

Inkslingers Blended Session

11th November 2023

The Prompt from The Bag Was:

“Laugh alone and the world thinks you’re an idiot”

And the Visual



Neither a borrower nor a lender be..

Willie In The Morning

Greg Fields

A bleak autumn morning, and into the streets to find the proper bus that would take him to the proper stop, where he would then walk the proper number of steps to his building. Everything predictable, as predictable as the sea charts that told the comings and goings of the tides, or the almanac's listing of sunrises and sunsets. Past the guard, with his predictable morning surliness, a flash of his id, then up the elevator, through the usual office door and then to his desk, in exactly the same order as he had left it the night before.

Willie Meadows sighed as he settled into his chair, then placed his Starbucks latte on top of the day's Washington Post. He seldom read it lately. Newspapers, he knew, were a dying breed, victims of the need for instant information gleaned from fingertips and the quick push of a button. He knew this, and yet here he was, a part of this dying industry, a witness to its demise. More than a witness – a central participant. He sighed again and sipped his latte, which was predictably warm and strong.

The newsroom was largely empty. Things would pick up as the day went on. His colleagues would come in through their grunts and grumbles, take up their work, and often leave in pursuit of the details that would weave their stories. The noise level would rise then, with clacking, and footfalls, and the swish of people moving to and fro. Willie enjoyed the mornings, when he could set his own pace and have time and space enough to consider what it is he had to do, and how to do it.

He had a late-day deadline for his piece on the consistency of an old northeast neighborhood, one that had defied gentrification and retained its simple character, with the same stores owned by the same old men and women, in the same places on the same streets. The neighborhood had been largely Irish at one point, the remnant of Swampoodle, the landing site in the 19th century of immigrants off the boat looking for a place with their own kind. It had changed over the years, of course. Most of the original Irish had moved on, lifting themselves through various rungs of accomplishment and ease, and those who stayed behind retained the hardscrabble, day-to-day

exhilarations of drink and drugs and petty crimes that kept them going, joined now by others who had entered the game. There was a diversity now in the old neighborhood that did little to mask the sameness of those whose lives differed little from all that had gone before.

Part of his Willie's story was an interview with a man now in his eighties who owned a small corner grocery near the end of one of the streets that slid off New York Avenue. Louis Salvaterra, his name was, and he was loaded with stories.

"Ah, it used to be friendlier," he had told Willie when they met over coffee the day before. "Kids would come in and steal a few pieces of fruit. I'd let them, you know. They were poor, and they never had anything to eat. Not bad kids, just hungry. Some of 'em tried to make like they were tough, but they never caused a ruckus. I never felt threatened. We got along, all of us, and I knew their names. Irish, mostly – Mannion and Doherty and Duncan and Cooney. Cooney, he was the worst. A cocky little bastard, and full of himself. But still, I liked the kid. He never meant any harm.

"It's different now," he went on. "The kids today, they're tougher. Most carry guns tucked into their pants. Sometimes you'd hear the shots, usually late afternoon after they've had a chance to warm up a bit, to get feisty.

"I've been robbed more times than I can count. I just hand over the money. No sense in getting myself killed. Insurance covers some of it, and the customers keep coming back. I'm the only fresh fruits and vegetables in the neighborhood. No supermarkets here. They need me. And I suppose I need them. We go on, all of us."

Willie sat back and listened once more to his recording of the old man's words. "We go on." A poor man's grocer, and here he was after all these years.

Willie laughed to himself at the notion of it. 'We go on,' he chuckled to himself. 'As if we have a choice.'

From the next desk a young reporter, a new kid who Willie thought might not last, leaned over and said, "What's so funny, Willie?"

“Ah, you wouldn’t understand,” and Willie laughed again, this time louder and stronger. The other shook his head and settled back at his own desk. “Fool”, he muttered.

Willie Meadows regarded again the predictable order of his day, and he thought on Louie Salvaterra and the man’s corner grocery, still in place after all these years. Willie knew in his heart how Salvaterra’s story would end, and he sensed next to it how his own would continue to unfold.

Predictable. Proper. We go on.

