

The Dreaming of Roger Casement

Patrick Mason

2015

for my father

Characters:

The play is written to be performed by a company of 11 actors (9 male/2 female). Some actors are allocated to single roles, others to a series of roles (both speaking and non-speaking). Roles might be allocated to actors on the basis of age group, gender, and availability, as suggested:

1. Sir Roger Casement (fifty-two)
2. Sir Ernley Blackwell (forties)
3. Sir Basil Thomson (forties)
4. Sir Frederick Smith (fifties)
5. Gertrude Bannister (forties)
6. Aunt Charlotte/Mother*(fifties)
7. Captain Monteith/Sgt. Turner/Kennett/Dr. Mander (actor thirties)
8. Bailey/Warder Benson/RC Chaplain (actor twenties)
9. Constable Riley/Germain/Baxter (actor twenties)
10. Sgt. Major Reece/Findlay/Mr. Ellis (actor forties)
11. Pte Evans*/Stott

**indicates non-speaking role*

Summary of characters to be represented by the company:

Sir Roger Casement
Sir Frederick Smith—*Attorney General*
Sir Ernley Blackwell—*Home Office*
Sir Basil Thomson—*Scotland Yard*
Gertrude Bannister—*Casement's cousin*
Captain Monteith—*IRB*
Bailey—*Casement's Irish Brigade*
Constable Riley—*RIC*
Aunt Charlotte—*Casement's aunt*
Sgt Turner—*Scotland Yard*
Mr. Findlay—*Home Office*
Stott—*Home Office*
Kennett—*Home Office*
Warder Benson—*HM Prison Service*
Mr. Germain—*Casement's landlord*
Sgt. Major Reece—*Welsh Fusiliers*
Private Evans—*Welsh Fusiliers*
Mr. Ellis—*the Hangman*
Baxter—*Hangman's Assistant*
Dr. Mander—*Home Office Doctor*
Mother
R.C. Chaplain—*HM Prison, Pentonville*

The Dreaming of Roger Casement

Place: *Ireland, England.*

Time: *April-August 1916. Real time & memory/dream time.*

Stage: *An open space which may, by lighting and projections, be changed and divided into at least three separate acting areas. Any furniture used should be minimal and institutional in character—suggestive of 'The System.'*

The action of the play should flow uninterrupted from scene to scene, and the secondary acting areas should never be completely lost to view. Casement himself is a constant presence: and the continuous presence of at least some members of the ensemble is also of significance.

Costuming, if used, could be redolent of the period, but should not be elaborate or over-literal. It should rather be simple, and emblematic of both role and character.

Part One. Scene 1.

Darkness. Drumming. Figures gather in the murk. A shaft of light reveals Casement, standing apart from the others.

CASEMENT. The System. That's what he called it. The penal laws, the brutal clearances, the savage reprisals—all part of the System. Barely a week into my investigation, I could make no sense of the cruelty I had witnessed. I was bewildered by all I had seen and heard. But he was calm, measured—an old Africa hand, the German Consul General. "It's the only language they understand: regrettable, of course, but the most effective way for a colony to prosper. Belgian, British, French or German—whatever Empire you serve, you'll find the System to be the same. Villages burned, land seized, crops and minerals plundered, the people displaced—their culture destroyed. The price of Civilization as we know it. And not without some benefit to the natives in the long run."

I bade him good night, and retired to my room to write up my notes. I lit the lamp, hung the ragged mosquito net over the table, opened my ledger, and wrote, and wrote—until my hand ached, and my head cleared. He was right, of course. The barbarity was deliberate—systemic. What I had been prepared to classify as an aberration—the evil consequence of corruption, the deeds of a few unscrupulous rogues—was, in truth, the method and machinery of Empire itself: its secret force—its shameful purpose. And as I read and re-read my record of every ravaged field and mutilated corpse, of every ruined hut and starving beggar I had met on my way through the Congo—it came to me that I was reading the history of my own country. And I sat alone in that stifling room, and wept—pitiful, angry tears. That such a System should prevail.

The roar of the sea. The figures surge forward to create a tumult of waves. Casement is hoisted aloft, and tumbled through the surf. Men cry out after him.

CASEMENT. Ireland!

MONTEITH. Casement!

CASEMENT. Ireland!

BAILEY. Casement!

Casement crawls ashore and lies in the shallows, exhausted. Light on Bailey and Monteith.

BAILEY. I made a grab for him as the boat went over—lost him again in the surf.

MONTEITH. Search the strand—the water's edge. Quick, man. Help me find him!

They run off to search the strand. The man in the shallows raises an arm to the sky.

CASEMENT. Home! God's will. I'm home.

He passes out. A wave breaks, and figures appear on the strand: Sir Ernley Blackwell and Sir Frederick Smith. Smith smokes a cigar, Blackwell is reading a report.

BLACKWELL. Death was instantaneous—severed vertebrae, spinal cord. Digital examination as requested. The bowel dilated as far as he could reach. Visual evidence too, Sir Frederick: the anus clearly distended.

SMITH. A revolutionary and a rake—a play-actor to the last. But that’s the Irish for you, Sir Ernley: all cause and no effect. A popular humanitarian, of course—the Congo and the Amazon. But a man of no character. By emotional force he made his way: sheer emotionalism did for him in the end.

As they move off, Gertrude Bannister appears. She holds a letter.

GERTRUDE. He wrote to me from Africa—“The native works to have life, the white man toils to have things.” He went barefoot on this earth, to be, not to have—to love, not to possess. My cousin died a martyr’s death—a hero, and a martyr. Whatever the ground in which he lies—that ground is made holy by his presence.

She disappears as another wave breaks, and Monteith and Bailey run on.

MONTEITH. Casement! For Pity’s sake...

He runs to Casement and lifts his head. Casement comes to.

CASEMENT. Monteith. Captain Monteith. Where’s Bailey?

MONTEITH. He’s safe. He’s here. We thought you were drowned.

CASEMENT. Baptised. Washed clean. Free from the filth of that submarine.

MONTEITH. Listen to me now. There’s no sign of Commandant Stack or his men. We’ll have to leg it into town.

CASEMENT. Skylarks—d’you hear? There are skylarks.

MONTEITH. You rest up here. We’ll find Stack and fetch a motor to collect you. There’s cover back there. An old ring fort beyond the strand.

CASEMENT. I’m fine, Monteith—fine. You two go on ahead.

MONTEITH. We’ll look for you at the fort. Remember—lie low till then.

CASEMENT. I’ll remember.

MONTEITH. We’ll be back for you, I swear.

Bailey and Monteith run off. Casement lies on the strand—drifting in and out of consciousness.

CASEMENT. The old fort—I’ll remember. Surf, and strand... Skylarks, I remember... the long curve of the bay—Dublin Bay...

The figure of Aunt Charlotte appears.

CASEMENT. And a boy—a lanky stick of a boy. His Papa teaching him to swim. Rough hands—a soldier's hands—

CHARLOTTE. The army! Nothing will do you but the army! But who's to pay for a Commission now?

CASEMENT. And Mama?

CHARLOTTE. The Captain dead, and your wretched mother—

CASEMENT. Mama...

CHARLOTTE. You cannot expect your Uncle John to support you forever—idling about the Glens of Antrim! You'll have to learn to fend for yourself: overcome your deficiencies, and earn your keep. What about the Constabulary?

CASEMENT. I want to be a hero, Aunt Charlotte—

CHARLOTTE. Or Canada?

CASEMENT. I want to be a hero, and ride with General Grant.

CHARLOTTE. It's high time your mother's people pulled their weight—the Bannisters of Liverpool. Perhaps they could find you something in shipping?

CASEMENT. Papa's sword at my side, Aunt Charlotte—my long cloak flying!

CHARLOTTE. You'd best buck up your ideas, and learn to make your own way in the world. Or you'll be hanged for a rascal yet, young man—hanged for a rascal yet...

As she moves off, Constable Riley appears: a loaded carbine leveled at Casement.

RILEY. Move hand or foot and I'll shoot.

CASEMENT. Good morning, Constable. And what has you up so early?

RILEY. I'll shoot, so help me.

CASEMENT. That's a nice way to treat an English visitor, I must say.

RILEY. Sergeant!

The blast of a police whistle and distant gun shots—Casement is led away as Monteith runs on.

MONTEITH. Bailey! *(A shot—he dives for cover)* We missed our way. By the time we got back he'd been taken. I begged Stack to rescue him—two or three peelers against a dozen armed Volunteers? He

refused to commit his men. He had his orders, he said, from Commandant Pearse himself: no operations to be sanctioned that might alert the authorities. I nearly punched the bastard—but he wouldn't budge.

Another blast of the whistle: Bailey cries out.

BAILEY. Captain!

MONTEITH. Run for it, man!

Another shot. Monteith runs off. Casement in custody.

CASEMENT. To the English, I know, I'm a villain—biting the hand that fed. But they must understand that I never wanted to hurt their country as England—only to help Ireland. I am a rebel, yes—in their eyes a traitor, I know—but I am doing nothing dishonorable. So they can call me any name they like, but to help Ireland must bring me into conflict with England—and help Ireland I must. For Ireland is something more than nation—something more than race.

Ireland is more than any reason.

She is a dream that rises from her own dark soil—more real than rock or sky.

A secret soul that haunts us still.

Her subjection is our shame.

Her freedom is our duty.

To fight for her.

To die for her.

To lay down my life...

Sergeant Major Reece and Private Evans march in.

REECE. Prisoner, prisoner will stand and face the wall!

Casement stands and turns to one side as Private Evans brings in the bedroll and blankets and drops them on the floor

REECE. Prisoner! Prisoner will turn and make up his bed! Well, get a move on! This is the Bloody Tower, you know—not a holiday bloody spa hotel!

Office din as 'The System' swings into action. Tables and chairs are set, papers and files. Reece and Evans withdraw, leaving Casement to make up his bed. When he has done so, he sits on the mattress, to scribble with the butt of a pencil on the back of an old envelope. Private Evans stands guard outside the cell. Sir Basil Thomson sits in his office in Scotland Yard, a pile of files on his desk. Sergeant Turner enters.

Scene 2.

TURNER. Beg pardon, Sir Basil. There's a Mr. Germain outside. Something about a tin trunk, and articles belonging to the traitor Casement.

