamus.

EDDIE

You don't want either one of them lookin' for you, trust me.

BRYAN

(finishes his drink)

You're right about that. Maybe when Jim gets home he can settle things between Seamus and Mick.

EDDIE

I don't care what anybody says, Jim didn't finger anybody for that missing inventory.

BRIAN

Try tellin' that to Seamus. Thanks for the drink. I gotta get home to the Missus. I'll be back after dinner.

Brian exits as the phone on the bar rings.

EDDIE

(answering the phone)

The Lads.

(listens... frightened look on his face)

EDDIE (cont'd)

(on the phone))

He's not here.

(listens again)

I don't know if he's comin' tonight.

(starts to hang up; listens)

I don't want to hear...

(listens)

Eddie slams the receiver down. He stands there a few seconds trying to think. Picks up the phone again, dials, listens.

EDDIE

(on the phone)

I just had a call from one of Seamus's goons.

Tell Mick not to go out tonight. There's bloody hell to pay.

BLACKOUT

ACT ONE, Scene Two

12:30 a.m.

POUNDING on the door in the BLACKOUT.

VOICE OF BRIAN DOYLE

Eddie, open up! Gracie McDonald's missing!

ONE LIGHT COMES ON

Eddie was awakened from his sleep. Comes down the stairs, walks slowly to the front door.

EDDIE

Missing' what?

Eddie unlocks the front door.

BRIAN

(OFF STAGE)

I always said it. You wake up Eddie O'Brien the middle of
the night and he'll tell you a joke. Open this door, you
lummo. Gracie McDonald – bless her soul – is missing!

LIGHTS UP

EDDIE O'BRIEN, barefoot with suspenders hanging at his waist, opens the door for BRYAN.

BRIAN

Did you hear what I said? And don't be giving me any of your
smart talk. You wouldn't be havin' a wee bit of whiskey
to nip the chill?

Eddie pulls up his suspenders, curses as he stubs his toe on a table and takes a bottle of whiskey off the shelf to pour a shot for Brian.

BRIAN

(takes a drink from the bottle)

I'm obliged. Here's to findin' Gracie. There's a search party
formin' at the church. Sean thinks Jim is stayin' with a friend.

EDDIE

You think... Jim and Gracie...?

BRIAN

Holy Mother of God.

(blesses himself)

With Mick's temper?

(blesses himself again)

Nobody knew but Sean learned tonight that Jim got out of prison two days ago. He was to meet up with Mick and Gracie at Mick's place last night.

EDDIE

Brian, listen before you go all hells fire runnin' 'round town like Michael Collins waking up folks. Sit yourself down and start at the beginning.

LIGHTS DIM

STORYTELLER

Brian Doyle sits at the table with Eddie O'Brien and tells him the story of Gracie McDonald gone missing.

LIGHTS DIM further.

Brian brings Eddie up to date.

BRIAN

It all started with the money missing from that accounting firm's books. Jim wasn't in on that. I swear on my mother's grave. He was railroaded... set up by Seamus Dowd, who just happens to be running for Union Leader in our district.

LIGHTS OUT

END OF ACT I, Scene Two

ACT I, Scene Three

It's a cold and foggy night across the river from the big, bright lights of NYC.

(Backdrop depicting the city.)

One hour later. Eddie's saloon.

POUNDING ON THE DOOR

Sean Cleary uses his key, shoves the front door open, dragging MICK FLAHERTY

(huge man, late 30's) under his arms.

EDDIE ENTERS from the back rooms.

EDDIE

Where'd you find him?

BRIAN

Passed out at Clancy's. He can't talk that you can make any sense of.

Got real angry when somebody mentioned Jim. Called him some nasty names.

EDDIE

Mick blames Jim for every bad thing that ever happened to him or Gracie.

BRIAN

It's gonna take both of us to move him downstairs.

Brian looks at Eddie for help.

