Naming the Names Study Guide

Naming the Names by Anne Devlin

BOOKRAGS

Contents

Introduction

"Naming the Names" appears in Irish writer Anne Devlin's collection of short stories, *The Way-Paver.* Like much of Devlin's work, the story is set during the recent conflict in Northern Ireland. In 1969, a civil rights campaign by Catholics, who are in the minority in Northern Ireland, led to riots in Derry and Belfast. The British Army was sent to both cities to keep the peace between Catholics and Protestants (who form the majority). The Irish Republican Army (IRA) began a terrorist campaign to force the British out of the province and unite the north of Ireland with the Republic of Ireland in the south. Nearly three decades of violence has ensued.

In "Naming the Names," the protagonist is Finn, a young Catholic woman in Belfast who gets caught up in the sectarian conflict. When she forms a friendship with a young Englishman who is studying the history of Ireland, her romance tragically intersects with her commitment to the republican cause. "Naming the Names" is a story about love and betrayal and the complex web of history that draws so many people into murderous conflict. Ultimately, Finn is forced by her own conscience to face up to her own guilt and take responsibility for the death she caused.

Author Biography

Anne Devlin was born to a Catholic family in Belfast in 1951. She is the daughter of Paddy Devlin, a member of Parliament for the Social Democratic and Labor Party. Devlin was raised in Belfast, lived for a short while in Andersonstown, Northern Ireland, and then left Northern Ireland for England. She was visiting lecturer in playwriting at the University of Birmingham in 1987, and a writer in residence at the University of Lund, Sweden, in 1990.

Devlin's work includes short stories and plays, most of which center on the lives of Catholic women during the period of civil disturbance in Northern Ireland which began in 1969. Devlin's short stories were first published in the early 1980s, and nine of them were collected in The Way-Paver in 1986. The collection includes the story "Passages," which won the Hennessy Literary Award for Short Stories in 1982. Devlin adapted this story for BBC television as *A Woman's Calling* (1984), and she won the Samuel Beckett Award for Television Drama in 1984.

The Way-Paver also included "Naming the Names," which Devlin adapted as a radio play in 1984 and for BBC television in 1987. It has been shown on public television in Canada and the United States. Devlin also wrote the television plays, *The Long March* (BBC 1984) and *The Venus de Milo Instead* (BBC 1987). She adapted D. H. Lawrence's novel, *The Rainbow* for BBC television (1988), and Emily Brontë's novel, *Wuthering Heights,* for Paramount Pictures (1991).

During the 1980s, Devlin also had success as a playwright for the stage. In *Did You Hear the One About the Irishman* (1981), a Protestant girl and Catholic boy conduct a love affair in spite of death threats from paramilitary forces. *Ourselves Alone,* about the lives of Irish women involved with Irish Republican Army (IRA) men, opened at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs, London, in November, 1985. The title is a translation of Sinn Féin, the name of the political wing of the IRA. The play was acclaimed by critics in England and was produced in the United States in 1987 at the Kreeger Theatre/ Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. It won the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and the George Devine Award in 1985.

Heartlanders, a community play to commemorate Birmingham's centenary, followed in 1989 at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. *After Easter* opened at the Other Place, Stratford, in 1994. It has been called a feminist drama; it features an Irish woman who has religious visions and believes she can stop the violence.

Devlin's most recent work is the screenplay *Titanic Town* (Company Pictures, 1998). The screenplay is adapted from a novel by Mary Costello and is set in the Belfast back streets of the 1970s.

Plot Summary

"Naming the Names" begins on a late August day in Belfast, Northern Ireland. The narrator, Finn, arrives at her place of work, a used bookstore in the Falls, a Catholic area of the city. She is late and is thinking about the fact that a young man she knows has not called her in three weeks. Her supervisor Miss Macken gives her a job to do; it is just a routine day at the store.