600lb Man

Matthew Tubridy

Bill is 600lb,
He gets his sons to bring him hot dogs,
He lies in his bed,
He watches the spiders on the ceiling,
He can't get up to shoo
the spiders away,
He must watch them,
One dangles down to Bills mouth,
Bill goes 'Grr away'
He shakes his hands at the damn spider,
Bills son comes in,
Fecking spiders!
The son puts the spiders in a smoothie
for Bill,
To try to get him off his food to lose weight,
Bill splutters out the smoothie
From that day forth the son puts rats legs in Bills dinner,
Bill splutters away,
Bill tried to go down to the shop,
For some chocolate chip cookies,
But he finds it very hard to walk down the street,
He sits down on the pavement,
But can't get up,
So he calls 999,
A ambulance arrives,
They drive him to Dr Noszaradans hospital,
He gets admitted and put on a controlled diet,
Of rats legs,
Dr Nowzaradan puts a balloon in Bills stomach,
After awhile Bill is discharged,
He moves in with his son,
He goes back eating hot dogs,
And whipped cream and mince pies,
The reason for the mince pies was it was Christmas!

A bad time for 600lb individuals,
Bill wolves back the turkey and ham,
And chocolates for after,
He's with his family,
They pour liquor down his throat,
Because he can't get it himself,
They give him mince pies,
The don't like Dr Nowzaradan
They're plotting his downfall
Getting the bus to Donegal but before Donegal town I get off,
I walk up a mountain with my tent in the dark,
I can see the lights of the town,
The ground is soggy bog,
I have my head torch,
I put up my tent, get in my sleeping bag,
I hear bullocks outside my tent,
When I wake up I get out of my tent,
My knee goes in a cow Pat,
One of the bullocks comes over and talks to me,
He says
This is Farmer Toms land!
And it's not a campsite,
I go down to Donegal Town to a cafe run by Farmer Tom,
He sees me covered in cow pats,
Where were you sleeping last night? He asks me
He rings up one of his bullocks... hello? Can I get threw to Marty?
Farmer Tom knows cow language,
Bullock says We had a man sleeping in our field last night,
I order a full irish breakfast,
Farmer Tom charges me another 10 euro for the camping,
Farmer Tom goes to a camping expo in Croke Park Dublin,
He is educated in setting up a campsite,
He sets up the talking cow campsite,
As you arrive at the campsite a cow welcomes you
Shows you to your pitch,
Do you require electricity?
They ask.

We have a vending machine,
All the campers provide good business for Farmer Toms cafe in town,
When the campers come in Tom empties their pockets,
Another enterprising local sets up the cow museum,
The campers flock there,
The local and museum owner is a cow,
She provides the milk for the cafe,
The neighbouring town is run by horses.

A Borrower Nor A Lender Be
Bernadette O'Reilly

The 21st Birthday party was
Held in a marquee in a neighbours
Back garden
The house was also open to the
Party goers
I was partying on my own
The Woman in my life broke her leg
The little lady was a work colleague of
The birthday girl
We got chatting and ended up in the small
Front room of the neighbour's house.
When the party ended I said goodbye
My parents oft recited
Neither a borrower nor a lender be
Came into my head.

Borrower Lender

Max McCoubrey

Neither a borrower nor a lender be
Nor a sycophant or one that can't
Say a kind word.
Or
Fail to see joy.
In everything around

Neither a sour puss nor one that must
Talk the dark side to the moon.
Don't be a clown.
When someone has a wound.

Instead,
Be open when you can
And
Honest
A cushion not a stone
No one likes to be alone.

So
Borrow from your kindness side.
And
Hide
The tongue that stings
Hear the ones who reach.
Give them all the comfort you can bring.

1969 and all that...

Ciaran O'Melia

It was 1969.

I lived in this moto, yet I stumbled. It all happened when I left my girlfriend to catch the bus home. I can recall the incident vividly, and I walked Aston Quay, towards McBierneys full of the joys of summer, I met this man, he said hello and we nodded to each other, he then said.

“You don't remember me, do ye”

I stuttered and stammered, “I”

“I'm your postman, how is the mammy and daddy?”

“Oh” I tried to recover, “They are great.”

As we stood in the middle of the not-so-busy road, he told me of his brother, who was in hospital, and he lashed out for flowers. “Poor fellow he has no chance.” Was that a tear glistening on his cheek?

“That is terrible.” I felt for this man and his blight.

” The thing is I have to tell me Mammy and she is in Ballyfermot, and to be honest with you, after lashing out for the flowers and fruit, I'm broke.” At this point, he took out a hankie and blew his nose, but I saw the tears well up in his eyes, added: “She is going to be devastated, God I don't envy my task.” I was stuck for words.

