

THE MIRACLE OF BALLYDONAL

BY
JAMES CAPUTO

THE MIRACLE OF BALLYDONAL

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THE MIRACLE OF BALLYDONAL

*With gratitude to:
Stephen Metcalfe
Dennis Gromelski
The Fusion Theatre Family*

THE MIRACLE OF BALLYDONAL

The Miracle of Ballydonal was first produced at The Cell Theater in Albuquerque, NM by The Fusion Theatre Company, featuring the following cast and production members.

FINN BEGONE. McDonalBruce Holmes*
SAINTJACK. MacDonal.....William Sterchi*
ONE SHOT. Donal.....Ross Kelly *
EILEEN. DonallyJacqueline Reid *

Production Credits

Co-Director.....Charlie Clute
Co-Director.....Frederick Franklin
Producer.....Dennis Gromelski*
Stage Manger.....Robyn Phillips*
Set Design.....Harrison Sim
Sound Design.....Brent Stevens
Costume Design.....Ashley Miller
Light Design.....Harrison Sim

*Member Actor's Equity Association

CAST OF DONALS

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| EILEEN DONALLY | Female, mid thirties |
| FINN BEGONE MCDONAL | Male, 45+ The "disheveled" one. |
| ONE SHOT DONAL | Male, late 30s The "normal" one. |
| SAINTJACK MACDONAL | Male, 45+ The "sensitive" one. |

TIME: Christmas Eve, sometime between the past and the present.

LOCATION: The back room of a pub in rural Ireland.

NOTE: The "Wild Rover" song is in the public domain.

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ACT I

The small back lounge of a rustic pub in rural Ireland. An arch upstage leads to the tap room, rest rooms and front door. An arch to one side, leads to a back door. A few worn tables and chairs. Some old Christmas decorations -- the remains of last night. At Rise: FINN BEGONE is sweeping the floor.

FINN BEGONE. *(Singing)*

I'VE BEEN A WILD ROVER FOR MANY'S A YEAR,
AND I'VE SPENT ALL ME MONEY ON WHISKEY AND BEER.
BUT NOW I'M RETURNIN WITH GOLD IN GREAT STORE,
AND I NEVER WILL PLAY THE WILD ROVER NO MORE.

(ONE SHOT enters from bar with a box to collect the empty bottles and glasses. He joins in).

FINN BEGONE. & ONE SHOT. AND IT'S NO NAY NEVER,
NO NAY NEVER NO MORE
WILL I PLAY THE WILD ROVER
NO NEVER NO MORE

ONE SHOT. *(Mimes toasting.)* Slainte!

FINN BEGONE. Slainte? Ya can't slainte without a glass now, can ya?

ONE SHOT. Is that a hint?

FINN BEGONE. I'm just statin a natural fact.

ONE SHOT. Is she here yet?

FINN BEGONE. No.

ONE SHOT. You told her I was goin to be here, right?

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FINN BEGONE. I'm tinkin Saintjack told her.

ONE SHOT. You're thinkin? You're not sure? (*One Shot starts to leave.*)

FINN BEGONE. Hold on, hold on, Saintjack told her.

ONE SHOT. And what did she say?

FINN BEGONE. (*Beat*) She said she couldna wait to see ya.

ONE SHOT. You're a lying bastard.

FINN BEGONE. He told her. He told her! ... I tink. (*SOUND: the wall phone begins to ring.*)

ONE SHOT. Aren't ya goin to answer it?

FINN BEGONE. You're closer.

ONE SHOT. It might be her.

FINN BEGONE. So, talk to her.

ONE SHOT. I'm not ready.

FINN BEGONE. Jaysus, One Shot, grow a pair, why don't ya? (*Picking up the phone*) The Five Cousins. ... Who's this? (*Who am I?*) Who's this? (*Who are you?*) ... Ah, Tommy Two Stroke. Merry Christmas me boy. This is Finn. ... Finn. ... Finn Begone... Sorry, Tommy, the pub closed early today. ... Why? Do ya not know what day it tis? ... Did I not just wish ya a Merry Christmas? ... No, it's not Christmas. Mary Mother of God Tom, tis Christmas Eve. ... Saints preserve us, Tommy, I kina hardly understand ya. Have ya got ya teeth in?... Ya do! Well, take them out. ... That's better. ... Me? I'm here because the cousins let us have the back room for a little send off. ... Who? Never mind who. That's none of ya business... Now you keep a civil tongue in your head for feck sake. ... And a happy new year to you! (*Finn Begone hangs up.*) I tink Tommy Two Stroke was in his cups ... the lucky bugger.

ONE SHOT. I get the hint, Finn Begone, I'd pull you a pint, but it's not yet five.

FINN BEGONE. I'll do it.

ONE SHOT. No, no, no. The cousins let us have this room on three conditions: one, Finn Begone is not allowed behind the bar; two, I'll pay for all the drinks; and three, Finn Begone is not allowed behind the bar. (*A bit of fog precedes SAINTJACK, entering from back, carrying a paper sack and a homemade sign -- "Goodbye."*)

SAINTJACK. I parked in the back. Is she here yet?

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FINN BEGONE. No.

SAINTJACK. The fog is something awful. Sorry I 'm late.

FINN BEGONE. You'll be late for yur own funeral.

SAINTJACK. And g'day to you too, Cousin. Always a wisecrack.

ONE SHOT. Let's not start. Is there something wrong?

SAINTJACK. Seein you, ... I think, ...I know I forgot somethin, ...

FINN BEGONE. (*Indicating fog.*) Yeah, ya left the door open.

ONE SHOT. What did Eileen say, when you told her I would be here?

(*Saintjack. freezes.*)

SAINTJACK. Ah! Now I know what I forgot. (*One Shot starts to leave again.*)

ONE SHOT. You two are the most unreliable, irresponsible, undependable pair of cock-ups on the isle.

SAINTJACK. One Shot, One Shot, don't go

ONE SHOT. It's her last day here, and I'm not goin to ruin it for her.

SAINTJACK. Well, well ... just give me a hand with the sign before ya go.

ONE SHOT. All right, where do ya want it?

SAINTJACK. Wherever ya tink.

FINN BEGONE. What's in the sack, Jack? Ha! I'm a poet.

SAINTJACK. Yeah you're a regular James Joyce, ya are.

FINN BEGONE. I've been told I have a poetic soul, you tin-eared low brow cretin.

ONE SHOT. All right you two, can we declare a truce for the night? It's Christmas eve.

SAINTJACK. Yeah, it's Christmas Eve, so shut your hole.

FINN BEGONE. You shut your hole, your big hole.

SAINTJACK. Enough! (*Beat*) I'll see if I can find a something to hang this with.

(*One Shot exits to rear entrance.*)

FINN BEGONE. And shut the door while you're at it.

SAINTJACK. What's keepen her? She should be here by now.

FINN BEGONE. Ya didener tell her, One Shot. will be here?

SAINTJACK. No.

FINN BEGONE. That was your job; we agreed.

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SAINTJACK. She told me not to invite him before I had a chance to tell her we already did.

FINN BEGONE. God almighty, Saintjack, you're as useful as teats on a bull, just like One Shot said ya are.

SAINTJACK. Finn Begone are ya forgettin, One Shot called for a truce? Those were unkind words, but I'm gonna ignore them because that's the kind of man I am. And just to show ya what kind of a man I am, I'll pull ya a pint.

FINN BEGONE. And to show ya what kind of man I am, I'll pull you a pint.

SAINTJACK. I'll do it. I don't tink ya should be goin behind the bar, Finn Begone.

FINN BEGONE. Saintjack, I haven't been allowed behind a bar in twenty years, and I lust to do so. Would ya be denyin a man his one fantasy?

SAINTJACK. Oh no ya don't. You'll get no sympathy from me.

FINN BEGONE. Sure, and ain't that the truth.

SAINTJACK. What are you goin on about? If anyone is going behind that bar, it can't be you. You behind the bar would be like ... Would be like ...

FINN BEGONE. A kid in a candy store?

SAINTJACK. No. A fox in a chicken coop.

FINN BEGONE. That's the same thing.

SAINTJACK. No, it's not.

FINN BEGONE. Yes it tis. You not havin a poetic soul, are not in a position to judge. But I choose not to disagree with ya at this point in time, seein as we're in the midst of an important negotiation. Now, I'll take ya up on ya offer, if ya don't mind.

SAINTJACK. O.K., just as soon as it's five.

FINN BEGONE. Is it not five yet?

SAINTJACK. It's five to five.

FINN BEGONE. Then it's time.

SAINTJACK. How do ya figure?

