

University of AL- Muthanna
College of Education for Humanities
Department of English
Second Year/ 1st course

English Drama

Introduction to Drama

One Act Play

J. M. Synge

Riders to the Sea

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Introduction to Drama

Drama:- is a literary composition involving conflict, action crises and atmosphere designed to be acted on the stage before an audience. The Greek word for “deed” or “action” is “dram”.

Drama has two-fold nature;

- ❖ **Literature:** the printed text of the play.
- ❖ **Theater:** the actual production of the text on the stage.

Elements of Drama

- ***Playwright***: the author of a play
- ***Setting***: identifies the time and place in which the events occur.
- ***Characters or actors***: are the people in the play and thus considered as the principal material in a drama.



- ***Script:*** the written pages of a play.
Scripts are divided into:-

- **Acts-**

- long sections of a play, made up of multiple scenes, usually designed to separate the play into its main parts and to give the audience a “break” from the performance.

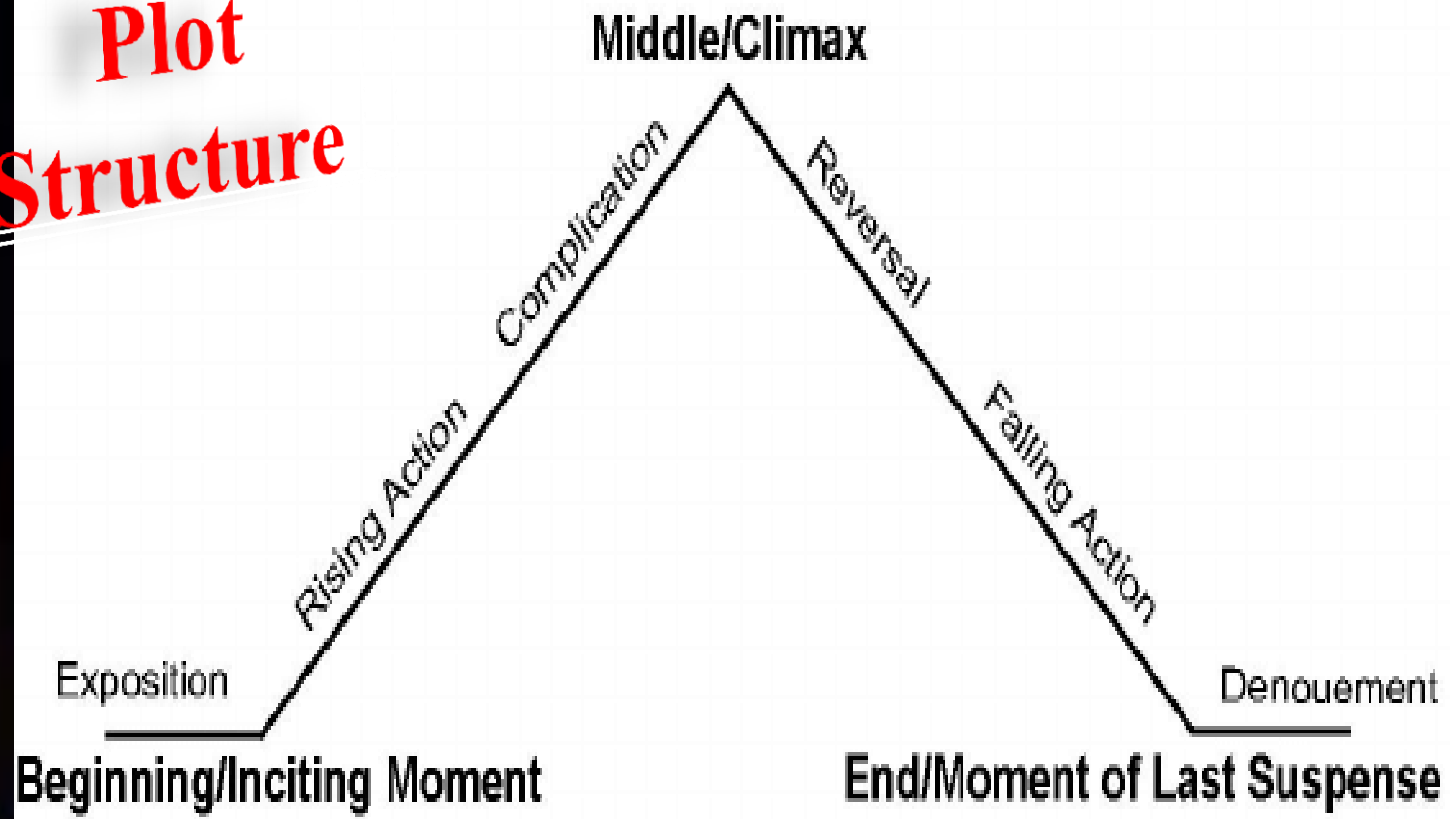
- **Scenes-**

- shorter sections of a play, usually each scene occurs in one location at a specific time. Multiple scenes make up an act.

- ***Plot***: sets the series of events that form the completeness of the play. It serves as a structural framework which brings the events to a cohesive ***form and sense***.