A flashback follows, as the Catholic Finn recalls how she first met this young Protestant man. He was a graduate student at England's Oxford University, and he was doing research in Irish history. Finn helped him to obtain the books he needed. They became friends and used to meet twice a week in a café. They eventually began a tentative love affair, even though Finn had a boyfriend, Jack, and the young man had a girlfriend, Susan, in Oxford.

Back in the bookstore in the present, Finn hears the latest gossip from her co-worker Chrissie, who gets it from Mrs. O'Hare, the cleaner, who appears to know everyone's business. Mrs. O'Hare alludes to the sectarian troubles in the city when she tells them that a Protestant employee is being transferred from their area to somewhere else. Chrissie disapproves of this because she thinks it will start to create a Catholic ghetto.

On her own again, Finn reflects on her relationship with Jack, whom she has not seen for a long time. He is an English journalist and is currently visiting the United States.

Next, Finn hears that her young historian friend has called her and left a message with Chrissie. Finn calls him back. Then she recalls the first time she took him back to her house.

That evening, Finn meets her friend in the park. She is nervous and her stomach is in a knot. He explains why he did not call for a while. Because he lived in England, he thought their relationship was not very satisfactory and he did not want to be unfair to her. He tells her he is getting married at the end of the summer. Finn walks away from him and goes home, wishing she had ended the romance earlier.

The next morning at work, Miss Macken and Chrissie discuss the news that a man was murdered in the neighborhood the previous night. The victim was Finn's young English friend. At lunch time the police arrive and question Finn. Finn tells them that on the afternoon of the previous day, she told a man she knew who came to the bookstore that she could "get him to the park." The implication is that the person she refers to is the murdered man, her own friend. The police escort her past her bewildered coworkers and interrogate her at the police station. She refuses to give the names of her accomplices, responding only with a list of place names. She does tell the police, however, how she got involved in terrorist activity.

She first goes back to what happened when the troubles in Belfast began, in mid-August, 1969. She was showing Jack around the Falls Road area. There had been a

riot the previous night as Protestants and Catholics clashed. The following night, the riots were worse. Stores were set on fire and several people were killed. As Catholics and Protestants massed for further violence, Finn discovered that her grandmother, with whom she lived, had been hurt by flying glass in her house on Conway Street. She visited her in the hospital, and the following morning she saw that the British Army had arrived to keep order.

Finn was shaken by this but she did not get involved in a terrorist organization until two years later, in 1971. She was on vacation with Jack in Greece when she heard that the British had introduced internment of suspected terrorists without trial and for an unlimited period. When she returned to Belfast, she visited a man she knew and asked if there was anything she could do. Her first job was to help deliver money to the wives of the men interned.

However, Finn will give the police no information about others who may have been involved in the murder. At one point, she faints and dreams of her grandmother. When she recovers, she is questioned again about the names but she just gives a list of the street names of West Belfast.

Jack visits her and says he cannot forgive her for what she has done. The police interrogate her again, but her response is always the same. She will not name the names, and it may be that she does not know any.

The story ends with a hint that Finn feels some guilt about what she has done, and she does not try to evade responsibility for her acts.

Characters

Chrissie

Chrissie is one of Finn's co-workers at the bookstore. Talkative and clothes-conscious, she is in charge of the crime, western, and romance exchange section.

Eileen

Eileen is one of the down-and-outs who congregate at the bookstore. She and Isabella quarrel and fight.

Harry

Harry is a drunk from the St. Vincent de Paul hostel who often takes refuge in the bookstore. Miss Macken throws him out.

Isabella

Isabella is one of a group of down-and-outs who kill time in the bookstore. She wears black fishnet tights.

Miss Macken

Miss Macken is Finn's boss at the bookstore.

Aharleen McCabe

Sharleen is a young girl who goes to the bookstore to borrow murder mysteries for her grandmother.

