

Dinner at Home between Deaths

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A new play

By Andrea Lepcio

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## Cast of Characters

SEAN LYNCH	40s-50s, the map of Ireland on his face. Born and raised in Queens, New York. There may still be a hint the accent in the speech. Though a success, he is unpolished.
FIONA LYNCH	40s-50s, an Irish beauty, well preserved and manicured. Also born and raised in Queens. She too still has a hint of the accent. Unapologetically unpolished.
KAT CABOT	40s, younger sister of Fiona, also a beauty, clinging a bit more to youth. Unlike Sean and Fiona, Kat has done everything in her power to erase her upbringing and fit into Manhattan society.
LILY CUNNINGHAM-GOLDBERG	20s, a thrill, delicious, the essence of youth. All upspeak and know-it-all attitude. Raised to be a Manhattan Socialite, she was adopted from China as a baby by Kat's third husband during his first marriage.

### Time

Present. A recent spring.

### Place

The dining room in Sean and Fiona's Tribeca penthouse  
Sean's Office  
Sean's Sailboat  
Fiona's bathroom and adjoining master bedroom

Note: The set sounds elaborate owing to the Lynch's wealth. It can be detailed if resources allow, but may also be done simply. Lights, sound and select set pieces can create the called for rooms and sailboat.

*At Rise: We are in the dining room of a Tribeca apartment. Penthouse. River view. Spring flowers are in full bloom on the adjacent terrace. A bouquet filled with recent cuttings graces the table.*

*SEAN enters agitated and determined. He looks through the breakfront for silver and napkins. He has never set the table before. Ever.*

*Suddenly, the vague sound of a far off door being unlocked. The click of heels alternating between marble floors and Persian runners.*

FIONA (O.S.)

*(calling)*

Esperanza.

*No reply. The footsteps continue across Walnut. As measured off by the approaching steps the apartment sounds huge. SEAN struggles to make progress.*

FIONA (CONT'D) (O.S.)

*(calling)*

Dónde estás? Tengo noticias.

*No reply. The footsteps continue across Maple coming ever closer.*

FIONA (CONT'D) (O.S.)

*(calling)*

Esperanza?

*FIONA comes into view. A shopping bag and her pocketbook dangle from her arm.*

*SEAN moves quickly towards her kissing where she lets him. They freely talk over and around each other.*

FIONA (CONT'D)

You scared the ever loving out of me.

SEAN

Put that down.

*He takes her pocketbook. She won't release the shopping bag.*

FIONA

Where is Esperanza? I have good news, finally.

SEAN

*(he fired her)*

Gave her the night off.

FIONA

*(seeing the table)*

What's all this?

SEAN

I'm making you dinner.

FIONA

We have Kat's Benefit.

SEAN

I want to be alone with you.

FIONA

She got Sophia Vergara to host the auction.

SEAN

Not tonight.

FIONA

You like her.

SEAN

I like you.

FIONA

Kat will be crushed.

SEAN

You wouldn't care, you wouldn't care about her. If you loved me.

FIONA

I do love you. It's a lot of work, but, if I do anything, it is love you.

*FIONA opens the shopping bag.*

FIONA (CONT'D)

I got you a nice new tux shirt. Remember we talked about going tone on tone. Let me see you.

*SEAN presents himself dutifully. FIONA holds up the shirt. Is pleased.*

SEAN

We'll dress for dinner then. I'm making Mother's stew.

FIONA

I smelled it. Not enough rosemary, I think.

SEAN

Mother said a sprig.

FIONA

We'll have it for lunch tomorrow. It's always better the second day.

SEAN

Tonight, Fee.

FIONA

What's gotten in to you? You know Kat will give you every dime she raises. The Ferbers will be there; you've wanted to land them. Not to mention her new Junior Board.

SEAN

I don't want any more investors.

FIONA

You're tired. We'll go for the first act.

SEAN

I'm not leaving this room.

FIONA

Then I'll go alone. I've done it before.

*She starts to go. He is on her tough and then tender.*

SEAN

I need you, Fee.

FIONA

You're sweating, Sean. I don't like it, your heart. I filled your prescription.

SEAN

Do you remember how strong I was? The way I'd spin you. And twist.

FIONA

I can still spin you.

SEAN

And twist?

FIONA

Pilates, I sure can.

SEAN

Until you have an asthma attack.