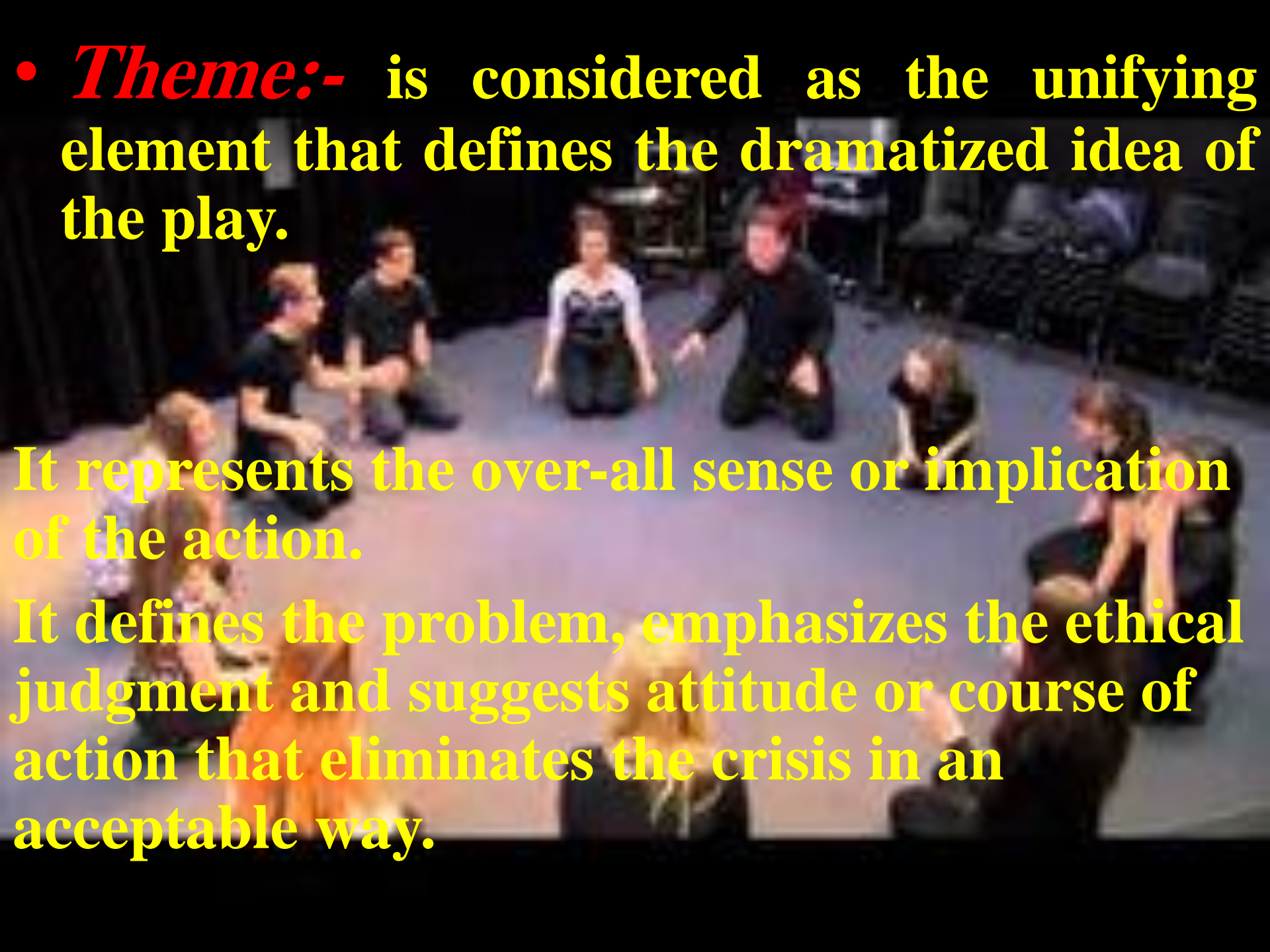
Plot Structure



- ***Theme:-*** is considered as the unifying element that defines the dramatized idea of the play.

It represents the over-all sense or implication of the action.

It defines the problem, emphasizes the ethical judgment and suggests attitude or course of action that eliminates the crisis in an acceptable way.





- ***Style:-*** refers to the mode of expression of the play and points out the playwright's viewpoint.

- ***Symbol:-*** like (names, objects and use of actions) denote many meanings.

- ***Image:-*** a picture or symbol has one meaning.

Conflict:

The internal or external struggle that creates dramatic tension.