FINN BEGONE. By the time ya get to the bar, find a glass, draw the pint, let the head settle, top it off, skim the foam, and pass it over, it'll be five on the dot. Many's a time I've timed it.

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SAINTJACK. You're a marvel ya are, Finn Begone - an absolute marvel. O.K. Just remember to stay on your side of the bar. The other side is off limits. It's what the sisters call an occasion of sin. If ya remember?

FINN BEGONE. Lead us into temptation, Dear Cousin. (*EILEEN enters from front door arch with a suitcase. She is wearing a long coat. She places the suitcase to one side.*)

EILEEN. Good evening, Lads.

FINN BEGONE. Eileen, darlin, ya made it.

SAINTJACK. We're just about to begin.

FINN BEGONE. We got a little surprise for ya.

SAINTJACK. Finn!

EILEEN. What sort of surprise?

SAINTJACK. We were just headin for the tap. We'll be right back. (*They exit. Saintjack. dragging Finn Begone away. One Shot enters with sign, a hammer and nail.*)

EILEEN. What are you doin here?

ONE SHOT. Eileen.

EILEEN. I told the cousins not to invite you.

ONE SHOT. Don't blame them.

EILEEN. Ya're not supposed to be here.

ONE SHOT. I just wanted to say goodbye.

EILEEN. You mean good riddance, don't ya?

ONE SHOT. Eileen, how can ya say such a thing? You're the one who's been avoidin me.

EILEEN. And I've good reason, Mister Jackson.

ONE SHOT. We don't get ta pick our names, Eileen.

EILEEN. And we don't get to pretend to be who we're not either. All these years thinkin you were one thing and then findin out you're another.

ONE SHOT. It's not my fault.

EILEEN. You were Auld Bridey's nephew from Dooley -- a Donal.

ONE SHOT. It's what me Nana told me. (*Eileen needs to sit and does.*)

EILEEN. Are ya blaming ya grandma now, not in her grave long enough to melt? Poor Old Bridey, makin do all these years on her own, down there at the bitter end of Spinster's Lane - just an occasional chicken for her midwifery.

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ONE SHOT. Ya forgettin the poitin. She made the finest tax free beverage in the county.

EILEEN. Don't try to change the subject.

ONE SHOT. Eileen, I don't know what to say.

EILEEN. Whatever you say, say nothing.

ONE SHOT. O. K.?

EILEEN. You've no idea. You've no idea what you've done to me.

ONE SHOT. I didn't do nothing.

EILEEN. Shush! Waitin for ya ... all these years. Keepin my father's hopes up.

ONE SHOT. Don't ya think this hurts me too, ya know. It's the truth. I've been tryin to tell ya this for months now.

EILEEN. And I'm still not listenin, I'm leaven.

ONE SHOT. Leavin! Leavin for Dingle? It makes no sense, no sense attall. You'll find no Donals in Dingle.

EILEEN. Do ya think that's why I'm goen? To find me a man? A Donal? A member of the clan? Do ya think so little of me?

ONE SHOT. No, Eileen, no. I don't. I don't think nothin of ya. I mean nuthin bad. Ya have me all confused. I don't know what to think. I try not to. ... think.

EILEEN. I have my reasons. I should never have let the cousins talk me into this gatherin. I specifically told them, "No One Shot, do not invite One Shot." And yet here you are. If they aren't the most unreliable, busy bodies in Ballydonal, then I don't know who are.

ONE SHOT. You're right there, Eileen. Sure, if I wasn't just tellin them the same thing. I'm sorry I'm here, Eileen. But I can't help it. Here I am.

EILEEN. Here you are.

ONE SHOT. And ... and ...glad of it. I've got a lot to tell ya, Eileen Donnely. If you'll just hear me out. (*Eileen rises.*)

ONE SHOT. Eileen, don't go. I'll leave. (*He holds up the sign: "GOODBYE."*)

EILEEN. Don't flatter yourself, I'm just headin for the Ladies. Why don't ya go find those two troublemakers and get this over with. My bus will be here before they are. (*Eileen begins to exit. She stops.*) I waited for you. For ten years. The best years. The whole time, me Da on me back, paradin

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one bumpkin after another though the parlor, posies in hand. Every night, me, down on me knees, prayin to the blessed Virgin. I gave you everything ... everything. I'll be glad to see the back of ya.

ONE SHOT. Eileen. (*Eileen rushes out.*)

ONE SHOT. Merry Christmas. (*He hangs the sign and calls out.*)

Saintjack? Finn Begone?

(*Saintjack with a pint and Finn Begone with two pints enter.*)

SAINTJACK. Ah a fine job, my boy.

ONE SHOT. I see the party started.

SAINTJACK. Not without you, One Shot, not without you.

FINN BEGONE. Yeah, three for one, and one for all. (*To Saintjack.*)

That's a famous literary quote, but you wouldn't be knowin that.

ONE SHOT. I'm not in a party mood.

SAINTJACK. She's still not talkin to ya?

FINN BEGONE. Can ya blame her?

SAINTJACK. Aye you're right, Finn Begone.

ONE SHOT. Can ya blame her? I don't believe you two. I've done nothing wrong ... not on purpose.

SAINTJACK. Ya have no understandin of the female persuasion, of the pressure she's under.

FINN BEGONE. It's not your fault. It's not her fault. It's the hermit's fault.

ONE SHOT. Who?

FINN BEGONE. Donal, the hermit, the one who founded this God-forsaken village.

ONE SHOT. Saint Patrick founded this village.

FINN BEGONE. Ha!

ONE SHOT. He did. Saint Patrick founded this village on blessed land consecrated by the Pope himself.

FINN BEGONE. That's what we tell the outsiders. It's a bunch of malarkey.

SAINTJACK. Finn Begone! The code, man. The code.

FINN BEGONE. I've no time for the code. These two young people are about to be torn asunder. The hell with the code.

SAINTJACK. Well in that case, I'd better tell him. You'll just muck it up.

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ONE SHOT. Tell me what.

SAINTJACK. Ballydonal, this small, remote village that time and place has forgot, ... was not founded by Saint Patrick, and the land is not consecrated. That's just what we tell outsiders. Ya can't sell consecrated land. Sorry, no place for ya here. It keeps the foreigners out, you see.

SAINTJACK. No, Ballydonal was founded by a hermit named Donal.

ONE SHOT. Donal who?

FINN BEGONE. He could only afford one name.

SAINTJACK. He migrated from the hamlet of Dingle -- it had become too crowded for his taste. So, Donal left Dingle with his rucksack, his bible, and two sheep and trekked slowly up and down the hills and vales of Erin, until one day he found what he was looking for -- a place so bleak, so barren, so destitute, that no one else would ever want to live there.

FINN BEGONE. The place hasn't changed much.

SAINTJACK. But there was a weak stream, and scrubby pasture enough for two sheep. What more in life can a hermit expect? So, Donal settled in, and soon, due to fertilization ...

FINN BEGONE. Sheep being what they are.

SAINTJACK. ... the pasture could support more sheep. And sure enough more sheep appeared.

FINN BEGONE. Sheep being what they are.

SAINTJACK. Who's tellin this story? You or me? So, he began a small sheep farm here. Now, eventually, Donal begot twin sons.

ONE SHOT. How?

FINN BEGONE. The usual way.

ONE SHOT. No, how? He was a hermit, how did he do that?

FINN BEGONE. It's a mystery.

SAINTJACK. He named both of the twins, Donal, because being a biblical pessimist, he was certain that one would kill the other. But they didn't.

FINN BEGONE. Came close a couple of times.

SAINTJACK. Finn! Upon reaching puberty, both sons wandered off, driven by urges they little understood.

FINN BEGONE. Jaysus, Saintjack ya don't have to be so abstruce. One Shot, ya know what he's talkin about?

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SAINTJACK. Fin Begone, shut ya hole! Now, the boys came upon the village of Dooley where they found mates, returned home, and began begottin.

FINN BEGONE. Which is another mystery as neither was schooled in the mechanics of duplication.

SAINTJACK. Their father being a taciturn man. But since sheep farmers spend most of their days staring at sheep, they soon figured out what goes where and begat with abandon many wee ones. But they were all males.

FINN BEGONE. So now, ya see, ya got all these young rams and no ewes.

SAINTJACK. None, not one member of the opposite sex.

FINN BEGONE. I tink it was the smell. Just imagine that many sheep farmers in one place.

SAINTJACK. So, ya can see the problem - an abundance of sleepless young men.

FINN BEGONE. ... and nervous sheep.

SAINTJACK. The Donal twins, now known as Mc'Donal and Mac Donal, to avoid confusion, devised a solution. They struck a bargain with their sons. They would hold a special feast and invite all the single young maidens from Dingle and Dooley.

