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Nov 30, 2021
EVERYONE CALLS HER GRACE

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An abstract of
a thesis submitted to the Faculty of Emory College of Arts and Sciences
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Abstract
EVERYONE CALLS HER GRACE
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The Sea Queen of Connacht seemed to be full of ‘contradictions’, working at times for the crown and at times for her people, a murderer and a revolutionary, a woman in a ‘man’s role’. Whether or not we are able to excavate a full truth or personhood from the history the English wrote of her remains to be seen, but there is certainly a truth to her multiplicity; her fraught construction of morality and legacy; her complicity; her relationship to gender; the reasons we want to be her (or, perhaps, already are).

Most of all, there is a truth to be found in her construction of self, like our constructions of self, between history, myth, and the other stories we tell ourselves about being human. Not even Grace O’Malley could have been Grace O’Malley—her history has already been colonized, sanitized, and mythicized; but maybe we can find some kind of truth, playing pirates by her grave.

This play has gone through many iterations as my relationship to Grainne/Grace as a story, a figure of history, and an example of a specific relationship to femininity, have changed; and as my perspective on the theater industry, narrative structures, and history have changed. These relationships have crystallized, in part, into characters who voice the complications with finding yourself and others in story, as well as refusal of a cartographic understanding of narrative of all sorts.

*Everyone Calls Her Grace*, while surely perpetually unfinished, is as of now a culmination of my various discoveries on the intersections of gender, race, power, performance, and representation; and how decolonizing/queer-ing/subverting historical, hierarchical, and fictional narrative structures (or, going to the sea) may act as a gateway to intersectional and personal truths.
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Most of all—thank you to Grainne for letting us be you; & thank you to Kimberly for everything.
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EVERYONE CALLS HER GRACE

by Ozzy Wagner
CHARACTERS
Grainne - *grahn-yuh* - Non-binary POC. When they were a kid, they were the one to ask the teacher if they could have class outside.

Granuaile - *grahn-you-ale* - Woman. POC. Older than Grainne & Grace. An actor, like professionally. (Like, Professionally.)

Grace - *grayce* - Woman. White or white-passing. An aspiring actress and well-meaning #girlboss.


Maeve - Woman or Nonbinary person. Any race. The youngest of the cast. A student. They didn’t write her a character description because they “just don’t know a lot about her.”

John - Man. Any race. Any age. Doesn’t totally get this play, but he’s along for the ride. Plays all of the men and most of the villains. (Shoutout to another play about another villain named John)

SETTING
A rehearsal space and a greenroom. Oh and also the sea, but we’ll get to that.

PRODUCTION HISTORY
Workshop Production - Emory University, October 2021

NOTES
*CWs* - death, suicidal ideation, microaggressions out the wazoo (racism, transphobia, sexism, erasure, etc.)

Pronunciation notes - Granuaile = Grahn-you-ale, Grainne = Grah-nyuh, Mháille = Mohl-yuh, Mhaol - Mwail (like whale with an m)

Errors in punctuation, capitalization, font size, etc are, as a rule, intentional

“Conductor” is played by the actor who plays Director.

Abbreviations generally indicate a level of familiarity/professionalism/commitment to what is said, rather than a literal spoken abbreviation (IE - Oh My God, Oh my God, OMG, and omg -- same words but all different)

[] unspoken, either indicates pronunciation notes or implied dialogue
// indicates an interruption

_Run time: ~85 mins_
WORKSHOP PRODUCTION
Oct 6th, 7th 2021
Directed by Roz Sullivan-Lovett

Cast
Grainne - Kait Rivas
Granuaile - Anneka Rose
Grace - Haley Ornstein
Maeve - Beverley Sylvester
Director - Adam Weisman
Man/John - Eythen Anthony
“To tell her own story, a writer must make herself a character. To tell another person’s story, a writer must make that person some version of herself, must find a way to inhabit her.”

-Jenn Shapland, My Autobiography of Carson McCullers

“For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change. And this fact is only threatening to those women who still define the master's house as their only source of support.”

-Audre Lorde, The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House

“The history of the sea, the history based on facts and dates and measures, has mostly been told by sailors and explorers, by people who think they have conquered it and understood it. There’s no such thing as a comprehensive history of the sea….The sea is a story that belongs to all of us, to storytellers and singers and small girls collecting shells on the beach,”

-Charlotte Runcie, Salt on Your Tongue
Overture

The sea.
It was there long before the house opened, and will be there long after the ghostlight is lit for the night.
Water, waves, sound. It isn’t fast or slow or regular or irregular; it is simply there. Constant.
A hum. A bird, maybe? Sounds and shadows of figures and songs we haven’t met, but perhaps have known forever
The sounds build, in waves. Perhaps we hear the outline of a melody, then it fades, then melodies. Distant
laughs or applause. This should be to the world we’re about to build and to Irish folk music what
“Ghosts” by Albert Ayler is to Jazz.
Time is irrelevant; this can take as long as you like. Longer. The sea doesn’t get bored.
Movement, almost a dance. “Almost” because there aren’t “steps,” per se, since there isn’t a “rhythm” either. But still, ghosts of movements -- it should feel natural in its irregularity. They pass a shell between them.
There are five people, but three eventually take our focus. These three come closer together as time goes on, as the music builds, maybe even into a wonderfully dissonant chord, or a nearly recognizable melody-Oh! A baton!
Our little stick friend communicates in that universal way that only a little stick friend can communicate.
1 2 3, 1 2 3. This is a waltz, people!
The sounds try to follow him, but it’s a little weird considering he’s literally conducting, like, the ocean? I mean there are people too, but the waves aren’t exactly cooperating

EM-pha-sis
ON-the-first
BEAT-Two-three
OH-my-go-
O-O-oD

He might clap or snap or hit the baton on his stand to get his point across. The women move apart and
the staging looks awkward and first-rehearsal-y and they try to follow but it’s honestly...

CONDUCTOR
and off.
and . OFF

He comes out of the pit, if he hasn’t already. Knowing him, he probably has.

CONDUCTOR
OFF!

Another gesture. He takes the shell, and the other actors exit. He is left alone with the ocean. He takes the
shell and spikes it.
The ocean stops.
CONDUCTOR
(to himself)
One two three
Two two three..

Lights down. That director-y clap, hand-rubbing thing.

DIRECTOR
O-kay!
Part I
I.
In the darkness:

DIRECTOR
What we need is focus! Take a step back.
What is this play about?

GRACE
Grace O’Malley.

DIRECTOR
Okay, sure. But go deeper than that.

GRAINNE
Anti-colonialism.

GRANUAILE
Motherhood

DIRECTOR
Maybe not the main focus, but sure

GRANUAILE
Or, the balance of motherhood and other things.

DIRECTOR
Maybe...

GRACE
Success as a woman in a man's world

DIRECTOR
Yes! There we go. More.

MAN
Pirates.

DIRECTOR
Thank you! That’s the simple answer.
But keep going. Who was Grace? Why should we care?
MAEVE
Did we decide we were calling her Grace?

Beat.

DIRECTOR
Good question. Let’s come back to that.
- But what else? Anyone?
- Grace O’Malley. The pirate queen.
- Why her? Why this play? I know you all have something. Remember what you said at the first rehearsal.
- Fine. I’ll start.

Lights up.

DIRECTOR
Hi everyone, my name is James, I’m the director of the, currently untitled Grace O’Malley project! My pronouns are he/him/his, or himself. Before we begin, I just want to mention that we are on the ancestral land of the Muscogee Creek, and this theater was built using slave labor. Okay.

So, about me:
I’ve done a bit of film in my time, but I’ve been wanting to take a step back. Do something more...collaborative. See, my background is in theater, and someone [OR: John, actually] mentioned Grace a while back, and I thought--well what’s more theatrical than a Pirate Queen? I guess the rest is history.

Ha - speaking of!
It’s tricky. The history. --and flawed!;, of course!
Legends, folk songs--not a lot to go off of.
But then again, we have a few primary sources--and plenty of options.
I’d like to help us find her.

Lights down.

DIRECTOR
Alright: Graces, your turn.


GRACE/GRAINNE/GRANUAILE
Hi, my name is (actor names)
And I'll be playing
Grace/Grainne/Granuaile

They look at each other.

GRACE/GRANUAILE
Grace/Granuaile

GRACE
Grace.
Oh gosh what else
right my pronouns are she/her/hers
I’ve never worked on a devised play before-

GRANUAILE
She/Her. Excited to work with you again, James

GRAINNE
Hi guys, I’m (actor name) -- I’m playing Grainne.

GRACE
I think the whole creating-as-you-go thing is going to make for such a cool play

GRANUAILE
I’m also one of the, ah, Gran-you-ales. I think it’s so interesting to have three of us playing her?
Oh, and I’d probably be a big cat of some kind.

GRAINNE
This is a little awkward because I’m going last,

GRACE
Oh, and my-

GRAINNE
but in my understanding Native communities generally frown on the term-

GRACE
- spirit animal is...a flamingo? Or no, probably a smaller bird

GRANUAILE
There’s a lot of room to make the play our own.
GRAINNE
Oh, and I actually use they/she

GRACE
-she’s just such an interesting figure, you know?

GRAINNE
...pronouns.

GRANUAILE
Some people use “patronus” instead

GRACE
And I consider myself a feminist-

DIRECTOR
(to Grainne)
Oh, no!
We’ll have to use a different icebreaker next time.

GRACE
Isn’t JK Rowling transphobic, though?

GRAINNE
I mean, I -

GRACE
No she’s a TERF for sure

GRANUAILE
I’m excited for this show because,
   Well
   I guess...

DIRECTOR
Okay, okay.

*Beat. Lights down again.*

DIRECTOR
Maybe not the first rehearsal. But we have to have something.

*Crickets.*
DIRECTOR
Okay -- what if we start from the top again.
Yeah?

GRACE
Good idea.

DIRECTOR
Places, please

ALL
Thank you places

DIRECTOR
Let’s just cut all the frills and the gimmicks and the swords; just tell us what you know.
Anything that’s missing or that we don’t know, just improvise. Like we’ve been practicing.

Okay.
Lights down, aaaand:
II.

*Lights up. Performance time!*

**THE GRACES**
Grace O’Malley
The Pirate Queen

**GRANUAILE**
Not to be confused with “The Pirate Queen,” the musical
Written by some guys named

**THE GRACES**
John, Alain, Claude-Michel, and Richard

**GRANUAILE**
Where “The Pirate Queen” is the name of a boat
And Grace has to save her boyfriend from the queen

**GRAINNE**
The Pirate Queen was a person

**GRACE**
Her name was Grace
Well, sort of
Her name wasn’t exactly Grace

**GRACE & GRANUAILE**
(*gesturing to Grainne*)
Her name was Gráinne Ó Mháille

**GRACE**
But Ó Mháille was anglicized as Ni Mhaol
Wait no, not anglicized

**GRANUAILE**
Mhaol means bald, because she chopped off all her hair as a child

**GRAINNE**
Grainne the Bald

**GRACE**
Some people think it’s because she wanted to be a boy but there’s not a whole lot of proof
Plus that takes away from the fact that she was so successful as a WOMAN
GRAINNE
But then again there isn’t a lot of queer representation either, so like

GRACE
Right

GRANUAILE
So Grainne Ni Mhaol but that’s also spelled a bunch of different ways
And all of that is then anglicized -- actually anglicized this time -- as the one word:

GRACE & GRAINNE
(gesturing to Granuaile)
Granuaile
GRACE
So we have the Pirate Queen Granuaile, sometimes referred to as Granuaile O’Malley, since that’s what
we call the Ó Mháille clan --

GRAINNE
(reading from their notes)
Also known as Gráinne O'Maly, Graney O'Mally, Granny ni Maille, Grany O'Mally, Grane ne Male,
Grayn Ny Mayle -- which is the same but with ’Y’s -- Grainy O'Maly, and Granee O'Maillie -

THE GRACES
But everyone calls her Grace.

