

HUNTINGTON
THEATRE
COMPANY

MOVING IRISH DRAMA

THE SECOND CURRICULUM GUIDE

BY RONAN NOONE
DIRECTED BY CAMPBELL SCOTT



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Standards 3

Guidelines for Attending the Theatre 4

Artists 5

Themes for Writing & Discussion 7

Mastery Assessment 10

For Further Exploration 12

Suggested Activities 15

© Huntington Theatre Company Boston, MA 02115

December 2015

No portion of this curriculum guide may be reproduced without written permission from the Huntington Theatre Company's Department of Education & Community Programs

Inquiries should be directed to:

Donna Glick | Director of Education
djglick@huntingtontheatre.bu.edu

This curriculum guide was prepared for the Huntington Theatre Company by:

Marisa Jones | Education Assistant

with contributions by:

Donna Glick | Director of Education

Alexandra Truppi | Manager for Curriculum & Instruction

Marian Eiben | Education Intern

COMMON CORE STANDARDS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

STANDARDS: Student Matinee performances and pre-show workshops provide unique opportunities for experiential learning and support various combinations of the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts. They may also support standards in other subject areas such as Social Studies and History, depending on the individual play’s subject matter.

Activities are also included in this Curriculum Guide and in our pre-show workshops that support several of the Massachusetts state standards in Theatre. Other arts areas may also be addressed depending on the individual play’s subject matter.

Reading Literature: **Key Ideas and Details 3**

- **Grades 8:** Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.
- **Grades 9-10:** Analyze how complex characters (e.g. those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the themes.
- **Grades 11-12:** Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop related elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

Reading Literature: **Craft and Structure 5**

- **Grades 8:** Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style.
- **Grades 9-10:** Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks), create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
- **Grades 11-12:** Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

Reading Literature: **Craft and Structure 6**

- **Grades 8:** Analyze how differences in the points of view of the characters and the audience or reader (e.g., created through dramatic irony) create such effects as suspense or humor.
- **Grades 9-10:** Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.
- **Grades 11-12:** Analyze a case in which grasping point of view required distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).

Reading Literature: **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 7**

- **Grades 8:** Analyze the extent to which a filmed or live production of a story or drama stays faithful to or departs from the text or script, evaluating the choices made by the director or actors.
- **Grades 9-12:** Analyze multiple interpretations of a story, drama, or poem (e.g. recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry), evaluating how each version interprets the source text (Include at least one play by Shakespeare and one play by an American dramatist).

Reading Literature: **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas 9**

- **Grades 9-10:** Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work.

MASSACHUSETTS STANDARDS IN THEATRE

ACTING

- **1.7** — Create and sustain a believable character throughout a scripted or improvised scene **(By the end of Grade 8)**.
- **1.12** — Describe and analyze, in written and oral form, characters' wants, needs, objectives, and personality characteristics **(By the end of Grade 8)**.
- **1.13** — In rehearsal and performance situations, perform as a productive and responsible member of an acting ensemble (i.e., demonstrate personal responsibility and commitment to a collaborative process) **(By the end of Grade 8)**.
- **1.14** — Create complex and believable characters through the integration of physical, vocal, and emotional choices **(Grades 9-12)**.
- **1.15** — Demonstrate an understanding of a dramatic work by developing a character analysis **(Grades 9-12)**.
- **1.17** — Demonstrate increased ability to work effectively alone and collaboratively with a partner or in an ensemble **(Grades 9-12)**.

READING AND WRITING SCRIPTS

- **2.7** — Read plays and stories from a variety of cultures and historical periods and identify the characters, setting, plot, theme, and conflict **(By the end of Grade 8)**.

- **2.8** — Improvise characters, dialogue, and actions that focus on the development and resolution of dramatic conflicts **(By the end of Grade 8)**.
- **2.11** — Read plays from a variety of genres and styles; compare and contrast the structure of plays to the structures of other forms of literature **(Grades 9-12)**.

TECHNICAL THEATRE

- **4.6** — Draw renderings, floor plans, and/or build models of sets for a dramatic work and explain choices in using visual elements (line, shape/form, texture, color, space) and visual principals (unity, variety, harmony, balance, rhythm) **(By the end of Grade 8)**.
- **4.13** — Conduct research to inform the design of sets, costumes, sound, and lighting for a dramatic production **(Grades 9-12)**.

CONNECTIONS

- **Strand 6: Purposes and Meanings in the Arts** — Students will describe the purposes for which works of dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and architecture were and are created, and, when appropriate, interpret their meanings **(Grades PreK-12)**.
- **Strand 10: Interdisciplinary Connections** — Students will apply their knowledge of the arts to the study of English language arts, foreign languages, health, history and social science, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering **(Grades PreK-12)**.

AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE

Attending live theatre is a unique experience with many valuable educational and social benefits. To ensure that all audience members are able to enjoy the performance, please take a few minutes to discuss the following audience etiquette topics with your students before you come to the Huntington Theatre Company.

- How is attending the theatre similar to and different from going to the movies? What behaviors are and are not appropriate when seeing a play? Why?
- Remind students that because the performance is live, the audience's behavior and reactions will affect the actors' performances. No two audiences are exactly the same, and therefore no two performances are exactly the same — this is part of what makes theatre so special! Students' behavior should reflect the level of performance they wish to see.
- Theatre should be an enjoyable experience for the audience. It is absolutely all right to applaud when appropriate and laugh at the funny moments. Talking and calling out during the performance, however, are not allowed. Why might this be? Be sure to mention that not only would the people seated around them be able to hear their conversation, but the actors on stage could hear them, too. Theatres are constructed to carry sound efficiently!
- Any noise or light can be a distraction, so please remind students to make sure their cell phones are turned off (or better yet, left at home or at school!). Texting, photography, and video recording are prohibited. Food, gum, and drinks should not be brought into the theatre.
- Students should sit with their group as seated by the Front of House staff and should not leave their seats once the performance has begun.



Ronan Noone

THE PLAYWRIGHT: RONAN NOONE

Ronan Noone, the son of an engineer and a housewife, was born in Northern Ireland on April 7, 1970. He began writing as a freelance journalist while still a student at Galway University where a professor told him that he was “too flowery and lyrical for journalism.” At the age of 24, Noone made the decision to immigrate to the United States and continued writing (mostly poetry) while working as a bartender on Martha’s Vineyard. It was at this time that he began working on *The Lepers of Bastille*, a play that touched on the difficult topic of sexual abuse in the Catholic Church and explored the complicity of church communities in the hiding and enabling of these horrific crimes. Noone submitted *The Lepers of Bastille* with his application to Boston University’s MFA graduate program in playwriting, which led to his being named to the first cohort of Huntington Playwriting Fellows in 2003. Two of his plays, *The Atheist* (about the industry of tabloid journalism) and *Brendan* (portraying the struggles of an Irish American) were produced at the Huntington in 2007.