THOMSON. Show him in, Sergeant. And, Turner?

TURNER. Yes, Sir Basil?

THOMSON. Did those papers arrive down from the Home Office?

TURNER. Not yet, Sir Basil.

THOMSON. Let me know when. No, tell you what—send someone up to fetch them. I promised Sir Ernley Blackwell I'd have them signed by close of business.

TURNER. Right you are, Sir.

THOMSON. And you can send up these while you're at it. Transcripts of all our Irish friends' interrogations to date—including Tralee. There are copies for the Attorney General. See they're delivered to Sir Frederick Smith in person. (*Hands over the documents*) Ireland's this and England's that—let him make sense of them if he can. Bring in Germain.

TURNER. Mr. Germain? Sir Basil will see you now.

Germain enters the office.

GERMAIN. Sir Basil Thomson?

THOMSON. Mr. Germain. Do sit down. I'm told you have articles belonging to Sir Roger Casement?

GERMAIN. I didn't have any personal connection, if you understand me—a business arrangement, pure and simple. He was abroad so often, quite the nomad—needed somewhere to store books, clothes—anything surplus to requirement. I have no idea what's there, you understand? Simply that I felt, in the circumstances, it would be for the best.

THOMSON. And so it will! Did you or Mrs. Germain notice anything untoward?

GERMAIN. No—no. That is—I am a bachelor, Sir Basil. I haven't opened or touched a thing.

THOMSON. I'll send some constables round to collect the stuff. A tin trunk you say?

GERMAIN. A portmanteau, and a deck chair.

THOMSON. A deck chair?

GERMAIN. Somewhat frayed—but a perfectly good deck chair, nonetheless.

THOMSON. Well, he won't be needing that now, will he? Thank you, Mr. Germain. You have done the right thing at a difficult moment. It will stand to you—when the time comes. Sergeant Turner!

GERMAIN. What time is that, Sir Basil?

THOMSON. Who knows, Germain—who knows?

Turner enters.

THOMSON. Be so good as to show the gentleman out. Keep up the good work! (*Germain leaves*) And Turner?

TURNER. Sir?

THOMSON. Keep a close eye on our bachelor friend.

Scene 3.

The Tower of London. Casement, huddled in a blanket, is lying on his mattress writing notes on the back of an envelope.

CASEMENT. To me a diary is a lifeline—my only way to connect the scattered moments. Every word a trace—proof positive. Belfast, Rio, Loanda, New York—I scribble down entries on the back of envelopes and receipts, then copy them into notebooks or ledgers. Berlin, Tralee, Dublin, London—the Tower of London...

Last night my guard boasted that no man held here had ever escaped the scaffold. That's what I call a sense of history—English history! Axe and block, rope and rack—and proud of it! Yet still they claim that England will keep faith—Home Rule for Ireland, once the war is won! But what faith has England ever had to keep? The faith of Imperial self-interest? The faith of a universal system of terror and exploitation? The faith of those Englishmen whose secret alliances and double-dealing have rendered this war inevitable?

“O, but my dear fellow, your Amazon report—admirable, admirable! And at such a cost to your own good self. But unhelpful to publish just now. Beastly for the natives—and a London-based syndicate, I know! But privately, the Foreign Secretary suggests—the warmonger Grey advises!—best to consider, best to delay. And your knighthood, Sir Roger, your pension, Sir Roger—your knighthood, your pension, your England, Sir Roger!”

And to think that I was a believer once. God help me! That England's sacred rule might bring to all its subject peoples dignity, justice, redress...

So hang me, do you hear? Don't leave me to rot in these stinking clothes! Don't starve me in this filthy hole! You cannot bury the truth. Grey, Asquith—Churchill! Do you hear? You cannot hide your guilt. I know your tactics—I know your lies! I know the difference between a word and a deed—and I was not afraid to act—to act decisively! Against you, and against your precious Empire...

Forgive me. A touch feverish. Malaria. The legacy of Africa. And they'll not allow me any quinine. I have never feared a sudden death: never feared pain—used to it. But there are times—times as if the body would shake itself apart: as if the skull would crack, bones snap—dust and disappear. No mark, no trace—no proof that such a man had ever been...

Sergeant Major Reece and Private Evans march into the cell.

REECE. Prisoner, prisoner will turn and face the wall. Arms out! Wide. Wider!

Casement does so, and Evans proceeds to search his pockets, confiscating his pocket book, papers and pencil.

CASEMENT. No. Please. My pencil—my papers...

REECE. All means of communication with the enemy to be confiscated and withheld under the powers invested in me by the Defense of the Realm Act, nineteen hundred and fourteen.

Evans hands the stuff to Reece.

CASEMENT. No, Sergeant—

REECE. Prisoner—prisoner dismissed!

Reece and Evans march out of the cell.

CASEMENT. My pencil—my papers—I beg you—

Scene 4.

TURNER. Clothes, Sir Basil—and books. And photographs, Sir Basil—hidden at the bottom of the trunk.

THOMSON. Photographs?

TURNER. Italian, sir. Artistic.

THOMSON. Naked women?

TURNER. No, sir. Men, sir.

THOMSON. Men! Are you sure, Sergeant Turner?

TURNER. No room for doubt, sir—if you see what I mean.

THOMSON. Anything else?

TURNER. Notebooks. Diaries—1903, '04. And a ledger, nineteen hundred and eleven.

THOMSON. Right! I want that stuff shipped up to the Home Office double quick. Let Sir Ernley know it's on the way. He'll want those diaries properly assessed. That's not for you or me. Get them out of here—diaries, photos, the lot! I don't want anyone in Scotland Yard to be tainted. And Turner!

TURNER. Yes, Sir Basil?

THOMSON. You can leave the deck chair at the porter's lodge. Silly to see it go to waste.

TURNER. Very good, sir.

Scene 5.

Casement pacing his cell, wrapped in his blanket against the cold.

CASEMENT. Guard? Guard!

No response.

CASEMENT. Ignore me so. *(He blows on his hands, rubs them together)* I miss my camera. I've an Ensign Deluxe—well, I did have. Lost in transit—and I am lost without it. To capture a moment in time, to hold it—fixed, printed...

There was a lad in Belfast I photographed once. By the old fountain in the Botanic Gardens. I'd met him by chance at the Ormeau Baths—an apprentice in the shipyards. Good composition, though I say it myself: photogenic young subject. I had barely returned to London when I got word that he was dead. A shipyard accident—Harland and Wolff. Only it wasn't an accident. Or so I was told...

I saw him again last night: beautiful—broken. My father appeared the night I arrived here. No sign of Mama yet—as might be expected. There *was* a woman I glimpsed once—down a long corridor, through an open door. She was standing in a bare room, a broken bench beneath the tall window, moonlight through the metal shutters. A tin trunk lay by the empty grate.

They say they cannot decide whether to hang me or to shoot me—or leave me here to rot until their criminal war is won...

Guard!

No response.

Hardly encouraging, though—is it? To be talking to the dead.

Scene 6.

The Attorney Generals' Office. Kennet holds out two notebooks and a bundle of yellow paper bookmarks, half of which he hands to Stott.

KENNET. Right, then. We're to read them through, quick as we can—mark any sedition or smut, and pass them on to Mr. Findlay to be photographed. Got that?

STOTT. Read, remark, refer—reproduce.

KENNET. *(Offering the two books)* Take your pick.

STOTT. Eeny, meeny, miny, mo. *(He takes a book and opens it)* The Congo.

KENNET. (*Opens his book*) The bloody Amazon!

STOTT. Terrible handwriting. Look at it. All over the shop! And the crossings-out. Scratch, scratch, scratch. Cracked, if you ask me! What do they want photographs of this mess for anyway?

KENNET. Ours not to reason why. Just read!

They set about their work.

Scene 7.

FINDLAY. A Miss Bannister to see you, Sir Ernley. Gertrude Bannister?

BLACKWELL. The persistent Miss Bannister. Show her in. And, Findlay—stay close.

FINDLAY. Sir Ernley will see you now, Miss.

Gertrude Bannister enters the office. She carries a basket, a parcel, as well as a handbag.

GERTRUDE. Sir Ernley Blackwell?

BLACKWELL. Miss Bannister. Please, be seated. Thank you, Findlay. What can I do for you?

GERTRUDE. I believe that you know the whereabouts of my cousin, Sir Roger Casement. I wish to see him.

BLACKWELL. You must understand that the precise location in which your cousin is presently held is a matter of extreme delicacy. I'm not at liberty to divulge what is, in fact, classified information. Perhaps if you were to try the War Office?

GERTRUDE. I have. They referred me back here to the Home Office. The Home Office then referred me to Scotland Yard, and Scotland Yard referred me back to the Home Office, and after three days, Sir Ernley—I have finally managed to be referred to you.

BLACKWELL. And that is a considerable achievement, believe me. You must appreciate that the war has placed an intolerable strain on our whole system of governance. However, as legal coordinator of this unfortunate case, I shall do whatever lies within my limited power to assist.

GERTRUDE. I wish to visit my cousin.

BLACKWELL. Might I suggest that you give me your message—and I will ensure that it reaches him at the earliest opportunity.

GERTRUDE. I want to see him in person.

BLACKWELL. Out of the question.

GERTRUDE. What are you hiding? Is he beaten—tortured?

BLACKWELL. My dear Miss Bannister, this is not Afghanistan. Your cousin is in safe hands.

GERTRUDE. Soldiers' hands. They are killing men in Ireland—shooting them in cold blood.

BLACKWELL. Ireland is Ireland. England, thank God, is quite another matter. Your cousin shall have justice. Whether it is to be before a Military Tribunal or a civilian court is, as yet, undecided.

GERTRUDE. So it is to be the firing squad? Another army assassination!

BLACKWELL. A Military Tribunal may yet prove the most appropriate means of judging this case in time of war. Now, please! My time is short. Do you have any message I may relay on your behalf?

GERTRUDE. Be so good as to see that he receives this. (*A letter*) There is no treason in it.

BLACKWELL. Nevertheless, it will have to be passed through the appropriate channels.

GERTRUDE. I have brought fresh food. (*The basket*) Please see that he receives it. And clean clothes. (*The parcel*)

BLACKWELL. Your cousin is held at His Majesty's pleasure. He is regularly fed and adequately clothed.