GRACE
She looked like this

GRANUAILE
Or this

GRAINNE
Or this -- wait no that’s Anne Bonny

GRANUAILE
Anyway we’re not exactly sure what she looked like
She probably didn’t look like this to be honest, but lots of guys draw her that way

GRACE
Could be empowering or demeaning depending how you look at it

GRANUAILE
Most ways you look at it it’s demeaning
GRAINNE
We can actually be pretty certain that her father wasn’t white

GRANUAILE
Not fully, anyway

GRAINNE
So she could have looked like me

GRANUAILE
Or me

GRAINNE & GRANUAILE
But most of the time she looks like her.

GRACE
Right.

*Beat. They might look at their notes.*

GRACE
Grace O’Malley was born in the west of Ireland before Ireland was Ireland.
She was in the O’Malley clan, which is sort of like a kingdom
And her father was a Chieftain, which is sort of like a king

GRANUAILE
The O’Malleys were unique because they got their power from land AND sea

GRAINNE
~Foreshadowiiiiinggg~

GRANUAILE
Her first husband had a lot of political power, but was completely useless. So she just sort of took over his job.

GRAINNE
Then he died doing something stupid.
But, because she was a widow, they wouldn’t let her keep her position.

GRACE
So she went back home to the O’Malleys, but some of the men she had led respected her so much that they decided to come with her
GRAINNE
and she led a fleet of ships with hundreds of men and started all of these rebellions -

GRANUAILE
She became a pirate.

GRAINNE
- 
*Well...did she?*

GRACE
I mean yeah that’s the whole point
GRAINNE
The *English* called her a pirate

GRACE
But she also did a lot of the classic pirate stuff

GRAINNE
Like seizing castles or fighting on boats or inciting uprisings against the English like 
what are you getting at

GRANUAILE
Oh, I feel like we should clarify that the English are kind of the bad guys

GRACE
Right.

GRAINNE
Aren’t they always.

GRANUAILE
Granuaile was born during the Tudor Conquest of Ireland.

GRAINNE
So they were trying to colonize her land

GRACE
They’d technically already started colonizing it, but this was different

MAEVE
Because of Queen Elizabeth I
They all look at her.

GRACE
Right
She also had children.

GRAINNE
Three sons

GRANUAILE
-and one daughter.

MAEVE
Hi!

GRANUAILE
We...don’t know that much about her.

MAEVE sits.

GRAINNE
Her eldest son was murdered

GRACE
Then her second son joined forces with the English

GRANUAILE
So naturally, she declares war on him.

GRAINNE
“I brought you into this world-!!”

GRACE
Her third son was with her second husband.

GRAINNE
Tibbot, “of the sea.”

GRANUAILE
He was sort of her legacy.

MAEVE glares at her.
GRAINNE
She taught him how to sail and stand up for their people
He carried the torch, so to speak.

GRACE
Ok, but the other thing that’s cool about him is that she -

GRANUAILE
Oh, right

GRACE
She gave birth to him ON the SEA

GRAINNE
I honestly kind of doubt this story

GRACE
No it’s like really cool! Her ship was LITERALLY under attack-

GRANUAILE
A lot of this is oral history so it’s hard to know

GRACE
No no okay like, it’s all about the triumph of - It’s like -
She did everything!
Like she was a mother and also - agh. Basically she gave birth and her ship was under attack and then her men weren’t able to hold them off so she came up WITH her newborn son And she fought them off herself.

Beat.

GRAINNE
That’s the story, anyway.

GRACE
Okay, okay, but the main thing

GRANUAILE
(Right.)
GRACE
is that she met with Queen Elizabeth.

GRAINNE
I wouldn’t call it the most important thing

GRANUAILE
Right, but it is what everything sort of builds up to.

GRAINNE
And obviously Queen Elizabeth is also kind of the villain
GRACE
Yeah but it’s also like. Queen Elizabeth and Grace were both queens in their own way.
They were both women in these super huge positions of power

GRANUAILE
There was a sense of..mutual respect. Between them.

GRAINNE
But also, Grainne had no other options.

GRANUAILE
She was powerful, so a lot of people really hated her at this point.
She probably wouldn’t have made it out alive, if she were anyone else.

GRACE
So, after answering 18 questions from the queen

GRAINNE
(18! In writing!)

GRANUAILE
“The eighteen articles of interrogatory”

GRACE
Elizabeth finally agreed to meet with her.

GRANUAILE
Face to face.

GRACE
And here’s the thing,
the story that made her famous
GRAINNE
She takes this whole journey into enemy territory,

GRACE
Which would have been long

GRANUAILE
And after losing everything,

GRAINNE
On threat of death

GRACE
she walks up to the throne--
And with all of these soldiers and Englishmen watching,

THE GRACES
She doesn’t bow.

Beat.

DIRECTOR
Okay.
That’s a start.
Let’s call it a night.

Blackout.
III.

*Lights up on the three “Graces” in the greenroom. One of them holds a little slip of paper. They’re a bit stilted. (For the top of this scene, goodbye Gilmore Girls.)*

GRAINNE

Um, so.

Anyone have one they want to start with?

GRANUAILE

Why don’t we go in order?

GRAINNE

Sure.

GRACE

It’s kinda funny how he’s like. Forcing us to bond.

GRAINNE

Ha! Yeah that’s what I was thinking

GRANUAILE

It’s part of the process.

GRACE

No yeah

GRAINNE

For sure.

GRACE

I’m sure he knows what he’s doing

GRAINNE

-

So. Okay. Um.

What makes each of our Graces different?

*Beat.*

GRACE

Um

I guess our names
GRANUAILE
Right

Beat.

GRAINNE
Um
And yours is like, the most. Anglicized.

GRACE
Yes

Beat.

GRAINNE
And, you’re, white

GRACE
Right!
duh
-

GRANUAILE
I’m also older than you both

They nod. Beat. They sort of look to Grainne, expecting them to mention their queerness. The audience probably does too, you know, since they have short hair:

GRAINNE
I’m sort of interested in um, her childhood

GRACE
Oh, sure

GRAINNE
I don’t know about you guys

GRACE
Oh,
I guess me too?
And like her marriages
GRAINNE
Really

GRACE
I mean, yeah

GRAINNE
Huh

GRANUAILE
It is interesting how she married more than once.

GRACE
Right.
She didn’t have the best luck in love.

GRANUAILE
Well, I don’t know if I would call it love. She married the second one for his castle

GRAINNE
Hah, right: “Richard Bourke! I dismiss you!”
Stole it out from under him

GRACE
She had the boyfriend though.
The one she saved from the shipwreck

GRANUAILE
That’s right

GRACE
Isn’t that kind of cool? Too? Like. A reversal.

GRAINNE
(to themself, so GRANUAILE can’t hear)
Be more of a reversal if she were gay.

GRACE
What?

GRANUAILE
So maybe your Grace is more into the romance stuff.
GRACE
Oh. Yeah. But also the other stuff. I guess like--the romance stuff and the pirate stuff not being mutually exclusive. Like, how she can sort of be masculine and feminine and neither of them cancel each other out or make her something other and she’s still respected. 
-
You know?

Beat.

GRAINNE
Oh.

GRACE
Um. But. I don’t know though.
Just
Spitballing
What else?

Beat. A longer one.

GRAINNE
Well, okay, maybe this’ll help- why did we all audition? // Cause I-

GRACE
//Oh!

GRANUAILE
Well-
No, you go

DIRECTOR
(offstage)
Alright ladies, if we could wrap up soon we’re gonna work on the Hen’s Castle bit

GRAINNE
Oh, guess that’s it

They pack up to go. The lights shift. They stop--they are still for just too long. Waves draw them back. They speak to..themselves?
GRACE
I’d heard of Anne Bonny and Mary Reid

GRANUAILE
I guess I relate to the career thing. I’ve...I don’t want to say I’ve done well for myself.

GRAINNE
I don’t usually get to relate to the characters I play

GRACE
And Grace, she’s a pirate, but she’s someone who also had all of these lovers and also had all of these kids and it’s like, I like to imagine--think. Think we can do that.

GRANUAILE
Even then part of me wonders if I would have gotten the role

+GRAINNE
if there weren’t three of us,

GRAINNE
But something about her feels familiar

GRANUAILE
Even though //I’ve been an actor //I’ve wanted to be an actor

GRACE & GRANUAILE
for a long time

GRAINNE
I actually don’t act much, really

GRACE
and acting is like
you can be someone different, I guess,
and you can be lots of different people, but not usually all at once

GRANUAILE
If you only get one thing. One thing you get to do perfectly and that you excel at and everything -- yes, what happens to everything else. But even worse -- what happens if you lose it?

GRACE
Grace feels like something to aspire to
GRANUAILE
It’s that terror
of success

GRAINNE
Maybe there are actors who wouldn’t be interested in a show like this
maybe there’s something different about us
For me, I think it’s-

GRANUAILE
the reminder

GRAINNE
I remember-

GRANUAILE
of all the people who want to be where you are

MAEVE & GRANUAILE
The people who aren’t here

*GRACE and GRANUAILE look to MAEVE’s homework corner.*
*GRAINNE has been waiting -- they burst.*

G R A I N N E
There was this book.

_Beat._

G R A I N N E
When I was a kid. A pirate book.
It wasn’t mine, it was my brother’s -- one of those holiday gifts from those relatives that don’t know
anything about you except your age and your gender
Anyway, pirates weren’t his thing.
I always saw it on the shelf, so new it might as well be wrapped, and I’d think “why didn’t _I_ get that
book?”
and I could have just said that,
but I got the sense that wanting it
the way I did
was something … against the rules.
But one day, I had the house to myself, and maybe I was feeling mad or rebellious or just bored, but there
was also...this _pull?_
and there always had been, but it was different that day
So I read it. And it had all these pirates. Real, fictional, in-between. And some awful stuff about torture
devices?? Really not appropriate for a kid my age
And obviously they’re all men, and obviously they’re all white.
But then I got to this page on female pirates. Which is kind of awful, when you think about it? But I
didn’t think it was awful at the time. And there was this girl, Grace, who in the drawing looked nothing
like me, but for some reason I saw her and something just HIT me.
Like, woah:

THE GRACES
I could be her.

Beat. The waves stop, the lights shift back. They all look like they had some weird deja-vu, and
maybe they look at the others, one by one, without making eye contact--but no one acknowledges
it. They begin to exit. Blackout.

DIRECTOR
Aaand - lights up!
IV.

Lights up, mid-rehearsal. The other actors might sit, following along. Maybe MAN and MAEVE are playing a card game or something.