“Is there any chance you could spare me a few bob, just to get the bus, to the Ma?”

Now I had only a two-shilling piece on my, and that was for my bus fare, I told him this and he said, “No problem.” Adding “Tell the Ma and Da I was asking about them.” That did it for me, I offered him the two-shilling piece.

He took it and reminded me, “I'll give it to the Mammy on Monday.”

As I walked home about 4 miles, I thought of the incident and me giving over to the

Postman my last two shillings. At first, I realized I was stupid as I reached Kelly's Corner, I had a blazing row with meself. Then at Leonard's Corner, I had quietened, oh, yes, I was angry, but this changed. At the bridge over the canal, I could see the funny side of things, I admit I smirked. At the green on Harold's Cross Rd, I laughed out loud, so much so late-night walkers moved away. Thinking that I was an idiot and a treat to them made me laugh more, and by the time I made home, I was laughing so much the Mammy thought I was drunk.

"You go to bed; we will talk about this in the morning." She said.

Surgeons Hours

Matthew Tubridy

After work, straight to the pub,
After a good few drinks, everything is sloshy,
I was a medical doctor,
I was operating on people,
Now after a few gin and tonics,
I write my name on the wall,
Dr Nesbit,
They wheel in a patient,
The patient has been put to sleep,
Dr Nesbit goes Who is this?
He has a scalpel in his back pocket.
He gets to work,
Patient B needs his appendix removed,
Dr Nesbit sticks his scalpel in patient Bs tummy,
Dr Nesbit is very drunk at this point,
After the operation failed,
The licence for the bar is questioned,
The barman was giving out samples of alcohol to doctors,
It's like in Trailer Park Boys taking hash before painting a wall,
All staff in the hospital are sloshed!
The nurses, the occupational therapists,
The porters,
The hospital gets a bad rep,
In the city called Moosejaw, Canada,
The firemen come in,
They see an attempted amputation,
A heart transplant gone wrong,
Blood on the floor,
They see the canteen, overtaken by the barman,
Instead of the milk dispenser you get vodka,
Joanna Claw, head of Human Resources is drinking it back,
Mac the surgeon is too,
He has to prepare for his next operation
and for it he must be drunk,

He starts the operation Where's the damn appendix he asks,
He plunges his knife in patient As tummy,
He mumbles in a drunken stupor,
Where's the appendix?
The firemen burst in, they move all the patients to a respectable
hospital across town,
Mr Grey is the doctor there,
He was hearing stories of the drunken hospital,
His classmates led astray by the barman,
He has his qualifications on the wall,
When he does surgery it's like poetry in motion,
He wields his knife gracefully,
When he goes home he has 1 glass of sherry with his wife,
He gets up the next morning without a hangover,
He drives his BMW to work,
He passes the alcoholic hospital.
Nurses strung out in the car park.

Laugh alone and the world thinks you're an idiot..

Angelina Kelly

Jackie found herself laughing at a post on Facebook the other day. She was sitting alone at the LUAS stop and, while I was waiting, I sought the distraction of my phone.

As I was scrolling a few people came to the stop in a group and were chatting among themselves. Deeply engrossed in my scrolling, I ignored them.

About six memes in I came across a video of a family of raccoons who had made their home in a disused dumpster, with blankets and pillows for comfort and a neat stache of food, stacked up in a corner, for sustenance.

The little ones were playing with a discarded child's toy, the middle-sized ones tossed a ball to each other, the adult male sat with his back against the side of the trash can, reading a newspaper and, the adult female lay in another corner watching them.

I laughed so hard that I threw my head back and laughed out loud. Immediately the other people stopped chatting and looked over at me. Feeling no desire to explain to them what I was laughing at, I continued laughing, enjoying the moment.

Looking up from my screen, I gazed over at them and saw them looking back at me.

One of them turned to her friends and, in a stage whisper, half covering her mouth, she said,

“Obviously she's crazy, thank God we don't know her.

ust then the LUAS arrived, and they embarked, they sat together, well away from me, but at a distance where they could still see me, shaking their heads.

I sat at the window in one of the single seats and continued scrolling with a smile on my face.

I didn't care what they thought of me, I didn't know them so their opinion of me was not my concern.

The meme had cheered me up and made me feel happy and that's all that mattered to me.