GERTRUDE. I shall leave them with you. You may dispose of them as your conscience finds fit. Good day, Sir Ernley.

BLACKWELL. Might I have an address where—

GERTRUDE. Care of Mrs. Alice Stopford, Green: 36 Grosvenor Road—

BLACKWELL. S.W.1. Your hostess is an historian of distinction—an assiduous chronicler of Ireland's woes.

GERTRUDE. And England's guilt.

BLACKWELL. Indeed. A most distressing narrative, to be sure. Findlay! Rest assured that I shall be in touch at the first opportunity. (*Findlay enters*) Please show Miss Bannister out. (*She leaves with Findlay*) Alice Stopford Green, indeed! (*He opens the letter and reads it*) Findlay!

FINDLAY. (*entering*) Sir?

BLACKWELL. Add this to the file. And dispose of these things while you're about it. (*The parcel and the basket*)

FINDLAY. Yes, sir.

BLACKWELL. And Findlay?

FINDLAY. Sir Ernley?

BLACKWELL. I would be grateful if, in future, you would shield me from vexatious women.

Scene 8.

KENNET. ‘Allo, ‘allo. Here. Take a look at this.

STOTT. (*Reading from the diary*) “Stayed in house all morning. At one p.m. magnificent young policeman passed with fine big one and splendid, underlined, calves. Strong as a tap—tip—”

KENNET. Tapir!

STOTT. What’s that, then?

KENNET. Class of an animal. Eats ants. Must have big legs.

STOTT. (*Reads again*) “Immediately followed by another with huge one on right side. Could see it stiff and long and thick open brackets about seven inches close brackets, wo—wub—”

KENNET. Wabbling—

STOTT. “Wabbling down right thigh.” Is he doing it with wogs?

KENNET. So it would appear.

STOTT. Doing it with darkies? That’s—that’s disgusting! Is there any more?

KENNET. (*Reads*) One sixteen mucha—Spanish something underlined—just gone past. Flew to window and looked after—lovely stern and calves in blue putties. To dinner after—Spanish—and—Spanish—and soldier. Cigarettes but would not, and then Jose to house, underlined, at eleven.”

STOTT. Did they do it?

KENNET. What?

STOTT. Him and Jose.

KENNET. Look, I think you’d better stick to your diary, and I’ll stick to mine.

STOTT. But you can’t just leave me in suspense.

KENNET. It’s not a bedtime story! It’s a private fucking diary!

STOTT. Exactly!

KENNET. (*Reads*) “Tenth Friday. Jose to come at eight after last night visit exclamation mark. He came at eight ten, we went away at eight twenty five first to—Spanish—and then to—more bloody Spanish—where we bathed and after coming out mine under capital HK apostrophe F.” What’s capital HK apostrophe F?

STOTT. Handkerchief!

KENNET. “Mine under handkerchief. Got stiff and he did same with his and it got huge underlined. Nearly did it.”

STOTT. That was close!

KENNET. “Back at eleven and told him come at three: to breakfast Cazes seeing huge one underlined and now at two forty five I am waiting for Jose naked underlined with mine ready exclamation mark. He came at two fifty eight, mine huge and his up too exclamation mark. He wants it exclamation mark.”

STOTT. Leave out the exclamation marks.

KENNET. What do you mean leave out the exclamation marks?

STOTT. They hold things up.

KENNET. You can’t leave out the exclamation marks—these are homosexual exclamation marks: pervert punctuations.

STOTT. Just thought it might speed things up a bit. Go on.

KENNET. “He is quite ready, exclamation mark—but if I do it I must take him with me to Rio. After dinner met Manuel. Gave good evening. Tried to feel it, but got match box instead. Agreed to come with me but afraid of soldiers. Then a Colombian on—Spanish again—showed him mine and felt his.”

STOTT. But they still didn’t actually *do* it.

KENNET. Well, it wasn’t for lack of trying!

STOTT. Tell you what, I’ll check and see if they did it in the Congo.

Scene 9.

The Tower of London. Sgt. Major Reece and Private Evans march into Casement’s cell.

REECE. Prisoner—prisoner ‘shun! Prisoner to be transferred 06:00 hours. His Majesty’s Prison Service, Brixton. God save the King! (*With great dignity*) I can only regret, Sir Roger Casement, that we did not shoot you the moment we saw you.

Reece turns, and marches out of the cell followed by Evans.

Scene 10.

Scotland Yard. Sgt. Turner with tea tray. Blackwell, Thomson, and Smith.

THOMSON. Tea, Sir Frederick?

SMITH. Never touch the stuff. Go on, Sir Ernley.

BLACKWELL. (*Scanning a report*) The youngest of four, born Dublin, 1864. Family moved to England soon after. Dragged from lodging house to lodging house—then back to Ireland. Father dead, Ballymena, 1877. Mother previously deceased. No details. Just vanished off the face of the earth.

SMITH. Orphaned at eleven.

THOMSON. O boo-hoo! Tea, Sir Ernley?

BLACKWELL. Milk, no sugar. Children passed from pillar to post. Cousins in Antrim, friends of the family—

THOMSON. What has this got to do with anything? It's the man we have to deal with, not the boy. Hang the bugger, say I!

Thomson hands Blackwell his tea.

BLACKWELL. Thank you.

SMITH. Every man is a story, Sir Basil. Some men manage to make their own story, but, more often than not, it's the story makes the man. Learn the story, learn the man: learn the man, and, with a bit of luck on the day, you may lead him to hang himself. Which is our objective, is it not? Seeing that we can no longer shoot him after the debacle of the Dublin firing-squads, Sir Ernley.

BLACKWELL. Dispatched from Antrim to Liverpool at fifteen. His mother's people: the Bannisters.

SMITH. Not so many years in Ireland, then?

BLACKWELL. More in England.

THOMSON. (*Taking a biscuit*) Help yourselves to a biscuit.

BLACKWELL. Liverpool. A clerkship—the Elder Dempster Line. Entered the Consular service 1892. Consul General 1904—

SMITH. Congo Casement, CMG—the Amazon Report: arise Sir Roger Casement KB. Did rather well for himself after all.

BLACKWELL. Retired from the service, December 1911.

SMITH. To devote himself to Kathleen ni Houlihan.

THOMSON. Kathleen Ni what? Sorry. Didn't mean to interrupt.

SMITH. Ni Houlihan, Sir Basil. A sort of Irish Britannia—only a great deal more alluring.

THOMSON. You don't say!

SMITH. Kathleen ni Houlihan, the Dark Rosaleen—all beautiful young women: dusky and dangerous as the island they represent.

THOMSON. Crikey!

SMITH. Murky waters, Sir Basil! Yet what is she to him, or he to her, that he should become quite so enthralled? What about these diaries?

BLACKWELL. I have the psychiatrist's report.

THOMSON. Psychiatrists!

SMITH. Any signs of mental instability?

BLACKWELL. No evidence of delusion or general intellectual defect. However: (*reading from the report*) "The pages shown us contain definite evidence of sexual perversion of a very advanced type, both long-standing and chronic. The detail recorded and the intermingling of everyday material are particularly unusual, pointing to an obsessive or addictive personality."

SMITH. Is he insane?

BLACKWELL. Not certifiably.

SMITH. Then he is sane.

BLACKWELL. He must be regarded at least as mentally abnormal.

SMITH. So much for Harley Street.

THOMSON. How can you possibly broach material like this in open court?

SMITH. How is it that so much of this smut has already found its way into the public domain?

BLACKWELL. I have instructed Findlay in my department to conduct a thorough investigation. However there is no use pretending that these unfortunate revelations have not worked to our advantage.

SMITH. I dare say. But I would prefer if they were to stop—at least for the duration of the trial.

BLACKWELL. I'm sure Findlay will be up to the job.

SMITH. Well, gentlemen, what is the way forward?

THOMSON. Break his neck!

SMITH. Strategy, Sir Basil—we need a strategy. What if we were to offer the Defense a plea of Insanity?

BLACKWELL. On the basis of the diaries?

THOMSON. And lose our man?

SMITH. Our man is a traitor, but he presents himself as a patriot.

THOMSON. How can you make a patriot of a pervert?

SMITH. Precisely.

BLACKWELL. Show O’Sullivan and Duffy the diaries, and offer them Insanity.

SMITH. Even if they don’t run with it, they’ll have seen the diaries.

BLACKWELL. And they will know their man.

SMITH. And they will know that we know him, too. What about a second charge?

BLACKWELL. Gross indecency?

SMITH. A second trial.

THOMSON. But if we get him on the first count he’ll be dead.

SMITH. But if we don’t, Sir Basil? If the jury acquits, or fails to reach a unanimous verdict? We cannot hang him then. What do we have on the second count?

BLACKWELL. On a charge of gross indecency we have the diaries, the testimony of Adler Christensen his so-called valet, and sworn depositions from the chief reception clerk in the Grand Hotel, Christiania.

THOMSON. Christiania? That’s in Norway not Germany—isn’t it?

SMITH. Full marks, Sir Basil. They travelled from America via Norway to Germany to evade our naval blockade. Evidently found time for some hanky-panky on the way.

THOMSON. Bloody animals!

SMITH. Treachery is a notorious aphrodisiac.

BLACKWELL. There are also references to a regular sexual partner in Ireland by the name of Millar Gordon, or Gordon Millar—the name is unclear from the entries. Our man in Belfast is on the case.

SMITH. And on the first count?

BLACKWELL. Bailey, one of Casement's so-called Irish Brigade, has turned, and is willing to testify to Casement's recruitment drive in German Prisoner of War Camps. We have a copy of the treaty concluded with German High Command. Transcripts of pro-German speeches made in the USA.

SMITH. What are our American cousins making of all this, by the way?

BLACKWELL. Ambassador Page has indicated that the President is unwilling to intervene.

SMITH. You surprise me.

BLACKWELL. It would appear that he has got wind of the diaries. Nearer home, the Cardinal of Westminster has indicated he will have nothing to do with the man.

SMITH. My word, but you have been busy!

BLACKWELL. If a job is worth doing, it's worth doing thoroughly.

SMITH. The Cardinal of Armagh?