Similar to his own life, Noone’s plays often combine strands of Irish and American experiences to explore universal themes. Noone once contrasted the two countries by saying: “In Ireland, the glass is always half empty . . . In America, it’s always half full.” If that is true, then Noone has taken *Long Day’s Journey Into Night* — one of the greatest, but also darkest, plays by an Irish-American playwright — and remade it with an American, “glass half full” approach, propelling the immigrant’s long journey into light rather than night.

QUESTIONS:

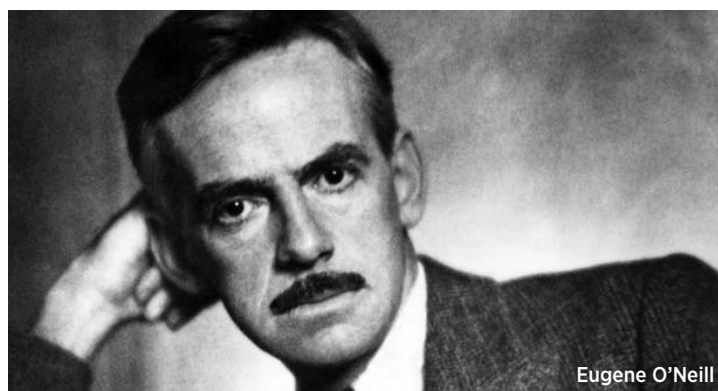
1. Do you think *The Second Girl* is an Irish play? An American play? Or something else?
2. The Huntington Theatre Company has produced two other plays by Noone: *The Atheist* and *Brendan*. Compare and contrast these plays with *The Second Girl*.
3. Ronan Noone was a member of the 2003-2005 cohort of Huntington Playwriting Fellows. Research this program. What are its objectives? What criteria does a writer need to meet in order to apply? In addition to Noone, which Fellows have had their work produced by the Huntington Theatre Company?

EUGENE O’NEILL — A LONG DAY’S JOURNEY FOR *THE SECOND GIRL*

Inspired by the great Irish-American playwright, Eugene O’Neill, Ronan Noone imagined the world downstairs in O’Neill’s masterpiece *Long Day’s Journey into Night* when conceiving and writing his own play, *The Second Girl*. Both plays take place over the course of one day in the Tyrone family’s Connecticut summer home in 1912. O’Neill’s play focused on the Tyrones, an upper-class family struggling with alcoholism and drug addiction. Noone’s play looks at the servants living downstairs who have their own struggles and passions. *The Second Girl* is a stand-alone production that can be enjoyed even by those unfamiliar with *Long Day’s Journey into Night*, but together they present a powerful contrast between two social spheres that intersect not only physically, but also thematically, in ways that neither the Tyrones nor their servants even realize.

Cathleen, the “second girl” for whom Noone’s play is named, was first introduced in *Long Day’s Journey into Night*. She is the young maid, an Irish immigrant working under the care and direction of her Aunt Bridget, the family’s cook. O’Neill describes Cathleen in his stage directions as a one-dimensional character: “amiable, ignorant, clumsy, and possessed by a dense, well-meaning stupidity.” O’Neill used the character of Cathleen primarily for the purpose of giving Mary Tyrone, mistress of the household, the opportunity to speak at length. As a result, the character was never fully developed. The other principal characters in *The Second Girl*, Bridget and the chauffeur, Jack, are referenced in O’Neill’s play but never appear on stage. Noone, however, puts them at center of his play and shows that their working-class lives are just as complex and compelling as the upper-class lives of the Tyrones.

Long Day’s Journey into Night is considered an autobiographical work, as it closely resembles O’Neill’s own life story. Similar to Mr. Tyrone, O’Neill’s father, James, was an actor, best known for his portrayal of the *Count of Monte Christo* in the stage adaptation of the Alexander Dumas novel. His mother Ella, like Mary Tyrone, followed her husband around the country on the theatre circuit with her children in tow, putting her love and support for her husband ahead of her own desire for a more stable home life. Like the Tyrones, the O’Neills spent summers at their home in



Eugene O’Neill



Eugene O'Neill and his third wife, Carlotta.

Connecticut, overlooking a river. And, sadly, the struggles that plagued the Tyrones were also true-to-life: O'Neill's mother developed a morphine addiction that O'Neill blamed on her nomadic lifestyle; his older brother James died of alcoholism at age 45; and O'Neill himself suffered from tuberculosis and alcoholism.

As a young man, O'Neill dropped out of Princeton after only a year of study and spent the next six years traveling the globe without money, schooling, or career prospects — a time he referred to as his “life” education. It was during this time that he became an alcoholic, attempted suicide, and contracted tuberculosis. After recovering in a sanatorium, O'Neill felt he was given another chance at life and he began writing plays with serious themes, often religious in nature. Through a connection of his father's, he took a playwriting class at Harvard University and then joined a group of friends to create a theatre company in Provincetown, Massachusetts. With some local success the group launched the Playwright's Theatre in New York City's Greenwich Village. In O'Neill's late 20s he was a prolific writer with a growing reputation. His play *Beyond the Horizon* premiered on Broadway to critical acclaim.

While his plays received some attention in the United States, O'Neill's work was even more popular abroad, especially in Sweden, where he premiered several of his plays. In 1936, the Swedish Academy conferred on him the Nobel Prize for Literature,

the first time ever that such an honor was bestowed on an American playwright. Many critics have argued that O'Neill, with his uncompromisingly realistic portrayals of modern life, broke traditional boundaries of what was considered appropriate for theatrical performance and paved the way for other playwrights to do the same.

While his career flourished, O'Neill's personal life struggled. He married three times and fathered three children. His son Eugene Jr. committed suicide, and his son Shane lived a tortured emotional life and was reportedly a heroin addict. O'Neill's only daughter, Oona, was estranged from her father after marrying Charlie Chaplin, the famous actor and director who was, at the time of their marriage, the same age as O'Neill. Upon reflection of his early life, O'Neill wrote *Long Day's Journey into Night* and presented it to his wife on their anniversary. The following note accompanied the manuscript:

For Carlotta, on our 12th Wedding Anniversary

Dearest: I give you the original script of this play of old sorrow, written in tears and blood. A sadly inappropriate gift, it would seem, for a day celebrating happiness. But you will understand. I mean it as a tribute to your love and tenderness which gave me the faith in love that enabled me to face my dead at last and write this play — with deep pity and understanding and forgiveness for all the four haunted Tyrones.