Reluctantly, Eddie helps Brian get Mick under the arms and drag him over to the stair.

EDDIE

Mother of God, don't waken him if you wanna live to tell it.

Eddie and Brian manage to get Mick downstairs with difficulty.

They come back upstairs after the struggle.

BRIAN

God, let him sleep it off. I called Sean. I thought he'd beat me here.

Red and blue police lights from a cruiser flood the stage. The police have arrived.

Sean also arrives. He's seen talking to the police outside.

Sean enters the pub. Brian and Eddie are fortifying themselves with a whiskey.

SEAN

The police want to talk to Mick about some trouble on the wharf tonight.

EDDIE

They need a warrant to come in here. Sean, go out and talk to 'em. Tell 'em about Gracie missing in case they haven't heard.

Sean starts to grumble as he walks to the door, holds his hands in the air and steps outside to talk to the police. Closes the door behind him.

Eddie pours two shots of whiskey for himself and Brian. He drinks the first one, pours himself another.

EDDIE

Sean's got the gift of gab. It was good money Mick spent for those correspondence classes.

BRIAN

You get what you pay for. He did square my dozen or so parking tickets.

The two guys drink their shots.

Sean comes back inside, wipes his sweating brow.

SEAN

Gracie is now officially missing. If they come back again, they'll have a warrant.

EDDIE

I knew you could handle them, Sean. You always could talk your way out of a nick.

SEAN

Yeah? Well, Jim better be clean when they find him is all I have to say. Carrying comes with a big penalty. They can revoke his parole. Forty eight hours on the streets and already wanted for questioning. Maybe armed.

BRIAN

We gotta find Gracie.

EDDIE

Before Mick.

BRIAN

He'll be waking up.

SEAN

Where the hell would Gracie go? Did they try her mother's place?

BRIAN

Her mom's the one who reported her missing. Got no use for Jim.

Mick at least has a job. The old lady respects that.

EDDIE

She respects the money he gives her every week.

SEAN

One of the cops out there is a friend of mine. He told me Jim was let out on a reduced parole because he snitched.

EDDIE

That's a lie. Jim would never snitch on a brother.

SEAN

(holding up his hands in self defense)

I'm just tellin' you what the copper said. Jim was let out two nights early.

He said they're lookin' for Mick now for some answers.

EDDIE

That would explain why Jim didn't show up at Mick's. Did Gracie know?

SEAN

I didn't stand around asking questions. It makes sense why she was a no show at Mick's. Jim's been out two days. Where you suppose he is?

A LOUD BANG FROM A DOOR OPENING AND SLAMMING against the wall leading to the basement.

MICK enters like Lazarus from the dead.

MICK

Where do you suppose who is?

Eddie, Sean and Brian cower around the table.

EDDIE

Mick! We were just talking...

MICK

And now I'm talkin'. Where is that son of a bitch brother of mine?

BRIAN

We're lookin' for him, Mick.

MICK

Yeah? Where you lookin', Brian? Under the table?

EDDIE

There's a posse at the church. They'll find him.

MICK

Find him and you'll find "her". Unless I find her first.

(starts to head for the door)

SEAN

Mick! It ain't safe you goin' out there alone. They're lookin' for you.

MICK

Is that a fact, Sean? You got my back? You and your... posse here?

Get outa my way.

Mick heads for the door. None of the three tries to stop him.

EDDIE

Mick, Sean found out from one of the cops that Jim was let out early.

SEAN

Two days early, Mick. That's why he didn't show up at your place.

Jim and Gracie are probably there now, waiting for you to come home.

MICK

That what you think, Sean? They're waiting for me to come home?

SEAN

Makes sense, Mick.

Mick studies Sean a long time, considering what he said.

MICK

You're always thinkin', Sean. I like that about you.

BRIAN

Have a drink, Mick.

EDDIE

NO! Let me make you some eggs.

MICK

Sit down, Sean. Tell me everything that cop said.