BLACKWELL. Is, as yet, unaware of the realities of the case.

SMITH. But lobbying against us?

BLACKWELL. To the Vatican.

SMITH. Who are?

BLACKWELL. Sympathetic.

THOMSON. If only they could be made to see reason.

SMITH. Hardly the Vatican's strongest suit.

BLACKWELL. There is also the matter of the Palace.

SMITH. O, yes?

BLACKWELL. His Majesty has stated a preference for our man to shoot himself.

SMITH. Does he propose we supply a revolver? No, gentlemen, all things considered, if we are to hang our Irish revolutionary, we must nail him on the first count of High Treason—under the Statute of Edward III. "Adhering to the King's enemies, and giving evil example to others in like case."

BLACKWELL. He is arraigned and tried in open court by a jury of twelve good men and true.

THOMSON. Englishmen.

BLACKWELL. They are unanimous in the matter of his guilt.

SMITH. Perhaps.

BLACKWELL. The black cap, the rope—may the Lord have mercy on his soul.

THOMSON. Because I most certainly won't.

SMITH. But others will.

THOMSON. Beg pardon?

SMITH. Precisely.

BLACKWELL. There is an appeal to the House of Lords?

SMITH. For which a certificate of fiat must be secured from the Attorney General.

THOMSON. But you are the Attorney General.

SMITH. So I am, Sir Basil.

BLACKWELL. There is no appeal.

SMITH. But there is a plea for clemency—agitation for a reprieve.

BLACKWELL. A petition?

SMITH. Several petitions, and several petitioners.

BLACKWELL. His old Congo Reform cronies, the Amazon lobbyists—

SMITH. Every libertarian and nationalist agitator the length and breadth of the Empire.

BLACKWELL. The cabinet might split. The tide of public opinion might turn.

SMITH. Let's not make another martyr for Ireland.

BLACKWELL. War fatigue—too many have died, too much blood has been spilt.

SMITH. Reprieve—reprieve!

THOMSON. Don't tell me the treacherous bugger doesn't hang after all?

SMITH. Well, gentlemen, whichever way you look at it, these diaries are critical to our success. But I must insist they be kept under lock and key, and should be seen only by a chosen few—no more than is strictly necessary, Sir Ernley. As to our strategy, I shall offer them Insanity, which they will almost certainly reject—our man is far too eager for his moment in the dock to settle for madness. Then I shall proceed on the first count of High Treason—and he can play the patriot game to his heart's content. But I shall let them know of our preparations on the second count—which we will continue to make in detail, Sir Basil.

THOMSON. O, very well.

SMITH. Thank you gentleman. Nothing like a hanging to concentrate the mind—eh, Sir Basil? And, Sir Ernley?

BLACKWELL. Yes, Sir Frederick?

SMITH. God bless the work.

Smith leaves the office.

THOMSON. I can never make out whether that man is entirely serious.

BLACKWELL. I fear that he has spent too much of his time in Ireland.

THOMSON. Still, he is one of us. Though, between ourselves, I did hear that they used to refer to him over there as Carson's Galloper.

BLACKWELL. A military term, I think you'll find, Sir Basil. Cavalry.

THOMSON. O! I see. Well, clever chap. Rather have him for me than against. A spot of hot?

BLACKWELL. No, thank you. I'd better get back to the Home Office.

THOMSON. I suppose it will stand to us? When the time comes?

BLACKWELL. O, it will, Sir Basil. In time. (*Blackwell leaves the office*)

THOMSON. Your pen, Sir Ernley! You forgot your... O well—waste not, want not.

Thomson pockets the pen, and scoffs the last biscuit.

Scene 11.

Warder Benson enters the prison cell, where Casement sits reading.

BENSON. Good morning, Sir Roger.

CASEMENT. Warder Benson.

BENSON. A visitor for you, sir.

CASEMENT. A visitor?

BENSON. This way, Miss.

CASEMENT. Gertrude!

GERTRUDE. Roddy? O, my darling Roddy.

CASEMENT. My dearest Gee.

GERTRUDE. But you've lost so much weight!

CASEMENT. I'm grand, I'm grand—so much better since they moved me here. But let me look at you. My favorite school-ma'am.

GERTRUDE. They wouldn't tell me where you were. I left messages, letters—several letters. They promised me they'd pass them on.

CASEMENT. Well, they haven't done so yet.

GERTRUDE. Blast them! Well, blast them anyway! And there were biscuits and chocolate, and clean shirts—what ever did you think of me?

CASEMENT. I thought of you often, and I knew well you'd be thinking of me. But our time is short. Is there any word from Nina?

GERTRUDE. (*To Benson*) Would you be so good as to leave us please? I wish to speak to my cousin about private matters—family affairs.

CASEMENT. There's no privacy here, Gertrude. Solitude, yes—but no privacy. He's not to blame, are you, Mr. Benson?

BENSON. Only doing my duty, Miss.

CASEMENT. Besides he *is* family. His mother hails from Galway. Have you had any contact?

GERTRUDE. Nina sends her love. She's quite furious at your treatment—attacked a lady in a Manhattan restaurant for blackguarding you.

CASEMENT. That's my little sister! And Tom and Charlie?

GERTRUDE. Australia *is* a long way.

CASEMENT. Of course. Anything from the Antrim branch?

GERTRUDE. No. Not a word. And you have Mr. Duffy to represent you.

CASEMENT. Yes, Duffy is in charge of the good ship Hope. I'm to be arraigned on a charge of High Treason. It sounds positively Shakespearian, doesn't it? I'll certainly have to dress for the occasion. Perhaps I should be arraigned in a kilt—what do you think? And how are the young hussies of Queen Anne's College? As demanding as ever?

GERTRUDE. Still the same. Though you should know I've decided to take a little break from teaching. I've moved in with Mrs. Stopford Green—just for a while. I'm helping her to organize a petition on your behalf.

CASEMENT. You're staying with Alice?

GERTRUDE. She kindly invited me—and she sent you these (*emptying her bag*)—books, essays, pamphlets. She thought it would be important for you to prepare a detailed historical perspective to back up any legal arguments.

CASEMENT. But what about your rooms—your teaching?

GERTRUDE. I thought it best if I took a short sabbatical—and then, when Alice offered to take me in, I—

CASEMENT. To take you in?

GERTRUDE. O Roddy, please, I didn't mean—

CASEMENT. What has happened? Gertrude, please—you must tell me.

GERTRUDE. The Headmistress and I agreed that it would be prudent if I were to step down—

CASEMENT. You were turfed out onto the streets of London for my sake!

GERTRUDE. You mustn't judge people too harshly. Things are so different here since you went away. I'm safe with Alice now. We've set up a committee, and she has introduced me to Bernard Shaw. He says that he is prepared to write a defense for you, but only on condition that you represent yourself.

CASEMENT. I would never harm you—

GERTRUDE. No lawyers! He's quite adamant about that.

CASEMENT. I would never hurt you.

GERTRUDE. Listen to me, Roddy. This is important. Mr. Shaw argues that you cannot have committed treason against your country when your country is Ireland, not England. Signing a treaty with Germany was the action of a patriot, not a traitor. But he is utterly against you placing your case in the hands of lawyers.

CASEMENT. He has a thing about the professions—conspiracies against the laity!

GERTRUDE. Lawyers argue points of law. He believes you should ignore them and put your own case as an Irishman who, if he is to be tried at all, should be tried before an Irish court, by an Irish jury.

CASEMENT. My dearest Gee, I appreciate your canvassing on my behalf, but I think it would be wiser to follow Duffy's advice.

GERTRUDE. Roddy, please—

CASEMENT. He has already engaged his brother-in-law, O'Sullivan of King's Inn. He'll give them a run for their money. And if O'Sullivan's defense should fail—well, then I have the right to make a speech from the dock. I can state my own case then.

GERTRUDE. But only after the verdict. Your best hope—Mr. Shaw is convinced your only hope—is to defend yourself, win over some of the jury, and rob the prosecution of a unanimous verdict. They cannot harm you without it. He is prepared to write the defense for you himself—no fee. He guarantees a speech that will bring the house down.

CASEMENT. I shall write my own speech, thank you very much—and I shall deliver it myself. And it will be a *speech*, I promise you—to bring down house and Empire, King and all!

GERTRUDE. This is not a game, Roddy! They mean to kill you. You must save yourself by splitting the jury—they cannot touch you then. Roddy, dearest, I beg you.

CASEMENT. Maybe you're right, alanna. Maybe you're right. But I simply don't have the strength—

GERTRUDE. But you cannot—

CASEMENT. No, Gertrude, please—please... O'Sullivan must do the business. And if he fails, he fails. But I will have my speech from the dock. And when I speak, I will speak for Ireland.

Silence

GERTRUDE. You heard the news from Dublin?

CASEMENT. Duffy told me. All executed?

GERTRUDE. Pearse, Connolly—fifteen men, all told. Dozens more killed in the fighting—women and children. The city half destroyed.

CASEMENT. I don't understand it. I simply... (*Aware of Benson's presence*) When Pearse knew that I had failed! When he knew I brought no men—no hope! And he got my message. Others will have seen to that. For Pity's sake—the man was outnumbered and out-gunned a thousand times! What sort of commander is it that gives such an order? To sign away the lives of his own men—innocent young lives! For what? Why? Folly. Arrogant folly. Vain, futile, cruel...

GERTRUDE. O Roddy, I'm so frightened. The things that are being said about you—the terrible things that are being written. Every day some dreadful insinuation—

CASEMENT. It's all nonsense. Rameis. They'll blacken my name by any means they can. They did it to Parnell, they'll try it on with me. All part of the System.

BENSON. Time's up, Miss.

GERTRUDE. But it can't be. I haven't said half the things that I have to say.

BENSON. 'Fraid so, Miss. Regulations.

CASEMENT. You must leave me now. Thank you, Mr. Benson.

GERTRUDE. My dearest man. *(She embraces him)*

CASEMENT. Do you remember the day I was confirmed—all those years ago? You found me hiding in the garden shed.

GERTRUDE. You told me to go away, there was something wrong with your eyes.

CASEMENT. But you stood your ground and dried my tears, and swore you'd never tell a living soul.

GERTRUDE. I never did.

