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Nov 30, 2021

EVERYONE CALLS HER GRACE

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An abstract of
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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.

Director - Man. White. Any age. The guy in charge.

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

andoff.

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.

Shuffling. Lights back up on the Graces. Gilmore Girls pacing, here.

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* -- Rainy 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

Granaile 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 herself, 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

GRACE

//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.

GRAINNE

There was this book.

Beat.

GRAINNE

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

Aaaand - 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 nouterly, 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

GRAINNE
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??

GRAINNE
Sorry
I just didn't think what we had worked anymore

GRACE
..you mean the kiss??

GRAINNE
I mean, I don't think she would have been "too excited about it"

GRACE
I think she would have

GRAINNE
I really don't think so.

GRACE
It was her wedding.

GRAINNE
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

(endearingly 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 boyyyy

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
(embarrassed)
 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
 No.

GRACE
 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 roadsign--
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 Granuaile)

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.

GRAINNE

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 "Granuaile."

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 bc 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

GRAINNE
and it was supposed to be.

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

GRAINNE
Oh, but didn't you hear? They "race-bent" R&J so it's okay

GRANUAILE
"Race-bent?"

GRACE
Did they?

GRAINNE
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

GRAINNE
No literally
and they act like it's some, big,

GRANUAILE
Like it's generous.

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

GRANUAILE turns on the comm. Men playing with swords. Boisterous laughter. Maybe a bad joke. She turns it off.

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
Gene. Jerry. Geeeeeronimo.

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 Granaile.

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 bhanríon.

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 sáile,
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,
Anois ar theacht an tsamhraidh!*
(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-éirí 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-éirí 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 khool/)

DIRECTOR

Grace can be yours, now

GRANUAILE & MAEVE

Go lonraí 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 pháirceanna
(/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

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*An incomplete list

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