Theses twelve years, Beloved One, have been a Journey into Light — into love. You know my gratitude. And my love!

Gene

Tao House

July 22, 1941

Drawing on his turbulent family experiences, O'Neill was prone to writing about topics with which he had a personal connection — *Long Day's Journey into Night*, his most acclaimed work, is in fact his personal history. The power of this family drama inspired many theatre artists and playwrights who came after, including Ronan Noone and his play *The Second Girl*.

QUESTIONS:

1. For a playwright like O'Neill, what are the advantages of “writing what you know?” Is it possible to write well about things with which you have no personal experience?
2. Do you think James and Ella O'Neill would enjoy watching a production of *Long Day's Journey into Night*? Why or why not?
3. Was O'Neill fair to his parents and brother when he used their lives as source material for his play? How does he portray himself? Would you be willing to publicly share your family's personal history in a literary or dramatic work? Why or why not?
4. Why do you think Ronan Noone was inspired by Eugene O'Neill's play, *Long Day's Journey into Night*? Why might he have been particularly drawn to the lives of the people in the Tyrone family's kitchen?

THEMES FOR WRITING & DISCUSSION



LETTING GO

Cathleen and Bridget struggle in different ways to let go of the past. Cathleen desperately misses her fiancé in Ireland and is determined to return to him. Bridget knows she cannot return to her home country, but nevertheless feels controlled by her past. “I made a mistake a while back that determines my life from now on,” she says. Jack, however, refuses to accept her determinism. He urges Bridget to “[w]rap your arms around me and let yourself be happy for once. Give up.” He is not asking Bridget to give up on life — rather, he wants her to let go of her old life and embrace a new one, even if it may not be the life she had imagined.

By the end of the play, Cathleen has committed to letting go of her past, vowing that she will stay in America and “seek out an adventure [she] never could have had” back in Ireland. Bridget, still outwardly resisting Jack’s advances, also seems poised to let go of the past and “eke out a life, a better one,” which, earlier in the play, she calls “the noble pursuit.” Unlike in *Long Day’s Journey into Night*, where Mary Tyrone famously asserts that “[t]he past is the present ... and the future, too,” Noone allows in *The Second Girl* for at least the possibility, if one dares to seize it, of a future not defined by the past.

QUESTIONS:

1. Do Bridget and Cathleen idealize their past? If so, why would their doing so make it increasingly difficult for them to move forward?
2. In what way are the Tyrone family holding onto the past? Why?
3. Why is it easy for some people to get stuck in a rut or allow stubbornness to prevent them from seeing “the big picture”? Can you think of a situation in which you were caught up in an emotion only later to realize that you were wrong or overreacted?

CYCLES

The Tyrone family marks the time by when their food arrives upon the table. This routine is a never-ending circle in which breakfast arrives as expected and dinner is served late, a symbolic daily occurrence of the “long day’s journey” that plagues the family dialogue and is a constant nuisance for the household staff. Noone writes of Cathleen, “She despises the constant whining and desperate idea to understand each other that the Tyrone family seem to display.” It is the same stories and narratives told over and over, the same arguments that repeat without end that the household staff must constantly work around, creating endless stress in the kitchen. For Bridget the day starts with a headache and remorse. She must pull herself together to complete her daily tasks. She re-commits herself to God and her work and abstaining from the things that could bring her pleasure — alcohol and Jack Smythe.

As the conversation of the day repeats itself and the usual problems and issues arise, Bridget is beaten down. Bridget cannot keep herself from drinking, fighting with Cathleen or carrying on with Jack. Each day ends the same way, with each of the staff feeling defeated and dinner served late. This action sequence mirrors that of the Tyrone family upstairs, who suffer from old heartbreaks, substance abuse, loneliness, and regret. The day drags on until everyone can finally go up to bed.

QUESTIONS:

1. Describe Bridget’s speech patterns. Are there any themes she repeats?
2. What behavioral patterns characterize Bridget and Jack’s relationship?
3. Describe one event in Cathleen’s life that broke the cycle of repetition in her day.



A woman working in her kitchen in 1900.

4. In what way does your life follow a pattern? Do you mark the time by when you eat meals? Do you follow any daily rituals to help you wake up and prepare for the day or to wind down and fall sleep? Do you follow a strict daily routine? If so, how are you affected when unexpected events disrupt your routine?

HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS

"You're the closest thing I have to home. And to have you here is like having home beside me." – Bridget

Cathleen tells Bridget that "[t]here are three types" of Irish immigrants in America: those "that can set down roots," those that "wander," and those that "can never adapt, that never should have left, that will always be lost and alone in any place that's not home." Cathleen accuses Bridget of being the last type. But the play reveals that neither woman is typecast: both have moments where they long to return home to Ireland, moments where they seem destined to wander in America, and moments where they seem poised to embrace America as their new home.

Cathleen gave up everything and risked her life to join her Aunt Bridget in the United States, yet she spends most of her time talking about home. She misses her family, her fiancé, and her home in Ireland, and is set on returning to them. Noone describes Cathleen as "a proud confident girl" who "considers her sojourn in America an adventure and not a permanent relocation."

Bridget is more practically minded. Her situation is better as an immigrant than it would be in her native Ireland. "It's the way it is," she says of her home country. "That country was never made for too

many to live in it. Always reaches capacity and after that it forces us out." Bridget saw leaving for America as her best chance at a better life for herself and a way to send money back to her son Daniel. Yet Noone describes her as a wanderer: "She already feels removed from her home, Ireland, but for whatever reasons she has never been able to put down roots in America and this displacement leaves her stranded at times, especially in moments of isolation."

After Cathleen receives a letter from her fiancé in which he ends their engagement, her attitude about making a life in America shifts. She wants to start a new chapter and a new journey — to live her life to the full. And with a keen sense of her First Amendment rights, she envisions herself embracing her freedoms and pursuing a life on the stage. "He says I have it!" declares Cathleen after an impromptu performance for Mr. Tyrone, who gave her a \$2 reward for her talent. In this moment, Cathleen makes an important decision:

I'm going to stay here. And I'm going to make it my home. It is my decision and why wouldn't I? All the while here and [Bridget] telling me to stay in America and to be putting notions of return away and now I have nothing to go back to. Why wouldn't I stay? But stay on my terms. And seek out an adventure I could never have had there and if I die doing it I'll die proud having lived on my terms for once in my life.