FIONA

The new inhaler's working. I haven't had an attack. Since the last time you missed a Benefit.

SEAN

I was working.

FIONA

Which is the excuse I expected tonight. But stew?

SEAN

When was the last time we sat here alone?

FIONA

*(they never have)*

We sat with Bishop Walsh, the Brewers and Denise Rich so you could win their trust.

*SEAN has gone back to setting the table. Doesn't do anything right. FIONA fixes as he goes.*

FIONA (CONT'D)

On the left, on the left. The widow Rothstein and all five Pearlmans you demanded I have for brunch. Give me that. I could go on.

SEAN

Forget the Widows. Forget the Pearlmans

*SEAN remembers candles. Starts to look. Finds two. Triumph! Now where are the candle holders. FIONA takes over.*

FIONA

Ben Pearlman has been a god-send to Esperanza, never mind the millions he's entrusted to you.

SEAN

I've missed you.

FIONA

Because there was something important to me. Something I wanted to do for someone other than you.

SEAN

Today. I was picturing tripping you on the way to homeroom.

FIONA

Landing you in detention.

*He lures her to sit down.*

SEAN

And your bare feet. You used to never wear shoes.

*SEAN slips off her shoes.*

FIONA

They're a bit marred with age.

SEAN

No. No.

FIONA

A bit knobbed. I keep holding off bunion surgery. Aunt Vera's went so badly.

SEAN

Perfect, they're perfect.

*SEAN attends her feet.*

FIONA

I did have a pedi today. And a mani. And a facial. And a blowout, all in preparation for tonight. And then Ben called with the news!

*He kisses her toes. She reacts.*

FIONA (CONT'D)

You're tickling.

*More kisses.*

FIONA (CONT'D)

You're tickling me.

*More.*

FIONA (CONT'D)

Stop. Stop.  
Stop that. And tell me what is the matter.

*She pulls her feet away.*

SEAN

Nothing. I've just decided. I've decided it's time we got away. When was the last time we had a vacation?

FIONA

You hate vacations and I like my life.

SEAN

We'll be together all day every day.

FIONA

We'll have all the time we need in heaven.

SEAN

Can't a man want to take his wife on a holiday.

FIONA

I know you Sean Lynch. Something is wrong.



SEAN  
It's nothing, nothing to concern you.

FIONA  
With the market? Did oil prices?

SEAN  
Fuck oil.

FIONA  
The accountants? Sid Grossman?

SEAN  
Sid does what he is told.

FIONA  
The SEC?

SEAN  
I'd have to explain it to them.

FIONA  
Explain what?

SEAN  
Everything. Anything. The idiots.

FIONA  
The boys, then? Did one of them?

SEAN  
How should I know? They never call me.

FIONA  
I've told you a million times. Children only call for money. For love, you have to call them.

SEAN  
Everyone only calls me for money.

FIONA  
Because you're so good at it. Now tell me, if it's not work, not the boys?

*SEAN's watch dings.*

SEAN  
Stew's ready.

*SEAN's gone.*

FIONA

You will tell me.

*FIONA finds her phone in her bag. Checks it.  
No missed calls/messages.*

FIONA (CONT'D)

Did Esperanza say when she'd come home?

SEAN

Here we are.

*SEAN returns with a covered pot of stew.*

FIONA

Trivet?

*SEAN exits with stew.*

FIONA

I can't reach her. All these phones and I can never reach anyone.

*SEAN comes back in with stew and trivet. He  
drops the trivet on the table. As he lowers the  
stew, he breaks down weeping. It's a full on  
Irish keening.*

FIONA (CONT'D)

Sean. Sean. For goodness sake. You sound like your mother.

*SEAN's keening builds. FIONA wraps her arms  
around him. He collapses against her.*

FIONA (CONT'D)

There, there.

SEAN

*(struggling to speak)*

Mnnfn.

FIONA

Catch your breath before you choke. Your heart.

SEAN

Mnnnfnnn.

FIONA

Quiet now. Seany, Seany, quiet. Quiet.

*He is quieter now.*

FIONA (CONT'D)

*(affecting a brogue)*

So it's me ye long for?

SEAN

*(his brogue is back)*

The Emerald Isle.

FIONA

Ireland itself is it.

SEAN

*(barely getting it out)*

Ballyconneely.