GRAINNE

(stepping forward)

When I was a child
I watched the ships go by like a hungry dog
My father in command of nearly every one
My father, either out in the spray or home telling us of his time in Spain
More often his time getting to Spain

MAN

(with an Irish accent, it’s ok if it’s not good though)

A nasty noutherly, had to change course!
Heeling at a near 45, we were,
-- learn from my mistakes, lass, never wait too long to down the sails with fragile goods aboard.

GRAINNE

He’d say it with a laugh in his voice like we were in on a joke, like perhaps one day I’d be the fragile goods. At least that’s how I took it.
I spoke to my mother each time he was away
(to Maeve)
I want to go with him, why can’t I go with him
She would always frown

The first time

MAEVE

You just miss him.

GRAINNE

But that wasn’t it.

Sometimes:

MAEVE

Me too

GRAINNE

But she didn’t say that very often.

Mostly, though:

MAEVE & GRAINNE

We are women.
GRAINNE
Whatever that means, I’d think.
Until finally, she said:

DIRECTOR
Hold please.

*Actor neutral.*

DIRECTOR
Let’s jump to the wedding.

GRAINNE
Wait, sorry. Are we skipping the hair-cutting scene?

DIRECTOR
Sorry, just for time’s sake.

GRAINNE
I thought…

DIRECTOR
No, go for it

GRAINNE
I just thought we were going to work that one today
I just thought it was important
I also just
I had some ideas

DIRECTOR
Okay! Yeah! Ideas!
I think we’ll. Yes.
For now, I think we’re running out // of

GRAINNE
Oh, yeah, totally
sorry,

DIRECTOR
No no! I mean we’re writing as we go, input is the whole thing -- we’ll just plan to come back to it. Can we get ourselves set up?
They set up for the wedding ceremony.

DIRECTOR
Okay, so, she decides to cut her hair to disguise herself as a boy, then we have the song, and then the wedding is on page...

GRACE
Actually I had a thought about the song

DIRECTOR
Go ahead

GRACE
The chorus...is a little unfortunate. For our purposes, you know.

General murmurs of approval. From the men especially -- they’re feminists! Can’t you hear how much of a feminist I am in my murmur of approval??

DIRECTOR
Right, all that about the sons! I mean, it’s one of the only songs about her - which is interesting in and of itself

GRACE
I guess we lean into the irony of it?

MAN
It could be very tongue-in-cheek, like
“Hey guys look at this popular song about this awesome lady and it’s still focusing on her sons”

GRAINNE
I thought it was more like, her legacy? Like Ireland in general.

GRANUAILE
I mean, I guess -
(The men look to her. They’re good feminists! They listen!)

In a sense, children were one of the ways women exercised power. Like marriage.
So you could maybe think of her sons as an extension of her power.
And Ireland’s power.

MAN and DIRECTOR think this is so interesting and smart.
MAN
Iiinteresting!

GRACE
Of course her daughter doesn’t get any recognition, though. It’s like they all forget she exists.

*They all nod and kind of look to MAEVE. A moment.*

MAEVE
You //know there’s-

DIRECTOR
How about we-oh no, go ahead!!

MAEVE
Oh.
I was just going to say. There’s another song about her, we could use?

*They look at her expectantly. But like, because they have to? She didn’t expect this, but she’s prepared.*

MAEVE
It’s a battle song, where Granuaile is like a symbol of Irish sovereignty.

GRAINNE
Wait that’s cool

DIRECTOR
Could you send it to me? And for now, we’ll keep practicing the one we have and see if we can get more juice out of the irony or legacy stuff.

MAEVE
..Sure.

DIRECTOR
Alright, great!
Let’s go from the top of the wedding, everyone.

*MAN goes to the “altar” and GRANUAILE stands to the side somewhere. GRACE becomes the officiant.*

DIRECTOR
You know what, could we get some Canon D or something, (actor name)?
GRANUAILE
Oh.
Is that what they would have played?

GRACE
Do you play the bagpipes, (actor name)?

MAEVE
Bagpipes are actually Scottish

DIRECTOR
That’s true, and no, but we can suspend our disbelief a little.

GRANUAILE
-
Alright then.

GRANUAILE hums the first line or two of “here comes the bride.” GRAINNE goes to the top of the aisle.

GRAINNE
Wait, sorry. Just so I know, how old was she?

Some of them consult their dramaturgy packets. GRAINNE looks at MAN’s.

DIRECTOR
Let’s keep the scene moving.

GRACE
Do you take Grainne to be your lawfully wedded wife?

MAN
I do.

GRACE
And do you, Grainne, take the tanaiste to be your lawfully wedded husband?

Beat.

GRAINNE
I..

GRACE
Well don’t look too excited about it
GRANNE
I thought she might hesitate.

MAN
Yeah no, should I seem more menacing?

DIRECTOR
Let’s skip to the end-

GRACE
I am happy to announce this marriage of equals.

*MAN leans in. GRAINNE ducks away. MAN might lean in again--it’s not creepy-creepy but it’s definitely a little grey. He realizes.*

MAN
*Oh, sorry*

DIRECTOR
Hold -- What was that??

GRANNE
Sorry
I just didn’t think what we had worked anymore

GRACE
..you mean the kiss??

GRANNE
I mean, I don’t think she would have been “too excited about it”

GRACE
I think she would have

GRANNE
I really don’t think so.

GRACE
It was her wedding.

GRANNE
She was thirteen.
Beat.

GRACE
Oh.
I didn’t know that.

They look to the DIRECTOR. Beat.

DIRECTOR
It’s a bit complicated
without the time to really get into it,
you know?
So maybe the audience doesn’t need to know that.
-
Why don’t we take a five?

A smattering of “thank you five”s as the room shifts. As the rest break away, GRAINNE takes off the veil and looks at it.
V.

GRACE, GRANUAILE, and MAEVE sit around the greenroom, waiting.

GRANUAILE
(to herself, not super well but also not funny-bad)
Go n-éirí [guh nuh-ey]... Go n-éirí an bóthar leat
[/Guh ny-ree on boh-har lyat/
Okay! Got it!

MAEVE
Sounds good

GRANUAILE
Oh, thank you.

MAEVE
What does it mean?

GRAINNE re-enters, with two or three reusable water bottles.

GRANUAILE
It’s a prayer for the dead.

GRAINNE hands out the bottles to their respective owners.

GRACE
Thank you!

GRAINNE
(endeearingly awkward)
Water’s the source of life, man

They sit for a beat, then MAN rushes in to set his things down.

MAN
(seeing them)
Oh, I thought I was late

GRACE
Yeah, James is trying to get one of the primary sources transcribed and I guess it’s taking forever
MAN
Gotcha
Do I have enough time to get a bite?

GRANUAILE
It’s probably another ten at least

GRAINNE
If you go to the place -

MAN
The one right-? Yeah that’s what I was thinking

GRAINNE
I mean, probably?

MAN
Cover for me?

MAN exits. They sit in silence a while.

MAEVE
(practicing?)
The Eighteen Articles of Interrogatory!

GRAINNE
What is this, Hamilton?
MAEVE
Sorry

GRAINNE
No it was great just didn’t expect it

GRANUAILE
Why don’t you keep going?
Maybe we’ll get somewhere.

GRACE
It’s so weird; I swear we know more about her than him sometimes.

GRAINNE
Maybe it’s the experience.
GRACE
What, of being a pirate?

GRAINNE
You know what I mean.

MAEVE
...
Um, okay!
The Eighteen Articles of Interrogatory.
Or, Queen Elizabeth’s eighteen questions to Grainne. Oh, AND
the eighteen answers that got her an audience with the queen.
Number one...
Um.

GRAINNE
Could be anything!

MAEVE
What’s your name.

GRACE
Okay, sure:
I’m Grace O’Malley, the Pirate Queen.

GRAINNE
Grainne ni Mhaol.

GRANUAILE
Granuaile.

MAEVE
-
Sorry, I don’t-

GRANUAILE
It’s okay. Keep going.

MAEVE
Two. Where are you from?

GRACE
The west of Ireland.
GRAINNE
Claire Island.

GRANUAILE
Connacht.

MAEVE
Three. What is your allegiance to the crown?

GRAINNE
None at all.

GRANUAILE
...Your Highness.

GRACE
I respect Your crown--I’d like to speak woman to woman.

GRAINNE
She’d never-

MAEVE
Four. They call you the Pirate Queen. Why should I speak to someone who, without the second half of your title, would be left to rot in the cages above our channels without hesitation?

GRACE
That’s just it, my liege. We are both queens. Might we discuss peace? Friendship?

GRAINNE
I hate this.

GRANUAILE
Well, she convinced her somehow.

GRAINNE
Saying that is like conceding. If she didn’t bow, she wouldn’t have said that.

GRACE
Then what would have convinced her?
GRAINNE
Maybe she was a lesbian.

GRACE laughs.

GRAINNE
What? Grace was a badass and probably ripped
Not to mention she cut her hair to look like a boyy

GRACE
That’s ridiculous

GRAINNE
..just as likely an explanation as what some of these biographers wrote.

MAEVE
Early Ireland was pretty cool with gay people. I think.

GRAINNE
See! Maybe Grainne was bisexual. Totally could have flirted with her.

GRACE
This feels blasphemous.

GRAINNE
Um okay internalized homophobia

GRACE
Hey.

GRANUAILE
Do we want to...

GRACE
Yes please.

GRAINNE
What?

MAEVE
Five. What are you doing here?

GRACE
I have done nothing wrong.

GRANUAILE
I have had no choice, your highness, but to maintain myself by land and sea, since my position was taken from me.

MAEVE
No choice? -that’s six.

GRANUAILE
No choice.

MAEVE thinks.

MAEVE
You’re a woman.

GRACE
...Is that a question?

GRAINNE
Yes, actually

GRACE
Well..

GRAINNE
It’s at least a question.

MAEVE
Seven, then.

Eight: Is that...normal? In your society. For women to lead.

GRANUAILE
Oh, no.

GRACE
Well, sort of.

GRAINNE
More normal than in yours.
MAEVE
Tell me more. Nine.

GRAINNE
The spirit of my country is a woman.

GRANUAILE
Eiru.

GRACE
My mother and my daughter are named after a goddess.

GRANUAILE
Maeve.

GRAINNE
Well, a chieftess. A warrior.

GRANUAILE
You might call her a queen.

MAEVE
Was she real? Ten.

GRAINNE
I guess it’s hard to say.

MAEVE
You know, that’s what bothers me about history. So many live between it and legend, don’t they?

GRACE
Isn’t that beautiful?

GRAINNE
Not if they don’t believe we are real.

GRANUAILE
(losing enthusiasm)
. . . Hm.

MAEVE
Are we real? Eleven.
GRAINNE
Of course.

GRACE
Are we? I sometimes wonder.

GRANUAILE
I...

MAEVE
Twelve: how do you do it?

GRACE
It’s lonely.

MAEVE
God, it’s lonely.
See, that’s why I like to write things down. It’s why I’m having you write this down, your answers to my questions.
I write what I see, who I see, what I do, who I am. If it’s written it is documented, and if it is documented it is real.
I wonder, if I weren’t a queen, and if I weren’t a woman, if I would have made a good cartographer.
Twelve: do you know what I mean?

GRAINNE
...

GRACE
I think so.

Beat.

MAEVE
Thirteen - would I make a good cartographer?

Beat.

GRANUAILE
Hold on.

I’m sorry - I don’t know if we’re getting at it.
MAEVE
(embarassed)
Oh.

