

Downstairs

Féilim & Pádraig enter downstairs. Féilim's pent-up energy is about to burst.

Féilim

Mairead can't be coming in here and winding Margaret up like that. It's Annie's wake for Christ's sake. What sort of a state does she think she's in to be going at it about everything that's ever happened. This ... I ... No more. I'm done with the fightin'.

Pádraig

Féilim, Margaret and Mairead are too much alike for their own good. You know it, you've said it! They've both been hurtin' and they take it out on each other.

Féilim

It's different this time Paddy.

Pádraig

Look around you, Féilim. This is more than just our wives fightin'. It's the Fenians, it's the Crown, it's every Irishmen being treated like a criminal in their own country. Men are sitting in jails without any charges because we no longer have rights.

Féilim

This is about our wives -

Pádraig

No Féilim, it's about everything. We wouldn't be at each other's throats if we didn't feel the crushing weight coming down on us.

Féilim

I'm not talking politics in this house.

Pádraig

Whether we talk about it or no, it still affects you. We can't escape it no matter how hard we try. Politics dictates what you're allowed to say and how you say it.

Politics dictates how our police can treat us. Politics dictates whether we can afford a roof over our head and food in our bellies.

Féilim

You're changing the -

Padraig

I'm not the changing the subject. It's all the same thing. That's what I'm tryin' to tell you.

Féilim

We've been fightin' this fight for independence from the British for centuries and we'll be fightin' this fight for centuries more.

Padraig

Aye, if we all had that mindset we would. I don't know what I can say to get through to you. We're taxed the same as a Londoner yet we have a weaker economy. We're asked to put in our share for the good of the Kingdom, yet our hard earned coin is spent elsewhere. We're given scraps and are told to be grateful for them. If the Crown wasn't squeezing every last drop out of us we wouldn't have lost the land our wives should have inherited. We wouldn't be a bad week away from starving. We wouldn't be hunted by the authorities and locked up without reason.

Féilim

I'm trying to protect my family. That's my job. Mine. And half of my family is underground.

Padraig

It's a fools folly to think that way.

Féilim

Then I guess I'm a fool.

Padraig

You're not responsible for cholera or the state of the world. You are responsible for what you do about it.

Féilim

What are you sayin' Paddy? I take up arms and get myself killed? What good will that do?

Padraig

I'm saying you can't put your head in the sand and hope the waves won't crash in around you.

Féilim

I can't keep doing this alone. We're struggling, Paddy. If I'm not working night and day I'm afraid we'll lose the bar.

Padraig

What do you mean, struggling?

Féilim

I mean we've no savings, we've been cutting back where we can. Annie, my girl, she ... she was using her salary to pay bills. And not only have I lost my little girl, we also won't have enough to make it to the end of the month without her income.

Padraig

I'm sorry, Féilim. I didn't know.

Féilim

It's a shameful thing for me to say that my daughter was helping to provide for my family.

Padraig

It's a terrible burden you carry. But you shouldn't carry it alone.

Féilim

There's no one else. Margaret and Róisín both work with me. I can't afford to lose either of them to other employment. Margaret won't say, but I've seen her and Róisín doing laundry for another family.

Padraig

What do you need to keep things running?

Féilim

I don't know. My girl isn't even in the ground yet and I'm thinking of renting her room out. Feels like I'm erasing her from the house.

Padraig

We know that isn't true.

Féilim

But that's what it's feeling like. Sitting here, looking down at Annie and wondering what price I might fetch for her room and if it will be enough. I'm ashamed of myself.

Padraig

Féilim, we need to get our wives on the same page. I will talk to Maisie and you need to talk to Margaret. If we reconcile our differences we can work together as a family to make sure we're all taken care of.

Féilim

Margaret is in a state.

Padraig

Aye, and so is Maisie. But if anyone can talk some sense into them it's us.

Féilim

Okay. But I can't tonight, Paddy. Let me bury my girl.