FINN BEGONE. I call it the Dingle, Dooley, Donal day.

SAINTJACK. Finn! But first the young lads had to agree to: one, take a bath; two, scrape their boots; and three, promise not to annoy the sheep. And it worked. The cousins were able to pair up with lasses and slept soundly ever after.

FINN BEGONE. And so did the sheep.

SAINTJACK. So the tribe grew and grew, which led to an expanding population but a shrinking gene pool. How to control the population and grow the gene pool? Something had to be done. And thus was born the policy of "couragement," where non-Donal males...

FINN BEGONE. Like yourself,

SAINTJACK. ... are discouraged from staying, and single female Donals,

FINN BEGONE. Like Eileen,

SAINTJACK. ...are encouraged to move away, usually to Dingle or Dooley.

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ONE SHOT. So that's why she's leaving?

SAINTJACK. No, if that was the reason, she would have left ten years ago

FINN BEGONE. Yeah, ten years ago. You're the reason she's leaving.

ONE SHOT. Well, before she leaves here tonight, I'm going to get this cleared up, or I'm not One Shot Donal.

FINN BEGONE. Bingo!

ONE SHOT. Is that pint for me?

FINN BEGONE. What? This one? For you? Would you like this one?

ONE SHOT. Either one will do. I can't help but noticin that you have two.

FINN BEGONE. Two? Do I now. Ah! Two!

ONE SHOT. Yes, one in each hand.

FINN BEGONE. That I do. That I do. Very observant. Would you like one?

ONE SHOT. Don't mind if I do.

FINN BEGONE. Well, we'll fix ya right up.

SAINTJACK. Can't ya see the man is dyin of thirst? Give One Shot ya pint.

FINN BEGONE. Give him me pint? Ya wantin me to be given him me pint? Can't ya see, I'm in balance. Ya don't want to be unbalancen a man.

ONE SHOT. He's got a point there,

SAINTJACK. The hell he does. Finn Begone! Sit yer arse down. (*Finn Begone sits.*)

SAINTJACK. Now, ya don't have to worry about fallin over when ya handen one of those pints to One Shot. (*Finn Begone gives his pint to One Shot.*)

ONE SHOT. May the good Lord bless and keep ya.

FINN BEGONE. Isn't that a song?

SAINTJACK. Where's Eileen?

ONE SHOT. She's in the Jill.

FINN BEGONE. Let's practice a song to send Eileen off. We'll sing it when she gets back from the Ladies

ONE SHOT. This is not a celebration.

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SAINTJACK. Oh, cheer up, One Shot. She'll get to Dingle, take one look round and be back on the next bus.

ONE SHOT. No, she won't.

FINN BEGONE. We'll sing "Good Night Eileen."

SAINTJACK. Irene. It's "Good Night Irene."

FINN BEGONE. Oh. (*Beat*) I know, we'll sing "I'll Take Ya Home Again Eileen."

SAINTJACK. Kathleen. It's "I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen."

FINN BEGONE. Ya know what's wrong with ya? Yer a stickler, ya are. Tats what's wrong with ya, alright.

SAINTJACK. Finn Begone, the facts is the facts. You can't be changin things to suit yourself.

FINN BEGONE. Ya got no imagination. Ya one of toes anal people. Anals got too many facts in their head. And that's what's wrong with ya.

SAINTJACK. I am not an anal.

FINN BEGONE. Yes, ya are. Ya just an anal denier. I'll prove it to ya. (*Quickly*) John Wayne!

SAINTJACK. John Wayne: born Marion Robert Morrison in Winterset Iowa.

ONE SHOT. That's impressive. How did you do that?

FINN BEGONE. That chowder head of his is just bustin wit facts. It's natural. He's got a God given anal ability.

ONE SHOT. Give him a hard one.

FINN BEGONE. Martin Sheen

SAINTJACK. Ah, a bit of a trick question because his mother was from Tipperary. Martin Sheen: born Ramón Antonio Gerardo Estévez in Dayton Ohio. (*Saintjack rises.*)

SAINTJACK. End of performance.

FINN BEGONE. Where ya headin, Saintjack?

SAINTJACK. I'm off to the Gents.

FINN BEGONE. (*Offering his empty pint.*) Before ya go, will ya wet me glass again?

SAINTJACK. Empty? It was full a minute ago.

FINN BEGONE. A minute ago, a tousand people were alive, who are now dead. A lot can happen in a minute.

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SAINTJACK. Is that a fact, now.

FINN BEGONE. It tis, and I'd raise a glass ta dem, if I had one.

SAINTJACK. God in Heaven, Finn Begone where did ya cum up wit that one?

FINN BEGONE. It's me poetic soul.

SAINTJACK. I'm off to the gents.

ONE SHOT. See what's happened to Eileen, while you're at it.

FINN BEGONE. Do you want me to go with ya?

SAINTJACK. No, I'm a grown man, Finn Begone.

FINN BEGONE. Ya may need someone to help ya find it.

SAINTJACK. The gents?

FINN BEGONE. No, yer Willy. (*Saintjack exits.*)

ONE SHOT. Why do you pick on him so? He's your cousin.

FINN BEGONE. We're all cousins. Besides, He's a MacDonal.

ONE SHOT. You're a MacDonal.

FINN BEGONE. Ya bastard! Don't ya ever call me that again. I'm a McDonal and don't ya forget it. Mac'Donals are the scum of the earth. They tink they're high and mighty because they're distant cousins to a hamburger. And don't get me started on the Donals. Just because they have the original name, they tink their shite doesn't stink. There is nothin lower than the Mac'Donals except the O'Donals.

ONE SHOT. Your mother was a Dongle?

FINN BEGONE. Yeah.

ONE SHOT. From Dooley? A Dooley Dongle?

FINN BEGONE. Now don't go believin that rumor that the Dongles changed their name and it used to be Donal. There's no truth to it, no truth so ever. Just because the Dongles sometimes have a sixth toe and a recessive gene for alcoholism, is no reason to jump to conclusions. (*FINN begins to remove his shoe.*) Here, I'll prove it.

ONE SHOT. No, no, no, no. For the love of God, please don't. And be nice to Saintjack. You're first cousins and like peas in a pod.

FINN BEGONE. It's not the blood, it's the upbringing that sets us apart. Saintjack's Da died at his birth.

ONE SHOT. You mean his Ma died at birth.

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FINN BEGONE. No, his Da. During his birth his father, Anegus, died of apoplexy because his pre-celebratory libations caused him to see double when he was counting the baby's toes. And so Jack was raised in a fatherless home by his mother, and six older sisters who used him as their Bobby Doll. Jack soon developed an interest in fashion design. Do you know, he was once in a Sligo pub, the one with the telly, and saw this show, and now he can't stop dreamin of bein on Project Runway. Of course, there's no call for a fashion designer in Ballydonal, so that's how he became a maker of horse blankets and sheep covers.

ONE SHOT. We do have the most fashionable live stock in the county.

FINN BEGONE. Aye. That's sometin. So, ya can imagine what it was like for him in school, so he took refuge in his faith.

ONE SHOT. And that's where he got the name, Saintjack? Well he's still a Donal, still your cousin, and that's more than I have. I may be the only man in this village who doesn't have a Donal in his name. Anymore that is.

FINN BEGONE. Yer not far off there, One Shot. There's a reason this town is called Ballycousin, with the whole damn village near related, We're the laughingstock of the county.

ONE SHOT. It's no wonder. Your most popular sport is incest.

FINN BEGONE. Ah, it's only incest if yer terd cousins or closer.

ONE SHOT. Says who?

FINN BEGONE. Says the Church, fourth cousins? -- have at it.

ONE SHOT. What about third cousins once removed?

FINN BEGONE. I don't know.

ONE SHOT. Or second cousins twice removed?

FINN BEGONE. Well, two times two is four, so maybe tat's the same as a fourth cousin. I tink you might be all right there.

ONE SHOT. What about first cousin three times removed?

FINN BEGONE. Oh I don't know about that, One Shot. I tink first cousins are first cousins, ya know? First cousins are kissin cousins. Like second cousins - ya can advance to mid field. And third cousins - ya can go deep in the pitch. And fourth cousins, why with fourth cousins ya can, ya can ... I tink, it's probably best to check with the parish priest on that one.

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ONE SHOT. Oh, I don't think I'll be doing that, Finn Begone. I hear he refers to me as the Dingle bastard.

FINN BEGONE. Sometimes I tink I'm a bastard too with no family about me.

ONE SHOT. But you have family.

FINN BEGONE. Ya can have family and not have them. You wouldn't know, not having any.

ONE SHOT. That was either a deep complex thought or an alcoholic one. Nevertheless, it's something I've been thinking about since I was uncovered. You and Saintjack can walk into any establishment in town and meet a cousin.