A few stops along the way they alighted and, while they stood on the platform waiting for the tram to pass by, they looked in at me, shaking their heads laughing.

The stage whisperer mouthed the word "Idiot"

Snakes and Things

Matthew Tubridy

Get out if this bloody building!
There's snakes coming through the wall!
A big hole in the floor,
With a hippo in it,
The giraffes race down the stairs,
There's bats stuck to the ceiling!
The room gets flooded and the penguins move in.

Escaping New China

Miguel A. Rivera, Jr.

“Neither borrower nor lender be”. On this very warm August morning, John realized It was the most asinine thing that he’d read in a very vast collection of horrors over the last couple of years. Almost a decade had passed since the great fall.... the fall of America! Such a message was of course meant to be whimsical, and John found it ironic that it was now a tattoo displayed on the sun-burned, naked back of the man in front of him on the chain gang. It was barely visible beneath the spiderweb of scars and whip marks that the man in front of him sported. His body odor however, was quite pronounced. A stark reminder of their work gangs’ one-shower-per-month policy.

Despite the eighteen hours per day of back breaking labor, He considered himself one of the lucky ones. Most former American soldiers had been put to death in any number of grotesque public displays by their new masters, the People’s Republic of China. Every day they sailed out to Liberty Island to collect the remaining parts of the Statue Of Liberty. It was slowly being disassembled for shipment to Bei Jing. It was widely whispered that it was scheduled to be melted and restructured as a trophy. A symbol of Chinese victory in honor of their newly minted Emperor.

As a matter of P.R.C. policy for New China, most Blacks, Jews, gays, elderly, clergy members, disabled, and anyone otherwise considered to be a threat or drain on state resources, had long ago been escorted to mass execution chambers. Only the most utterly skilled and useful had even a fraction of a chance when the occupation of America began. Athletes, actors, singers, and other former celebrities were shipped off to mainland China to be sold as “house entertainment” for wealthy and powerful Party-members to keep as pets. Translators were kept in New China to help the occupying troops and Military intelligence during house-to-house inspections and interrogations.

The attack that ended freedom had come suddenly and of course, during a cold, snowy, Christmas night. An E.M.P. blast that disabled every electrical and/or battery powered device had been deployed over the skies of every major city without warning via the hypersonic rocket

delivery system that proved to be too advanced for their vaunted American technology.

Only women under the age of 30 had been allowed to live and most were sent to work at farm collectives or “comfort centers”. For the latter group, a fate surely worse than death awaited them. Any Doctors, chemical engineers, computers scientists and such, had to undergo rigorous “Loyalty” tests along with routine interviews and polygraph examinations.

A number of American Politicians and affluent people who’d been collaborators in favor of The People’s Republic, thought that their treachery would prove beneficial. Nearly all were dumbfounded when they were invited to a “party” that ended with a bullet to their brain right before being informed that their children and possessions were now State Property. Asset forfeiture and “wealth-reassignment” were almost certain for most home and property owners nation-wide. The few survivors in remote mountains and forests with hunting skills and firearms were tracked day and night. Upon capture they were skinned alive and displayed in front of the work factories for all would-be rebels to see.

New China was a house of horrors that John had long ago accepted. He’d also accepted his fate, at least until an opportunity for either escape or a quick death should present itself. As the crew-chief unloaded them from the barge, he noted that the man with the tattoo also had one on the front of his body. It read “Laugh alone and the world thinks you’re an idiot”. John could not understand exactly what subliminal message these tattoos were meant to convey but he cared little and did not expect the man to last long once the winter months came on.

Their chains were removed, and they were assigned to work details for the day. As he retrieved his pick and shovel from the tool-bin he glanced at the water. Briefly considering making a run for it and taking his chances with a swim. It was a pointless thought though. Every former American who’d been allowed to survive as forced labor had a small incision in their back. Wandering more than two hundred feet from one’s work-boss would cause the capsule to burst and release a dose of

cyanide into the would-be escapee's body. Many had tried to run or remove the capsule themselves. All were now at the bottom of the ocean as The Chinese no longer bothered to bury them but instead used their remains to chum the waters during fishing trips.

It occurred to John that he'd never seen this tattooed man, not ever! Not in their meager living quarters, not on other work crews, and never during the free years. It was also strange that the bruises and whip marks on his back were all from left to right and their disciplinary Sergeant was right-handed.