CASEMENT. There are so many things I cannot tell you now. It's all become so confused, so idiotic, and wrong—plain wrong! But I have to try and make sense of it on my own—yes? *(He kisses her forehead)* Thank Alice for the books. They'll come in handy for my speech. A speech to bring down the Empire—and make bold Emmet proud.

BENSON. The Duty Warder will see you out, miss.

Gertrude leaves. Casement watches her go.

CASEMENT. She's everything to me. Mother, sister—everything.

BENSON. It's always the women take it the hardest.

CASEMENT. What do you think of me?

BENSON. That's not for me to say, sir.

CASEMENT. Say it anyway.

BENSON. Well, I know what you're about—Irish independence, and that? But I've two brothers at the Front—my Uncle Denis missing in action over a year ago. My Mum gave me a right earful when I told her who I was minding—and frankly I couldn't disagree. I mean—now's not the time, is it?

CASEMENT. Or maybe it is the only time? But it wasn't meant to be like this.

BENSON. Well, there you are. Things never go to plan—as Uncle Denis always said. God rest him. (*He takes a pencil from his pocket*) Talking of which—here. I thought you might be needing this. (*He hands it to Casement*)

Scene 12.

Sir Frederick Smith addresses the court.

SMITH. The prisoner is an able and cultivated man, versed in affairs and experienced in political matters: not, as you will hear, a life-long rebel against England, and all that England stands for, as others well known in Irish history have been. He has had a considerable career of public usefulness, which culminated in 1911 with the Putumayo investigation and his subsequent knighthood. (*He holds up a letter*)

In that year he wrote to the Foreign Secretary, in terms of gratitude, a little unusual perhaps in their warmth and in the language almost of a courtier, to express his pleasure at the title with which his Sovereign had rewarded his career. He presents his humble duty to the King, and he begs that his deep appreciation of the gracious honor may be expressed to His Majesty. (*He puts down the letter*)

What occurred between 1911 and 1914 to affect and corrupt the prisoner's mind I cannot tell you, for I do not know. I only know of one difference. The Sovereign of the country to whom his humble duty was sent in 1911 was in that year the ruler of a great and wealthy nation, unequalled in resources, living at peace, unassailed, and, it almost seemed, unassailable. In 1914 this same nation was struggling for its possessions, its honor, its very existence in the most prodigious war which has ever tested human fortitude.

At the very hour of his Sovereign's direst need, the prisoner made his way from America to Germany, to conclude a Treaty with the German Imperial High Command, and to seduce British prisoners of war from their allegiance. Those who refused his blandishments were duly punished by being put on a lower ration scale, some being transferred to punishment camps for their insubordination. Finally, the prisoner arrived from Germany off the Irish coast to signal the outbreak of a violent rebellion in that unfortunate country—an armed insurrection of which he was both architect and leader. He was discovered and arrested in the vicinity of Tralee. A merchant vessel carrying a quantity of German armaments was also intercepted.

Such, in general outline, is the case which the Crown undertakes to prove, and upon which the Crown relies. I have, I hope, outlined these facts without heat and without feeling. Neither in my position would be proper, and fortunately neither is required. Rhetoric would be misplaced, for the proved facts are more eloquent than words.

The prisoner, blinded by hatred to this country, as malignant in quality as it was sudden in origin, has played a desperate hazard. He has played it, and he has lost it. Today, the forfeit is claimed.

Scene 13.

Casement is preparing his speech, pencil in hand—notes, which he consults from time to time, are scattered over table, bed, floor. He is suffering from a severe malarial relapse, pacing back and forth.

CASEMENT. There is an objection. Yes! There is an objection—moral not legal—to the application of an English statute six hundred years old to deprive an Irishman today of life and honor. Meet them head on—yes! Life and honor today—life and honor today... cold, so cold...

The government of Ireland by England rests on restraint not law. Restraint demands no love, it evokes no loyalty. Loyalty is a sentiment not a law. Love is not restraint. Conquest gives no title. Conquest exists over the body, but it fails over the mind. The mind. It fails... (*The figure of Aunt Charlotte appears*)

CHARLOTTE. Shame!

CASEMENT. No. The indictment—stick to the indictment!

CHARLOTTE. Shame and disgrace!

CASEMENT. No! Adhering to the King's enemies, giving evil example to others in like case.

CHARLOTTE. To turn on your people—to spit on your own!

CASEMENT. What evil? What others?

CHARLOTTE. Parading like a Judas before our captured Tommies.

CASEMENT. I made no appeal to England—to Ireland I came—

CHARLOTTE. Shoulder to shoulder with their Prussian torturers! With your German guns, and your German treaty—and your German gold.

CASEMENT. (*Confronting her*) They were Irishmen! Fellow Irishmen! Duped by their Home Rule leaders to fight an unjust war—a British provocation, an imperialist aggression!

CHARLOTTE. But they saw through you quick enough. God be praised, they spat in your face—

CASEMENT. Not true—

CHARLOTTE. They heckled, and they jeered—

CASEMENT. Not true!

CHARLOTTE. And with scorn in their eyes, and stones in their fists, they drove you from their midst!

CASEMENT. They were broken men, demoralised—

CHARLOTTE. The Irish Brigade—your Band of Brothers! A jeer and a joke for generations!

CASEMENT. I owe you nothing! Every step I made in this world, I made myself—myself alone!

CHARLOTTE. Where's your brave Commandant now? Your armed Volunteers? Where were they on Banna Strand? Where were they in Tralee?

CASEMENT. Warder Benson!

CHARLOTTE. Abandoned you to the hangman's rope—the traitor's noose! Betrayer and betrayed!

CASEMENT. You're dead—long dead!

CHARLOTTE. It'll come soon enough. Never fear.

CASEMENT. Let me be.

CHARLOTTE. O, but you're the right hero now! Your long cloak flying! Ireland's martyr and Ireland's dupe! The treacherous spawn of a wastrel and a drunkard of a woman unfit to rear a dog.

CASEMENT. What did you ever care for us? What did you ever give?

CHARLOTTE. I curse the day he took her.

CASEMENT. Mama loved us—she loved us all—

CHARLOTTE. I curse the hour that you were born.

CASEMENT. She never abandoned us!

CHARLOTTE. God save the King! God save him from the likes of you.

Aunt Charlotte fades from the scene.

CASEMENT. No one there. There's no one there...

Silence.

I made no appeal to England—to Ireland I came... Ireland...

Silence.

It is the fundamental right of every Englishman to be tried by a jury of his peers. It is the basis of all his freedoms. I, too, have a right—an indefeasible right. To be tried as an Irish man in an Irish court, before a jury of my Irish peers—my Irish—

Silence.

Pearse. Commandant Pearse—O, my brave commander! You never intended to heed me—you never intended to delay. And I believed that you would listen. I believed that I could make you see reason, that I could save our men—and save our cause! I believed that I could stay your hand... Betrayer and betrayed! Duped by an army within an army, a war within a war—a dream within a dream!

Commandant Pearse, brave Commandant Pearse—where were you on Banna Strand? Where were you in Tralee? Betrayer and betrayed! A wasted journey—a wasted life. Abandoned to the hangman's noose! And I must stand and speak for Ireland? I must stand and speak for you? There is blood on your hands—there is blood on your hands—the blood of innocents—women and children...

He starts to shake uncontrollably as the malarial fit reaches its peak.

Christ! O, my Christ!

He sinks to the ground and hugs his knees to try and contain the shaking of his body.

Alone. I am alone...

Scene 14.

GERTRUDE. Each morning at nine, Alice and I join the queue for the public gallery. We sit far up and watch, as silent and as helpless as my cousin in the dock below, while O'Sullivan's defense staggers under the weight of its own ingenuity. Point of law follows point of law until, half-way through his final address, his face grows pale, his voice falters and fails. He stands silent, staring at the Bench—a broken man.

The Lord Chief Justice is solicitous. There is an adjournment. The next day, O'Sullivan's junior completes the speech on his behalf. Not that it matters. Not that any of it ever really mattered. The jury is out for less than an hour. Their decision is unanimous.

Scene 15.

Casement sits on the floor of his cell, exhausted but lucid in the aftermath of his fit.

CASEMENT. Self government is our right—a thing born in us. A thing no more doled out to us or withheld from us by another people than the right to life itself—the right to feel the sun—the right to love our kind.

It is only from the convict that these things are withheld for crimes committed or proven: and Ireland—Ireland that has wronged no man, that has injured no land, that has sought no dominion over others—Ireland is treated today as if she was a convicted criminal.

If there be no right of rebellion against a state of things that no savage tribe would endure without resistance, then I am sure that it is better for men to fight and die without right, than to live in such a state of right as this. If it be treason to fight against such an unnatural fate as this, then I am proud to be a rebel. And I shall cling to my rebellion with the last drop of my blood...

The roar of the sea. Darkness.

End of Part One.

Part Two. Scene One.

The Home Office. Blackwell at his desk, Findlay with an Intelligence report.

FINDLAY. *(Reading from a report)* His name is Millar Gordon. Father deceased. Lives with his mother at Myrtlefield Park, Belfast. Our man there traced him through the sale of a motor cycle that the traitor Casement bought for him. *(He hands the report to Blackwell)* There are a dozen recorded encounters in the diaries, including one description of a sodomitical act in the Warrenpoint Hotel. *(Hands over a photograph of the relevant page)*

BLACKWELL. *(He looks at the photograph)* Whatever about this Belfast catamite, it beggars belief that a white man should fornicate with a blackskin. *(Hands back report and photo to Findlay)* We'll stay our hand for the moment—but tell Belfast to continue their surveillance until further notice.

FINDLAY. Very good, sir.

BLACKWELL. Was there anything else?

FINDLAY. What are we to do with Miss Bannister, Sir Ernley? She's been out there this hour or more. I've done all I can to dissuade her. She is determined to see you.

BLACKWELL. The very worst kind of Amazon Suffragette. A follower of that termagant Stopford Green and her set. God help us! What world do we live in, where we must defend ourselves against a clique of mannish women squabbling over their womanish man? I suppose I must go through with it—for form's sake. But let it be clearly understood, Findlay—never again.

FINDLAY. Thank you, Sir Ernley. Never again.

BLACKWELL. What is the latest report on her wretched cousin, by the way?