Dramatic Speech

Dialogue- two or more people talking

Monologue- one person talking

Soliloquy- one person speaking his thoughts out loud for the audience

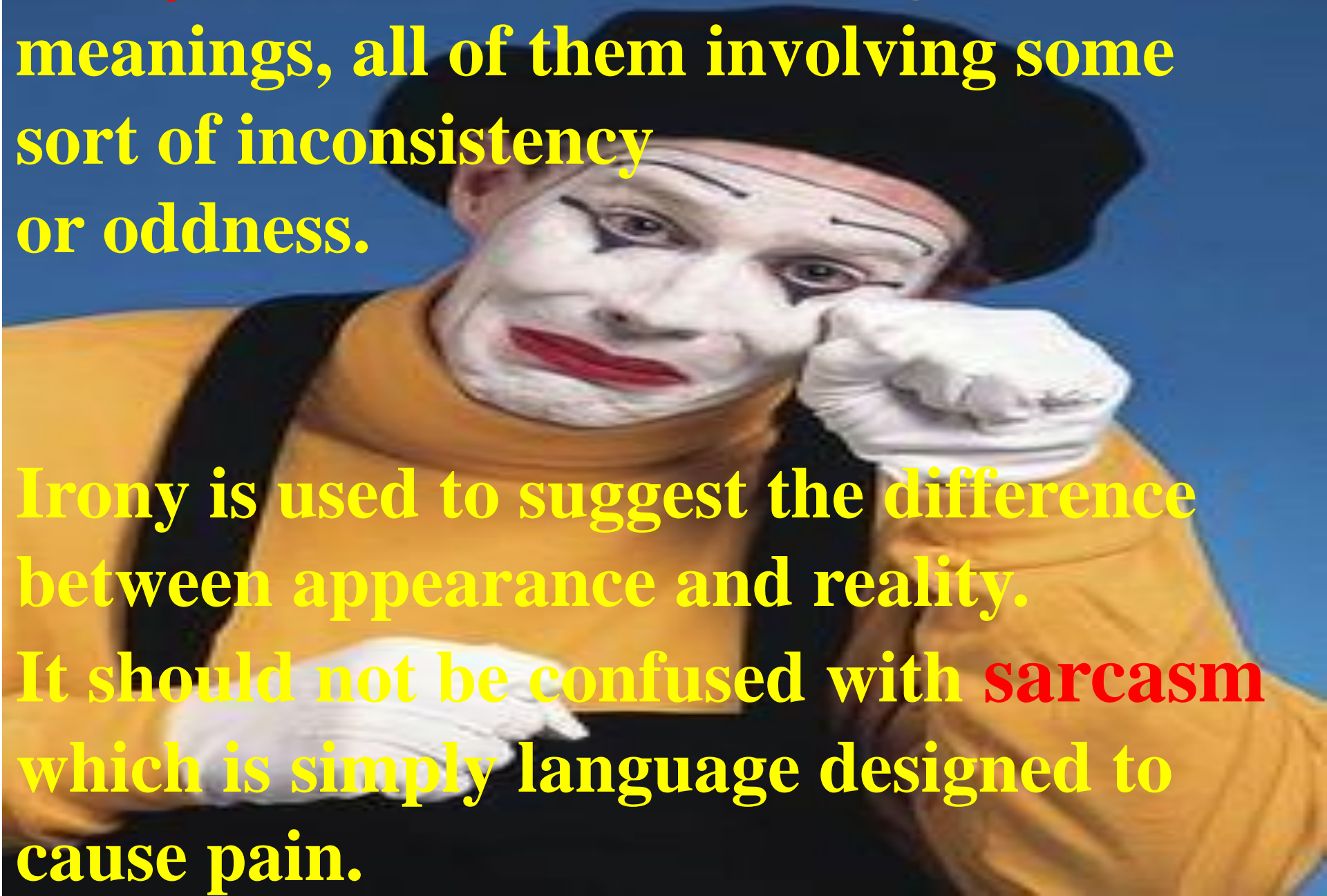
Aside- a character's direct address to the audience, which is not heard by the other characters.



Irony:- is a term with a range of meanings, all of them involving some sort of inconsistency or oddness.

Irony is used to suggest the difference between appearance and reality.

It should not be confused with **sarcasm** which is simply language designed to cause pain.





• *Motifs:-*

are recurring structures, contrasts, or literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes..

Types of Drama



Tragedy

is a form of drama in which events lead to the downfall of the main character, often a person of great significance, like a king or hero.

Comedy