FIONA

The old homestead. Where ye Ma and ye Da made ye.

SEAN

Up the lane.  
By the bog.

*This is SEAN's ancestral home. The following is a story they make up with many variations. SEAN and FIONA, in fact, met at William Bryant High School in Woodside, Queens.*

FIONA

And who was it fished ye out of the bog the day yer bike hit a rut and ye flew out over the handle bars.

SEAN

I was looking for Da was the problem. We'd not seen him for a fortnight and Ma was half out of her mind.

FIONA

Tell the truth. Ye found him and next ye found yeself drinking long side him at Moran's.

SEAN

Tis true and necessary. For how else would I have come to be fished out by the prettiest lass I ever did see.

FIONA

I took pity on ye.

SEAN

Ye did, tanks god, ye did.

FIONA

Tied me shawl to a tree. For I had no idea how a slip of a thing like me was to save a man as sizeable and drunk as ye.

SEAN

Ye always were the smart one. Always thinking ahead.

FIONA

*(singing)*

O who is sinking in a bog

FIONA AND SEAN

Drinking stinking in a bog  
Who is blinking in a bog

FIONA

The only man for me  
Singing  
The only man for me

SEAN

I long for Ballyconneely.

FIONA

Where your father nearly starved and his father before him.

SEAN

I nearly starved here thanks to Seamus the Unable Seaman. Would have Mother hadn't brought in boarders with her stew.

FIONA

When were we there? Twenty years ago? That inn's not likely to have gotten any more comfortable.

SEAN

*(brogue)*

The smell of the sea, Fee, the ocean breeze.

FIONA

*(brogue)*

The stink of the bog, Sean, the endless rain.

SEAN

Our own kind. Don't you remember what that was like when we were kids? All us Irish together.

FIONA

Is that what you're missing? We'll go get a pint at Donovan's.

SEAN

We'll drink all we want in at Moran's in Ballyconneely tomorrow night!

FIONA

You didn't give me a chance to tell you. I've won Esperanza permanent residence.

*The land line starts to ring. FIONA goes to get it. He holds her back gently, at first, then more intently.*

FIONA (CONT'D)

Sean, the phone.

SEAN

*(the brogue is gone)*

No one. No one. No one.

*The phone stops ringing. A cell phone starts Lady Marmalade "Soul Sister" in FIONA's bag.*

FIONA

That's Kat's ring.

*"Hey Sister, Go Sister, Soul Sister, Go Sister"*

SEAN

Let it.

I'm getting my phone new, Sean.

FIONA

No, Fiona, no.

SEAN

*"Go Sis"- The phone stops.*

*SEAN breathes a sigh of relief. Then his pocket starts to vibrate. He reaches in. Digs his phone out. Throws it on the ground. Stomps on it. When he is done...*

If you tell me nothing is wrong one more time.

FIONA

I did something bad.

SEAN

Mortal or venal?

FIONA

I don't want to tell you.

SEAN

I'm your wife.

FIONA

You're the lass pulling me out of the bog.

SEAN

*(brogue)*

*The doorbell rings. And rings. And rings.*

Ignore it.

SEAN (CONT'D)

This is getting ridiculous.

FIONA

*The vague sound of a far off door being unlocked.*

*The click of heels alternating between marble floors and Persian runners.*

KAT (O.S.)  
*(calling)*

Esperanza.

*The footsteps continue across Walnut.*

KAT (CONT'D)  
*(calling)*

Fiona?

*The footsteps continue across Maple.*

KAT (CONT'D)  
*(venom)*

Sean.

*Click, click. KAT appears in full benefit dress. The only incongruous note is the enormous Louis Vuitton bag she carries. They talk over and around each other. Air is rare.*

KAT (CONT'D)  
*(to SEAN)*

What have you done to my daughter?

FIONA

You don't have a daughter.

KAT

I have Lily.

FIONA

The adopted adult child of your third husband's first marriage is hardly a daughter.

*KAT sneezes. Allergies.*

KAT

Always something blooming with an allergic sister.

FIONA

Sean made stew, if you can believe it. He completely forgot about your benefit.

KAT

Screw the Benefit.

But, darling, Sophia Vergara.

FIONA

What have you done?

KAT

What has Sean done to Lily, is that your question?

FIONA

For the tenth time, yes.

KAT

That was only two.

FIONA

Lily told me everything.