Suddenly, the man stopped and dropped his work shovel thereafter making the sign of The Cross. This was tantamount to suicide and John immediately dropped to the ground as he saw a young Sentry take notice followed by the sound of several rifles racking their actions. John had seen this many times. Guys who'd had enough and chosen death by "Chin" as it was called.

Angry warnings were shouted in both English and Mandarin followed by a barrage of fire. John opened his eyes only to see the man still standing and several collapsed and mushroomed projectiles, the remnants of numerous bullets fired from the Guard's AK-47's. Those rounds were now laying on the ground at the feet of this mysterious man as smoke rose from the spots on his chest and back where they'd impacted but failed to penetrate. The mouths of the guards hung open. They had no explanation for what was unfolding before them and were now awash in an unfamiliar feeling challenging their certainty of authority, raw fear.

The mystery man then closed his eyes and a small opening in his back released a silver pill-sized object that burst in the air. A similar pattern followed with John, and he could feel the one tee-shirt he had in the world staining with blood. He was frightened but not dead as expected. The stranger then closed his eyes and extended his arms from his muscular body giving the very astonished Chinese Soldiers dual middle fingers. *"Fuck you, and you, and you too!"*, He screamed, pointing at each man one by one, thereafter saying something equally crass in perfect Mandarin.

The man then grabbed John by the back of his neck and picked him off the ground as though he weighed a feather. *"Time to go Johnny-boy!"*,

was what came out of his mouth. With those words a ship rose from the water and hovered for a few seconds. With John now slung over the shoulder of this very un-washed man, the stranger leaped onto a sort of ramp deployed in midair from the ship. They rose through the sky and Liberty Island was a speck on a map in a matter of seconds. John then felt light as though gravity had lost its hold on him and the next moment everything went dark.

Hit by a Bus

Matthew Tubridy

The first time I was hit by a bus,
On Nassau street,
I ended up in the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Dun Laoighre,
My leg got shattered in 4 places,
When I was crossing the street the bus was coming so instead of
hurrying across I just stood there and held out my hands!
Nooooo! I shouted,
Please stop,
But the bus driver was reaching for a packet of wine gums,
So he didn't see me!
Eventually he was brought to court,
The Judge said
'You were reaching for a packet of wine gums?
Bus driver said, 'I was blinded by the sun!'
I was tuning in by video call because it was painful to move,
I say 'But it was cloudy that day!'
Bus driver grimaces at me,
As if to say 'I'll get you sometime!
Anyway the bus driver is sentenced to 5 years in prison,
When I'm recovered I go to his prison cell,
I laugh threw his cell door,
As the sun sank behind the mountain,
Jim of the Masari sat down beside the lion he just killed,
He wants a drink so he stabbed the lions neck,
Blood spurted out,
He put his mouth to the indecision,
And sucked out the blood,
His brother comes along,
With a zebra over his neck,
They do an African Tribal dance to celebrate,
They talk about their Aunt who's cattle all died,
They talk about the damn park rangers who would shoot them
unfortunately
They see a jeep coming towards them,

They say to each other,
We should be a guide for those tourists on that jeep!
They go to their local town in stuffy suits,
They fill out some forms,
Congratulations!
Man says 'Your now a Safari guide!
You won't kill any more big game'
'Thank you sir 'the brothers mumble,
You start on Monday!

Don't be a borrower or a Lender

Mark L'estrange.

They got to the airport and met the Mexican army at arrivals the sergeant from the Mexican army said to them. "I am so sorry these guys are causing so much trouble, I can assure you they do not represent the Mexican government we have been hunting this gang for a few years." Paddy and the Super said. "I thought as much we need to get them once and for all."

They explained to them which Garda station the gang had taken over and all about the cloning machine that they found in the airport and is with the Irish army now. They said "Thanks for all the information we will have your Garda station back very soon." Paddy said "If you need any help I can spin by?" The Super laughed at this.

They headed up to the Garda station in Clondalkin and stormed the place, Paddy and the Super waited outside looking at them taking the gang out of the station and their colleagues that they had captured in the station too, thinking that they were part of the gang. Paddy jumped out of the car saying "These aren't part of the gang they were hostages." They were relieved to see Paddy and to be set free.