FINDLAY. On suicide watch, but bearing up, the Governor says. It would appear he's turned to religion.

BLACKWELL. Religion?

FINDLAY. Taking instruction from the R.C. Chaplain. Reading *The Confessions of St. Augustine*.

BLACKWELL. Much good may they do him. Very well. Show in our New Woman. And Findlay?

FINDLAY. Sir?

BLACKWELL. Stay close.

FINDLAY. This way, Miss.

Findlay ushers Gertrude into the office, and then leaves.

BLACKWELL. My dear Miss Bannister. How good of you to come. Please allow me to say that whatever my personal feelings about your cousin's behavior, they do not blind me to the distress it must cause both you and your family.

GERTRUDE. I insist that you stop printing this filth about Sir Roger Casement.

BLACKWELL. I beg your pardon?

GERTRUDE. I insist that you stop this vile campaign to blacken his name—stop it forthwith!

BLACKWELL. I assure you that I have no control over what is printed in the newspapers.

GERTRUDE. You and your confederates have set out deliberately to destroy my cousin's good name in order to destroy his cause, and prevent a reprieve. Forgery, perjury, lies—you will stop at nothing until you have murdered him.

BLACKWELL. These are very grave accusations, Miss Bannister. And were it not for your obvious distress I would have to consider taking stern action against such an attack on *my* good name.

GERTRUDE. If you will not stop this vicious campaign, I too will go to Fleet Street. I shall expose your dirty game.

BLACKWELL. I would strongly advise you against it. Not only because you will not be very welcome in Fleet Street—your cousin's treachery has seen to that—but because it has obviously not occurred to you that these rumors may be true.

GERTRUDE. How dare you say that to my face!

BLACKWELL. No, dear lady—how dare *you*! You have said things to me that were you a man, I should have struck you.

GERTRUDE. Show me the diaries!

BLACKWELL. Are you mad?

GERTRUDE. I demand that you show me the diaries.

BLACKWELL. Out of the question!

GERTRUDE. Because they do not exist.

BLACKWELL. O, they exist all right. But they are not the sort of books that could possibly be shown to a lady.

GERTRUDE. Because they do not exist.

BLACKWELL. They do exist! They are vile beyond belief! And I could not live with myself if I thought that I had been responsible for endangering your morals, and very possibly your sanity, by showing you such degenerate filth.

GERTRUDE. Either you will prove the existence of these diaries to me, Sir Ernley—or you will publicly retract these lies forthwith. I will not leave this office until you have done so.

BLACKWELL. Your actions today will have serious legal consequences for you and your cousin. Now I must insist—

GERTRUDE. Do not underestimate me, Sir Ernley. I know your game—I have studied it. And if you do not stop these acts of deliberate sabotage, I shall cry your guilt to the whole of Fleet Street. I will ensure that every American reporter in London knows exactly what you have done. Every detail—chapter and verse. That is your choice. Call off your campaign, or face the consequences.

Silence.

BLACKWELL. Findlay!

(Findlay enters immediately)

FINDLAY. You called, Sir Ernley?

BLACKWELL. Fetch me the diaries and the photographic prints.

FINDLAY. Sir?

BLACKWELL. You heard me.

FINDLAY. But you cannot mean to—

BLACKWELL. Just bring them!

FINDLAY. Miss?

GERTRUDE. Please do as Sir Ernley asks.

FINDLAY. Yes, Miss.

He leaves.

BLACKWELL. This is a catastrophe entirely of your own making, Miss Bannister. I appeal to you, before it is too late: do not abandon your womanhood. Think of the danger to your reputation.

GERTRUDE. I appreciate your concern, Sir Ernley—but it is *his* reputation that I must save.

BLACKWELL. Very well. Since you are determined. I cannot leave you alone with this filth. But I will turn my back, so that you may read unobserved, and at least some semblance of modesty may be preserved.

Findlay returns with a strong box.

BLACKWELL. Set it down on the table, Findlay—and wait outside.

FINDLAY. Yes, Sir Ernley.

Findlay does so—and leaves. Blackwell unlocks the box and lifts out two diaries, one ledger, and a thick file of photographs. He places them neatly on the table.

BLACKWELL. I will place these photographs on the table. They are reproductions of the passages of greatest depravity. You may check their authenticity against the originals, if you so wish. The relevant pages are marked with yellow slips. I will now turn my back, and you may read.

Blackwell turns away. Gertrude sits and looks at one photograph, then another. She opens a book to check the pages reproduced.

BLACKWELL. You recognize your cousin's handwriting?

GERTRUDE. I do.

BLACKWELL. Then I beg you, do not proceed any further.

GERTRUDE. I will read.

BLACKWELL. Very well. Please inform me when you have read enough.

Gertrude continues to examine and compare. She stops. Silently, she leaves the room.

BLACKWELL. Is that not enough for you, Miss Bannister?... Must you read more?... I am going to turn round. On the count of three. Please stop reading, and put away the photographs. One. Two. Three.

He turns around to find the room empty.

BLACKWELL. Findlay!

Scene Two.

H.M. Prison Pentonville. Casement sits at a table in the condemned cell.

CASEMENT. (*Reading*) "How great a mystery is the human memory. Who knows its limits? Yet it is my mind; it is my self. Who is this I say I am—I, who cannot fathom the depths of my own mind." (*He closes the book*)

Augustine—the *Confessions*. Lent to me by the prison chaplain. (*He puts the book down on the table*)

I read, I sleep, I dream—I wake, to read again—then sleep again. And all the time the warders at the peephole—in case I should deny them the pleasure...

I have forgotten so many—and then I dream, and there they are again—crowding the parks, the avenues, the quays. Who was I stalking?

All day they had been coming from the villages, down to the river station where I had set up my enquiry. Men, women, boys—all mutilated or disfigured: punishment for this or that infringement of Company rules. One man carried his own right hand—a blackened claw that he held up for my inspection. Another showed me the mound of flesh between his legs. They had cut off his genitals, and now he must relieve himself through a rubber tube.

All day, stories of the whipping block—machete, chain, fire. A young woman, bent like a hoop, told how they had penetrated her, front and back, with burning brands. They had roasted her children on a spit.

That night I took to the quays, the park—wherever I could find them: soldiers mostly—native policemen, sailors off the river steamers... All night I did them service. No sleep. The stars cooling the sky...

White man, Black man, Irish man—soldier, humanitarian, gun-runner—His Britannic Majesty's Consul General!—play-actor, patriot, traitor, martyr, invert—dreamer of dreams... Who is this I say I am?

Casement takes up paper and pencil, and starts to write. Ellis and Baxter observe him through the peephole. Baxter carries the 'hangman's box.'

BAXTER. Is that him, Mr. Ellis?

ELLIS. Ay, that's him. What do you think?

BAXTER. Six foot ?

ELLIS. Six foot one. Build?

BAXTER. Athletic.

ELLIS. Muscular neck.

BAXTER. A longer drop?

ELLIS. Not too long or we'll pull the head off him. How much do you think he weighs?

BAXTER. Hard to say.

ELLIS. How often have I told you? The height, the build, the hands—fine boned or big? How much?

BAXTER. Twelve stone.

ELLIS. So how long a drop?

BAXTER. A weight of twelve stone dropping at rate of four feet per second, generating a pull of three—times two—eight foot!

ELLIS. Nine—we don't want to choke him.

BAXTER. How long would that take?

ELLIS. First time it happened to me, about twenty minutes.

BAXTER. Blimey! That long?

ELLIS. And you look a right bloody fool, I can tell you. Now, have you got everything? Rope, straps, hood?

BAXTER. Yes, Mr. Ellis. All present and correct. (*Opens the box*)

ELLIS. I want you to put them on me, just as you would with the prisoner.

BAXTER. Now, Mr. Ellis?

ELLIS. Practice makes perfect, Baxter. I don't want any slip-ups on the day. So. Forty seconds from cell to drop.

BAXTER. Forty seconds.

ELLIS. We've done our checks, you're in the execution shed, waiting. I'm next door in the condemned cell with the warder, the governor and the padre. The prisoner is bid stand, the governor gives the signal, I approach and strap the prisoner's hands behind his back. Now I'll be the prisoner—you be me. Strap my hands. Well, go on.

BAXTER. Hand strap: one. Leather. Round—loop—through and tie. Is that too tight?

ELLIS. No talking to the prisoner.

BAXTER. I was talking to you.

ELLIS. Learn to judge it for yourself. Tight enough to press but not to pinch.

BAXTER. (*He ties the strap*) To press—

ELLIS. But not to pinch!

BAXTER. Sorry.

ELLIS. No talking to the prisoner! (*His hands are strapped behind him*) Now, the connecting door is opened, the padre leads the way. (*They walk around the room*) “The Lord is my Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want; fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose; near restful waters he leads me to revive my drooping Spirit. If I should walk through the valley of Death, no evil should I fear; for he is there with his rod and staff, with these he gives me comfort.” We stop in front of the trap. The governor and his party take their positions. Twenty seconds gone. I give you the signal. Twenty seconds to go.

BAXTER. The hood.

ELLIS. Go ahead.

BAXTER. (*Takes from box*) Hood: one. White cotton. Up-over-down. (*Hood on Ellis*)

ELLIS. Excellent. Now what?

BAXTER. Move him forward onto the trap. (*He does so*) Watch your step.

ELLIS. How can I watch my step?

BAXTER. I meant mind where you step.

ELLIS. You mind, you fool! I can't see a blind thing!

BAXTER. Sorry, Mr. Ellis.

ELLIS. He's on the trap. What then?

BAXTER. I strap his legs, as you do the rope.

ELLIS. Well, do it!

BAXTER. (*Takes strap from the box*) Strap, one. Leather. Round—and loop—and through. (*Strap on*)

ELLIS. Meanwhile?

BAXTER. You place the noose over his head, draw it under his chin, behind the left ear.

ELLIS. For why?

BAXTER. To throw the head forward, snap the neck.

ELLIS. Show me.

BAXTER. How can I show you?

ELLIS. Mark it, lad. Mark it with the rope in your hands.

BAXTER. (*Takes rope from box*) Rope: one. Italian silk hemp. Noose, one. Cover chamois, eyelet steel. (*Rope on Ellis*) Over, under, and adjust.

