

## ACT I - SCENE 9

[LIGHTS come up in the study; NATHAN sits at his desk, writing]

### A LETTER TO FATHER

#### NATHAN

Dear father. The situation here in Dublin is... in a word... impossible. That won't do.

*(crumples up the paper, throws it on floor; starts over)*

Dear father. I find myself... between the *hammer*... and the anvil. *No.*

*(sighs, crumples up the paper; starts over with a fake smile)*

DEAR FATHER... THE WEATHER HERE IS PLEASANT...I AM ALIVE AND WELL...

*(stops writing, speaking to himself cynically)*

WELL, AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT

*(writing again)*

REST ASSURED YOUR CONCERNS WILL BE ADDRESSED...I SHALL DO MY LEVEL BEST  
BUT IT COULD BE...IT COULD BE THE *UN-MAKING* OF ME

[NATHAN looks back to his letter. DEIRDRE enters; He stops]

#### DEIRDRE

The carriage is waitin' ...M'Lord.

#### NATHAN

*(stiffly)*

Yes. I have a meeting.

*(puts papers in a satchel as Deirdre starts to leave)*

You didn't mention being employed *elsewhere*.

#### DEIRDRE

Forgive me. I didn't expect to see you in the pub.

#### NATHAN

Nor I, you.

*(with slight frustration; incredulity)*

Why?...when I offer a respectable wage *here* would you toil at a public house all evening?

#### DEIRDRE

Me father isn't makin' the ends meet.

#### NATHAN

Am I to understand, Irishmen allow their daughters to work, not one, but *two* jobs and then *take--*

#### DEIRDRE

*M'lord.* We'll lose our home if we can't pay the taxes.

**DEIRDRE cont.**

*(turning directly to him)*

But then, *you* know all about that.

**NATHAN**

*(as if he's been struck, pauses)*

It is not my intention--

**DEIRDRE**

And...My father'd never take. I *give*. I work me fingers to the bone. How could ye comprehend a life such as mine. Surely the *fine* ladies ye know in London never lift a dainty finger.

*(realizing she's overstepped)*

Forgive me. I'd only ask... *please*...don't be judgin' *me*... on account o' me brothers.

**NATHAN**

Pardon? Those contemptuous men in the pub?...are your--

*(turning away, speaking to himself)*

And their *sister* is here in *my study*. I am as good as dead. *Confounded country!*

**DEIRDRE**

Welcome to Ireland, Lord Peel. We're a people who fight with every fiber to survive.

*(Nathan turns, surprised, drawn in again)*

I'll heartily beg yer pardon for my brothers' behavior... but not for who I am.

## **DEIRDRE OF THE SORROWS**

**NATHAN**

*(with a smirk of realization)*

I assure you. Those 'fine ladies I know in London'... could not hold a candle to your character.

*(earnestly)*

Deirdre. Your brothers regard me with contempt. I pray you'll not join them in that.

**DEIRDRE**

No, M'Lord.

**NATHAN**

Might I even...hope to consider you... an *ally* in this struggle?

**DEIRDRE**

Me?

**NATHAN**

I'VE FOUND MYSELF IN IRELAND...Well, IN NEED OF A FRIEND  
WHEN I SAW YOU AT THE PUB LAST NIGHT I BEGAN TO COMPREHEND  
THAT YOU MIGHT NEED ONE EVEN MORE

**DEIRDRE**

*(despite the sad confession, she smiles wistfully)*

A friend? NO ONE'S EVER ASKED ME THAT BEFORE

**NATHAN**

THEN NO ONE'S EVER TOLD YOU OF THE WARMTH IN YOUR SMILE

*[DEIRDRE looks up at him; NATHAN turns away, speaks to himself]*

AND YOU'RE ENTIRELY UNAWARE HOW THOSE IRISH EYES BEGUILE

**DEIRDRE**

We say, MO CARA

**NATHAN**

MO CARA?

**DEIRDRE**

MEANS 'MY FRIEND'

**NATHAN**

*Mo Cara...sounds even sweeter in your language.*

**DEIRDRE**

I could teach you more Irish words when ye return.

**NATHAN**

Return? Oh! How could I forget? Yes...

*(taking his bag in hand, forgetting his cape, turning back)*

How do you say, *goodbye for now?*

**DEIRDRE**

SLAN GO FOILL *(Slahn, guh fuhl)*

**NATHAN**

MISS DEIRDRE, SLAN GO FOILL

*[NATHAN exits; DEIRDRE pulls the ribbon from her pocket]*

**DEIRDRE**

POOR DEIRDRE MCBRIDE LEAVE THE TEARS THAT YOU'VE CRIED

THOUGH THEY'VE BEEN MANY TODAY THEY'VE BEEN DRIED

OH DEIRDRE OF THE SORROWS BE SORRY NO MORE

FOR THIS LOVELY DAY YE'VE BEFRIENDED A LORD

MO CARA I CALLED HIM MO CARA LORD PEEL

HOW CAN IT HAVE HAPPENED... HOW CAN IT BE REAL

*(Taking the 'legends' book from the desk opening it reading proudly)*

JUST FOR A DAY I'M THE GIRL FROM FOLKLORE

FAMOUSLY BEAUTIFUL LOVED AND ADORED

*(suddenly shocked at what she reads)*

THAT HEROINE PERISHED IN BLOODSHED AND WOE

THAT CAN'T BE MY ENDING *(closes the book; smiles)* I'LL LET THAT PART GO

**DEIRDRE**

SO DEIRDRE OF THE SCULLERY IT'S TIME TO SING  
WHAT HAPPENED JUST NOW IS A MIND-BOGGLING THING  
THAT HE ASKED ME MY NAME T'WAS QUITE HARD TO BELIEVE  
BUT TO TREAT ME HIS EQUAL... I CANNOT CONCEIVE

[DEIRDRE picks up Nathan's cape, holds it out and sings to it]

TO BE A FRIEND BY HIS SIDE IT CANNOT BE DENIED  
T'WOULD BE SUCH AN HONOR FOR THIS POOR MCBRIDE  
OH DEIRDRE OF THE SORROWS BE SORRY NO MORE  
FOR THIS LOVELY DAY YOU'VE BEFRIENDED A LORD  
MO CARA I CALLED HIM MO CARA MY FRIEND  
I FEEL GIDDY AND RECKLESS AND MIGHT EVEN PRETEND  
THAT LEGENDS COME TRUE AND HANDSOME LORD PEEL  
IS A BRAVE ARDENT SUITOR WHO LOVES ME FOR REAL

[NATHAN enters upstage of her, observing DEIRDRE in full swing]

MO STOR I WOULD CALL YOU FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE  
MO STOR, MY DARLING, YES I'LL BE YOUR W---uh

[DEIRDRE turns to see NATHAN standing in front of her]

**NATHAN**

Forgive me. I forgot my--

[DEIRDRE takes off his cape, holding it out without looking his way  
NATHAN endeavors to keep a straight face]

Yes. Thank you. *Mo stor?* I shall have to learn *its* meaning.

[NATHAN exits. DEIRDRE slowly sinks to the ground]

**DEIRDRE**

May the earth swallow me whole.

[BLACK OUT]