GRANUAILE
Sorry. It’s just… Queen Elizabeth was…
This is nothing against you, I just don’t know if it’s a totally accurate portrayal.

GRAINNE
I mean technically none of it’s accurate

GRACE
I kind of thought it was interesting

GRANUAILE
No, and it is! It’s just - for the Queen, she seems desperate.

MAEVE
That’s true.

A brief moment. People stop sticking up for her, since it seems like she’s conceding.

MAEVE
But maybe she was desperate.

GRANUAILE
I don’t think so.

MAEVE
I just mean...It must have been lonely. And she probably felt guilty.
Like Grace.

GRACE & GRAINNE look up.

GRAINNE
I wouldn’t say she’s like Grace.

GRANUAILE
Queen Elizabeth was very...iron fist.

GRAINNE & GRACE are in agreement.

MAEVE
Exactly.
GRANUAILE
Okay--exactly what?

MAEVE
She used that. To get power.

GRANUAILE
Sure.

MAEVE
It’s just. And maybe I don’t know anything. If she lived her life waging war and pillaging and taking peoples’ homes (to GRACE & GRAINNE)
If she wanted to do that
chose to do that
(back to GRANUAILE)
or even felt like she had to do that.
To be strong.
Doesn’t that make her weak?

Beat. The Graces all feel kinda weird about this but none of them know why.

GRAINNE
...

GRACE
...

GRANUAILE
I guess, just
Normally-
this isn’t how we approach these kinds of exercises

MAEVE
...
right.

Beat.

GRANUAILE
You were good, though.
Beat.

GRACE
What if we start over?

GRAINNE
Um. Yeah. I’m down.

GRANUAILE and MAEVE look at one another.

GRANUAILE
...
Okay. One?

MAEVE
W//

DIRECTOR enters, triumphantly.

DIRECTOR
Ladies and gentleJohn, I am proud to present: the Eighteen Articles of Interrogatory!

GRACE
Oh, we actually -

DIRECTOR
Now we can start.

MAN sneaks in as the lights go out.
V.5

*Ghostlight.* **DIRECTOR** is playing with the shell when **GRANUAILE** enters.

**DIRECTOR**

*(Sing-humming)*

“Success to the sons of sweet granuaile”

**GRANUAILE**

Hey, James?

**DIRECTOR**

*(hiding the shell)*

Yes!

**GRANUAILE**

Thanks again for having me

**DIRECTOR**

Oh of course

You know I always love working with you.

**GRANUAILE**

Just wanted to say -- I know these girls aren’t quite as experienced

So if they’re ever crossing lines or whatever

I can always...tone them down

**DIRECTOR**

Oh, you don’t have to do that

**GRANUAILE**

I know! And I love em to death. But, you know. They’re just new.
VI.

*In the darkness--*

**DIRECTOR**
Okay, ready everyone?
Explain it to me again. Like I’m five.

*Lights up on the GRACES.*

**GRANUAILE**
Welcome, welcome! Have a seat!

**GRACE**
We’re going to learn about pirates today!

**GRAINNE**
And why you should never trust a colonizer.

*GRACE shoots them a look. Laugh track.*

**GRANUAILE**
Granuaile-

**GRACE**
Grace

**GRANUAILE**
was a very very successful woman

**GRAINNE**
And we’re pretty sure she was a girl. But some people say -

**DIRECTOR**
*Hey, (GRANUAILE actor name), did you have something-?*

**GRANUAILE**
Yeah, maybe we-

**GRACE**
Remember, this is five we’re talking. Five.

*GRANUAILE is taken aback by the interruption.*
GRAINNE
okay, okay, I get it.
(jumping up)
She was a pirate!

*GRAINNE takes out a foam sword.*

GRAINNE
She fought the English!

MAEVE
Give me your land and I’ll give you money!

GRAINNE
NEVER

MAN
(entering)
I’ll do it.

MAEVE
uh...cool!

*MAEVE knights MAN.*

GRANUAILE
~Who are you?~

MAN
Richard Bingham.
Actually, now SIR Richard Bingham.
(aside)
And then, do you know what I do? Me. Sir Bingham.
I fight for England, I tell them all about Ireland -- where things are, how to get around, how to trick people into selling their land-

GRACES
Booo!

MAN
And I meet many young Irishmen who want to fight for their home
GRACE
Wait, John

MAN
I trick them into thinking I’m on their side-

GRANUAILE
Maybe we should //skip...

MAN
And I lead them straight into a trap
A thousand Irish boys
Including your son
And the English kill them all
And a thousand more innocent women and children

GRACE
(They cry, right? What do we do if they cry)

They struggle, maybe GRAINNE tries the sword thing again.
MAEVE re-enters in a crown.

MAEVE
(a funny accent!)
Look at me! I’m dressed like Queen Elizabeth!

Thank God - they shoo John off the stage.

GRACE
Queen Elizabeth! Sir B//ing-

GRAINNE
Some guy

GRANUAILE
destroyed my home and kidnapped my son!

GRACE
(Or was it her boyfriend?)

GRAINNE
(I thought it was her?)
MAEVE
Pirate Queen…
Would you like to be a princess?

GRAINNE          GRACE
No.               You mean it??

Beat.

GRANUAILE
Your highness, I would like to be restored of my ships and my land and my son and my title.

MAEVE
...
(o)k!

Cheer!

MAEVE
But -

No more cheering.

MAEVE
no more of this pirate nonsense.

The GRACES look at each other.

MAEVE
You may only sail for me.

They stare. They are very unhappy.

MAEVE and GRACE turn to us, smiling - GRAINNE and GRANUAILE do not.

ALL
And they all lived happily ever after

DIRECTOR
(clapping)
And, blackout!

Blackout.
VI.5

*Ghostlight.*

DIRECTOR
Jesus. I really need to figure this out.
We’re gonna get to the performance and it’ll be like “who the heck is this lady”
And who keeps moving this shell?? We have spike tape for a *reason*—
Let me just—

MAN
Hey

DIRECTOR
Shit
Sorry you startled me

MAN
I’m sorry to bother you-

DIRECTOR
No, go ahead.

MAN
I was just wondering like…
When we’ll get
to the real Grace O’Malley stuff?

*Beat. He tears the tape.*
VII. (Maeve’s Part)

*Lights up. It’s just MAEVE, working by herself in the greenroom.*

MAEVE

Map, map...
God this is impossible to read. I shouldn’t be studying Latin, I should be studying handwriting. Then again I’m definitely not finishing my Latin homework tonight.

- The Irish Pirate Queen. Why is this book even called that. Ireland wasn’t Ireland; Ireland didn’t have Queens.
The queen asked her to be a princess and she said no. Why would she ever want to be a queen?

- MAEVE (cont.)
There’s so much about her meeting with Queen Elizabeth. Why is she only important because she met with Queen Elizabeth?
And then there’s all these men
Her sons, her husband, her other husband, her random boyfriend, even her brother who never even sailed a ship. He played the bagpipes or something.
She spent her life rebelling against the English. And there’s nothing on that.

- Here we go. Look. They put her on a map. Spelled her name wrong, but so did everyone, didn’t they?

- You know what they did with maps? History lesson. The English knew nothing about Ireland. Who to talk to, how society worked, what a chieftain was, but especially not where they could find things like food and water and shelter. You can’t take over if you don’t know what you’re taking. Cartographers, explorers? Those were the real colonizers.
And they had the Audacity to put the nurse to all Irish rebellions on a MAP.

  Map.
  MAP.
  Map Grace O’Malley
  Map Grace O’Malley
  Granny-grainy-grey-yay millie-nuh-mayDAY MAYDAY GRACE THE BALD!
  The Pirate Queen.

- Maeve was never mapped.
No one remembers her. No one memorializes her. But no one gets her wrong, hops inside her skin and puppeteers her. Well—except for me, but I haven’t hardly spoken, have I?
No, all they got to take was her name. Did you know they call her Margaret now?
Maybe she should be grateful no one is writing plays about her.

Map Grace O’Malley

Map

Map the sea
Calm the waves
Dissect the riptides
Freeze time with lines and numbers
Pretend it’ll never move, never erode the shore,
and when you pass the words on the map, pretend the landmarks call out their own English names like a
lighthouse or a roadsigh--
But you can’t map the sea.
Only chart it.

I should be a dramaturg. Maybe they’d listen to me as a dramaturg.
I’m gonna go now.
VII.5

*Ghostlight. DIRECTOR fiddles with the shell again.*

**GRAINNE**
Are you changing the set?

**DIRECTOR**
Oh, you’re early
And no, just making sure it’s all in the right place

**GRAINNE**
You know, I wonder if we could put the shell closer to the throne so they could see it better

*Beat.*

**GRAINNE**
But. Um. Where it is is good, too

*Beat.*

**GRAINNE**
I actually um, had something I wanted to mention

**DIRECTOR**
Oh sure!

**GRAINNE**
Um
I don’t know if you remember
But at the first rehearsal, I told you...

**DIRECTOR**
Oh--pronouns?

**GRAINNE**
Yeah
And I know you’re sometimes are talking about the character

**DIRECTOR**
Right
GRAINNE
And I use she sometimes but it’s not really accurate

DIRECTOR
...well, yeah, okay!
Thank you for reminding me.
VIII.

*Lights up on the rehearsal room.*

**DIRECTOR**

Alright. You’re on a high - it’s been a long day but you had a quick trip and you’re excited to tell everyone about your latest...something.

**GRAINNE**

Should we include some of that?

Like, one of her rebellions?

*He considers.*

**DIRECTOR**

I’m afraid of extrapolating too much since we don’t have that all documented.

- Not to say that’s not important because it’s obviously very important.

  *(very proud of himself)*

  But I was hoping to focus on her as a mother, today.

- So. You’re excited to tell everyone about your rebellion or how you plundered or something and then you come down here -- can you each try walking in and we’ll decide which version takes this? Grace, then Granuaile.

**GRAINNE**

You didn’t want-

**DIRECTOR**

I think we’ll put you in one of the next ones.

*They sit. GRACE might watch them, but doesn’t say anything.*

**DIRECTOR**

Okay, Granuaile-

**MAEVE**

Wait, isn’t the next// one-

**GRANUAILE**

All the way to center?

**DIRECTOR**

Mm. Maybe not quite, we might want to leave that for another moment.

How about, when you get almost downstage center,
Oh. Then we have Maeve crying.

_They glance at MAEVE._

DIRECTOR
actually why don’t you look *first* and Maeve can just try to take the cue right off of that.

MAEVE
_(she waits till it’s clear she can speak)_
so
I cry after she notices?

DIRECTOR
..Yes.

GRACE
Okay.

DIRECTOR
_(Actor name)_ why don't you take it from the entrance.

GRACE gets into character, leaves, then enters. She is fully in character, then looks, and Maeve cries a few seconds after she looks, and it’s...very awkward.

DIRECTOR
Um. Okay. You need to cross further before you go downstage; we need some more time to take in your entrance before the shift. Maybe (GRANUAILE actor name)--

GRACE
So I cross, and then cross like, back?

GRANUAILE
Yes.

DIRECTOR
Here, why don’t I -

DIRECTOR pulls the whiteboard towards them and starts mapping out the stage.