FINN BEGONE. Who'll turn his back on ya. Yer not missin anyting.

ONE SHOT. Are you sure? It's more than I have. I thought I'd have a wife and children, but all I have are two old friends and a dog with three legs. You see, I will leave this green earth some day and not leave so much as a divot. I will leave, not as a comet trailing an arc of sparkling dust across the vault of heaven, but as a slim pebble dropped into a pond, pointy side down, leaving no ripple, no sound, -- falling, falling, falling and disappearing into the eternal muck.

FINN BEGONE. I'm confused. Are ya a divot, a comet or a pebble? Ya ought to be tinkin of cuttin back on the semaphores.

ONE SHOT. I mean, a man with family goes out with ceremony - whiskey and ham sandwiches. People remember him. "Wasn't those lovely sandwiches at Finn's wake" they'll say.

FINN BEGONE. For God's sake, don't be talkin about me wake. Pass the salt. (*He throws salt over his shoulder.*) Praise to Jaysus.

ONE SHOT. Sorry. "Wasn't those lovely sandwiches at Jack's wake" they'll say. But me, I'll go down without a fuss -- quietly, un-noticed, un-mourned, un-remembered, not even a stuffed celery stick.

FINN BEGONE. Are ya plannin on dyin soon, One Shot?

ONE SHOT. No, you're missing the point. I'm just saying, it's a terrible burden I carry -- alone in the world -- not being a Donal in Ballydonal.

FINN BEGONE. What keeps ya here? Not tat I want ya to leave, mind ya.

ONE SHOT. My heart.

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FINN BEGONE. Ah, tis a terrible ting when yer heart takes ya to a rainy place. Yer dear ma is it?

ONE SHOT. I don't even remember her. I was a child when she dropped me off at my auld grandma's.

FINN BEGONE. Ya never heard from her?

ONE SHOT. She told Grandma Bridey she was off to find a husband. I guess she's still lookin.

FINN BEGONE. It's Eileen that keeps you here then? Ya had your chance with her.

ONE SHOT. Since she learned I was a Jackson, she'll have nothin to do with me. She won't even talk to me. It makes no sense.

FINN BEGONE. Ya have to understand her situation, One Shot. Eileen was the only product of her Da, auld Cormac Donnelly. Poor Cormac, he wanted a son so desperately. Despite years of near constant attempts at procreation, includin a consultation with the hairy witch who lives beyond the wall, all he has to show for his efforts are Eileen and a smilin wife. So, he sees his line of Donallys comin to an end - a significant embarrassment and cause of sorrow for all.

ONE SHOT. Well, that's not Eileen's fault.

FINN BEGONE. Aye but! ... because of her father's inability to produce a progenitor of the male persuasion, the albatross of tribal responsibility haunts Eileen. Jaysus, but that was poetic. In any case, Cormac tinks it's up to her for the sake of father and family. And a Jackson will never do.

ONE SHOT. I know, Eileen can only marry a Donal or an O'Donal or a McDonal or a MacDonal or a Donalson or perhaps a Donnelly. But what if she doesn't?

FINN BEGONE. Then all the Donally spirits amoldering in their graves, some for over 500 years, will haunt her for eternity.

ONE SHOT. Now that's crazy. (*Finn Begone reacts: salt over shoulder, sign of the cross.*) It sounds like an excuse - she just doesn't want to get married.

FINN BEGONE. Yer daft. She does. More than you'll ever know. Listen, Eileen was raised in a home where the bedroom door was always shut, and ... musk hung in the air like Spanish moss. (*Beat*) I should write that down. She found herself to be in a constant state of unexplained

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anticipation, then you came along and she understood what it was. She wants to marry. Ya just have to find a way.

ONE SHOT. I just have to find a miracle. That's what Saintjack thinks too. For feck sake, he's been gone a long time, he has

FINN BEGONE. It's because he's washin his hands.

ONE SHOT. When did he start doing that?

FINN BEGONE. I told em. A waste of time it is, I told em.

ONE SHOT. It makes no sense. You wash your hands before you ingest, and then you wash your hands after you exgest. Seems to me you ought to be able to eliminate one of those washings.

FINN BEGONE. Tat's what I told him. Saintjack, I said, ya got one too many washins. *(Pause)* I don't tink there's any such word -- exgest.

ONE SHOT. This is turning out at be some night, it tis. First, EILEEN. goes for a wiz and never comes back, and now Saintjack goes to the gents and never returns.

FINN BEGONE. Maybe they're doin it.

ONE SHOT. Saintjack ... doin it? I don't think he's ever done it in his life. Eileen would have to be drunk.

FINN BEGONE. I agree, not likely - her bein on the wagon since Spring.

ONE SHOT. But he has the Donal name.

FINN BEGONE. He has the name, but he doesn't have the game. I can't believe after all these years, she left ya.

ONE SHOT. Just because I'm a non-Donal, damn it.

FINN BEGONE. Foreigners, we call them. If you're not a Donal, you're a foreigner.

ONE SHOT. If anyone's to blame, it's Auld Bridey. If she had just been honest with me from the beginning.

FINN BEGONE. Come on, One Shot, ya kena tell a wee lad he's a bastard.

ONE SHOT. Well she didn't have to lie - tell the village I was a Donal. Do you know what it was like the day the news broke? One day, in one day, I became a foreigner.

FINN BEGONE. It got ya through school didn't it? And it got ya, Eileen.

ONE SHOT. And a lot of heartache. It would have been better off, if I had never met her.

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FINN BEGONE. If it makes ya feel better, if you can't have her no one can. I should know. I took a try at her myself -- at the Sligo Fair.

ONE SHOT. Damn the Sligo Fair.

FINN BEGONE. What?

ONE SHOT. That's when my world ended. That's when I told her the truth

FINN BEGONE. You told her about Mary.

ONE SHOT. What?

FINN BEGONE. Ha! Ya didn't know I knew that. Well, she sure was pissed at ya. I remember she kept mutterin somethin about Mary. She was goin to get even with Mary. I didn't know which Mary she was talkin about. There are so many here. So, I figure it must be Good Sport Mary.

ONE SHOT. I had no business taking her to the Sligo Fair, no business at all.

FINN BEGONE. Am I right?

ONE SHOT. She thought I was going to propose to her. After putting her off for all those years to tend to my Granny.

FINN BEGONE. Well, it was a good thing, you were doing. Widow Bridey was dyin.

ONE SHOT. But for 10 years? I think she was just trying to keep us apart.

FINN BEGONE. Ah! I know who. I bet she caught ya in the hay with Well Fed Mary? Oi!

ONE SHOT. Propose? Instead I crushed her.

FINN BEGONE. She was so intent on revenge, I tought I won the lottery.

ONE SHOT. And did you?

FINN BEGONE. I'm not sure.

ONE SHOT. What do you mean you're not sure? How can you not be sure? If someone wins the lottery they are not likely to forget.

FINN BEGONE. I had a few.

ONE SHOT. What? Pints or drams?

FINN BEGONE. Both.

ONE SHOT. Both. Both? What happened to your five o'clock rule?

FINN BEGONE. The Sligo Fair. I helped Eileen set up the kissin booth. She said she wanted to tank me, and then she winked. That made me nervous, so I went and had a few. When I returned she said she was glad

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to see me and winked again. I think it may have been a double wink, so I went back and had a few more. Things got a little fuzzy after that.

ONE SHOT. You know, Finn Begone, it's not just your memory that drink impairs.

FINN BEGONE. Don't I know what ya intimatin. That's not the first time thats happened to me. I'm just not comfortable with those situations. Anyway, it doesn't matter - she never brought it up again. Oh well, she's lettin herself go, gettin a bit thick for me.

ONE SHOT. You know you can hardly see the other side of the room with all this smoke?

FINN BEGONE. It's the peat; it's too damp.

ONE SHOT. It's the fog. Who left the door open?

FINN BEGONE. (*Shouting to tap room.*) Saintjack, were you born in a barn? (*SOUND: door closing*).

FINN BEGONE. And don't be returnin empty handed. (*To One Shot.*) Where the divil is Eileen.?

ONE SHOT. Here she is. No, wait it's Saintjack. (*Saintjack enters through the mist carrying a shot glass, and bottle of whiskey like it is a holy chalice.*)

FINN BEGONE. Well, well, well, celebratin are we?

ONE SHOT. And keeping it to himself.

FINN BEGONE. Sure, and it would be too much to be sharing with ya mates.

ONE SHOT. It's an awful thing to be selfish.

FINN BEGONE. Tis one of the deadly sins, if I'm not mistaken.

