

**(Female- Irish- middle aged or older. Comic)**

**Setting- a kitchen. A neighbour is in the kitchen and is talking to Brendy who has come home to see his mother.**

You mother is a marvellous woman, isn't she Brendy? I was only after reading an article in my 'Homes and Furnishings' magazine the other day entitled '*the economy of housewifery - an unrecognised skill*'. An article applauding the skill of those who need to, shall we say, '*stretch the household budget*'? And who do you think came to mind immediately? Your mother of course. Every time I come into this house Brendy I marvel at how your mother has kept the same homely look over the years. Why Brendy she takes such good care of things it seems that there's never any need to buy anything new.

It must be very comforting to know that the same '*friends*' will be on the mantelpiece each time you come home. I say to the neighbours: '*stepping into Eileen O 'Mahoney's front room is like stepping back twenty years*'. A great skill indeed in a household where there was often very little money coming in due to your father's '*liking for the drink*'. D'you not think so Brendy? (176 words)

**(Female- Irish - middle aged or older. Comic). An elderly nun is talking to an imaginary visitor.**

Tis good of you to come Teresa. We don't get many visitors these days. Remind me, how many years was it since you left the school. Fifty? July 1972 so? (*Laughs*). And I look like I'm wearing the same dress? That's because I am. (*She goes to the jug, picks up the two glasses beside it and fills one of them before offering the other to the 'visitor'*) Will you join me? (*She makes a facial expression that shows that the person has refused and puts the empty glass down. She sips from her glass*)

You heard right, the prison service did buy the nuns quarters. Too big for us now. Fortunately, the authorities didn't need to do much in the way of converting; our tiny bedrooms in those long corridors and our high walls were ideal for them. The estate agent, a cheeky young fella cracked jokes about it. And when I told him that we called our bedrooms '*cells*' he was off. Asked me "*if being a nun in an enclosed order was that different from being locked up in a high security prison?*" And when I told him that we stayed in the same place for life. Well. "*Tell, you something sister, those prisoners can get parole easier than you. Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha.*" *Ha, ha, ha, ha.*" I didn't offer him a drop; I can tell you. (183 approx)

**(Female 20s Irish. Comic)**

I'm from a small place in County Down, there's not much to do and most people settle down young. It was when my best friend Marie finally decided to make a go of it with Albert Mooney, that I knew that my days of having someone to go out with on a Saturday night were finished. So, I left. Decided to leave home and try my luck in England.

This is the first time I'd tried online dating. I'm a massive James Bond fan and didn't the guy in the first photo have the look of Daniel Craig about him ? Daniel Craig? The James Bond guy with the six pack who comes out of the sea. That's the one. So I "swiped right" and was really excited when he texted me back to arrange a date.

The girls at work were dead jealous. "*Bet there's loads of girls after him.*" they said. Some even told me that he wouldn't turn up. I took no notice and a lot of care getting ready. Make up, hair, new blouse.

We agreed to meet in the Italian restaurant in the high street but when I got there it was empty apart from an ugly auld fella sitting on his own. He didn't look a bit like Daniel Craig so I thought I must have the wrong place. I began to walk out when I heard a loud voice behind me "*Roisin did you forget to go to Specsavers?*" (246)

**(Male 20s/30s Irish Wistful)**

I fall silent. Not because I don't want to tell her or because I'd rather watch the horses but because I can't. I fight back with tears. It's the words. *Did he ask you to come and see him in Africa?* that gets to me. I don't reply. Instead, I clench my fists. Think back to the small boy who saved his pocket money to buy airmail letters and stamps. All those letters I wrote to 'somewhere in Africa' to an address I found in one of mum's old diaries. Telling my dad how much I wanted to see him. That all the other lads in the class had a dad, even if they were working in England or America. I didn't mind if he didn't have the money for my airfare to Africa I understood. But if he could just see his way to finding the money for a stamp, or maybe a photo, then perhaps the other boys in the class might stop calling me a 'black bastard'. I didn't mind the 'black'. I'm proud of that bit. Don't the best singers and dancers in the world look like us? And sure when did anyone ever call someone with ginger hair and freckles cool?

**(Male or Female- any age- accent)**

Has it occurred to you for one moment that having a child outside marriage during the war years might be something, of which Eleanor, if indeed she did have one, was in some way deeply ashamed? That it was something that she may have wished to keep secret.

I appreciate your wish to help your friend. But even if we could make ‘all the dots join up’ what good would it do? Your client probably enjoyed a happy life, albeit one where he missed his mother. But a good life is spite of that. Young women like Eleanor, without a home or money could never have provided for him in the way his adopted parents did.

Look it, by the time I met Eleanor she was a virtual recluse, she spent any free time in her room. If you really want to know I think that she was a deeply unhappy, friendless woman. She barely spoke to me. She was polite right enough alright. She did not ignore me but she made it clear that she didn’t want to talk about herself

**(Male Late 20s Early 30s- English)**

Look, we’ve just found out that we’re expecting twins. It is months away but when they’re born, I want to be able to...to tell them about their heritage what their grandads and great uncles did for this country. I want them to be proud. You’re right, my dad is wealthy, and I’ve wanted for nothing. Except for one thing. Connection. All my life I have never known whether to call myself Irish or English. I want my kids to know their history so that they can decide who they are, who they want to be. I want them to look down from the top of the London Eye, at all the buildings, the London skyline and to know that it wouldn’t have been built without people like their granddad and great uncles. Now do you understand why I want to talk to you? And by the way, please stop calling me a Plastic Paddy! It’s offensive.

**(Male – Middle aged or older. Irish)**

Roots were never of any use to me son. Tell me, what good is a country if the soil’s no good and a plant can’t grow there? I’ll tell you a story. You say that your people are from West Cork, well one evening I was on the road to ... to... doesn’t matter. ‘Twas dark- it had been raining- the sky was full of clouds-there was no moon. I saw a cowshed ... It’s okay you can switch that thing on. I heard a strange kind of crying- not a woman’s cry but a mans’. I’d never heard that before.... Thought men didn’t ...you know.... But there he was. Jaysus the poor auld fecker sobbing’ like a babby I didn’t need to ask him what was wrong.....what I saw before me said it all, ye man had his arms around a cow... he was sobbing into the skin of the dead beast- ‘I’m finished’ he said. Over and over again ‘I’m finished’.

**(Male or Female- any age)**

Boxing Billy for a start. Buying him sweets because that's all you can do to stop him stealing. Preventing your secretary from going to the hospital in case everyone finds out he's violent. What are you going to do next? Get him a skateboard if he promises not to bring matches with him next time he breaks into the school? Truth is you're terrified of the adult he'll become if you can't sort him out now. So scared, you'll risk your career for him and what's worse, you don't even stop and ask why. Then why won't you admit that all that bad stuff that dad went through as a kid affected him? Why do you keep saying that he was an adult, responsible for the choices he makes? Because you need to believe that what you're doing for that Ryan boy, will change him when everyone else can see that it is pointless. Face it, you can't always cure the bad stuff that happens to kids. And there isn't some wonder drug that allows their childhood horrors not to affect them as adults.