DIRECTOR
So here’s where you enter, and we’ll probably move the curtains so there are wings here and here, right, and then we’ve got the wooden dock thing, the throne, and the doorway to the house,
Then you cross between these, then - Maeve, this would be your cue to cry,
Then you cross down and notice.

GRACE
But not to center.

DIRECTOR
Right (He fixes it.) Just off-center.

MAEVE
So..I’m sorry -

DIRECTOR
Let’s just try it.

_They do. GRACE pauses, waiting for MAEVE to cry, but MAEVE is waiting for GRACE to notice, so they do nothing._

GRAINNE gives in to an overwhelming desire to approach the shell. They admire it.

GRACE
Sorry, I’m supposed to -

DIRECTOR
Okay, let’s just -

Let’s try it with Granuaile this time and we’ll just keep going.

GRANUAILE goes through the motions. It’s still awkward but she tries to make it work because she is a professional.

GRAINNE picks up the shell.

_The lights shift._

GRANUAILE
_(improvising. well!)_

Re-fasten that, lad. As much as we owe it to the sea we wouldn’t want her drifting away-

MAEVE starts crying, for real this time. GRANUAILE notices. So does GRACE.

GRANUAILE

Maeve.

MAEVE
_(stops crying)_

Mother.
GRANUAILE
Is it me, or has something happened?

MAEVE
(deadly)
Hard to tell the difference these days.

GRANUAILE
(to herself)
Eiru save your brothers.

DIRECTOR
(indicating to GRACE)
Can we try...

GRACE
Maeve!

MAEVE
Mother!

GRACE
Is it me, or has something happened?

MAEVE
(an inside joke)
Hard to tell the difference these days

GRACE
Oh, Eiru save your brothers!

MAEVE
I’m teasing.
But…
MAEVE (cont.)
Something has happened.

GRANUAILE
Oh.
No.
This happened before.
MAN
(Mocking MAEVE)
Oh, oh mother! You wouldn’t believe it! It’s so terrible! Waaahh!
A man came here, I didn’t know him... but he didn’t speak like the English did so I thought he was safe -
And Owen, my dear brother,

GRACE
Don’t say his name.

MAN
Oh Owen, Owen, where ya gowen

GRACE
Stop it!

MAN
It was Bingham! Oh nooooo! Sir Richard Bingham!

MAEVE
Owen said he had a dream about saving you
He went away

MAN
With me!
Boo hoo he went away
He went away forever

GRACE
...what?

*Lights shift back.*

GRANUAILE
And now it’s happening again.

GRACE
Maeve, what’s going on?

MAEVE
I…

GRANUAILE
I only have so many sons.
GRACE
Maeve.

MAEVE
When you were gone.

GRANUAILE
(singing—guilty, though, not fragile)
Success to the sons of sweet Granuaile.

MAEVE
They found us.

GRACE
Who?

MAN
Who do you think?

MAEVE
There was screaming
The ships

GRANUAILE
The ships?

MAEVE
The men

GRANUAILE
Where??

A slight English accent may creep in, or an Irish accent may be dropped, as MAN speaks.

MAN
What a sunset. Huh, Grace?
Red is almost gold sometimes, Grace.
You can turn it to gold, Grace.

MAN pulls out a sword.
MAN
If only you’d learned that, too.
You could have had a golden house as big as mine.
Or maybe you did learn it. You’re no stranger to screams, are you?
Ships in the water
Men in the water
I’m a fucking alchemist. Red to gold. But look at you
Look what happens when the tables are turned
Where’s your house? Where’s your home? Where’d your sons go?

GRACE
What happened?

MAN
(to Maeve, mocking)
Your father has passed.

GRANUAILE
Maeve.

MAN
I’ve imprisoned your mother

MAEVE
Mother…

MAN
I’ve murdered your brother

MAEVE
Owen…

GRACE
Where’s Tibbot?

MAEVE
I-

MAN
Aye aye!
GRANUAILE
Quit whining and *speak*!!

MAEVE
*(finally)*
Ships in the water
Men in the water

GRANUAILE
My men

MAEVE
*(deadly)*
You’ve run out of children.

*MAN does something with the bloody sword. GRANUAILE prepares to go. MAEVE’s facade breaks once GRANUAILE turns away. GRACE might comfort her.*

GRACE
Tibbot?

MAN
You’ll get him back if you turn yourself in.

GRACE
I have to go to him.

GRANUAILE
No.

GRACE
I *have to go.*

GRANUAILE
She didn’t.

GRACE
I have-/to

GRANUAILE
*She.*
-
GRANUAILE (cont.)
She. Didn’t.

GRACE stops comforting MAEVE and just sort of sits there. We can’t tell if this is in character or not.

MAEVE
(To Grace)
Mother?

Nothing. Beat. MAEVE looks directly at GRANUAILE for the first time.

MAEVE
Mother?

Beat. GRANUAILE turns from her.

GRANUAILE
(to GRACE)
Back aboard. We’re going to England.

Beat. As they melt out of character, they look to DIRECTOR. He sits for a beat, silent. Then -

DIRECTOR
Hands off the set.

GRAINNE has been playing with the shell, maybe listening to it. They put it back. The lights change.

GRAINNE
Sorry.

DIRECTOR
On the spike, please.

They adjust it, by like an inch. They all wait for DIRECTOR to acknowledge what just happened, but he just seems...bristled.

DIRECTOR
(gesturing to the whiteboard again)
So I think Granuaile ran into the dock and Maeve looked through a set piece to her.

MAEVE
(speechless)
Oh.
DIRECTOR
Grace you were a little out of it at the end there but I think if we play it up I may lean towards that version.
(to Granuale)
Sorry. Um…

GRANUAILE
No, I mean. No need.

They all kind of look at each other. This is weird. He realizes that this is weird, even if he’s not sure why.

DIRECTOR
Um. But!
What do you all think!

Beat.

DIRECTOR
No, really!
I want you all to have creative input.
That’s the point.
I also can’t exactly be an expert in feminism, so

This is a joke. They laugh, thinly.

GRACE
Um.

DIRECTOR
Yes!

GRACE
I guess I thought Granuaile was a bit. Harsh.

DIRECTOR
Hm.

GRAINNE
Well…Maybe she was? The real Grainne.

DIRECTOR
True.
GRACE
Sorry, I don’t think I was being very -
Not like harsh as in women can’t be harsh
What I mean -
She was good at a lot of things. Why should we expect she’s bad at being a mother?

GRANUAILE
…

DIRECTOR
Go for it.

GRANUAILE
We know she was gone almost all of the time, and focused most of her energy on her sons when she
focused on her children at all.

- I mean, we don’t know for sure that she wanted to be a mother in the first place.

GRAINE
That’s true.

GRACE
But she - Sorry, I just feel like.
(indicating the audience)
They aren’t going to like her if she acts like that.

GRANUAILE
She had to, though. To earn respect. She couldn’t get distracted.

GRACE
But she…

GRANUAILE
She wasn’t perfect.

GRACE
I’m not saying she was.

GRANUAILE
Aren’t you?

GRACE
It’s just that, she isn’t here
GRANUAILE
What’s that supposed to mean?

GRACE
It’s just not fair to her

GRANUAILE
How is that fair to us??

_If GRAINNE, MAN, and MAEVE had tea, they would sip it._

DIRECTOR
I think..we’re all making good points.
I’m still leaning towards putting Grace in this one. For now.

- But I’m totally open to suggestions.

Silence.

DIRECTOR
Alright. We’ll move on - but don’t forget your blocking or you’ll run into a wall.

_They look at the whiteboard._
_Everyone begins to pack up and leave, and MAEVE is the last to go._
_We hear music, faintly -- she does too. She looks around for the source, and as she does, it gets louder and softer as she gets closer to and further from the shell. It’s a rendition of “Granuale.”_ 
_She approaches the shell, realizing._ 
_We listen to the music with her._ 
_She reaches down to touch it --
IX.
The music stops and the lights shift—red, or a ghostlight. MAEVE runs.
The stage is empty for longer than a stage usually is.
GRANUAILE enters. Something overtakes her.
She approaches the throne.
She reaches out. Hesitant at first. Maybe it’s taller than it was before. She touches it.
We start applauding.
I mean, I guess we don’t, but we’re the audience presumably and her audience does, so, sort of.
We’re always participants even if we aren’t the audience that does the clapping, right? Complacency!
Not a perfect metaphor. But I digress.
This is another audience, just like us, but a ghost. An audience of ghosts! A ghost audience!
Not that every theater doesn’t have a thousand ghost audiences, but we usually don’t think about them.
I promise the digressions are important.
Anyway: it’s history and also us and they should feel connected if not the same.
Granuaile/Elizabeth hears the audience. She absorbs it. Slowly, but literally. Not in that it gets any softer,
on the contrary (more like a feedback loop) as she becomes Queen Elizabeth.
She takes in the applause. Maybe she starts to bow and then realizes she’s the queen and is like oops and
laughs and it becomes a whole bit.
She takes Her Rightful Place On The Throne.
As she does, the sound of the applause starts to change, just a little, just enough to raise a couple
eyebrows, but not enough for anyone to know why.
Damn, she’s glowing! She loves this! She was born for this! Cheers from the audience!

ELIZABETH
Long live the Queen!

Wait
Some of them might have been cheers
But that one
That one is not a cheer

ELIZABETH
Long live the...

Screaming
Crying
One of them sounds an awful lot like MAEVE

GRANUAILE
Maeve?

MAEVE
Mother?
A huge wave crashes. GRANUAILE hears it. The rest of the cast is visible, in the shadows.

ALL minus MAEVE & GRANUAILE

*Long live the Queen*

*Long live the Queen*

*Long live the -*

GRANUAILE

*Blackout!!*

Blackout.

[OR: GRANUAILE runs and unplugs the Ghostlight.]
Part II
I.

GRACE, GRAINNE and GRANUAILE are waiting in the greenroom. We listen to the muffled DIRECTOR & MAN through the comm by the door. We may see them, too.

DIRECTOR

It’s important that we see you before that happens, you know, so we can establish the sword // before you draw it

MAN

Before I take it - right.

So do you want me to take the sword out in the scene, you know…

DIRECTOR

Right, no - I don’t think you would, being in your own house.

MAN

I guess my wife would be in the room.

DIRECTOR

Right. So that would be, you know,

MAN

Right, ha. I mean, there are situations where you’d take your sword out with your wife in the room, but, you know, maybe not that kind of show

DIRECTOR and MAN laugh. GRAINNE looks at the comm. GRACE looks uncomfortable.

DIRECTOR

You never know

GRANUAILE shuts off the comm. GRACE and her exchange a look, an understanding. They were supposed to listen for their cue, but all three silently agree that they’d rather be late than listen. Beat.

GRAINNE

Do you think we’ll get to it today?

GRANUAILE

They are taking their time.

GRAINNE

How are we still on the death scene? He’s only in the play for a second.
GRACE
He’s an important character, to be fair.
Her first husband, her failed chieftainship…

GRANUAILE
I’d say that by the end she’s a chieftain.

GRACE
Oh, sure.

GRAINNE
Definitely.

GRACE
You know what? This would make a good Disney movie.

GRAINNE
You think so?

GRACE
She’s born into what is essentially royalty, she becomes a queen! I mean!

GRAINNE
She doesn’t have an animal sidekick, though.

GRACE
Is that required?

GRAINNE
Oh yeah, it’s like a whole thing.

They think.