ONE SHOT. And him being second cousin to a priest on his Da's side.

FINN BEGONE. Just enjoy yer drink, and pay no attention to us.

ONE SHOT. No, none at all. We'll just sit here and watch.

SAINTJACK. Will you shut your gobs, the two of ya? I need this drink. Can't ya recognize a man in shock?

FINN BEGONE. Oh, is that what it is - shock? He's in shock, One Shot.

ONE SHOT. Aye, no wonder the whiskey. And here we are bashing our friend, when we should be commiserating.

FINN BEGONE. Oh, oh. I'm feeling it. I tink ... I tink ... Yes, it's comin ... I feel the shock comin on. Ya feelin it, One Shot?

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ONE SHOT. Ooh, I'm feeling it too. Pass the Jameson's. (*Finn produces a shot glass from his pocket and slams it on table.*)

FINN BEGONE. I never leave home without it.

ONE SHOT. Ya wouldn't happen to have a spare?

FINN BEGONE. (*Producing another.*) Is the Pope catholic?.

SAINTJACK. Saints in Heaven, but you're a fine pair - I'm ashamed to be associated with ya. Between ya, there isn't the brains Our Savior gave a cockle. Can you not see, I'm in duress?

FINN BEGONE. (*Pouring*)Ya in a dress?

ONE SHOT. I don't think that's what he said, Finn.

SAINTJACK. Thank you.

ONE SHOT. He said he's in a mess.

SAINTJACK. Duress. Duress. Take the taters out of your ears, you drunken sots. I just had the shock of me life when I went to shake the dew off me lily.

ONE SHOT. What happened, Saintjack?

FINN BEGONE. He couldna find his willie.

ONE SHOT. Finn Begone, put a cork in it.

FINN BEGONE. It's a wee willie, Saintjack has.

ONE SHOT. Pay no mind to him, Saintjack.

FINN BEGONE. I'm gonna get him a can of that day-glo paint.

ONE SHOT. Tell us what you saw.

FINN BEGONE. The glow in the dark kind.

SAINTJACK. I saw a miracle.

FINN BEGONE. He found his Willie.

ONE SHOT. In the Gents?

SAINTJACK. No, in the Ladies.

ONE SHOT. What were you doing in the Ladies?

FINN BEGONE. He was in the dress.

SAINTJACK. The Gents was stopped up. I couldn't use it.

FINN BEGONE. That's never stopped me.

SAINTJACK. There were two inches of used beer on the floor.

FINN BEGONE. That never stopped me.

SAINTJACK. Cause you're a sloppy bastard. So, I went into the Ladies.

... I knocked first.

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FINN BEGONE. Did ya happen to see Eileen? Where the hell is she?

ONE SHOT. Maybe she went home.

SAINTJACK. Have you ever been in the Ladies?

FINN BEGONE. Now, what the feck would I be doin in the Ladies?

SAINTJACK. It's beautiful. It's clean. It has a fresh coat of whitewash, and the timbers are stained mahogany. There's no writin on the walls, none what so ever.

FINN BEGONE. And what's a person to read while they're standin there takin a tinkle?

SAINTJACK. They don't stand, you hopeless gat. They sit.

FINN BEGONE. And how am I supposed to know that? And while we're at it, how is it you've come by this knowledge?

SAINTJACK. They got little doors on the stalls...

FINN BEGONE. Is that where you sit?

SAINTJACK... for privacy. Imagine that, privacy! Oh, and here's the best part - the floors are dry -- dry and clean.

FINN BEGONE. How is that possible?

SAINTJACK. Oh, it's grand it is - simply grand. Never have I seen such a grand crapper.

ONE SHOT. Saintjack, that's a marvelous report that is. But do you think you might be getting around to the miracle anytime soon?

FINN BEGONE. Yeah, what about the feckin miracle? You're rattling on like a fisherman's hag.

ONE SHOT. So, you're in this palace, and you see the miracle.

SAINTJACK. No. First I took care of business.

FINN BEGONE. You ought to tie a string around it!

SAINTJACK. Mother of God, how many has he had?

ONE SHOT. Go on, Jack. We're all ears.

SAINTJACK. I finish me business, and I go to the sink to wash me hands.

FINN BEGONE. (*To One Shot.*) You see? What did I tell you?

ONE SHOT. When did you start doing that?

SAINTJACK. I always do that.

FINN BEGONE. A complete waste of time, if ya ask me.

SAINTJACK. Well, nobody's asking you now, are they? They have real soap in there.

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FINN BEGONE. Of course, it goes with the dress.

SAINTJACK. I'm gonna kill you, you jammy bastard

ONE SHOT. Jacko me boy, take it easy, calm down. Now you go to the sink and?

SAINTJACK. And that's when I saw it.

ONE SHOT. (*With understanding.*) Aah.

FINN BEGONE. Aah. (*Beat*) Why are we aahing?

SAINTJACK. I froze in me boots.

ONE SHOT. Yes, of course you did ... but do you mind if we back up a bit, Saintjack?

FINN BEGONE. Yeah. Between the time ya went to the sink and the time ya froze in your boots.

ONE SHOT. I think you might of left something out.

FINN BEGONE. Yeah. Like ... WHAT THE FECK YA SAW!

SAINTJACK. I saw a miracle.

FINN BEGONE. (*Exasperated.*) Ah, that explains it then, One Shot.

ONE SHOT. Do you think you might tell us what sort of miracle we're dealing with here?

FINN BEGONE. If it's not too much trouble, that is.

SAINTJACK. It was in the sink.

FINN BEGONE. We're gettin close now.

ONE SHOT. Are we talkin about a football miracle -- last minute goal type or a Jaysus miracle, ya know -- turnin the loaves into fishes?

SAINTJACK. You got that wrong.

ONE SHOT. Right. He turned the loaves into wine. Saintjack, do you mind If I ask you a hypothetical.

FINN BEGONE. A what?

ONE SHOT. If Finn Begone and I were standing next to you, when you went to the sink ...

FINN BEGONE. Not before!

ONE SHOT. If Finn Begone and I were standing next to you at the sink, and if Finn Begone and I looked down at the sink, at the same time you looked down, ... what do you suppose we might have seen?

FINN BEGONE. If he says a miracle, I'll kick him in the arse.

SAINTJACK. (*Pause*) A baby.

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FINN BEGONE. Now ya see, that weren't hard, was ...BABY?

ONE SHOT. You saw a baby? Are you sure of this, Saintjack? Perhaps this was one of your holy visions.

FINN BEGONE. Yeah. I get them all the time.

SAINTJACK. No, this is no vision, I'm telling ya.

FINN BEGONE. What's was it doin'?

ONE SHOT. What do you think it was doing? Having a wee? It's a feekin baby.

SAINTJACK. It's just laying there.

ONE SHOT. Yeah, that's what they do, Finn Begone. They just lay around. Don't you know nothing?

FINN BEGONE. What did it look like?

ONE SHOT. It's a baby, you eejit. They all look alike.

SAINTJACK. It looked familiar.

FINN BEGONE. It was the Baby Jaysus.

SAINTJACK. Truth be told, it's a strange little bugger.

ONE SHOT. The Baby Jesus?

SAINTJACK. The miracle. He has the look of all of God's kingdom.

ONE SHOT. Ah, so's it's a boy?

SAINTJACK. I think so.

FINN BEGONE. And why is that Saintjack?

SAINTJACK. It pissed on me.

ONE SHOT. The miracle pissed on you?

FINN BEGONE. It musta been holy water.

ONE SHOT. You say he's strange?

SAINTJACK. Yeah, he's sure not a Donal.

FINN BEGONE. Faith and Begorrah, that is a miracle!

SAINTJACK. He's got your nose.

FINN BEGONE. The divil ya say!

ONE SHOT. Ha! Sounds like Finn Begone should have begoned a little sooner one night.

SAINTJACK. And One Shot, he's got your eyes.

FINN BEGONE. Ah, the poor little bastard.

SAINTJACK. There's no need to be callin the child names.

FINN BEGONE. Well he's got no Da.

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ONE SHOT. That we know of.

SAINTJACK. Jaysus had no father that we know of, no real father.

ONE SHOT. He was born of the Holy Ghost, Saintjack. Sure, and I'm not having to tell you that.

SAINTJACK. No, you know there's no need, me havin been to seminary.

FINN BEGONE. For tree weeks.

SAINTJACK. Ya know me better than me self.

FINN BEGONE. What's a cousin for if it ain't humiliation.

ONE SHOT. Why is that, Saintjack? Why did you leave after just three weeks.

SAINTJACK. Never you mind. That's between the Lord and me self. But I'll tell you one thing - it's the Lord's loss.