Bridget, in contrast, resists adventure. She claims to have "hardened" herself to living away from home and says she would prefer to stay that way, "hard and lonely, and not to be open to the vulnerabilities inside me." Jack, though, seems determined to soften Bridget's stoic attitude. At the end of the play, it is anyone's guess whether Cathleen or Bridget will find a way to set down roots and make America home.

QUESTIONS:

1. Who is best equipped to make America her home: Bridget or Cathleen? Do you think either will ever consider herself American?
2. Do the Tyrone's make their household servants feel at home? Investigate the character of Mary Tyrone in *Long Day's Journey into Night*. What is Mary's attitude about the concept of making a home? How closely does her own life match the ideal?
3. What makes a place "home"? Is it simply where you live or is there more to the idea?
4. Research your own family's history. What cities, states, and countries has your family called home over the years? How has each place shaped your family's cultural traditions and identity?

LOVE AND LOSS

Bridget and Jack both know the pain of losing loved ones. Bridget was abandoned by her lover, James Callaghan, who left her with a child she had no means to support in her native country. She became "like a leper in [her] own village" and ultimately had to leave for America without her son. Even though she faithfully sends money back to her family in Ireland, they barely communicate with her anymore. "My heart is broken," she says,

“and I’d be better off dead.” Her greatest heartbreak is the loss of the opportunity to raise her son, to spend birthdays with him, and to see him in the flesh and know that he’s alive and doing well.

Jack’s story is similarly tragic. His wife has died, leaving him a widower who is “almost always aware of how fragile we are and how finite our time.” But he is also determined to find love again — with Bridget. Unfortunately, Bridget has made the decision that romance will not be part of her life, and abstains as an act of penance towards God. A romantic relationship derailed her life once and she will not allow that to happen again. Although Jack is respectful of Bridget’s loss, he still pursues her in the most gentlemanly way possible, despite her rude behavior.

Cathleen, too, experiences loss. Her beloved fiancé Michael, whom she regards as the love of her life, suddenly casts her aside for a woman with property. Cathleen cannot understand why anyone would choose financial security over love. She, like Bridget, is heartbroken. But her anger, as deep as the sorrow she feels, propels her forward and gives her momentum to accept the loss of love. That is the greatest challenge facing all three characters in *The Second Girl*: to overcome love’s loss and dare to find love again, knowing the pain they ultimately risk in doing so.

QUESTIONS:

1. At the end of the play, do you think Bridget and Jack have a chance at a romantic relationship? Is there reason for Jack to hope? Why or why not?
2. Would Cathleen have a better shot at happiness if she returned to Ireland to be with Michael? Or is it in her best interest to move forward with her life in America?
3. Out of the principal characters in the play, who has best dealt with the unfair loss of love he/she has so far experienced? Are some instances of loss more difficult to process than others? Who seems to have the best strategy for coping with his or her pain?
4. Have you ever experienced the end of a relationship with a family member or other loved one? Compare and contrast your experiences and coping mechanisms with those of one of the characters in *The Second Girl*.

ADDICTION AND SELF-DESTRUCTION

Bridget is fighting an ongoing battle that she cannot win. While Bridget tells Cathleen that she thinks she should drink less, her own actions expose her as a suffering alcoholic. “Tippling away at the drink” is her tool to get through the pain in her life and the drudgery of her work. She numbs her personal torment and escapes with a bottle in hand.

She is not the only one in the house with this problem. All of the Tyrone men drink, especially Jamie, the oldest son. But the most problematic addiction stems from Mary Tyrone’s overuse of a prescription medication. Mary has been addicted to morphine since the birth of her younger son, Edmund. Everyone in the house, her family and the help, can tell when Mary has taken this medication because it clouds her mind and influences her behavior. Both Bridget and Mary Tryone find themselves worn down by life



and submitting to their addictions. They allow their substance abuse to fill holes in their lives, blurring painful memories.

When Bridget and Mary have given in to their addiction that they are no longer capable of keeping up any kind of façade — they wear their disappointment and hurt for all to see. Cathleen and Jack are forced to tolerate Bridget’s dependency on alcohol. Jack does his best to respect Bridget and not take advantage of her when she is inebriated, but Cathleen’s patience, however, is running thin. She is completely aware of her aunt’s illness and wishes she would stop drinking altogether. She lost her uncle, Bridget’s brother, to this devastating disease. Bridget’s alcoholism therefore creates tension between them. Bridget also serves as a poor role model for her young niece, who toward the end of the play finds herself in some unflattering situations as a result of drinking too much.

QUESTIONS:

1. How has Bridget’s drinking negatively affected her life?
2. What makes substance abuse illnesses different from say other chronic illnesses like asthma or cancer? What are the difficulties facing the caretakers of a drug addict?
3. Do you think it is simply a matter of “willpower” to overcome an addiction? What is the process of breaking the habit?
4. In *The Addicted Brain: Why We Abuse Drugs, Alcohol and Nicotine*, author and neuroscientist Michael Kuhar shows the ways in which long term substance abuse fundamentally changes the brain and its ability to function. As a result, breaking the pattern of abuse becomes increasingly difficult. Stopping the disease early is the best chance you have at controlling it for life. **If you or someone you care about is suffering from drug addiction, please consider contacting Project Know (projectknow.com), an online resource. Counselors are available, online or by phone, 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week.**

RELATED WORKS & RESOURCES

Other plays by Ronan Noone include:

Brendan. Dramatists Play Service, 2009.

The Atheist. Dramatists Play Service, 2009.

The Blowin of Baile Gall. Dramatists Play Service, 2006.

The Lepers of Baile Baiste. Samuel French, 1999.

Explore the following works as supplements to this literary and curriculum guide.

Barrett, James. *The Irish Way: Becoming American in the Multiethnic City*. Penguin Books, 2013 (Reprint Edition).

Bartoletti, Susan Campbell. *Black Potatoes: The Story of the Great Irish Famine*. Hmh Books For Young Readers, 2005 (Reprint Edition).

Dezell, Mauren. *Irish America: Coming into Clover*. Anchor, 2002.

Gaynor, Hazel. *The Girl Who Came Home: A Novel of the Titanic*. William Morrow, 2014.

Kuhar, Michael. *The Addicted Brain: Why We Abuse Drugs, Alcohol and Nicotine*. Pearson Ft Press, 2011.

Lethbridge, Lucy. *Servants*. W.W. Norton & Company Ltd, 2014 .

Mccourt, Frank. *Angela's Ashes*. Harper Perennial, 2005.

O'Neill, Eugene. *Ah, Wilderness*. Kessinger Publishing LLC, 2010.

O'Neill, Eugene. *Long Day's Journey into Night*. Yale University Press; 2nd Edition, 2002.

