

Rhymes with Dingle  
A Ten-Minute Play by John Schoneboom

CHARACTERS

*JAMES and DARAGH, recently returned from holiday*

*MARY and HELENA, their friends*

SETTING

*Stage is divided into three sections representing three different locations. At stage right is James; at stage left, Daragh. Both begin the play in darkness. Only the center is lit initially, where Mary and Helena sit quietly and read. A few moments pass before Mary speaks.*

MARY

I have a confession to make.

HELENA

(mildly interested, still reading)

Oh yeah?

MARY

Yeah. [laughs] It's kind of major, actually.

HELENA

(still reading)

Hit me.

MARY

Well, it's just, I'm not really your older sister.

HELENA

(still reading)

You're not?

MARY

No. I'm really your mother. [laughs] I couldn't handle being a mother, so I gave you up. But I guess I was curious about what happened to you, so I kinda, I dunno, hung around. I thought up pretending to be your older sister. All those years, all that angst you had about not knowing your own mother – it was me the whole time!

HELENA  
(lowers her book, looks at Mary)

Are you serious?

MARY (laughing)

Yeah!

HELENA  
(resumes reading)

That is fucking freaky.

MARY

I know!

*They keep reading in silence for a short while. Lights up on James, dialing a phone.*

HELENA  
(shaking her head, wry smile)

I can't believe you never told me!

MARY (laughing)

I know!

*Helena's cellphone rings; she answers it.*

HELENA

Wai!

JAMES

Helena?

HELENA

Yes?

JAMES

It's me!

HELENA

Hi James!

JAMES

Why did you say 'why'?

HELENA

I like it. That's how Chinese people answer the phone. I've seen it in Hong Kong movies. 'Wai!' It means hello. I love it. It sounds like, 'why are you calling me?' It's great. So how are you, how was your trip?

JAMES

Oh, Dingle is gorgeous. Great little town, amazing coastline. They have this dolphin there, named after a mushroom. He gets chased around all day by boats.

HELENA

Wow.

JAMES

Yeah. Thing is though, Daragh, after a while...he drives me insane. I mean, you know how he is.

*Lights up on Daragh, dialing his phone. Mary's phone rings; she answers.*

MARY

Hello?

DARAGH

Hey, it's me!

MARY

Hi Daragh! How was the trip?

DARAGH

Amazing! We swam with this dolphin! But I'll tell you, I don't think I'll travel with James again. He drives me insane. You know how he is.

JAMES (to Helena)

I'll give you an example. We go to this late night snack shop, right, and we get the most rancid fish and chips you've ever seen. It's like, frozen fish, pressed into these uniform triangles – just weird. But we're hungry. We eat it. But I comment on how rancid it is, right? He goes through the roof. He tells me, why can't I just be happy!

DARAGH (to Mary)

It's like he's never happy. Something is always wrong with everything. I'll give you an example. It's late, we're starving, there's nothing open, and lo and behold, we find a place serving fish and chips. We're saved right? But he's like 'ewww, the fish is frozen, the chips are no good.' He's lucky to have anything! I'll tell you what he is. He's a poopyhead.

JAMES

It's like he takes it personally. I go to this Internet café and I'm trying to ask a question about the rates. Before I even finish the question, the girl cuts me off: 'It's on the sign on the wall.' Well I've seen the sign, and the answer ain't there. So I try asking again and she cuts me off again, points to the wall, saying 'the sign, the sign, it's all on the sign!'

HELENA

How rude!

JAMES

Thank you! That kind of stuff drives me completely insane. So I look her right in the eye and I tell her 'This is outrageous, madam; what you need is a customer service qualification.'

HELENA

Madam! Hah!

JAMES

Yeah. But do I get any support from Daragh? Nope. There he is with his hands in his pockets with a distinctly disapproving look in his eye.

DARAGH

You should've seen him in the Internet café. You know how he is. Hypersensitive to perceived slights. He goes in demanding answers, which are posted right on the wall. So the lady shows him where the answers are, and he loses it. It was weird. He starts yelling at her, makes a total scene.

MARY

How rude!

DARAGH

I know, right? It's like he's walking around waiting to be offended so he can fly off the handle. And I'll tell you something else.

MARY

What?

DARAGH

He's a putterer.

MARY

A putterer?

DARAGH

A hopeless putterer. Putters about for hours. I don't understand how a man can take so long getting ready to go out. I have no idea what he does. There are only so many personal hygiene tasks. It defies reason, the way he putters about for so long, like a, like a penguin. A retarded penguin.

JAMES

I'll tell you something about Daragh. He is one antsy individual. Sits around tapping his feet, drumming on the table with his fingertips. He seems very nervous, very anxious. By the time we make it out of the hostel in the afternoon he seems about ready to bust a blood vessel! He needs to relax, he really does. I once suggested he should try some yoga exercises.

HELENA

What happened?

JAMES

He turned purple! Completely purple!

DARAGH

I don't know. I feel like I went out of my way to accommodate him, you know? I took him to all the pubs where the best music was going on. I mean, we heard some amazing sessions. This is such a part of the culture of the region, I wanted to make sure he got a

taste of the good stuff, since I knew where to go. There is nothing better than great Irish music, played live.

MARY

Did he enjoy it?

DARAGH

Oh yeah. You could see it in his face. He was absolutely rapt. But did he thank me?

JAMES

He kept dragging us out to suffer through this god-awful tiddly-eye music. I sit there patiently with a glazed expression on my face while he elbows me and says ‘Ah! You’re getting into it now!’ Tiddly tiddly toodly toodly – it all sounds the same. But I tried to accommodate him, you know. I didn’t scream once. Anyway, enough about me. What’s new with you?

HELENA

Mary just told me she’s really my mom, not my sister.

JAMES

That’s whacked! Well, I better run. Good talking to you.

HELENA

OK, bye bye!

JAMES

Bye.

*They hang up.*

DARAGH

Well, I gotta go. Everything good with you?

MARY

Yeah! Same old same old!

DARAGH

OK, well, talk to you later. Bye.

MARY

Bye bye!

HELENA

Was that Daragh?

MARY

Yeah.

HELENA

Hah! I was just talking to James. Sounds like they had a real hellish holiday.

MARY

You know how they are.

HELENA

Yeah. I love it. The things they get upset about!

MARY

I know! It's fantastic!

HELENA

Oh by the way, you know when you found your dog with a pitchfork through it?

MARY

Yeah?

HELENA

That was me! I ran him through!

MARY

You never!

HELENA

I did! That dog really pissed me off!

MARY (laughing)

That is wild!

HELENA

I know!

*Lights down on Mary and Helena. James dials his phone; Daragh's rings and he answers.*

DARAGH

Hey ho.

JAMES

Hey! Listen, I just wanted to tell you I had a great time in Dingle.

DARAGH

Me too! That was awesome! Great to see you again.

JAMES

Yeah, you too. Love ya buddy.

DARAGH

You too man.

JAMES

We should really do that again. You always get two weeks in August?

DARAGH

Yep. I'd definitely do it again.

JAMES

All right then, man, what do you say?

JAMES and DARAGH in unison

Same time next year!

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