GRANUAILE
The boyfriend could be a bird. Scene five?

GRAINNE & GRACE
HAH

They look at each other like you always do when you say the same thing at the same time as someone and briefly believe in telepathy.
GRACE
She rescues him, nurses him to health, and then he becomes her trusty sidekick instead of her lover.

GRAINNE
Something about that feels...correct.

GRACE
Like I know one dimensional characters aren’t *ideal*

GRAINNE
No I get it it’s like. Karma?
Besides, he can be a three dimensional bird.

GRANUAILE
She would start a war if someone killed her bird.

GRAINNE
She *would* though

GRACE
That almost makes more sense than her boyfriend

GRAINNE
I mean she kidnapped someone’s kid be they didn’t answer the door, so

GRACE
No way

GRAINNE
She did!
She literally gave him back on the condition that they always left a place at the table for her
And they still do like, to this day

GRACE
You are KIDDING

GRAINNE
I am NOT

GRANUAILE
She’s kind of entitled, isn’t she.
GRAINNE
I mean
Kinda
It does make sense though

GRACE
I thought...
I thought she was just like, a go-getter. Like...
I mean maybe not but if a man did the same thing...

GRANUAILE
Right.

GRAINNE
No yeah that’s true
We’re harder on her about that and like, everything cause I mean
maybe she is but like. Men are so entitled.

GRACE
Well let’s not

GRAINNE
I’m not saying like, ~all of them~
I mean I’m the closest one to a man here so I’m basically talking about myself

GRACE
hey

GRAINNE
What?

*GRACE looks at GRANUAILE, then back at GRAINNE.*

GRACE
Like.
girl in red.

GRAINNE
I. Why are we.
Fine I mean “sweater weather” but what does that have to do with it

GRACE
Doesn’t that mean I win?
GRAINNE
Um, no?? What does that even-?

GRANUAILE
I’m sorry,
What on earth are you talking about

*They look at each other.*

GRAINNE
Did you want me to..?

GRACE
No okay whatever it means I’m gay
But like I’m keeping it on the DL, so…?

GRANUAILE
Oh, sure

GRAINNE
Which I so knew, by the way

GRACE
Um.
I’m sorry, no you didn’t.

GRAINNE
I mean, it’s not you. You can just recognize it sometimes.

GRACE
Recognize what? I’m not even-...

GRAINNE
I just, I mean,
straight white people are chill -not that you’re not chill!
Just-
Closeted white people are closer to the thing the rest of us can’t be
It’s like watching someone lose Tetris

*Beat.*
GRAINNE
Anyway you being gay has nothing to do with what I was saying

GRACE
Right.
I just meant like
The who-wears-the-pants thing
Which is archaic or whatever but I thought it was what you were going for??

GRAINNE
Okay first of all pants have nothing to do with it, that’s like the whole point

GRACE
No, I know

GRAINNE
And even so aren’t you like, lipstick or whatever??

GRACE
I mean
I don’t know
I don’t have to if I don’t want to be

GRAINNE
I mean, that’s fair
But what’s wrong with being feminine, anyway?

GRACE
No! Nothing!!
I thought that was what YOU were-
I just thought you were saying you were like
The only one

GRANUAILE
You girls confuse me.

GRAINNE stiffens. GRACE sees this, they may exchange a look.

GRACE
Oh, wait.

GRAINNE
No, we don’t have to
GRACE
No, I mean, duh

GRAINNE
Really, let’s not-

GRACE
I can’t believe I just--and you’re--

GRANUAILE
Ohh

*GRAINNE and GRACE exchange another look.*

GRANUAILE
Um..”people,” then? Or…?

GRAINNE
Oh. Yeah.

GRANUAILE
Sorry, I didn’t-

GRAINNE
It’s okay.

GRACE
Did you tell James? I keep hearing him say those, you know

GRAINNE
I know.
I did. And it was on the audition form. But it’s whatever.

GRACE
It’s not whatever.

GRAINNE
I’m aware.
But.

*Beat.*
GRAINNE
Okay literally what are they doing

GRANUAILE
That’s a great question.

GRAINNE
Like I don’t mean to be like, entitled to rehearsal time or whatever

GRACE
No, you’re not

GRANUAILE
It’s been over an hour. He’s never done this.

GRACE
Wait
Sorry I’m just now realizing
did you work with him on...you know

GRANUAILE
Oh. Yeah.

GRAINNE
Waitttttt
that’s where I recognized you from??

GRACE
Wait what you’re so good what

GRANUAILE
Oh! thank you!

GRAINNE
Oh no now I feel bad I only saw the trailer

GRACE
No offense but. Why are you here?
You’re so successful? like
You shouldn’t have to be

GRANUAILE
...You’d be surprised
GRACE & GRAINNE try to get over being starstruck

GRANUAILE
But anyway, you’re not making it up. This is ridiculous.

GRAINNE
Okay, thank you cause like
Why are we still in here
The play isn’t even about him

GRACE
Right. Like I don’t care if I have to wait on you guys rehearsing

GRAINNE
No of course

GRANUAILE
Exactly. But there are three Graces

GRAINNE
and none of us are rehearsing

GRANUAILE
And that was his idea

GRACE
Exactly
This was supposed to be our chance to like, take the stage for a second.

GRAINNE
Literally ONE second

GRACE
(to GRANUAILE)
No yeah like, like you’re so experienced and he’s hardly featured you

GRANUAILE
You’re both so great too
We deserved something bigger
She deserved something bigger
GRANINNE
and it was supposed to be.

GRACE
The ONE show of the season that wasn’t just like all the others

GRANINNE
Oh, but didn’t you hear? They “race-bent” R&J so it’s okay

GRANUAILE
“Race-bent?”

GRACE
Did they?

GRANINNE
No I made it up

GRACE
Ah.

GRANUAILE
But we believed it

GRACE
No exactly that’s the thing too like, this is the show that’s supposed to be different but I’m still featured and he’s still directing and now this?

GRACE (cont.)
like it’s not even the bare minimum

GRANINNE
No literally
and they act like it’s some, big,

GRANUAILE
Like it’s generous.

GRANINNE
Generous! Exactly!
I mean what are they even-

GRAINNE
Okay, we’re never getting in there.

GRACE
We can’t exactly leave, either.

GRANUAILE
Or can we.

_The two look at her._

GRANUAILE
If they can play with swords, we can do whatever we want.

GRAINNE
Ohmygod wait
Let’s go to the sea.

GRACE
We can’t do that.

GRAINNE
Come on!
Be a pirate!

GRACE
I’m here to be an actress, not a pirate.

GRANUAILE
Grace was a chieftain.

GRACE
What?

GRAINNE
Wait, you’re right.

GRANUAILE
Why was she a pirate?
    Why?
GRACE
Because she,
I don’t know,
because she is

GRANUAILE
What do pirates do?

GRACE
Steal?

GRAINNE
From who?

GRACE
Break rules.

GRAINNE
Whose rules?

GRANUAILE breaks the comm. GRACE and GRAINNE look at her. Confused, excited.

GRANUAILE
I definitely might lose my job for that.
In a way, though, I already did.

GRAINNE jumps up on the couch and wields a pen or something like a sword.

GRAINNE
On guard!

GRACE
Oh my God.

GRAINNE
Come on!

GRAINNE looks for another weapon, and pulls out pepper spray. They give it to GRACE. The two of them face off, until GRANUAILE pulls out a real sword. GRACE and GRAINNE neutralize.

GRAINNE
Woah.

Waves. The lights change. Water.
GRAINNE steps off the couch. GRACE looks at the pepper spray.

GRAINNE
Breaking us doesn’t make them pirates, does it.

GRANUAILE
Oh, no.
Makes them…

GRACE
Assholes.

GRAINNE
Patriarchs.

GRACE
Colonizers.

GRANUAILE
They can’t be pirates.
They have nothing righteous to break.

A flood -- the sea. Some weird electrical noises as everything shuts down. The GRACES disappear.

Time.
II.
Eventually, MAEVE enters, wading, and searches around with a flashlight. She comes across the shell. She starts to lift it.

GRACE
OMG hey!

MAEVE drops the shell back onto the spike. Silence. She looks around and sees no one. Finally, she looks at the shell. She lifts it again, and immediately-

GRAINNE
Hey dude! Heading to rehearsal?

GRAINNE and GRACE become visible through the sea.

GRACE
Yes!
Ok I’m sorry I keep remembering your character name

GRAINNE
HAH okay same I thought I was awful
Let’s guess

GRACE
Starts with a C, maybe.
Cathy?

GRAINNE

GRACE
Cat?

GRAINNE
Catia.
Thalia.

MAEVE might put it up to her ear, now. More waves - either we see it or we hear it.

GRACE
Dog?
GRAINNE
Alice?

GRACE
Atlantis.

GRAINNE
Elizabeth. En...England.

GRACE
Salt. Glass.

GRAINNE
Cut.

GRACE
Preying

GRAINNE
Dying.

GRACE
Mantis.

GRAINNE
Killer.

GRACE
-
You know what.
Grace is fine.

MAEVE puts the shell down. She realizes there are people here. (As in us, the audience people.) She shines a light on her face.

MAEVE
Did you hear that, too?
III.

Lights up on the DIRECTOR. He is impatient in the way certain businessmen are impatient *at* you while waiting their turn in line -- tapping his foot more loudly than he needs to, looking around as if to say “do you SEE how long it’s taking them??” even though he is, besides the audience and MAEVE (who is again doing homework in the corner), alone.

Finally, GRACE, GRANUAILE, and GRAINNE enter in beach attire.

    DIRECTOR
    Well hello, ladies.

    GRACE & GRANUAILE
    Hi!

He waits for them to apologize -- to say anything really, but they just go to set down their things and replace their sunglasses for regular glasses, their sunhats for hair ties, etc.

    GRACE
    Hey, do you have any aloe?

    GRANUAILE
    Oh yeah, here.

    GRAINNE
    My god I have sand everywhere I swear

    GRACE
    If we didn’t have rehearsal I’d take a shower right now

    GRAINNE
    Seriously though

The DIRECTOR stares at them until they say something.

    GRANUAILE
    Hope you weren’t waiting on us.

    DIRECTOR
    Well.

    GRANUAILE
    I sent a message, did you see it?
DIRECTOR
I honestly thought you were joking.

GRANUAILE
Oh. No.

DIRECTOR
- 
This has set us back a bit, you know.

GRACE
I thought you were beginning with John?

DIRECTOR
He’s sick.

GRAINNE
Our call is 7:55, isn’t it?

DIRECTOR
It was, but-

GRANUAILE
So we’re still early, technically.

DIRECTOR
I -
You know, these are the kinds of things, ladies
That we should anticipate.

They all look at each other, then continue replacing their beach gear with rehearsal gear.

DIRECTOR
(unsuccessfully casual)
Well. How was your weekend?

They look at each other.

DIRECTOR
Well I hope you had fun, because we are running out of rehearsals. No more time for vacations!
GRAINNE
It wasn’t just a vacation, it was research.

DIRECTOR
Research.

GRACE
About Grace.

DIRECTOR
Well I’d appreciate it if your research didn’t happen during rehearsal.
- We’re going to work the scene when she meets Queen Elizabeth.

GRANUAILE
(to herself)
Again.

DIRECTOR
Yes. Again.