is a form of drama that has a happy ending. Humor comes from the dialogue and situations.



One-Act Plays

It is a complete drama within one act.

- One condensed situation or episode.**
- no minor plots.**
- Characters are few in number.**

The One-Act Play, like the longer drama, should have:-

*beginning,
Middle
and an end.*

The plot may be divided into four stages:

- the Exposition,*
- the Conflict,*
- the Climax*
- and the Denouement.*

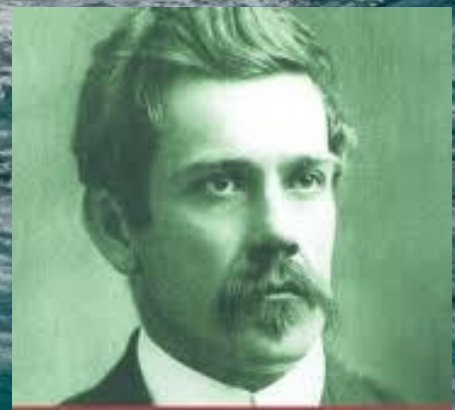


One-Act Play follows the three dramatic unities as far as possible.

The unities are –

- **the unity of time,**
- **unity of place**
- **and the unity of action**

Riders to the Sea (1904)



John Millington Synge

Irish Writer

1871 – 1909

Irish Literary Renaissance (1885-1920)

- Movements of independence from England.
- Renewed **Irish** identity and nationhood.
- Restoration attempts of the **Gaelic** language.