Powell, Margaret. *Below Stairs*. St. Martin's Press, 1968.

Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. Folger Shakespeare Library, 2004 (Reprint Edition).

Standage, Tom. *An Edible History Of Humanity*. Walker & Company, 2010.

Uris, Leon. *Trinity*. Doubleday, 1967.



Philip Seymour Hoffman and Vanessa Redgrave in the Broadway production of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (2003)

MASTERY ASSESSMENT

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

1. Describe the setting of the play *The Second Girl*.
2. List all of the characters and one interesting trait about each that you learned from the stage directions at the beginning of the play.
3. As the lights come up on Bridget, why is she kneeling? Is she sick? Or is something else troubling her?
4. Who walks in on Bridget in the kitchen? What were they talking about the day before?
5. For what reason does Bridget not respect “explorers”?
6. Jack implies that he and Bridget are more than co-workers. What is the nature of their relationship?
7. What is Cathleen reading? Why are Bridget and Jack annoyed that she’s doing so?
8. What does Jack demand in order to leave the kitchen and be out of the women’s way?
9. Why does Bridget think Cathleen’s behavior is unprofessional?
10. What is Bridget’s excuse for being up late at night, drinking?
11. What does Bridget believe her niece is lacking, despite her “quick mind”?
12. How is Cathleen trying to “move up in station”? How did Bridget find out?
13. Why does Bridget think that Cathleen should be grateful to her?
14. What happened to Bridget’s brother? Why does Cathleen remind her of it?
15. Who does Cathleen address on her way into the dining room for breakfast?

SCENE TWO

1. To whom does Bridget compose a letter? What does it reveal about her relationship with this person? Who is Daniel?
2. What does Cathleen think of the Tyrone boys?
3. Describe Cathleen’s position on First Amendment Rights.
4. What cruel remark does Bridget make for which she then immediately apologizes? What shipwreck did Cathleen survive?
5. From which play does Cathleen recite a monologue?
6. When did Cathleen fall in love?
7. Who is Michael and why does Bridget dislike talk of him?
8. What recent incident between Jack and Bridget does he recount to Cathleen?
9. What advice does Cathleen give Bridget as to how she could improve her looks?
10. Is Bridget religious?

SCENE THREE

1. What has Jack asked Bridget to do with him and what is her answer?
2. What does RC mean and why does Jack's religious preferences matter to Bridget?
3. According to Bridget, how is Jack vindictive every time he's been hurt?
4. Explain Bridget's rationale for refusing Jack's advances. What is the "deal" Bridget has struck with God?

SCENE FOUR

1. What has Cathleen received from home? How does she feel about its arrival?
2. After lunch, where is Mrs. Tyrone? Venture a guess as to what is wrong with her.
3. What are the two letters that Bridget has received from home during the many years she has been sending money back to her family?
4. Whose birthday is it? Why does Bridget think she doesn't receive letters from her family anymore?
5. Who reads the letter? Who wrote the letter? What news from home does Cathleen receive?
6. What is Bridget's explanation for why Cathleen is worth an "acre of land and a small house"?
7. Who is James Callaghan?

ACT TWO

SCENE FIVE

1. How is Bridget feeling at the opening of Act Two?
2. What does Bridget imply about the Tyrones' satisfaction with Jack's work? Why does Bridget think Jack finds means of compensation? Why does her response make Jack angry?
3. Does the Tyrone family live year-round in the house?
4. Why does Bridget believe Cathleen's broken engagement is a "blessing"?
5. What excuse does Bridget think they should make for Cathleen's red eyes?
6. Describe Cathleen's state of mind by the end of scene five.

SCENE SIX

1. Why has Mr. Tyrone delayed lunch?
2. What are Cathleen's regrets, specifically with regard to her fiancée and the Titanic?
3. How does Mrs. Tyrone deal with her troubles?
4. What does Bridget do with her drink at the end of the scene?

SCENE SEVEN

1. Where has Jack taken Cathleen to get her mind off her problems?
2. What does Cathleen think of Mrs. Tyrone? If Cathleen were in her position, how would she live differently?

3. What kind of business does Jack want to start?
4. Why does Cathleen say she kissed Jack?
5. How does Jack defend Michael? Is Cathleen moved by his reasoning?
6. Who is the visitor that arrives at the house?

SCENE EIGHT

1. Why is Jack in a rush? What does Bridget want to talk about?
2. What has Bridget asked Jack to do for her while he's in town with Mrs. Tyrone?

SCENE NINE

1. What has Mrs. Tyrone sent as a gift to Bridget?
2. What excuse does Bridget give to Cathleen for her drinking?
3. With whom has Cathleen been drinking?
4. According to Mr. Tyrone, what are the "three types" of immigrants?
5. Why does Jack think Bridget and Cathleen shouldn't go into town?
6. What present from Cathleen does Jack present to Bridget? Why is this awkward?
7. Why doesn't Bridget want Cathleen serving the meal?
8. As she's serving the food, what out-of-the-ordinary thing does Cathleen do for the Tyrones? How does Mr. Tyrone respond?
9. What big life decision does Cathleen announce after her performance?
10. How would Cathleen like to make a living?

SCENE TEN

1. Where has Bridget been? What's happened to Cathleen? Why are Bridget and Jack worried about her?
2. According to Jack, how does Bridget look?
3. How did Bridget offend Cathleen?
4. What does Jack mean when he says, "You're bitter and I'll speak the truth. What are you protecting her from, so she can end up like you"?
5. What ultimatum does Bridget give Jack?

SCENE ELEVEN

1. What happened to Cathleen in the night?
2. What shocking place did Cathleen end up?
3. What secret does Cathleen ask Bridget to keep from Jack?
4. In the final moments of the play, what does Bridget take down from the shelf? What scene does she remember from long ago?



FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

RISE OF THE SERVANTS' STORIES

First published in 1968, *Below Stairs* is Margaret Powell's important memoir of her life and service as a kitchen maid in England during the early 20th century. Her childhood was spent in utter poverty; her mother was a char worker and father was a handyman who was unemployed for much of the year, stretching every penny to feed and provide for their seven children. Yet Powell had fond memories of her childhood, such as playing on the beach or visiting the neighbor's farm. As the oldest daughter, Powell was charged with the care of her younger siblings, feeding them breakfast as her parents had long left the house, and making sure everyone arrived safely at school.

With a strong work ethic, desire to improve her life, and a family that could no longer afford to feed her, Powell went to work as the lowest-status member of the staff household: a kitchen maid. In 1920, at the age of fourteen, she accepted a job in one of the "great houses" of the era and started her workday before dawn, completing her chores long after the master of the household finished his dinner. Despite the demands of her job, Powell never stopped believing in herself or making the most of every opportunity that came her way. Her memoir inspired the wildly popular television programs, "Upstairs, Downstairs" and "Downton Abbey."