MAEVE
Did you want me to - since John isn’t here

DIRECTOR
Yes, fine. Alright, ladies --

GRANUAILE
Um...

DIRECTOR
Yes?

GRANUAILE
We’re not all ladies.

DIRECTOR
O-kay.
- Places for the top of the scene, folX. Can we get sound?
A courtly dance-song begins. MAEVE becomes Queen Elizabeth, sitting on a throne. She seems much more comfortable up there than we might expect. GRACE, GRAINNE and GRANUAILE practice the dance, eventually lining up before the queen. They perform the dance, which ends with a bow. The QUEEN nods and sends the first on their merry way, then shakes her head and sends the second to her death. The third, who we see is GRANUAILE, does not bow.

MAEVE
Grace O’Malley, The Pirate Queen.

GRANUAILE
Please. Call me Granuaile.

MAEVE
I’m gonna be honest, I’m not going to be able to pronounce that.

The others laugh because she’s the queen and you have to laugh when the queen makes a bad joke.

GRANUAILE
I see you’ve changed castles for me.

MAEVE
I’ve always preferred a view of the sea.

GRANUAILE
I wasn’t killed on my journey -- why is that?

MAEVE
Oh, none would dare take that job from me.
    Should I choose it.

GRANUAILE
I see.

MAEVE
Gran-u-...Grace.
    I respect your work, your dedication to your people. As much as I would wish that dedication for the English people, I do wish to hear you out.
    But the members of my court are concerned about your behavior.
    You see, normally when one converses with a Queen:
    You bow.

GRANUAILE stops for a moment. She’s not sure what to say next.
GRANUAILE
Line?

DIRECTOR refuses.

MAEVE
We hadn’t gotten to that part yet.

DIRECTOR
All the better to work on today, I thought.
Just improvise.

GRANUAILE
I’m honestly not sure what she would say.

DIRECTOR
Come on.
She’s Grace, the Pirate Queen. She doesn’t bow for the English queen.
That’s what made her famous.

GRANUAILE
I know.

GRAINNE
One of the things.

DIRECTOR
So, why doesn’t she bow?
-
Anyone?
You’ve all done your ‘Research’.
-
What about you?

GRACE
I
...

GRAINNE
I mean, she wouldn’t want to bow to someone who wanted to take her land, culture, & the sovereignty of her people.

DIRECTOR
I don’t..

GRAINNE
Let me try something.

They hand a handkerchief to MAEVE and both of them get into character. One musician plays for GRAINNE as they go through the dance. They don’t bow.

MAEVE
Grace O’Malley, the Pirate Queen.

GRAINNE
Call me Grainne.

MAEVE
Gr-Gray…?

GRAINNE
Blah blah why are you here,

MAEVE
Blah blah the members of my court are concerned with your behavior
-normally,
you bow.

GRAINNE
A queen doesn’t bow, does she?
Especially not to her enemy.

MAEVE
-
I see.
Well.

Our countries may be enemies, but I would like us to leave as friends, Grace.

She reaches out a handkerchief.

GRAINNE takes it, blows their nose, and throws the handkerchief in the fire. A gasp.

MAEVE
You were supposed to give it back.
GRAINNE
I suppose in My country, we have higher standards for cleanliness.

Another gasp. GRAINNE flips off the queen and starts dancing cause they’re like, such a badass.

GRACE
I know that’s what they say happened,
but wouldn’t Elizabeth have killed her on the spot?

GRANUAILE
That’s a good point.

DIRECTOR
We can’t do that. The queen would have had her hanged.

GRACE and GRANUAILE glance at each other. He really just -

DIRECTOR
Let’s try again.
Why didn’t she bow?
-
Come on. Why?
Okay, let me just-

DIRECTOR goes to the throne, gestures for MAEVE to get out, then sits. They look at each other as he does. The lights shift.

DIRECTOR
Go on. One of you.

It’s GRACE’s turn. She doesn’t really want to, but she walks up to him anyway.

DIRECTOR
(ridiculous British accent)
Grace O’Malley-

MAEVE giggles at his accent.

DIRECTOR
What was that?
-
Disrespect will put your head in a basket. Do you want your head in a basket?
-
Good.
DIRECTOR (cont.)

- Grace O’Malley. The Pirate Queen.

GRACE
Please, call me Grace.

DIRECTOR
Don’t mind if I do.

GRACE
I was not killed on my journey here.

DIRECTOR
I have taken an interest in you, Grace. Interests of the Queen are respected in our country.

GRACE
Your country.

DIRECTOR
For now, perhaps.
Now Grace, I wish to hear you out.
But members of my court have concerns about your behavior.
You see, normally my subjects are expected to bow.

GRACE
I…

*She looks to the others for help.*

DIRECTOR
You see
Normally
my subjects are expected to Bow.

GRANUAILE
I am not your subject, your highness.

*DIRECTOR ignores her. He does not take his eyes off of GRACE.*

GRAINNE
Your subjects, yes -- but not your equals!
GRANUAILE
I was not aware of that custom, your highness.

GRAINNE
You just called me a queen.
By that logic, shouldn’t you bow to me?

DIRECTOR
(he drops the accent, if he hasn’t already)
Grace.

Beat. She doesn’t know what to say.

DIRECTOR
Fine. Just bow, then.

GRACE
You - what?

DIRECTOR
I am the queen. If you have nothing to say to me, you will bow.

GRACE
I- hold on-
Your highness, a queen doesn’t bow to a //queen-

DIRECTOR
It’s too late. Bow.

GRACE
Your highness, you have taken my // land

DIRECTOR
Bow!

GRACE
Your highness-

He stands, towering over her. The lights shift; his shadow grows.

DIRECTOR
I said BOW, bitch!
Whoever is closest to GRACE might get between them.

GRAINNE
Woah-

GRANUAILE
James!

Beat. He cools down. They all stare at him.

DIRECTOR
hey, hey.. Actiing!

GRACE
(aside, if anyone laughed)
Why are you laughing?

Beat.

DIRECTOR
Listen
I know I’m hard on you.
But it's just because I know you have it in you.

GRACE
...

MAEVE approaches.

MAEVE
Grainne Ni Mhaol, an bhanríon bradach; is mise an bhanrion.
De ghnáth, nuair duine éigin lebhar liom,
umhlaíonn tú.

The GRACES and MAEVE bow to each other. GRACE hesitates a beat, but she still does.

DIRECTOR
(generally protests; maybe he says real words, maybe not--up to you)
Grace-
GRANUAILE
(stopping him)
Blackout!

Blackout.
IV.
When the lights return, the throne has been destroyed.

THE GRACES
Grainne Ni Mhaille, Chieftain of the Sea

GRACE
Grainne was 13 when she got married

GRAINNE
Grainne had short hair, like me

GRACE
Grainne did not look like me

GRANUAILE
Grainne was successful

GRAINNE
She fought for her home

MAEVE
And they didn’t write about it

GRACES & MAEVE
But we know it
So we write about it

GRAINNE
Irish law allows me to divorce, English law does not

GRACE
Irish law recognizes my power, English law does not

GRANUAILE
Even Irish law married me at 13
(Optional -- add GRACES)
So I became lawless

MAN enters with a real sword. He and the GRACES fight as Maeve sings. This can be as literal or
gestural as you want.
MAEVE

Tá Gráinne Mhaol ag teacht thar sàile,
Óglaigh armtha léi mar gharda,
Gaeil iad féin is ní Gaill ná Spáinnigh,
Is cuirfidh siad ruaig ar Ghallaibh.

Óró 'Sé do bheatha 'bhaile,
Óró 'Sé do bheatha 'bhaile,
Óró 'Sé do bheatha 'bhaile,
Aois ar theacht an tsamhráidh!

(etc)

GRANUAILE kills MAN. A flood of sound--MAEVE stops singing. Men yelling, swords clashing, waves.
GRACE, MAEVE, and GRAINNE fight invisible foes. GRANUAILE kneels by man.

GRAINNE
Hey, uh--captain?
What are you doing?

MAEVE
There's more of them!

GRANUAILE
(Irish accent)
I've killed him

GRAINNE
I can see that, Ni Mhaille

GRANUAILE
Go n-éiri an bóthar...
[/Guh ny-ree on boh-har/]

GRAINNE
It's not as if you haven't done it before

GRANUAILE
You know what Queen Elizabeth told me?

GRAINNE
I don't want to die today, Captain

Please
GRANUAILE  
Fine. But listen first.

GRACE screams.

GRANUAILE  
Don’t worry. She’s just in labor.

GRACE is, in fact, in labor. MAEVE helps her offstage.

GRANUAILE  
Again.

GRACE screams again.

GRANUAILE  
And again.

Another scream. MAEVE looks up.

GRANUAILE  
Now.

MAEVE looks up.

GRANUAILE  
Queen Elizabeth.

MAEVE approaches.

MAEVE  
You miscounted.

GRANUAILE  
She gave me everything I could have ever wanted, except I couldn’t sail anymore.  
I had to give up my life to get everything else back. My home. My son.

MAEVE  
What about your daughter?

GRANUAILE turns to her. Sees her. It should feel like the most focus MAEVE has gotten the whole show.
GRANUAILE
You know what.
I don’t know.
That’s the thing, I don’t know anything about you
I keep thinking it’s because we don’t know much about her, but that’s not it:
it’s because I never asked. How awful is that? Who am I to think you’re not important?
And it’s just what we do! Him. Me.
(Calling off to Grace, OS)
You, in a couple years.
(to MAEVE)
We see you, we know you, and we know how to kill you.
And we know that we know and it makes us more empty than we already were
But we do it anyway and use the emptiness against you.
Because that’s how you become Queen.

MAN resurrects and lunges at GRANUAILE.

MAN
(imitating the Director’s terrible accent)
Why Grace O’Malley, the Pirate Queen
Normally, when conversing with a Queen-

GRACE bursts out in a flowing gown, perfect hair, and a fancy ass pirate jacket, looking nothing like she
just gave birth other than the baby she’s holding. She is trying to hide the fact that she didn’t quite make
the quick change.

GRACE
You lot can’t do anything by yourselves!

The others cheer. MAN dies--must have been a last burst of life. GRANUAILE watches him fall into his
chair. She stays there.
The others do some ridiculous fight choreography--Grace’s is the coolest looking--and everyone is
impressed. Baby in one hand and a sword in the other; fighting foe after foe and being perfect and doing
everything at onceeee yay! All at once: GRANUAILE hands the sword to MAEVE, then approaches the
audience; GRACE wins! But she’s winded.
The ghost audience applauds.

GRANUAILE
Thank you, thank you!
I’m pleased to announce my retirement!

GRANUAILE takes in the applause and exits. GRACE takes it, now.
GRACE
I did it!
I am a mother and a pirate and your worst fucking enemy, you-
Oh...

She wilts. MAEVE and GRAINNE approach.

GRACE
NO
I’m fine
Go away

They go. She looks at her “baby.”

GRACE
This fucking costume

She tries to hold the baby while fixing the costume but she can’t, so she puts it down. She takes her time. Once she’s fixed it, she picks the doll back up. Riding the high of the battle and covering up GRACE’s quick change, Grainne takes the opportunity.

GRAINNE
(they cross DS)

When I was a kid, I would watch the ships go by like a hungry dog. My mother Maeve was named after the greatest of all Irish warriors but still she told me to stay. Until -

MAEVE
At least play your cards right, Grainne.