W.B. Yeats, J. M. Synge, Isabella Gregory and Edward Martyn

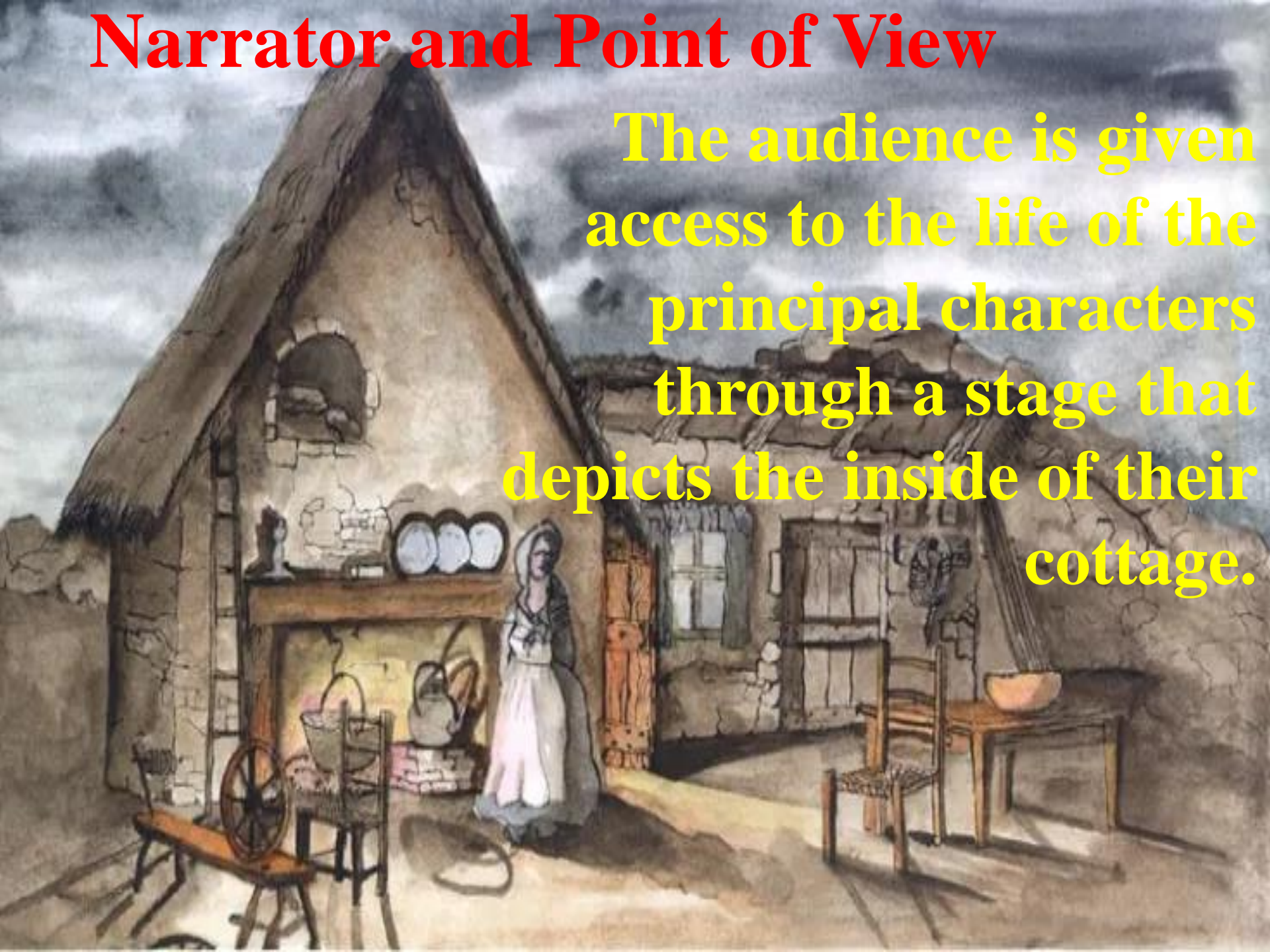
- The Irish Literary Society in London in 1892
- The National Literary Society in Dublin the same year.
- Abbey Theatre in Dublin and the Irish Theater