Jack McHenry

Jack McHenry is Finn's English boyfriend. He is a newspaper journalist. Finn first met him in 1969, when Jack was reporting on the riots in Belfast. Jack is a practical man and does what is necessary to take care of Finn, but they do not seem to communicate on a very deep level. Finn says she never talks to him about anything important, and she does not appear to have much romantic feeling for him. They drift apart. Jack goes to the United States on what is supposed to be a six-month trip, but tells Finn he does not expect to come back. Ever practical, he offers to send her some money if she needs it.

After Finn is arrested and in police custody, Jack returns and visits her. He reproaches her for what she has done. This appears to be the first time he has ever criticized her.

Finn McQuillen

Finn's name is an abbreviation of Finnula. She appears to have been raised largely by her grandmother, even though her parents were still alive. When she is asked why she lived with her grandmother, she replies that her parents' house was too small. Her father died when Finn was eight or nine years old, and she left school when she was about sixteen. This was in 1969, after the riots and after meeting Jack. Before that, she admits that she led a promiscuous lifestyle. It was clearly not a happy childhood.

In 1971, the Catholic Finn became involved with the terrorist organization, the Irish Republican Army, because she was shocked at the British government's internment without trial of suspected terrorists. Her first job was to deliver money to the wives of the men who were interned. By then she had found a job in a used bookstore, where she became the Irish specialist, knowing every book in that section.

Finn is a quiet, introverted woman and does not reveal much to her friends or co-workers about her personal life. Her young English friend calls her a dreamer. Sometimes she drifts off into her own world—childhood memories often—and people think she is not listening to them. She goes through the summer hardly noticing what is going on around her. Since her grandmother died, she appears to have had no family life at all, and she still lives in her grandmother's house, which she has kept mostly unchanged.

She gives no reason why she betrayed her friend, although she does seem to feel guilty about it. She was faced with a conflict between loyalty to a political cause and loyalty to a friend, and she chose the former.

The Murdered Man

The young man who is murdered is never named. He is tall and fair with dark eyes; Chrissie says he looks like a girl. He is writing a thesis on Irish history at Oxford University, and he spends the summer in Belfast. He meets Finn when he goes to the bookstore searching for books for his studies. Finn begins to feel romantically towards him, and he appears to reciprocate, even though they both have romantic attachments elsewhere. In his behavior towards Finn, the young man is straightforward, open, accepting, and kind. He says he loves Finn, even though he is to marry Susan, his girlfriend. The young man is singled out for murder because his father is a judge, and this means that in the eyes of the Irish nationalists, he represents the British authorities.

In the television adaptation of the story that Devlin wrote for the BBC, the young man is named Henry Kirk, but this name does not appear in the story.

Mrs. O'Hare

Mrs. O'Hare is the cleaner at the bookstore who is also the town gossip.

Themes

Cultural Loss and Preservation

Finn regrets the loss of her childhood world. The Belfast that she once knew has vanished, and she recalls it in loving detail. She remembers the candy store where she bought a tin of barley sugar as a present from her grandmother for her father. She recalls the color of the tin and how it was wrapped. She also recalls her days spent playing in the park; the sights and sounds of the bacon shop where she waited for someone to escort her across the road; and the skipping song which named the streets of west Belfast.

Those streets contained the whole world for her. As the police walk her down a block where there used to be a babyclothes store and an undertaker, she observes: "Everything from birth to death on that road. Once. But gone now—just stumps where the buildings used to be—stumps like tombstones." The destruction of the world she remembers is a partial explanation for why she feels so lost and disconnected from life. It is a manifestation of a desire to escape from the complexities of the present.

Finn's ploy of reciting street names to her interrogators rather than the names of others in the terrorist organization is therefore at once a way of deflecting their questions and also preserving, at least in her own mind, a familiar but now vanished world. The litany of street names, of places rapidly disappearing, is a lament for and a protest against the devastation of a close-knit community by the twin forces of civil conflict and modernization: "Redevelopment. Nothing more dramatic than that; the planners are our bombers now. There is no heart in the Falls these days."