"Upstairs, Downstairs" first aired soon after Powell's book was published. The London Weekend Television program was broadcast from 1971 until 1975, depicting the lives of the Bellamy family (the "upstairs") and its household staff (the "downstairs") at 165 Easton Place. The original series spans the time from 1903 to 1930, covering many major historical and political events and captures the major technological advancements and cultural shifts that took place during that period. "Upstairs, Downstairs" was aired again from 2010 to 2012 with Jean Marsh returning to her role as head housekeeper Rose Buck. She was the only cast member to return to the series, which picks up in 1936, 6 years after the original series ended.

Around the same time that "Upstairs, Downstairs" resumed, "Downton Abbey" first premiered. This popular award-winning series created by Julian Fellowes originally aired in the United Kingdom and Ireland in 2010 with its American debut closely following in January 2011 on PBS as part of its Masterpiece Series programming. Set at the fictional British estate of the Earl and Countess of Grantham in Yorkshire in the early 20th century,

"Downton Abbey" depicts the lives of the aristocracy and its servant help under the rule of King George V. Currently in its fifth season, "Downton Abbey" has already portrayed major historical events including the sinking of the RMS Titanic, World War I, the Spanish Influenza pandemic, and the formation of the Irish Free State, as well as many other key moments in world history. The production is filmed at various places of note, including the Highclere Castle in Hampshire, used for most of the interior and exterior shots of the Grantham estate. From period dress to regional dialect, the show strives for authenticity in the portrayal of life in Yorkshire, while certain liberties are taken for the sake of production.

The series, however, is not without criticism. One notable controversy arose when an Irish character was referred to as a "drunken gorilla," a slur that was used during that time period and remains offensive today. The storyline involved a deeply controversial marriage between the Granthams' youngest daughter and the family's Irish chauffeur, who brought his brother to the estate and drew the ire of Lord Grantham's mother. The marriage, which crossed ethnic, social, and religious boundaries, caused a great deal of tension in the house, although the family ultimately came to accept and even rely upon their son-in-law.

Ronan Noone has a knack for selecting topics and themes at the right moment, when they break into the social consciousness and have the potential to be both timely and timeless. "Downton Abbey" is currently the most watched television series in the world and at its core explores the relationship between the upper class and the people who serve them. In *The Second Girl*, Noone also dissects the complex relationship between the house and its servants, and the ways in which the social structure impacts, and is impacted by, the people living within it. Noone could not have orchestrated a better time to open this show as audiences everywhere are eager to hear the stories of the people that made aristocratic houses run.

QUESTIONS:

1. Describe some differences between aristocracy in Great Britain and the American upper class in 1912.
2. Compare and contrast the themes, historical events or characters in *The Second Girl* and the television series "Downton Abbey" or "Upstairs, Downstairs."
3. Are you familiar with "Downton Abbey?" If you've seen it, do you enjoy this television series? Why or why not?

UNDERSTANDING ALLUSIONS: YEATS & SHAKESPEARE

I. "ADAM'S CURSE"

At the beginning of *The Second Girl*, Ronan Noone writes in the stage directions that the character Bridget "is still pretty and with some effort and acceptance of 'Adam's curse' she would turn your head on any street." Noone is alluding to a poem by the great Irish poet William Butler Yeats, entitled "Adam's Curse," in which a beautiful woman explains: "To be born woman is to know / Although they do not talk of it at school / That we must labour to be beautiful." To which the poet responds: "It's certain there is no fine thing / Since Adam's fall but needs much laboring."

QUESTIONS:

1. Read the entire poem. What is this poem about? What is its mood or tone?
2. What is "Adam's curse"?
3. Write a brief summary for each stanza of the poem.
4. Discuss why Bridget does not labor to be beautiful, and whether she should.



The Tempest by
John William Waterhouse

II. THE TEMPEST

During the play, Cathleen recites the following monologue from William Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* for Mr. Tyrone. In the monologue, the character Miranda addresses her father, Prospero, in the midst of a storm

that Prospero has magically raised in an attempt to ground his brother's ship:

If by your art, my dearest father, you have
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.
The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch,
But that the sea, mounting to th' welkin's cheek,
Dashes the fire out. Oh, I have suffered
With those that I saw suffer. A brave vessel
Who had, no doubt, some noble creature in her
Dashed all to pieces. Oh, the cry did knock
Against my very heart! Poor souls, they perished.
Had I been any god of power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth or ere
It should the good ship so have swallowed and
The fraughting souls within her.

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Act I, Scene 2 of *The Tempest* to understand the monologue in context. Re-write it for a person who is not familiar with Shakespeare's plays.
2. Why is Miranda upset? What is Prospero's response to Miranda?
3. Why do you think Cathleen identified with this monologue? In your opinion, would she make a good "Miranda"?



RMS TITANIC

Cathleen is given a second chance at life when she is one of the fortunate souls to escape death when the ship she was traveling on, the RMS (Royal Mail Ship) Titanic, hit an iceberg and sank to the bottom of the ocean. It was the greatest maritime disaster of all time, killing 1,517 people out of the 2,224 that were onboard. Sadly, many of the lifeboats (of which there were simply not enough for all of the passengers) were not filled to capacity. The Titanic is the only ocean liner ever to sink as a result of hitting an iceberg.

The ship, which cost over \$7 million to build, was constructed in Belfast, Ireland by more than 1500 workers. Not only a passenger ship, the Titanic was also intended to move cargo and mail across the Atlantic with travel between Southampton in England, Cherbourg in France, Queenstown in Ireland, and New York City in the United States. The plan had been for the Titanic to make weekly trips across the ocean but her first trip proved to be her last.

QUESTIONS:

1. Compare and contrast the novel *Futility* by Morgan Robertson with the circumstances of the Titanic tragedy. Why is it interesting that this book was published in 1898?
2. The famous American Milton Hershey (founder of the Hershey Company) bought first-class tickets for the Titanic's maiden voyage. What happened to him?
3. What percentage of people from the first-class cabin survived the disaster? Second class? Third class?
4. Cathleen was likely a third-class passenger. What do you think she had to do in order to survive the sink's shipping?
4. Consider the following facts: If the crew had known only 30 seconds earlier, contact between the Titanic and the iceberg could have been avoided (from the time the lookout saw the iceberg to when the Titanic actually hit it spanned a total of 37 seconds); The lifeboat safety drill had been cancelled the day before the ship's sinking; over two-thirds of the lifeboats were removed because of "clutter on the decks." Do you think this tragedy was avoidable or inevitable? Was it a result of incompetence or simply bad luck?