FINN BEGONE. The Monsignor caught him pulling his pud.

SAINTJACK. You lying pisshead! Don't you be spreading no rumors about me.

ONE SHOT. Easy, Jack.

SAINTJACK. He doesn't know a thing about what happened there. (*To Finn Begone.*) You don't know shite. Were you there?

FINN BEGONE. No, but I know it's the only way to get thrown out.

ONE SHOT. I don't think that's true, Finn Begone.

SAINTJACK. Thank you, One Shot. You see, shite for brains?

ONE SHOT. I'm sure they'd throw you out if they caught you pulling your mate's pud.

FINN BEGONE. Ha! That's it.

ONE SHOT. And then of course, there's the occasional buggery.

SAINTJACK. Saints preserve us, One Shot, you're no help, no help at tall.

FINN BEGONE. What are ya going to do, Saintjack?

SAINTJACK. What am I goin to do?

FINN BEGONE. With the baby.

SAINTJACK. With the miracle?

ONE SHOT. Yeah, with the baby.

SAINTJACK. Me? You're thinking I'm the one to do somethin?

ONE SHOT. You found it. It's yours.

FINN BEGONE. Yeah, finders- keepers, losers - weepers.

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SAINTJACK. For the love of God, we're not talkin about a pair of earrings.

FINN BEGONE. No, cause we know what ya'd do with tose.

SAINTJACK. Alright, from now on, I'm just goin to ignore you. I'm not goin to get upset because you're a dumb shite-for-brains, no good dirty arsewipe, rummy, bastard and ... and ... dumb.

FINN BEGONE. Ya've hurt my feelings.

ONE SHOT. So, what are you going to do? At the least, he's probably hungry.

FINN BEGONE. Yeah, why don't ya breast feed im?

(Saintjack leaps over the table to strangle Finn Begone. One Shot pulls him off.)

ONE SHOT. All right, you too need to go to your corners. Finn Begone, why don't you go take a peek at the miracle. *(One Shot winks and mimes drinking to indicate Saintjack is hallucinating.)*

FINN BEGONE. Good idea. Wait, it's in the Ladies. I can't go in tere.

ONE SHOT. Why not?

FINN BEGONE. Because I'm a man. Isn't it obvious.

SAINTJACK. Well, now that you asked ...

FINN BEGONE. Shut yer pie hole!

ONE SHOT. Oh, for the Mother of God, Finn, swallow your pride just this once, and go into the Ladies. I won't tell a soul and neither will Saintjack. Will you, Jack?

SAINTJACK. Who me?

FINN BEGONE. I don't trust ya bastards. Swear, swear on yer mother ya won't say a word.

SAINTJACK. On me ma? You want me to swear on me ma? Sure, and that's a Cardinal Sin if there ever was one.

ONE SHOT. Then swear on someone else's then.

SAINTJACK. Fair play, I'll swear on Finn Begone's mother. That's almost the same thing - they're sisters.

FINN BEGONE. Ya'll swear on me mother when pigs sing.

SAINTJACK. TOO RA LOO RA LOO AR. Oink, oink.

ONE SHOT. All right, all right, you can swear on my mother's grave, may she rest in peace.

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FINN BEGONE. Is she dead?

SAINTJACK. That's right, One Shot. You can't swear on someone's grave unless they're dead for certain.

ONE SHOT. O.K. then, swear on my Granny's grave.

FINN BEGONE. Sure, and that's a grand gesture, that is, One Shot.

ONE SHOT. And I'll go along with Jack's oath.

FINN BEGONE. Repeat after me, I swear on the grave of One Shot's sainted dead granny ...

SAINTJACK. I swear on the grave of Auld Widow Bridey, who is truly dead ...

FINN BEGONE...that under penalty of eternal damnation, I will never ever tell any livin creature ...

SAINTJACK. Eternal?

ONE SHOT. That's an awful long time, Finn.

FINN BEGONE. Eternal.

SAINTJACK...that under penalty of eternal damnation, I will never tell any livin creature ...

FINN BEGONE. Never ever! I will never ever tell any livin creature, be it man, woman, wee one, or animal.

SAINTJACK. Animal? Are you afeared I'll tell an animal?

ONE SHOT. Yeah, Finn. What's the harm in that?

FINN BEGONE. Suppose he tells a parrot?

ONE SHOT. Ah, he's got you there, Saintjack.

SAINTJACK...Be it man, woman, wee one or parrot ...

FINN BEGONE. Animal.

SAINTJACK. What if I want to tell me donkey?

ONE SHOT. Do you still have that donkey, Saintjack?

SAINTJACK. Aye, and a dumber creature can't be found in all the county.

ONE SHOT. What's his name again?

FINN BEGONE. Can we get back to the swearin, please.

SAINTJACK.I call him Finn.

FINN BEGONE. O.K., I'll allow the donkey.

SAINTJACK. Be it man, woman, wee one or animal except Finn, the jackass.

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ONE SHOT. I think you had better say Finn, the donkey. Finn, the jackass may lead to some confusion.

FINN BEGONE. That's a good point, Jack.

SAINTJACK. Be it man, woman, wee one, or animal except Finn the donkey.

ONE SHOT. O.K. that's settled.

FINN BEGONE. That Finn Begone, sometimes known as Finnbar Aloysius McDonal ...

ONE SHOT. Jaysus, you're a feckin barrister, you are.

SAINTJACK. ... that Finn Begone, sometimes known as Finnbar Aloysius McDonal, went into the ladies, briefly, and for a short time and for the purpose of observation only!! Now for feck sake, be gone!

FINN BEGONE. Okey, dokey. (*Finn Begone gets bag of chips.*)

SAINTJACK. What are ya doin with those?

FINN BEGONE. In Case the baby's hungry.

ONE SHOT. Leave them. (*Finn Begone exits.*)

SAINTJACK. I don't know how, for the love of Mary, you keep your steady with him about.

ONE SHOT. He's an alcoholic.

SAINTJACK. In this town, that's a meaningless distinction.

ONE SHOT. I think you're more bothered cause you're related. It's that collective shame.

SAINTJACK. Do you suppose that's why he prods me so?

ONE SHOT. Cause you're family?

SAINTJACK. Cause of the collective shame.

ONE SHOT. Oh, he's just having a bit-of with you.

SAINTJACK. But behind it, there's a purpose. I'm not what you tink I am, you know.

ONE SHOT. I don't think anything, Saintjack.

SAINTJACK. I don't know why we have to be one thing or another. Perhaps I just haven't decided yet. I'm undeclared.

ONE SHOT. You don't think it's about time you chose a major?

SAINTJACK. I'm a bit confused. Raised in a house with seven women will do that to you, don't you know.

ONE SHOT. I bet you don't forget to put the seat down.

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SAINTJACK. I have no reason to raise it. No sir, I'm not what you think.
(*Beat*) I'm just ... sensitive.

ONE SHOT. Yes, Jack.

SAINTJACK. I'm a clothes designer. It may just be for animals, but I'm a designer.

ONE SHOT. And a fine job you do, Saintjack.

SAINTJACK. Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfinger? They're not what you think they are either.

ONE SHOT. I don't even know who they are Jack, it's O.K.

SAINTJACK. Do you know there has never been a gay Donal? Don't you find it unusual that there are no gays in Ballydonal.

ONE SHOT. Geez, Saintjack, you know I don't spend a lot of time thinkin.

SAINTJACK. In Ballydonal, nothing is known of such things. You won't hear a word, not even from Nora Big Ears. (*Beat*) Although even she admits there are a few sensitive people.

ONE SHOT. I always thought one of the Cross-eyed triplets ...

SAINTJACK. Which one?

ONE SHOT. The neat one.

SAINTJACK. You're right --- very sensitive, that one. A strange trio, but they have each other, and that's all that matters. Isn't it nice - a connection of some sort, someone who depends on you, and you can depend on?

(*Beat*) I prayed for it, you know.

ONE SHOT. You prayed for the baby; that's nice. I'm sure he needs it.

SAINTJACK. No, I prayed for a baby.

ONE SHOT. You wanted a baby.

SAINTJACK. I prayed for it every day at mass. You know I never miss mass. Finn Begone says I have a crush on the priest. It's not true. It's just more of Finn's palaver.

ONE SHOT. Now, don't go working yourself up over Finn Begone. He's a terrible teller of tales. We all know that. But Saintjack, what would you be doing with a baby?

SAINTJACK. It was at the Sligo Fair that God spoke to me --- right between the hog pens and the kissin booth. Buy a kiss he said and have a baby.

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ONE SHOT. Saintjack, I know you've led a sheltered life -- spending all that time in church, and not having dated a woman ...

SAINTJACK. OR MAN!