Brian, the window. You see any sign of coppers arrivin',
speak up quick.

BRIAN

Right, Mick. I'm on it.

Brian moves to the window.

MICK

Is Jim carryin'?

SEAN

Better not be. Carryin' on parole is a felony.

MICK

You learn that from those lawyer's books, Sean? Be a shame if my
little brother got sent back inside on a technicality, wouldn't it? Leave
little old Gracie out in the cold world again with nobody to take care of
her but me.

Mick laughs scaring the bejesus out of the other three.

BRIAN

Copper said warden put out some phony baloney yarn about a pipe
breakin' in the wing where Jimmy and three other inmates were bunkin'.
Had to evacuate 'em all.

MICK

Cop did a lot of talkin' out there.

BRIAN

You gotta run, Mick. I'm only sayin' for your own good. They can
put you away. Tell him, Sean. Tell him what you told us.

MICK

You want Jimmy to talk his way out of trouble with those boys
who scammed him, Sean? A Win/Win situation? And a
big fat "L" in my column. Is that what you want?

Mick starts across the table for Sean when Brian glances out the window.

BRIAN

Coppers, Mick. Go out through the basement.

Mick takes a second to contemplate what to do, then hurries to the basement door.

He opens the door, leaves the guys with this warning.

MICK

This ain't over, lads. Between you and me. This ain't over.

Mick opens the basement door and disappears.

POUNDING ON THE FRONT DOOR

The three lads look at each other as the LIGHT DIMS.

Red and blue lights flood the stage.

End of Act One, Scene Two.

ACT ONE, Scene Three

OVERHEAD LIGHTS COME ON in Mick's place (one room stage right).

Mick ENTERS flips on the light, looks around. Closes and locks the door behind him.

PHONE RINGS, causing Mick to jump.

Picks up the phone.

MICK

(on the phone)

Hello?

(listens)

Who is this?

(listens)

You tell my little brother for me that when I find him...

DIAL TONE

Mick looks at the phone in his hand. Slams it down.

KNOCK ON THE DOOR

Mick walks quietly to the door. Whispers...

MICK

Who is it?

SEAN

Sean. We have to talk, Mick.

Mick hesitates, finally opens the door.

SEAN

Close those curtains.

Sean walks over to the window facing the street, draws the curtains himself.

SEAN

I could lose my license for this.

MICK

That ain't all you could lose.

SEAN

You're the one who wanted a lawyer on the team.

MICK

My mistake. Give me a dumb ass court appointed know nothing any day. Not some ninety day correspondence school whiz kid who thinks he's Clarence Fuckin' Darrow.

SEAN

They're comin' to arrest you, Mick. That's what Jim wants to happen. Put you away where the bad guys can't get at you while he finds who really covered up that missing boatload.

MICK

You see, right there you don't know what the hell you're doin'. "Can't get at me in jail? You missed a class in incarceration 101, counselor. Unlike Jimmy, I don't have a lot of friends who are wardens or guards. No reduced time for Mick.

SEAN

Just listen to me. Jim ain't stupid.

MICK

He caught stupidity from our father.

SEAN

They let Jim out on purpose. They want to break up the Flaherty brothers. And they picked the place... here. And the object of both of your affections... Gracie. Don't deny it, Mick.

MICK

What the hell are you talking about?

SEAN

They let Jim out early so you wouldn't be around. Somebody clued in Gracie. She was no doubt waiting for Jim to walk through those gates on Wednesday evening when nobody expected it. Not even Jim. Word on the street is Jim was as surprised as anybody when they came

to his cell and told him some cock and bull story about a broken pipe in his wing of the prison. Too much paper work to fill out if they moved him to another prison when he was scheduled to be released in two days anyway... Dumb asses. Like anybody's going to believe that. They wanted it to look like Jim traded in an early release for some information about the missing inventory. All Gracie had to do was pack a bag and leave work early.