Sarah Bernhardt
by Paul Nadar

SARAH BERNHARDT AND A LIFE ONSTAGE

"You move from the second girl, to housekeeper, to a good man, not some floosy on the stage being gawked at by leersers, drawin' attention and prancin' about, spoutin' made up lines." – Bridget

Sarah Bernhardt, born Rosine Bernard in France in 1844 is considered by many to be the most famous actor

“the world has ever known.” Nicknamed “the Divine Sarah” for her emotional performances and memorable voice, Bernhardt was known for having a flair for the dramatic and lived a full life, both personally and professionally. One of her more over-the-top antics was the period in which she slept in a coffin — she claimed that this act helped her to more fully understand the tragic roles that she would take on. She began acting at an early age and enrolled in the drama school of the Paris Conservatoire when she was 13 years old. Following her training, she was prolific on stage and in film. Even after an injury from which her leg became gangrenous and had to be amputated, Bernhardt never gave up her career as a performer. She also tried her hand at fine arts, studied sculpture and wrote extensively, including plays and her own memoir. She performed all over Europe and in the United States before her death at the age of 78 from kidney failure.

After being jilted by Michael in *The Second Girl*, Cathleen makes up her mind that her future career must be in the theatre. After announcing this decision she declares:

Only then will I return to the sod and whether I’m known or not. I’ll keep my head down and remember with humility from barren lands, the bog and the strand, the people’s faces caught between destitution and hardship eking out a living and finding joy in a dance, a story, a poem and a song and from them I came, and from them I have this ambition.

QUESTIONS:

1. Jack refers to Cathleen as “Sarah Bernhardt.” What did Jack mean by this reference?
2. How does acting make Cathleen feel? Does Mr. Tyrone really believe she is talented? Do you predict that Cathleen’s acting career will be successful? Why or why not?
3. Cathleen believes that acting is a noble profession. Why does she feel this way? Are the arts an important part of your education or your entertainment? What role does a “dance, a story, a poem and a song” play in your life?



19TH & 20TH CENTURY IRISH IMMIGRATION

The Great Potato Famine changed Ireland forever as it ravaged the country and its relationship and political ties with England. Between the years 1845 and 1852, an estimated one million Irish citizens died from starvation and disease as a result of major crop destruction. The loss of the potato was particularly harmful to one segment of the population

(roughly 1/3) who were most affected because of their religious beliefs (Catholics were prohibited from land ownership and had no voting rights), ethnicity, and economic status. These citizens were most vulnerable in the wake of the disruption to the agricultural system. Relying on one variety of potato, the Irish Lumper, proved to be a costly decision as well — the lack of genetic variance meant the crop was unable to fight the disease. Roughly 25% of

the population was lost to death and emigration. Of those who chose to flee, many decided to move to the United States. The emigration of the Irish continued on for decades as the political turmoil and soured economy lingered.

As a result of the construction of steam-powered ocean liners in the late 1800s, many Europeans, most of them between the ages of 15 and 30 years old, were able to emigrate to the United States. By 1930, nearly 25 million immigrants had arrived, Irish Catholics among them, fleeing horrendous housing conditions, religious persecution, and starvation. Hope for survival rested on life in a new country.

QUESTIONS:

1. Ireland was still exporting food to Great Britain during the famine, and yet mass starvation was devastating the country. As Ireland was under British rule, some historians argue that key political decisions that moved crops out of the hardest hit areas were tantamount to genocide. Make the case for or against this position. Additional research and analysis of the Great Famine and the political history will be necessary.
2. Would you be brave enough to leave your family, who you will likely never see again, and move to a new part of the world? What circumstances would cause someone to make this difficult choice?



STEREOTYPES IN AMERICAN CULTURE

Rich in culture and tradition, Irish communities have made a major contribution to the diversity and progress of the United States — particularly here in Massachusetts, where roughly one out of every four residents can claim Irish ancestry. The most famous of our Irish-Catholic neighborhoods is the section of

South Boston known as “Southie,” which has been the subject of many films and plays, and hosts a celebrated St. Patrick’s Day parade every year. The only Irish-Catholic person ever to serve as President of the United States — John F. Kennedy — was also a Massachusetts resident.

QUESTIONS:

1. Is it important to the play that Bridget and Cathleen are Irish immigrants? Or could they just as easily have come from Sweden or Italy?
2. Many ethnic groups are subjected to stereotypes and labels; the Irish are no exception. They have been commonly characterized as heavy drinkers and prone to fighting. How do the characters in *The Second Girl* propagate these stereotypes and how do they undermine them? How do people use stereotyping or labeling as a way of organizing the world around them? Why is stereotyping dangerous? When is it not useful?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

THE BACK STORY: CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

PART I

Choose a character from *The Second Girl* to portray in a monologue of your choosing. In order to prepare for the role, consider (but do not feel limited by) the following:

- **Family life and childhood.** What information from the play gives insight into what my character's upbringing was like? What were the cultural and environmental circumstances of my character's upbringing? Did I live with both parents and have siblings? Was I rich or poor? Where did I live? Imagine an important event in your character's life prior to the time depicted in the play and speculate as to how this event may have influenced your character's current objectives.
- **Relationships.** With whom do I want to be romantically involved? What draws me to this person (or people)? Have I been married or in a serious relationship before? Am I easy to get along with? What contradictions are inherent in my character? What pitfalls might prevent a new relationship from forming?
- **Current Status.** Where do I live? What is a typical day like for me? Am I homesick? Do I regularly communicate with family? What are my hobbies? Who is my best friend? Do I feel financially comfortable or strapped?
- **The World of the Play.** What do I want? What are the obstacles in my way? Does my objective change throughout the course of the play? How, if at all, do I change from the beginning to the end of the play? Am I satisfied by the play's conclusion?

PART II

Select a monologue for your character from the play. Choose a moment from the play that you believe is important to your character's journey. While rehearsing, consider your character's backstory. How does truly understanding your character change the way you think about his/her lines?

PART III

Rehearse with a classmate and share your backstories. If you have the same character, how do your backstories differ? Can you both be right? If you have different characters, do you think that it would be helpful for your characters in the world of the play to know this information about each other? Why or why not?

If possible, memorize your monologue before sharing it with the class.