Literary Elements

- **Genre: Drama**
- **Language: English**
- **Setting and Context:**
Early 20th century: Aran island off coast of Ireland

Narrator and Point of View

The audience is given access to the life of the principal characters through a stage that depicts the inside of their cottage.





Characters

Nora: the youngest daughter

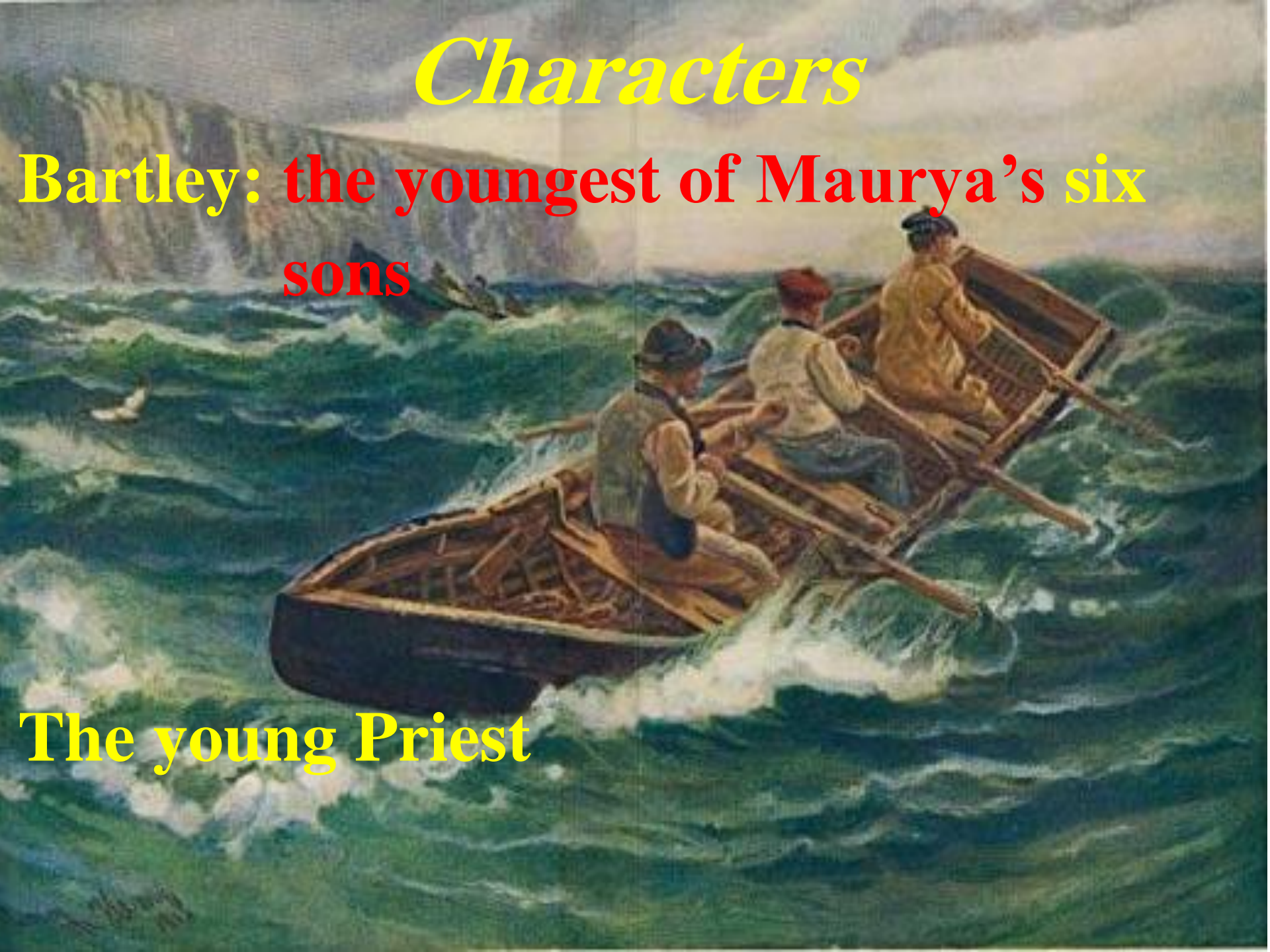
Maurya: the mother,
the protagonist

Cathleen:
the eldest daughter

Characters

Bartley: the youngest of Maurya's six sons

The young Priest



Tone and Mood

- **Gloomy;**
- **tragic;**
- **mournful;**

Conflict

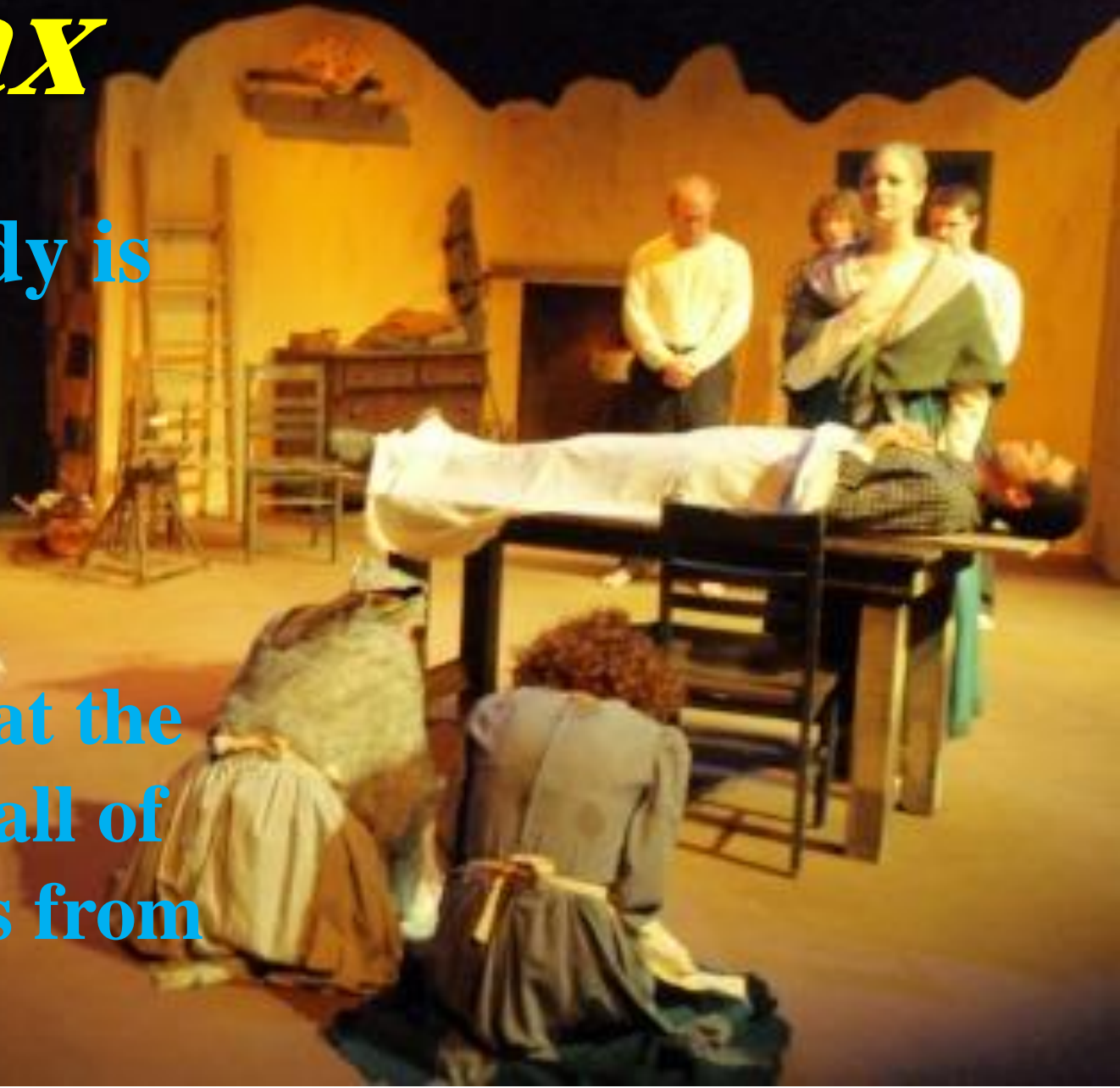
Protagonist: Maurya

Antagonist: the sea



Climax

Bartley's body is brought in, confirming that the sea has taken all of Maurya's sons from her.



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a patterned jacket, is looking out at a stormy sea. The background shows a dark, rocky coastline under a cloudy sky. The text 'Foreshadowing' is written in red in a white box in the upper right corner.

Foreshadowing

- **The talk about the rope and the coffin foreshadow Bartley's death.**
- **The entrance of the old women immediately foreshadow Bartley's death.**
- **Maurya's vision foreshadows Bartley's death.**

Allusions



- Samhein: All Saint's Day (Nov. 1st)