ELLIS. A little tighter. I can take it. That's it—not too—yes—yess-ss-ss. Now what?

BAXTER. You go to the lever and pull the bolt.

ELLIS. What have you forgotten?

BAXTER. Nothing.

ELLIS. What do you do before I pull the bolt?

BAXTER. What do I do before you pull the bolt?

ELLIS. Step off the bloody trap! Step off the bloody trap, you fool—or you'll go down with him.

BAXTER. Yes, Mr. Ellis. Sorry, Mr. Ellis.

ELLIS. Take off this hood—untie me—untie me! (*Baxter unties him and puts items back into the box*) Concentration. You've got to concentrate. Mind you don't scuff that chamois. Get the routine off by heart, then your nerves won't get to you.

BAXTER. Yes, sir.

ELLIS. Never let the nerves get to you. Paralyzed an assistant in York. They had to lift him bodily off the trap and carry him out the shed. So, repetition, repetition. Let's hear you.

BAXTER. Hand strap, hood, step on trap, leg strap, noose, step off trap. Drop. Snap.

ELLIS. With actions!

BAXTER. Hand strap, hood, step, leg strap, noose, step, drop, snap.

ELLIS. Put it in the muscles!

BAXTER. Hand, head, step, leg, neck, step, drop, snap. Hand, head, step, leg, neck, step, drop, snap. Hand, head, step, leg—

ELLIS. That'll do, that'll do. We'll make a hangman of you yet. Now, how about a nice cup of tea, and one of Mrs. Ellis's iced fancies?

They leave for their tea. Distant thunder. Casement puts down his pencil and reads through his composition.

CASEMENT. I, Roger David Casement, being of sound mind—though somewhat shaken—do hereby make my final testament, and being of such shaken but determined mind, do affirm the following: That love is not enough for this world: there must be justice, too.

That justice is not enough: there must be redress for injustice suffered.
That words are not enough: but a deed may never be undone.
That my life has been made forfeit, through another man's vanity.
That there is nothing left for me but to die as brave a death as he has died. My only purpose now—my only meaning, or hope of meaning...
That life is more beautiful than death.

He puts down the paper.

There was no German gold. I offered those men in the prison camps only death and hardship. There were no reprisals against those who refused me—none that I knew of. There were German guns, yes—half useless, and half as many as I had begged for, and only delivered when they knew there was no chance of a real fight. Our gallant allies in Europe! They wanted me to bring my recruits with me, just to be rid of us: my Irish Brigade—all fifty of them. Fifty two, counting Bailey and Monteith. I said I wouldn't hand them over to the English hangman, and left them in Berlin. I should have stayed there myself, but I was honor bound...

He takes up the pencil and writes.

That honor is not enough for this world. But I would not do a dishonorable thing...

He stares at the paper for a moment, then tears it up.

What does it matter? What does any of it matter? "I can only regret that we did not shoot you the minute we saw you." (*He laughs quietly to himself*) I did serve once. The South African War. Military intelligence. An oxymoron. But I saw them: the Boer farmers, their wives and children: herded like cattle into the concentration camps. And I saw that I rode with the herdsman. O, yes. God forgive me. A regular young Jingo. Blinded by faith—eager for action. One shining deed! A fool—a young fool. And would you look at the old fool now.

Silence

Lie down for a bit? (*He lies down to sleep*) "Introibo ad altare Dei"—I will go in to the altar of God. "Ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam"—to God, the joy of my youth...

Let it come.

Scene 3.

Smith and Blackwell at the Club.

SMITH. We'll take our brandies in here. No cooler, but more private. Cigar?

BLACKWELL. No, thank you.

SMITH. Thomson will join us later. A late night at the Yard. Sure? (*The cigar*)

BLACKWELL. I don't indulge.

SMITH. I daresay. (*Distant thunder*) Thunder in the air. Nothing worse than London in August! God be with the days when one could get out of town for the summer. So, what news on the Casement front? How fare the reprievers?

BLACKWELL. You foresaw developments very exactly, Sir Frederick. But even you did not anticipate the sheer strength of reaction in Irish America.

SMITH. The President will hold firm. Good Ulster stock.

BLACKWELL. Senator Cabot-Lodge introduced a motion to the House urging HMG to clemency. It was passed with an overwhelming majority. The Embassy urges that attention should be paid.

SMITH. Trust to the President's Orange antecedents. What else?

BLACKWELL. Petitions from every Irish American organization and association the length and breadth of the country.

SMITH. To be expected.

BLACKWELL. A petition from the Negro Fellowship League.

SMITH. To be ignored. No, Sir Ernley, I think you are unnecessarily alarmed. Irish America may huff and puff, but it will never take an ardent sodomite to its heart. You only have to whisper the name Oscar to clear the room instantly.

BLACKWELL. The Vatican.

SMITH. O, yes?

BLACKWELL. The Apostolic Nuncio has this afternoon delivered a letter indicating that Casement went to Ireland to stop the rebellion. (*Takes letter from inside pocket*)

SMITH. Whatever will they come up with next!

BLACKWELL. Casement contacted a Father Ryan while in custody overnight in Tralee, and begged the man to get his message to the rebel leadership in Dublin. There is the sworn testimony of the priest. The Germans had failed to deliver enough guns, the Irish Brigade was a fiasco, and Casement refused to commit his men to a hopeless fight. He crossed over to Ireland himself to call off the rebellion. (*Hands over the letter*)

SMITH. Has this been sent to Cabinet?

BLACKWELL. I am to do so in the morning. There is also an amount of resentment over the role the diaries have played since the trial. I'm sure you are aware of yesterday's *Times*?

SMITH. The *Manchester Guardian* was equally resentful. But then again, Manchester breeds resentment.

BLACKWELL. It is a resentment shared by a significant number of backbenchers. There are claims by Casement's supporters that these diaries are forgeries—Government forgeries.

SMITH. So you think you may have overplayed your hand, Sir Ernley?

BLACKWELL. I have followed your instructions to the letter, Sir Frederick.

SMITH. Well, *this* letter is certainly an interesting development.

BLACKWELL. It does rather dent the prosecution's case.

SMITH. You could say that. But then, of course, with the Cabinet meeting tomorrow, and the execution scheduled for the day after, it might so easily be redirected to the War Office? Or Scotland Yard? I have no personal animus against the man, but the traitor must hang. The Empire expects no less. (*Hands back the letter*) More brandy?

BLACKWELL. No, thank you.

SMITH. Don't mind if I do?

BLACKWELL. Please.

SMITH. I must say your zeal in coordinating this case has been exemplary. An almost fanatical attention to detail, and a striking will to win. I hope you don't mind my asking why?

BLACKWELL. I would have thought the reasons were self-evident.

SMITH. Don't misunderstand me. I'm delighted to have won the case, and more than happy to acknowledge a significant debt to your encyclopedic research. But I detect something different in your attitude to mine.

BLACKWELL. I don't see what you are driving at.

SMITH. I am a barrister: prosecution is my profession. For reasons of strategy and economics I am a Unionist: I defend the Union and its Empire—which, for similar reasons, I support and defend wholeheartedly. But after my time in Ireland, I know something of Casement and his kind. His treason is nothing particular there. Though his quaint sense of chivalry does set him apart from the more calculating fanatics like Pearse. As to his perversion, it is nothing uncommon amongst men of his class. But for all that, there is something in him I cannot help but admire.

BLACKWELL. Admire?

SMITH. A reckless passion for lost causes? You have to admit his speech from the dock was pretty spellbinding.

BLACKWELL. I found it fatuous and embarrassing.

SMITH. No ear for rhetoric, my friend. O, he's the real thing, alright. And he was spot on! What he said about me and Ned Carson? If it hadn't been for the war, we would have ended up in the dock, rather than the House of Lords.

BLACKWELL. You would never have betrayed your country.

SMITH. There was a time when Ned and I cared not one jot for King or Kaiser, just so long as one of them would give us guns.

BLACKWELL. You and Sir Edward were defending the Union, protecting the Empire.

SMITH. And that's what counts—the motive not the means?

BLACKWELL. When the motive is loyalty.

SMITH. But loyalty to what, loyalty to whom? We ran German guns into Ireland. And if the Kaiser had guaranteed us our birthright, we would have come to terms. "Mausers and Kaisers and any King you like!" That was Casement's warrant, too—when he armed his Dublin volunteers. Do I shock you, Sir Ernley?

BLACKWELL. I'd rather you didn't talk like that.

SMITH. I shock you. Why do you hate Casement?

BLACKWELL. I don't hate the man! It is simply a question of duty—my duty to my King, my country: my duty to the Empire.

SMITH. Spoken like a true-born Englishman.

BLACKWELL. But that is who I am.

SMITH. But that is who I am. No clash of clan or creed to madden or torment you? No bloody rivalry of caste or tribe—Planter stock or native Gael—to bewilder or enrage? You should spend some time in Ireland, my friend. Magnificent scenery, and a whole new perspective on life. On death, too. They're quite obsessed by it. They call themselves "the dispossessed." O, yes. They see themselves as a victim people: perpetual victims of our aggression towards them, which belief serves simultaneously both to justify and excuse their boundless aggression towards us. A general absolution for centuries of murder and terror, which they characterize as their fight for freedom. A fight which is, in reality, no more than revenge. The vengeance of an abandoned child, howling for its impossible mother! But then again, loyalty to Britain and her Empire has always meant subservience to England and English interests. So what's a true-born Irishman to do?

BLACKWELL. There can be no moral equivalence in the matter. England has a manifest destiny—a duty before God to bring a civilized and Christian order to an otherwise barbarous world. I daresay you find that risible.

SMITH. Wholly admirable—and extremely convenient. Mind you, Casement’s a believer, too—the sacred nation of the Gael. So what do you suppose to be Ireland’s duty before God?

BLACKWELL. It’s late. I should be going.

SMITH. Aren’t you going to wait for Thomson? Have a little brandy. Do. (*Pours one for himself*) They keep an excellent cellar here. Only reason to belong to the place. Stuffed with England’s finest—judges, generals, ministers. The sort of people who have been passing around your selected photographs—relishing every detail. English authority may stretch to the four corners of the earth, my friend, but Irish hope exceeds the dimensions of that power. It may even excel its authority. It will be a long war.

Sir Basil Thomson enters.