KAT

No, she didn't.

SEAN

Is one of you going to tell me everything?

FIONA

It's nothing, really. Over now. I'm cooking.

SEAN

*Sean heads to kitchen.*

Is it not working out? Her internship?

FIONA

She gets paid.

KAT

I'm the one who arranged it.

FIONA

I arranged it.

KAT

I distinctly remembering suggesting it after her failed acting career. If you can call it a career.

FIONA



KAT

She was on One Life to Live.

FIONA

As a waitress.

KAT

Precisely why I thought she might try finance.

FIONA

Sean wasn't even hiring this year. Isn't that right, Sean? But you asked and, as always, Sean was obliging.

KAT

I'd say Lily was the obliging one.

FIONA

Oh, please, is that what you think this is?  
An affair? Lily is hardly his type.

*LILY appears in the past.*

KAT

Some men like exotic.

*SEAN makes his way to LILY.*

FIONA

After thirty-seven years of marriage.

KAT

I always thought you married too young.

FIONA

I always thought you married too often.

*SEAN makes his way to LILY. This is their first meeting a few months ago in his office. She hands him her resume.*

SEAN

It's nice to finally. Kat's told me quite alot about you.

LILY

That can't be good.

SEAN

No. Come on. One Life to Live.

LILY

Meh.

SEAN

I would think they would have made you a star.

LILY

I kind of sucked.

SEAN

I don't believe that.

LILY

I told Kat I don't need any favors, I'm not looking for any favors.

SEAN

Favors! Jaysus. I'm just so- that you would have any interest in my dull fund.

LILY

What would I do?

SEAN

What would you want to do?

LILY

I don't know what there is to do here.

I mean I know Kat raises money for you to invest.

And you give her money to save the children.

SEAN

Your step mother-

LILY

Ah, Kat. My Dad divorced her.

SEAN

Kat is an excellent fund-raiser.

LILY

But some people who invest make money.  
And other people lose money.  
But you always make money.

SEAN

That's not exactly-

LILY

I read that New York Magazine article.

SEAN

I should never have given that interview.

LILY

You're famous.

SEAN

Yes, well, it did bring in new money in boatloads.

*LILY nods to a photograph.*

LILY

That your cutter?

SEAN

*(surprised by her knowledge)*

It is. Yes. I live to sail.

LILY

I won the Bermuda Junior Cup.  
I wasn't just the first girl.  
I was the first everyone.

SEAN

I'm impressed.

LILY

Then I made the Olympics.

*SEAN glances at her resume. Ah, no. She didn't.*

LILY (CONT'D)

Kat probably told you more about the drugging than the sailing.

SEAN

*(moving on)*

I see you went to Smith. I'm a City College boy myself. Night school.

LILY

Yea. I know. The article.

SEAN

Did you study acting at Smith?

LILY

I fell into acting. I fall into things. Didn't Kat warn you?

SEAN

Kat said you hadn't quite found your footing.

LILY

The article said you developed a mathematical model when you were like 16.

In the cages of the stock exchange.

And, then, like, you perfected it.

SEAN

I said too much there. Far too much. And then they misquoted. Like I've got some sort of magic wand. It's a brutal business. You should run for the hills. I should run for the hills.

LILY

I like math.

I'm good at it.

I was good at it.

I haven't done anything harder than addition,  
subtraction,

not even long division,

since Dalton.

But, I was good at math.

SEAN

Like Algebra?

LILY

Like differential calculus.  
Algebra's deadly dull.  
As if  $x$  were a finite thing. I mean.

*She checks if he is listening. He is.*

LILY (CONT'D)

I liked finding the equation, like an arrow, aimed at the answer.  
Solving for how one thing changes the thing changing it.  
And then using that equation to draw the curve of the change,  
The damage,  
The inevitable.  
All my life I was like what the fuck?  
It felt like there were no answers anywhere, no explanation for anything.  
The catastrophe that was my parents.  
Suddenly these equations making curves with the whole of life riding under them.  
So like even if today sucks  
There is this infinite place  
Where answers are possible.  
Even if it's never here  
Never where I am  
It's there at the end  
The place the arrow will stab infinitely.

SEAN

Would you... Would you like to see my models.

LILY

Yeah.

*LILY nods. SEAN turns on screens. Lines and curves. LILY leans in. SEAN points.*