ONE SHOT. Or man, but ... kissin ... well, that's not the way it works, Jack.

SAINTJACK. Oh, but it does. A miracle happened at the fair, and I have prayed every single day since. Never missed a day. I prayed directly to the Virgin Mary, with whom I have a special relationship. We have much in common. They say that if you pray to the Holy Mother, she will intercede with The Holy Father, and you'll get your wish, because The Holy Father can never refuse The Holy Mother. It's a little trick the sisters teach you.

ONE SHOT. Just like down here, hey? They lead us lads around by the nose cause they know we men are simple minded creatures with one thing in mind.

SAINTJACK. NO One Shot.! JAYSUS ON A STICK! (*with lowered voice*) There's no diddlin in the clouds. It's a place of happiness and contentment.

ONE SHOT. A place of happiness and contentment with no diddling?

SAINTJACK. Aye, that's the way it is.

ONE SHOT. Next you're going to tell me there's no Guinness there.

SAINTJACK. I'm afraid so, One Shot. There's no need. And no ciggies either.

ONE SHOT. It's a quare place, that is.

SAINTJACK. Oh no, it's a place where miracles come from.

ONE SHOT. And tonight, here at the Five Cousins's, the miracle has landed ...right in the sink.

SAINTJACK. Swaddled, just like Jaysus in the crèche.

ONE SHOT. Swaddled?

SAINTJACK. He's wrapped in a shawl of Virgin Mary blue.

ONE SHOT. Virgin Mary blue?

SAINTJACK. Yeah, you not raised in the Pale of the Church wouldn't know what I'm talkin about. We have our own colors, you know: Virgin Mary Blue, Franciscan Brown, Perpetual Heart Red. We even have our own crayons.

THE MIRACLE OF BALLYDONAL

One Shot. But the baby ...

SAINTJACK. There's no question about it, that baby is a miracle you know, a gift to me. Just like I prayed for.

ONE SHOT. Why, in the hell, would you be wanting a baby?

SAINTJACK. Don't you see? That baby could change my life. If I had a son, it would stop all the talk, all the whispers, all the hurt.

ONE SHOT. And would it? (*Finn Begone enters with another pint*)

FINN BEGONE. It's in there. I heard it, I heard it wit me own ears! It's in there all right. I swear on me Ma's grave.

SAINTJACK. Your Ma's still alive, you nitwit.

FINN BEGONE. Jaysus, Mary and Joseph, and we almost swore on her grave.

SAINTJACK. And ya not supposed to be drawin your own pint.

ONE SHOT. You heard it, you say?

FINN BEGONE. With me own ears.

SAINTJACK. What did it say?

FINN BEGONE. It's a wee baby. Do you suppose it to talk?

SAINTJACK. It might. If it's a miracle, it might.

ONE SHOT. Didn't you see it? Didn't you go in?

FINN BEGONE. I'm not goin in the Ladies, not all the way. I stuck my head in - that's enough. I could see a bundle in the sink.

SAINTJACK. That's the swaddle.

FINN BEGONE. And I'll tell ya somethin else too, I don't know where it come from, but it won first place.

SAINTJACK. What are you on about? You're teshed in the head.

FINN BEGONE. It's got a blue ribbon tied around the ... swaddle. He's a winner. And(*With pride*) It stopped cryin as soon as I popped me head in ... like it knew it was me. And then ... I tink it said Da. Just like that - da. I tink I have a child!

SAINTJACK. I thought ya said he was mine? I saw him first. I created him, praying for him every morning at seven o'clock mass.

FINN BEGONE. And winkin at young Father Conner.

SAINTJACK. I HAD SOMETHING IN MY EYE!

ONE SHOT. Whoa you two. The baby doesn't belong to anyone.

THE MIRACLE OF BALLYDONAL

SAINTJACK. Sure, and he belongs to one of the three of us. The Lord had a purpose when he put that little miracle almost in our lap.

FINN BEGONE. Jack's right, One Shot. There's no denyin that.

ONE SHOT. You are all forgetting, Eileen? She has a claim too. She was with us all night up to a half hour ago, sitting right there, wherever the hell she went.

SAINTJACK. She's been complaining about back pains.

ONE SHOT. It doesn't matter. I suggest we give him to the authorities. I'll go get the little fella. (*One Shot exits.*)

SAINTJACK. He's mine, damn it. By all rights he's mine.

FINN BEGONE. Didn't I just finish telling ya that he spoke to me? He must be mine.

SAINTJACK. And what would you do with him, you drunken reprobate?

FINN BEGONE. I'd do better than you. I'd teach him to be a man - a real man.

SAINTJACK. A scouce, a louse, a drunken body in an ally layin in his own piss, that kind of real man? Cause that's what you are now, Finn Begone.

FINN BEGONE. I know, Saintjack, I know. Don't tink I'm not ashamed of me self. But what's a man to do alone in this world? You have yer holy water, and I have mine.

SAINTJACK. Now, you're talkin sacrilege.

FINN BEGONE. My father never touched a drop.

SAINTJACK. Even with a son like you.

FINN BEGONE. I know, it's iconic. He never touched a drop, but he was often thirsty. Imagine what a sacrifice that was.

SAINTJACK. You're right there; he was a prince. I always looked up to Uncle Moderation.

FINN BEGONE. He was tall alright. He didn't drink because he wanted to set an example for his boys. A fat lot that did im. Here I am, night after night, drownin in stout. **BUT I AM NOT A DAY-TIME DRINKER.** I detest those people. They are the lowest of the low. Well except for maybe those shites from Cork; nobody's lower than them. You may see me shitfaced every day ... **BUT NOT BEFORE FIVE!** Never shitfaced before five. For me, it's a point of honor.

THE MIRACLE OF BALLYDONAL

SAINTJACK. It's good to know there's a bottom to your decrepitude. But, I gotta say Finn, that's not quite true. You never lift a pint before five except at the Sligo Fair.

FINN BEGONE. Saintjack, that's only once a year. Have mercy

SAINTJACK. Mercy, like you show me?

FINN BEGONE. That baby could turn my life around. I've watched my father gut it out, and I could do the same thing. That baby will make me respectable -- sober.

SAINTJACK. A child needs a mother, Finn Begone.

FINN BEGONE. One Shot had no ma. He turned out OK.

SAINTJACK. I wonder what became of his mother.

FINN BEGONE. Tommy Two Stroke said he saw her once, the time he went to Dublin. He said she was in one of the better houses of lesser reputation.

SAINTJACK. Do you really think you can you give up drink, Finn Begone?

FINN BEGONE. Aye, that I can. I'll show ya. I'll stop drinkin right now. Here ya can have the rest of me pint. (*Finn slides the pint to Saintjack, pulls it back to himself, takes a long swig, and slides it back, near empty to Saintjack.*)

SAINTJACK. Cousin, I don't know how to thank you for your generosity. (*One Shot enters.*)

ONE SHOT. You bastards. I should have known. So, I'm not family. Is that any reason to send me up the pole?

SAINTJACK. One Shot, what are you on about?

FINN BEGONE. Yeah, why are ya so flustered?

ONE SHOT. You know damn well, the two of you. You don't fool me. There's no baby in the loo!

FINN BEGONE. No baby? Are ya sure?

SAINTJACK. Maybe you overlooked it.

ONE SHOT. Do you think I don't know the difference between a sink with a baby and a sink without a baby?

FINN BEGONE. It's not a wee un you be lookin for. It's a swaddle.

ONE SHOT. There's no swaddle either. (*Saintjack falls to his knees*)

SAINTJACK. Lord, why hast thou forsaken me?

THE MIRACLE OF BALLYDONAL

FINN BEGONE. What are ya on to?

SAINTJACK. Finn, I've been prayin every day for this baby, ever since the Sligo Fair, nine months ago. (*A common thought brings One Shot. and Finn Begone to a halt.*)

FINN BEGONE. The Sligo Fair?

ONE SHOT. Nine months ago?

FINN BEGONE. Nine months.

ONE SHOT & FINN BEGONE. Oh, Jaysus, it's mine!!

SAINTJACK. Do you two mean what I think you mean? Savages! That's what you are, the two of you. Heathen fornicators - that's what I'm surrounded with here. You're no better than Tinker's bull. Excuse me, you're worse. At least Tinker keeps his bull in a pen, zipped upped.

ONE SHOT. Oh, Saintjack, you don't understand.

FINN BEGONE. No, ya wouldn't understand what drives a man.

SAINTJACK. I understand alright. These are not virgin lips you're looking at.

FINN BEGONE. It doesn't count when ya kissen ya sister.

SAINTJACK. You leave my sister out of it, you gobshite. It wasn't my sister. She didn't go to the Sligo Fair.