THE SPIN-OFF

Ronan Noone is not the only playwright inspired to write a play about the minor characters from a famous play. Tom Stoppard, for example, wrote *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* about two minor characters from Shakespeare's famous play *Hamlet*. Now it's your turn. Who are the minor or unseen characters in *The Second*



Early 20th century maid

Girl? (Other than the Tyrones, who already have their own play!) Write a scene portraying the lives of those minor characters (e.g., Cathleen's ex-fiancé Michael, Jack Smythe's mother, or any of the O'Sullivans or O'Learys) on the same day that *The Second Girl* takes place. Some ideas that your play could possibly explore:

- Why is Nollaig, Cathleen's mother, still angry with Bridget?
- Is Michael happy with his new fiancée?
- Do the characters in your play resemble their descriptions or the details provided by the characters in *The Second Girl*? Or is there more to the story?

PERSUASIVE ESSAY/LETTER WRITING

Cathleen reacts with heartbreak and fury to Michael's announcement that he's calling off their relationship and makes many compelling arguments against his decision. Write Cathleen's letter back to Michael. What message does she want to convey to him? What sends a more powerful message: sending the letter or not responding at all?

BEHIND THE SCENES

Something happens between Cathleen and Mary Tyrone right before Scene 9 begins — It appears, based on Cathleen's behavior, that she and Mrs. Tyrone had a conversation over a couple of alcoholic drinks. This moment in *Long Day's Journey into Night* was the foundation for Ronan Noone's own play. If you have not read Eugene O'Neill's original work, imagine and then write the scene that we do not see in Noone's play between Cathleen and Mrs. Tyrone ... then compare it to the actual scene from *Long Day's Journey into Night* and answer the following:

- Compare and contrast the scene you wrote with the scene in O'Neill's play. How similar are they?
- Does the Cathleen in your scene have more in common with the character in O'Neill's play or in Noone's?
- In which play is Cathleen a more interesting character?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

VISUAL ART

Professional theatres sometimes have a marketing department responsible for creating materials such as press releases, web sites, and advertisements that promote the plays being produced during the season. Imagine that you are part of the marketing team tasked with creating a large billboard advertising the production of *The Second Girl*. Consider:

- What information about the production will you include?
- What art will best represent the play?
- Do you think what looks appropriate on a small scale will also be effective on a large billboard in a city skyline?

Showcase your design on a large piece of paper or posterboard.

COSTUME DESIGN

Preparation (Homework Assignment): Ask students to speak with their parents, grandparents or other family members about their ancestry. If students have family trees, photo albums, or other memorabilia important to the family, encourage them to look through these materials.

- The time and geographic location in which the play is set.
- The characters' class and professional status

Using pictures from the internet or magazines, or your own personal renderings, create costume designs for each of your actors.

ROOTS: EXPLORING PERSONAL HERITAGE

Costumes are a very important design element to a full scale production of a play, but appropriately dressing all of the characters requires some research and a plan. Choose one scene that includes Bridget, Cathleen and Jack and select costume pieces that reflect:

- **Step One:** As a class, briefly discuss the ethnicities and cultural heritages of your ancestors. On a board, create a list of countries from which the class's ancestors arrived. As a whole, is the class a homogeneous or culturally diverse group? (5 minutes)
- **Step Two:** Students should pair off and discuss what they know about their ancestry. If your partner is not a Native American, discuss at what point (if known) his/her ancestors arrived in the United States. (5 minutes)
- **Step Three:** Choose a specific ancestor, as recent in your family history as a parent. Create a scene in which you and your partner's character meet (at a train station, for dinner at a restaurant, etc.). Relay information about your cultural heritage without explicitly referring to any countries or ethnicities.



These are brief scenes which should not last more than two minutes. (10 minutes)

- **Step Four:** Share your scenes with the group. (20 minutes)
- **Step Five:** Ask the audience to guess the heritage of the characters. In what ways did stereotyping play a role in the formation of the scene? (5 minutes)
- **Step Six:** For homework, students should answer the following questions after watching the scenes. How can you portray a person from a particular cultural background without resorting to stereotyping? Did playwright Ronan Noone rely on stereotyping in his play *The Second Girl*?

IDEAS FOR WRITING/OPEN RESPONSE

- What is a metaphor? Define the literary term. How is the “fog” a metaphor in this play? How did the weather affect the action of this play?
- Cathleen suggests that it is a problem when people don't “speak their minds” and that by holding back opinions people are “repressing them till we wither away with regrets.” Yet she is annoyed with the Tyrones for their endless discussion of family problems. When does speaking your mind help and when does it hurt?
- After seeing the Student Matinee performance of *The Second Girl*, write a critical review of the production for your school newspaper. What design elements (lighting, costume, set, sound) were executed well? Did you agree with the director's casting choices? Were there any standout performances by an actor in the production? Was the field trip to the Huntington Theatre Company a worthwhile event for your school community?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

QUOTABLE MOMENTS

To eke out a life, a better one. That's the noble pursuit.

- Bridget

When you had nothing you complained you had nothing and now you have something and you complain it's not enough.

- Bridget

Haven't we suffered enough away to have the right now to speak our minds. That's one thing they have here I like.

- Cathleen

Wouldn't have much of a job if the slave think he's better the master? So pragmatism wins out in such a case.

- Bridget

We come to survive and some of us came to escape. I'm not being cruel on purpose. Put away the idea you're going back.

- Bridget

Yours till death. What does that mean? That he is willing to half love another for the rest of his life rather than wait for his true love. And what way is that to live?

- Cathleen

If Shakespeare can write it and we have to hide behind masks to understand and see ourselves and our problems why not state them out loud, clear, without a mask. Repressing them till we wither away with regrets. No I'll shout it out in person. Cathleen O Leary, who is alive. Alive.

- Cathleen

Us Irish don't have heartbreaks.

- Cathleen

Why wouldn't I stay? But stay on my terms. And seek out an adventure I could never have had there and if I die doing it I'll die proud having lived on my terms for once in my life.

- Cathleen

I made a mistake awhile back that determines my life from now on.

- Bridget

I gave up what I had for free [in Ireland] and here [in America] I can't afford it.

- Bridget

**HUNTINGTON
THEATRE
COMPANY**
AVENUE OF THE ARTS
& SOUTH END
IN RESIDENCE AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY

264 HUNTINGTON AVENUE
BOSTON, MA 02115-4606

2014-2015 STUDENT MATINEES
GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER SEPT.17
ETHER DOME OCT.30 & NOV.20
AWAKE AND SING! NOV.14
THE SECOND GIRL FEB.12
THE COLORED MUSEUM MAR.13 & APR.2
COME BACK, LITTLE SHEBA APR.16

**BEST OF
BOSTON
2014**
AWARDED BY BOSTON MAGAZINE