GRAINNE
But I wasn't careful enough. I played them all at once.
Father?

MAN raises his head.

GRAINNE
I want to come aboard.
Take me to Spain with you.

He begins to exit.
GRAINNE
But that didn't stop me. I would ask nearly every time he left home. He found it funny at first. But then-
MAN
Women are bad luck aboard.

GRAINNE
What about the warriors you always told me stories about?

MAN
That's why they're called stories and not history.

MAN exits.

GRACE
(to the baby)
It’s not true, is it. She couldn’t have done that.
I couldn’t have done that
(looking to the other GRACES)
No one could have done that
(To the baby and/or herself)
Impossible
It’s impossible

Beat.

MAEVE
Grace grieves the impossible.

GRACE lets the baby doll fall, so she’s holding it by the foot.

GRACE
I’m not Grace.

GRACE begins to exit. GRAINNE is centerstage. Shadows of men dance around them. They watch them prepare the ship.

GRAINNE
For a rabbit the luck is in its foot, right?
But mother says I got my eyes from him; we walk on two feet and pull sheets with the same hands
I never thought we were any different
So where is it on me?
Maybe if I can find it. The luck. Get rid of it.
GRAINNE takes a sword, scissors, or even an electric razor and cuts their hair. They seem to glow - maybe they do. They jump onto the former throne.

GRAINNE
Wait
I’m not a rabbit
Look! Look what I look like
I’m human! See?
You can see it now

GRACE points the sword at GRAINNE.

GRACE
Well you’re not even doing it right

GRAINNE
What?

GRACE
She’s a woman. And you cut it off.

GRAINNE
No

GRACE
Look at your stupid wig!

GRAINNE
It’s not a wig

GRACE tries to pull it off their head. MAEVE doesn’t know what to do.

GRAINNE
Hey!

They wrestle her off at some point, here.

GRACE
That’s not how you play her!

GRAINNE
I’m not playing her!
GRACE
You’re an actress, aren’t you?

GRAINNE
No! I’m literally not!

GRACE
You think she was like you??

GRAINNE
I don’t know! None of us know!
You’re not the only one who can play pirates for a second!
She went to sea! She was a pirate! She broke the fucking rules!
Break a rule for once! Maybe then you’ll find her!

- I don’t know
  Maybe you won’t
  Maybe
I don’t know, okay?
Because she probably wasn’t; she probably fucking wasn’t. She was probably a killer, and she probably bowed to the queen, and she was a woman. I’m just...a bug.
And I’ve known it all along
I just wanted to pretend for a while because I just wanted a story that was mine
For once
Pretend I could be a woman, or pretend she could be me.
Just let me be her and kill her and kill him and die, let me be a woman like I love women, let me be a feminist like a woman is a feminist -- no, misandrist.
Mantis. Preying mantis misandrist I fuck men I kill men I eat men. Let me be a mantis like a misandrist is a mantis; the director won’t come back, I’ll say, because I drowned him in the sea and ate him.
But I can’t, of course
Because I’m not a monster
I’m not a monster or a woman, I’m a bug.
  I am!
  I’m a bug!
  I’m a fucking bug!
  You know what?
Bite my head off, Grace. I don’t want to be you anymore.

GRACE kisses GRAINNE, then snaps their neck.
V.

*DIRECTOR enters, clapping.*

**DIRECTOR**
Wow.
*(Actor name)*, that was really something.
You took it a little further than I would have, but really. No notes.

**GRACE**
What?

**DIRECTOR**
I’d been trying to curtail the whole “maybe she was really a boy” thing too
Not gonna say that didn't do the trick

*GRACE kneels by GRAINNE.*

**DIRECTOR**
You can go, John.

**MAN**
Go?

**DIRECTOR**
You’re dismissed

**MAN**
But, are they //okay -

**DIRECTOR**
This is a rehearsal.

- 

*Isn’t it?*

**MAN**
Right.
A rehearsal.

**MAEVE**
John?

*She tries to keep him from leaving; he might be apologetic, but he still leaves. MAEVE backs away.*
GRACE
Hey, Grainne-

DIRECTOR
“Grainne”? Oh, no.

GRACE
What did you do?

DIRECTOR
Me? I couldn’t take credit for this.
(Gesturing to where GRANUAILE exited and to GRAINNE)
Out with the old, out with the new, in with the, well - !
(he gestures to her)
I won’t say it wasn’t a team effort, though. Really, a beautiful performance from all of you.

GRACE
But they -

DIRECTOR
 Asked for it? Trust me, you have to get more creative these days.
But don’t worry, you’ve already got half your bases covered. When you’re small and nice and blonde no
one thinks you have it in you.

GRACE
Oh god
Oh god what have I done
I thought-
I didn’t mean to

DIRECTOR
Since when did that matter?
You’ve been doing it the whole time
It’s been wonderful: you’re doing my job for me!

GRACE
(to Grainne)
Grainne-
(actor name)
I’m so sorry
I just wanted to be her
DIRECTOR
You can be.

GRANUAILE
Go n-éiri an bóthar leat
(/Guh ny-ree on boh-har lyat/)

Beat. GRANUAILE enters, eventually.

DIRECTOR
Come on. They aren’t in the show anymore

GRANUAILE
Go raibh an ghaoth go brách ag do chúl
(/Guh ruh on ghwee guh brawkh eeg duh khooll/)

DIRECTOR
Grace can be yours, now

GRANUAILE & MAEVE
Go lonrai an ghrian go te ar d’aghaidh
(/Guh lun-ree on ghreen guh cheh air dye/)

GRACE
Grace…

DIRECTOR
Yes.

GRANUAILE & MAEVE & GRAINNE
Go dtite an bháisteach go mín ar do phairceanna
(/Guh ditch-a on wah-shtukh guh meen air duh fawr-ken-na/)

DIRECTOR
With me, you can make her whatever you want her to be.

GRACE
What I want…

DIRECTOR
What do you want, Grace?

Beat.
GRACE
I thought...
I thought I could be this badass lady who has everything I’ve ever wanted

DIRECTOR
Yes.

GRACE
And then I thought we could *all* make this beautiful thing...

But we can’t. Not with you.

*The GRACES and MAEVE gain power over the course of this monologue.*

We could write and rewrite the show for a thousand more years as much as the men of history wrote and rewrote her into the perfect woman
Terrifying, beautiful, talented, successful, a mother, a wife
We could tear her apart and put her back together again and still we would never find her
You know why??
Because she doesn’t exist.
She’s no more real than any of those other myths
And the fact we believe in her makes it that much worse -- a perfect myth means a woman who isn’t everything is nothing and I’ll never be everything, none of us will ever be everything we are just fractured little pieces thrown together like a basket of glass, breaking ourselves trying to stay whole
And I thought
I thought we *could* be everything

GRACES
*(split and together, where you see fit)*
But she wasn’t everything. She was just one. One piece of glass and now we’re all cut. Cut. Cut. Until there’s nothing but a stupid bald head or a baby or a sword or maybe none and nothing and God I wanted it so bad, give me the baby and the sword and the hair and the ships and the men and just see what I’ll do with it
Success to the sons of sweet Granuaile
Success success success to my daughter
See how I rise
See how I’m perfect
A perfect vase of glass
full;
of salt,
the tears of the ones who made it impossible
of men
GRACES (cont.)
who made me want it
What do I do now? What do you want from me? If I can’t do everything I’ll just do one thing perfectly
Would you like to steer the ship, boys? Would you like to see me climb the shrouds, boys? Would you like
to see me torn apart from the inside by a child, boys? Would you like to walk the plank, boys? Would you
like to see the other side, boys?
It's not up there, it’s underwater for you. You know how I know that?

_The GRACES scream, killing him. (Literally or symbolically—ideally both.) Maybe the Ghost Audience
screams, too. Blackout._
VI.
The Sea.

GRACES & MAEVE
I am Grace. Grace is me.
He doesn’t know what it’s like to be her
He said it himself
Welcome to the show.

MAEVE
What’s your name?

GRACES
We are the Graces. The charities.
(together, or split how you see fit)
Thalia.
Agalia.
Euphrosyne.

MAEVE
Eleven: are we real?

GRANUAILE
“I don’t want to extrapolate, since we don’t have all that documented”

GRACE
“Can you send it to me?”

GRAINNE
“Let’s come back to that”

GRAINNE
“That’s why they’re called stories and not history”

GRACES
The pirate queen, the graces
Same difference to you, isn’t it?

MAEVE
Twelve.

GRACES
Your Grace Your Grace Your Grace Your Highness
The anythings, the muses
What would you like to write about us?

MAEVE
Thirteen.

GRACES
Write us write us write us
Take us use us for whatever you’d like,
JAMESELIZABETHBINGHAMJOHN
YES YOU TOO JOHN
Tell me who I am
Give me my lines
Tell me tell me what I would say if you were me
I’m a myth! I’m history! I’m nothing!
Map me!

*The Graces form a trio of statues on the former throne.*

MAEVE
You want a map?! *Fourteen*
You want nothing?! *Fifteen*

Grainne was born in 1533 she was probably entitled she was probably a merchant and a chieftain and Spanish and cut her hair and and GRACE, GRACE is famous Grace is famous for being a pirate Grace is famous for green Grace is famous for her long red hair Grace is famous for being like a woman, for being like a man, for being white white white white white

grace grace grace grace grace

GRAINNE WAS A PERSON

GRAINNE FOUGHT THE ENGLISH AND FOR HERSELF AND TAUGHT HER SON EVERYTHING AND HE WENT ON TO TRY TO SAVE THEIR PEOPLE *EXCEPT FOR ME BUT I HAVEN’T HARDLY SPOKEN HAVE I ALL WE KNOW ABOUT HER DAUGHTER IS HER NAME DID YOU KNOW THEY CALL HER MARGARET NOW*

SIXTEEN
WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE
Beat. A long one.

MAEVE
Seventeen.
-
Can I be her too?

Beat.

GRANUAILE
You are.

Beat. The sea grows.

THE GRACES
When I was a child

GRANUAILE
I watched the ships go by like a hungry dog

GRAINNE
There was this book

GRACE
I wanted to be everything

GRACES & MAEVE
Something in the being her and being us
In the wanting to be her and wanting her to be us
Is something true
Something we can’t find in the room he built

MAEVE holds the shell.

MAEVE
When I was a child, I had a dream.

GRACES & MAEVE
Of the sea.
I was sucked under
there was no time and no language and no numbers
But there were monsters and women and a different kind of power
and for the first time I could breathe
When I got back to shore no one believed me
But I saw them
With my own eyes
I still believe in them.

MAEVE
Eighteen:

GRACES
Do you?

_MAEVE might listen to the shell, then she lifts it to the audience._
_We hear the sea; maybe ghosts; it overtakes us._
_The play may end -- the sea does not._

END OF PLAY
INFLUENTIAL WORKS*

*An incomplete list

^particularly influential


^Belflower, Kimberly. *Forest Creature.*

Belflower, Kimberly. *John Proctor is the Villain.*


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http://research.culturalequity.org/get-audio-ix.do?ix=recording&id=10095&idType=sessions&sortBy=abc - Source not found, I believe this was a field recording of a folk song.

https://celticlifeintl.com/eires-queen-maeve/ - Website has been deleted, but was a blog post about Queen Maeve (Grace’s daughter’s--& mother’s-- namesake)