ONE SHOT. At the Sligo Fair? You lost your virginity at the Sligo Fair?

FINN BEGONE. Just his lip's virginity.

SAINTJACK. It was more than that, I'll have you know. But I didn't participate in any animalistic or-gee like you two.

ONE SHOT. There was no orgy, Saintjack.

FINN BEGONE. Yeah, was ya tinken we were havin a tree-way?

SAINTJACK. What's a tree-way?

FINN BEGONE. Never ya mind, Saintjack. It's best ya don't dwell on such tings.

SAINTJACK. One Shot, how could you? How could you carry on like that in public?

ONE SHOT. There was no carrying on, Saintjack. It was all very proper, Eileen, and I didn't go in for no carrying on. We were saying goodbye for the last time. It was a beautiful moment, a sacred moment.

SAINTJACK. Sacred! And in public?

ONE SHOT. The only one who saw us was the Lord.

THE MIRACLE OF BALLYDONAL

FINN BEGONE. He sees everythin, Saintjack.

SAINTJACK. He doesn't watch people feck. There's no fecking in the eyes of the Lord. You two are worse than Atheists.

ONE SHOT. Cross my heart, no one saw us.

SAINTJACK. It was the Sligo Fair, there are woman and children there.

ONE SHOT. We weren't out in the open.

SAINTJACK. Where were you?

ONE SHOT. I wanted to break the news about my real name to her in private. We went behind the stage.

SAINTJACK. Did ya not think someone would hear you?

ONE SHOT. That's a good point, Saintjack because Eileen loves to giggle. But there was little chance of that, the pie-eating contest was going on.

FINN BEGONE. I tink I remember a giggle.

ONE SHOT. Maybe it was when she saw your John Thomas.

SAINTJACK. Comparin notes now, are we? Have you no shame? What time was this?

ONE SHOT. I don't know, but it had to be before the kissing booth opened at noon.

SAINTJACK. You were doin it in the mornin'?

FINN BEGONE. For the love of God , Saintjack, tere's no approved time fer doin it. (*Saintjack makes the sign of the cross.*)

SAINTJACK. I'll be prayin for you, One Shot at tomorrow's mass. And what about you, Finn Begone. Where did you do it? Behind the stage?

FINN BEGONE. Yeah, she took me there. Said she wanted to return to the scene of the crime. I tink it's coming back to me now. It was during the white elephant auction. The auctioneer kept sayin, "Who'll give me more." And Eileen would be yellin "More?, You want more?" The rest is kinda fuzzy.

SAINTJACK. And what time was that?

FINN BEGONE. It musta been two or so.

SAINTJACK. I didn't have my experience until five.

ONE SHOT. Wasn't the fair over by then.

SAINTJACK. I helped Eileen take down the kissin booth.

FINN BEGONE. That Eileen puts in a full day.

THE MIRACLE OF BALLYDONAL

SAINTJACK. She was very angry, One Shot.

ONE SHOT. She had every reason to be.

SAINTJACK. She said she was goin to get even.

FINN BEGONE. You disappointed her, One Shot, with your carryin on with Well Fed Mary.

SAINTJACK. I thought he was carryin on with Wink-Wink Mary?

FINN BEGONE. Who?

SAINTJACK. You know, the one that works at The Sheep Dip.

ONE SHOT. I wasn't carrying on with any Mary, not Good Sport Mary, Well Fed Mary, Wink-Wink Mary or Sheep-Dip Mary. Get back to your damn story.

SAINTJACK. The fog was rollin in, just like it's doin now. Like it usually does, this time of day.

FINN BEGONE. Tat's not exactly right, Saintjack, it depends upon the season. Now in the winter, the fog ...

ONE SHOT. Finn! Let him tell the story. Go on Saintjack.

SAINTJACK. The fog was rollin in. (*Pause to stare at Finn Begone.*) She asked me to give her a hand. We folded up the booth and stored it under the stage.

ONE SHOT. Under the ...

FINN BEGONE... Stage?

SAINTJACK. So it wouldn't get wet from the mist. The fog was a terror.

ONE SHOT. You were under the stage with Eileen.?

SAINTJACK. No, I was under, and she handed me the poles. And then she asked me to wait while she went off to the ladies. A few minutes later I saw her.

FINN BEGONE. Eileen?

SAINTJACK. An apparition. She came towards me bathed in fog. The moon cast a blue halo in the mist around her. You could almost hear the celestial harps. I could make out the outline of a shawl on her head, just like the Virgin Mary. Her arms were outstretched like the statue of Our Lady of Eternal Sorrows. (*He strikes a pose*) She came right up to me and kissed me. It was a true miracle kiss.

FINN BEGONE. A miracle kiss?

ONE SHOT. Can ya describe this miracle kiss, Saintjack?

THE MIRACLE OF BALLYDONAL

SAINTJACK. A gentleman doesn't kiss and tell.

FINN BEGONE. Saintjack, yer not a feckin Gentleman. Cause if ya were, ya wouldn't be a hangin about with the likes of us.

ONE SHOT. He has a point, Saintjack.

FINN BEGONE. So, if ya don't mind, tell us what a miracle kiss is all about, because I've never had one, and I don't think One Shot has had one either.

ONE SHOT. That's right, Saintjack, never had the pleasure.

SAINTJACK. First, she kissed me and then she ... opened her mouth.

FINN BEGONE. And ya still tinkin it's the Madonna?

ONE SHOT. Hush Finn! And then you opened yours, go on.

SAINTJACK. Was I supposed to do that? That explains her twinklin. Then she put her tongue in me mouth.

FINN BEGONE. The mother of God French kissed ya? Did ya tink she was givin ya holy communion?

SAINTJACK. Oh, Merciful God, that's a mortal sin. I'm gonna die.

ONE SHOT. Then what happened?

SAINTJACK. I don't remember. I'm bound for the eternal flames!

FINN BEGONE. Ya don't remember? How the hell could ya forget?

SAINTJACK. I was confused. Did you ever have a tongue in your mouth? It's a very disconcertin thing. What do you do with it? Chew it? That can't be right. I couldn't think. Confusion reigned all over me.

ONE SHOT. It started to rain?

SAINTJACK. I think she might have wrapped a leg around me.

ONE SHOT. One or two?

SAINTJACK. I don't remember. Maybe she didn't.

FINN BEGONE. Oh feck.

SAINTJACK. And then the miracle part started.

FINN BEGONE. Whoa! Here we go.

SAINTJACK. I have to go to confession.

ONE SHOT. Tell us about the miracle part.

FINN BEGONE. Yeah, don't leave nuthin out.

SAINTJACK. Well, I, I began to stir.

FINN BEGONE. What were ya stirin?

ONE SHOT. It's a figure of speech, ya spit-wad.

THE MIRACLE OF BALLYDONAL

SAINTJACK. I began to stir - to have feelings I never felt before.

ONE SHOT. What kind of feelings?

SAINTJACK. Special. I don't remember.

FINN BEGONE. How could ya not remember?

SAINTJACK. I was disoriented. I was still tryin to figure out what to do with that tongue. There were parts of me that took on a life of their own. I had no control. I remember a struggle to find ... somethin.

FINN BEGONE. See, if he listened to me and tied a string on it, ...

SAINTJACK. It was miraculous. And then, before ya can say, "Bob's yer uncle," the miracle ended. The vision got up and faded away, twinklin all the way.

ONE SHOT. "Got up?" So you were laying down? You did say, "got up?"

FINN BEGONE. That's what he said, One Shot, I heard em wit me own ears.

ONE SHOT. Saintjack, what is this twinkling you're on about?

SAINTJACK. It was a sound, a joyous sound.

FINN BEGONE. Like a moan?

SAINTJACK. I said joyous.

FINN BEGONE. Saintjack, ya wouldn't be knowin this, but a moan can be joyous.

ONE SHOT. Was it like laughter? Laughter is joyous.

FINN BEGONE. Yeah, or maybe it was a giggle. (*Saintjack looks to the heavens.*)

SAINTJACK. Oh, Holy God, is it mine? Please send me a sign. (*At the SOUND of a harp glissando, a tight, blue, BACK-LIGHT silhouettes a female in the upstage arch. Her face is not lit. She is wearing a shawl on her head, shoulders and arms. The back lit fog creates an aura around her. Her shawl obscures the baby in her arm. Saintjack sees her - The Madonna. He falls to his knees.*)

SAINTJACK. Thank you, Jaysus (*One Shot and Finn Begone notice Saintjack. They look up and see the apparition. They also fall to their knees. All bow their heads. Lights – slow fade out*)

THE PLAY IS NOT OVER!! TO FIND OUT HOW IT ENDS—

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