The army sergeant thanked them for all their help and said "We will hopefully find out where the rest of the gang is located, Who do I contact in the army to find out about the cloning machine?" They neither lend nor can we borrow information from them, there is one guy that that does communicate with us I will ring him and see if he has any more information he is trying to see where the machine is being held." "Ok here is all our information send us a quick email or contact us anytime if you have any more hassle from this gang."

They headed back to the airport with the gang. Paddy said. "That's a relief was a great idea contacting them." "Let's hope we have seen the last of that gang now." Said the Super. "I must contact Stephen to let him know he can head home now he will be delighted to hear this."

To be continued

Winter Light

Elaine Reardon

Conscious of times light into the white pines,
how low sunlight flows through branches
to the forest floor, lights moss into a green glow,
warms the thick pine needle ground cover,
sets diamond-like dazzles in the dark
snake that is Moss Brook. This December morning everything is new,
reborn into Winter.
Even the soil sends up a foggy exhale when light touches frost,
a Hosanna as fog rises to the sun.

Laughing alone

Clíodhna Joyce-Daly

Saoirse sat in the dimly lit and poorly ventilated classroom alone, contemplating whether the heavily dusted windows would open. It had been an hour since Mrs. Kennedy shut the door leaving Saoirse to face her peril staring at the complicated math problem on the board and two hours since she had any human interaction.

Mrs. Kennedy was known for her highly tedious yet highly unsupervised detentions that despite all their might, school work would have to be completed by the end of it. Saoirse spent the past hour in perplexity reading every bit of profanity that was scribbled across the wooden table. The leisure of reading teenage gossip had worn off and the reality of tackling the impossible equation set in. Mrs. Kennedy would be back soon no doubt and Saoirse has only managed a *"please forgive me"* with a smiley face across the top of her highly doodled notebook.

It was a useless class in Saoirse's opinion, as the only education that occurred was exposing the latest tittle of who was shifting who at the last disco along with some further tips about on how to get out of PE. While the information was nevertheless favoured, it provoked further anxiety that the mock exams were approaching and Saoirse still could not fathom whether the gibberish on the board was trigonometry or geometry.

Mrs. Kennedy was known for her harsh and poorly taught modules that involved more ranting and disappearing than actual teaching.

For the majority of the year, Mrs. Kennedy would frantically drive down to the lake to chain smoke cigarettes and glaring at the sun regretting her choice of career. After an hour of freedom, she would reappear with 15 minutes to spare to highlight the things she saw on her escapades. Tales would erupt of a woman nude swimming in the lake, another one where a woman was shouting at a child. As she spoke, aromas of stale cigarettes and desperation would consume the already stuffy classroom.

Despite the monotony of the stories, the students all relished the taste of not doing work. Yet when it came time for exams, Mrs. Kennedy was

ruthless for misbehaving and held a no nonsense approach in her element. The ruling of the classroom was truly one of an iron fist.

Unfortunately today was the day Saoirse faced her wrath.

It was harmless really, Saoirse got the fit of laughing from a joke that was told the morning beside the lockers. In the midst of one of Mrs. Kennedy's rambles, Saoirse reminiscing the joke, burst into giddy behaviour and snort that caused an echo throughout the classroom. Mrs. Kennedy came bellowing down to her insisting she share what was so entertaining. Saoirse said nothing.

"Laughing with friends, is a joke worth telling. Laughing alone and world thinks you're an idiot. It's like fishing with a broom," the words Mrs. Kennedy illuminated as she ushered a detention notice handwritten on construction paper across the uneven desk towards Saoirse.

As the time clicked with every passing minute, Saoirse realised she was utterly hopeless at comprehending any form of an answer before Mrs. Kennedys return. It was nearly 6, the exact time she was supposed to be getting ready for her match. The situation was becoming desperate. She would have to forfeit.

With another sigh and the thought of issuing defeat, a piece of tattered notepad paper stuck out from under the lid of the desk came into view. As the boredom encompassed her, Saoirse pulled out the thin piece opening up a jumble of words across the heading

"If you are in Mrs. Kennedy's detention, here is the correct answer to the equation. It's the same every time". Relief set in and with three minutes to 6 Saoirse began to frantically scribble the foreign numbering into her sheet.

With a click, the door swung open highlighting the figure of Mrs. Kennedy glaring into the classroom.

"You done?" She asked as she made her way pacing towards Saoirse's corner.

"Oh yes - Miss. I've finished it and I think you'll be impressed. It took me a while to figure out but I think I cracked the right answer!"