THOMSON. Sorry to be late!

SMITH. Sir Basil. Delighted! Brandy, cigar?

THOMSON. I bring great news! The Huns have shot Captain Fryatt.

BLACKWELL. Good God!

SMITH. Captain Fryatt? Not the fellow who rammed the Uboat with his ferry?

THOMSON. The same.

BLACKWELL. Poor devil.

THOMSON. A merchant seaman. A non-combatant. They shot him, the swine!

BLACKWELL. Poor helpless devil.

THOMSON. A martyr, no less—an English martyr. Let them stop us hanging Casement now.

SMITH. You see, Sir Ernley—God is an Englishman after all.

Scene 4.

A rumble of distant thunder. Casement in his dream. We hear the sounds of the tropical night and the storm—see the dark figures of the night.

CASEMENT. Night—the lingering heat of day. I step from the glow of the street lamps into the park. Shadows beneath the trees. Men stalking the dark. We move as one through the tunnel of leaves until we come to a clearing—as broad as it is long. At its center stands a marble fountain, its basin cracked and dry. We stand at the stone’s edge—peering into the darkness...

Lightning.

A rip of lightning, and I see him—tall, black, naked. His back is to me, his shoulders bloodied by his scourging. I cry out, but the sound catches in my throat. He turns towards me, and there I see it—huge, erect. (*The sound of rain*) It starts to rain—a tropical downpour. The ground is awash, the basin brimming. A voice says: “Unless you eat my flesh, and drink my blood.” I drop to my knees. He raises his right hand and spits on the palm. He smears my throat with his spittle, and my voice is loosed. I shout, I roar: “I will eat! I will eat, and I will drink!”

A flash of lightning. The figure of a woman, veiled and wearing a dark green silk dress, moving quickly away from him. He calls out after her.

CASEMENT. Mama?

She turns to him, raises her veil, to reveal the rotting skull beneath. A thunderclap. Darkness. Light.

Casement is alone in his cell, kneeling in prayer—rapid and inward. Gertrude Bannister approaches him as he prays.

CASEMENT. O my God, I love Thee above all things. O Holy Ghost, come down upon me. Obtain for me forgiveness from my God. Forgiveness, forgiveness, forgiveness...

GERTRUDE. Roddy? Roddy, dearest.

CASEMENT. Gertrude. Dearest Gee. How good of you to come at the last.

GERTRUDE. O, Roddy.

CASEMENT. Hush now, alanna. Or I'll not bear it. And I must. You know I must.

GERTRUDE. I know.

CASEMENT. There is something I have to tell you. Something I don't want you to hear from anyone else. It is something very important to me. I'm to be received into the Roman Catholic Church. I'm to make my confession and receive Holy Communion on the morning itself. Are you angry with me?

GERTRUDE. No, I—no—

CASEMENT. It's the best of us, Gee—our ancient faith. All that is gracious and noble. I've left my papers and things to you. They'll have to pass through the proper channels, of course, but Duffy has promised to retrieve them from your pal Sir Ernley. Odd, isn't it? That someone you've never met can become the master of your destiny? One of the more intriguing aspects of the System. Tell the family I was calm—tell them I was at peace.

GERTRUDE. I will.

CASEMENT. I'm so grateful to you for your loyalty—and your love. Your brave, unfailing love.

GERTRUDE. Is there someone else you would wish me to contact?

CASEMENT. I've written to all the friends that are left me: hail and farewell!

GERTRUDE. No, Roddy, what I meant, is there someone... some young man in particular, that you might wish me to give a message? Something that cannot be written down.

Silence.

CASEMENT. They showed you.

GERTRUDE. I insisted on the truth.

CASEMENT. About me?

GERTRUDE. About what you had written.

CASEMENT. About who I am?

GERTRUDE. No. It does not define you. Cannot define you.

CASEMENT. O, my dearest girl. How could you?

GERTRUDE. You left me no choice. Of course I was shocked—frightened—when I read. But then I thought of you, and I was no longer threatened. However strange, however hurtful, I saw that it was human. A part of what you are, who you are—but it was still you: still the same brave, lonely boy that I first loved, and always have. Always will.

CASEMENT. What can I say?

GERTRUDE. His name. Tell me his name.

CASEMENT. Millar. Millar Gordon. A clerk in the Belfast Bank, Donegal Square. Tell him I ask his forgiveness. Tell him... I remember the hotel at Warrenpoint.

GERTRUDE. I'll tell him.

CASEMENT. Strange thing. It keeps coming into my head, over and over. Do you remember that poem of Yeats we were both so cracked about? "The wrong of unshapely things is a wrong too great to be told, I hunger to build them anew—

GERTRUDE. —and sit on a green knoll apart with the earth the sky and the water, remade, like a casket of gold for dreams of your image—

CASEMENT. —that blossoms a rose in the deeps of my heart."

GERTRUDE. The Lover tells of the Rose in his Heart.

CASEMENT. That's it. That's Ireland. All that should have been—that could have been.

GERTRUDE. And will be. Believe me.

She takes his hand. They sit together in silence.

CASEMENT. Mysterious thing, the mind—memory. Ever watchful, ever active. (*Sudden break*) Bring me home. Bring me home. Don't leave me to lie in this terrible place... I'm sorry. After all I've put you through—

GERTRUDE. No, Roddy—

CASEMENT. The harm I've done—

GERTRUDE. No—

CASEMENT. I only meant to end the cruelty—to break the System. One shining deed! To smash it to smithereens. But I was the System, and the System has broken me.

GERTRUDE. No, no, you never sided with them—never! You chose instead to live in truth—the truth of the human heart. That means to live with confusion and doubt—yes, and failure, too! But it also means to live with courage, great courage—to live with courage, compassion, and honor.

CASEMENT. Words—words! They make nothing—change nothing! They cannot answer who I am.

GERTRUDE. Hush now, hush—

CASEMENT. Protect my name. There is nothing left me but my name. Don't let them shame my cause. Don't let them dishonor me.

Scene 5.

The sanctuary bell. The execution party gathers. The Chaplain, with chalice and host, approaches Casement.

CHAPLAIN. Corpus Christi. The body of Christ.

The host is placed on Casement's tongue.

CHAPLAIN. Sanguis Christi. The blood of Christ.

Casement drinks from the chalice, then bows his head in prayer. Silence. Casement blesses himself and rises to his feet. Ellis advances and straps Casement's hands behind his back.

CASEMENT. For God and Kathleen ni Houlihan.

The procession starts off, warders leading. They disappear into the shed. Silence. The prison bell rings. Tables being cleared of papers, boxes, trunks being cleared. Gertrude Bannister stands, isolated, motionless throughout.

Scene 6.

Findlay emptying a box containing Casement's possessions taken from his cell.

FINDLAY. Notebooks, three: "A Prison Diary."

BLACKWELL. Burn.

FINDLAY. Letters to various individuals, thirty five.

BLACKWELL. Burn.

FINDLAY. Essays and pamphlets.

BLACKWELL. Burn them.

FINDLAY. Books, three: *Confessions of Saint Augustine. The Imitation of Christ. The Friendship of Jesus.*

BLACKWELL. Return to the R.C. Chaplain, Pentonville.

FINDLAY. Pencils, five; metal crucifix, one.

BLACKWELL. Return to Miss Bannister.

FINDLAY. Shoes, one pair. Clothes, various. Cuff links, studs.

BLACKWELL. Miss Bannister.

FINDLAY. That's it, sir. O, toothbrush, sir. One.

BLACKWELL. Burn. As to the files, empty them. Save the diaries of 1903, '10, '11, and the ledger of 1911. Burn the rest.

FINDLAY. Very good, Sir Ernley.

BLACKWELL. And Findlay?

FINDLAY. Sir?

BLACKWELL. Well done.

Doctor Mander enters.

FINDLAY. Thank you, sir.

MANDER. Sir Ernley?

BLACKWELL. Doctor Mander. That will be all, Findlay. How good of you to call.

Findlay leaves.

MANDER. I came straight from the morgue. Left as soon as I had cleaned up. Here is my report as requested.

BLACKWELL. I am most grateful.

MANDER. Death was instantaneous. Severed vertebrae, spinal cord. Ellis made an excellent job of it. Forty seconds from cell to drop.

BLACKWELL. The pick of the bunch.

MANDER. As to the matter you specified? I made a digital investigation, rubber gloves. The bowel was dilated as far as I could reach. A sure sign of an invert. There was visual evidence, too: the anus clearly distended. It's all in the report.

BLACKWELL. Proof positive.

MANDER. I cannot understand why these people don't just shoot themselves. Save the rest of us a lot of time and trouble.

BLACKWELL. But they don't. They won't.

MANDER. I'll send my bill. Good day, Sir Ernley.

BLACKWELL. Good day, Doctor Mander.

The stage is now clear of the detritus of Casement's life.

BLACKWELL. There will be no martyrdom: there is no martyr. The quick lime and the diaries will see to that.

Blackwell leaves. Gertrude stands alone.

GERTRUDE. Of course the diaries are forgeries—government forgeries. All part of their System. Sir Roger Casement laid down his life for his country. He raised his voice against the cruelty and greed of Empire—and his voice was heard around the world. He died at the hands of ruthless enemies, who denied him Justice and Mercy: English enemies who now seek to murder his reputation, and taint his cause. Whatever the ground in which he lies, that ground is made holy by his presence.

A wave breaks as Gertrude turns to go, and the figure of Sir Frederick Smith appears. He has his glass of brandy and cigar from the Club. Gertrude stops when she sees him, he bows to her; she hesitates, as if to speak, thinks better of it, and leaves. He watches her go, then turns to address us.

SMITH. Casement? A revolutionary and a rake—a play-actor to the last. As a man, he was all temperament, and no character—and it's character that counts in the business of power. Admirable in his way—a noted humanitarian. But a peddler of dreams—dangerous dreams. And I put it to you: could any effective system of governance in the civilized world have tolerated such a flagrant challenge? From such a quarter, and at such a time? No. By emotional force he made his way: sheer emotionalism did for him in the end.

The roar of the sea. A tumult of waves. A man tumbling through the surf. Men cry out after him.

CASEMENT. Ireland!

MONTEITH. Casement!

Darkness. The end of the play.