- Connemara: part of the West Coast of Ireland in County Galway
- Donegal in Northwest Ireland

Summary



- **The play begins with Nora, bringing a small bundle and telling Cathleen that these may be the clothes of their brother Michael, who has been suspected drowning in the north. The girls hide the bundle fearing of their mother's sadness.**
- **The young priest told Cathleen that a body of a drowned man was found at Donegal, and the body might be Michael's.**
- **Old Maurya, after nine days of grieving her missing son, Michael, has fallen into a fitful sleep.**

- Maurya has already lost five; four sons, a husband and a father in low to the sea. She is prepared for the funeral for Michael, with whiteboards for his coffin ready at the cottage. Her grieving is now coupled with fear of losing Bartley, her only remaining son.
- The priest says that Bartley insists to go the main land to sell the horses at the fair at Galway to ensure the living of the family.



- Searching for a new rope to make a halter for his horse, Bartley is planning to cross the sea despite Maurya's continuous pleas for not to leave. Bartley leaves with a red mare and a grey pony tied behind.
- Cathleen then notices that he has not taken any food and tells Maurya to walk down to the well to give Bartley his food and to make opportunity for the blessings a mother should have given to the son, an Irish tradition.



- Once Maurya has gone, the girls retrieve the bundle of clothes from the loft to check if they are Michael's. Nora realizes that the stockings are truly Michael's, because she recognizes her own stitching on them. They count the number of stitches and arrive at the conclusion that Michael was dead and buried.
- Maurya comes back more distressed than ever. She tells her daughters that she could not bless Bartley, and in a terrifying vision she saw Michael on the grey pony behind Bartley. She is now sure that Bartley has doomed.



- Maurya's laments are interrupted when islanders bring the body of Bartley into the cottage, claiming that the grey pony knocked Bartley into the sea, where he drowned.
- Troops of Irish women enter the cottage to mourn the big loss of the family, an Irish chant of grief.



- Maurya gets on her knees near Bartley's body and sprinkles holy water on him.
- The whiteboards that were supposed to be used for Michael's coffin will now be used to bury Bartley.
- She finally resigns herself to her fate as she claims that she will finally sleep at night because she no longer has anyone to worry about: all the men of her family have died to the sea.

May they rest in peace, she concludes.



The End



Thanks for your listening