Loyalty and Betrayal

The story explores the theme of loyalty and betrayal at several levels: the personal, the familial, and the political. The core conflict is between Finn's affection for her unnamed English friend and her loyalty to the cause of Irish nationalism. Although she chooses the latter, it causes her some distress. This is shown by how she feels in the park on the night she betrays him. Her stomach is in knots and she confesses that she is in love with the man. She is touched by his romantic words to her (something she probably never received from her boyfriend Jack), and refers to him as her "last link with life." After she leaves the park, she tries to forget, to make her mind blank and shut out what she knows is going to happen. Perhaps part of her reason for betraying him (which she may not even admit to herself) is that she is piqued by the fact that he allowed three weeks to go by without calling her. If so, it was her petty resentment rather than her political idealism that cost her friend his life.

Another form of loyalty is to the family and its traditions. Finn is pulled in two directions here also. Although she chooses to act in solidarity with a political cause she believes

in, and which seems to be in keeping with her Catholic family heritage, she seems also to want to reject that heritage and be free. This is seen in her dream of her grandmother, who seizes hold of her and will not let her go, in spite of Finn's struggles to free herself. This suggests an unconscious rebellion against her grandmother that is not otherwise apparent. Everything else in the story suggests Finn's loyalty to her. For example, she keeps the house much as it was when her grandmother was alive, complete with its Catholic artifacts. It was also through her grandmother's stories that Finn learned of the Irish history that she now desires to shape.

Style

Imagery

When Finn's friend visits her house, he notices a large spider's web that stretches all the way from the geraniums in the window to a pile of books and then to the lace curtains. Finn tells him that according to her grandmother, a spider's web was a good omen: "It means we're safe from the soldiers." She may be referring to the web of social support (safe houses and the like) that the Catholic republican activists and terrorists received from the local population. If a wanted man disappeared into the web of houses in the Catholic areas of Belfast, he was not likely to be found by the British authorities.

The image of the spider's web also suggests the way in which everyone in Belfast, Protestant and Catholic, young and old, the politically committed and the politically indifferent, are caught up in the web of conflict. This web embraces the innocent as well as the guilty, which is why the young Englishman, who bears no responsibility for anything that happens in the province, can still fall victim to warfare.

When Finn dreams of her grandmother, and there is a fierce struggle between them, she may be trying unconsciously to escape this destructive web. But it appears that she cannot. The spider's web image returns twice at the end of the story. Alone in the police cell, Finn watches a spider spinning a web in the corner of the room. Then in the final paragraph, as Finn reflects on how she came to be in this situation, the implications of the image are made explicit: "The gradual and deliberate processes weave their way in the dark corners of all our rooms."

Narrative Technique

The story is not told in a straightforward linear fashion. It consists of short sections, many of which are flashbacks to earlier times in Finn's life. For example, the story begins in the bookstore, then flashes back to Finn's first meeting with her English friend, then returns to the present and the bookstore, then flashes back again to Finn's relationship with Jack, and so on. This back and forth rhythm continues for most of the story.

Because of the convoluted form of narration, the story may sometimes seem disconnected, but eventually all the parts are seen to be linked into a whole, like many threads of a web. Since the image of the spider's web is central to the story, this may well be one of the reasons that Devlin chose to tell the story in this form.

Historical Context

Ireland and Home Rule

Catholic Ireland had been dominated by Protestant England since the sixteenth century. In the first third of the 1600s, the English sent out one hundred thousand Protestant settlers who were loyal to the British crown. The settlers colonized mostly the northern part of Ireland, and are the ancestors of today's Protestants who wish to maintain their link with Britain. English dominance of Ireland was secured in 1690, when the Protestant English king, William of Orange, was victorious over the Catholic James II at the Battle of the Boyne. James had been trying to regain the English throne.

In the nineteenth century, there was a strong movement towards home rule for Ireland. The Irish leader in this campaign was Charles Stewart Parnell. Parnell, who was himself a Protestant, headed a group of Irish members of the British parliament who pledged themselves to the repeal of the Act of Union between Britain and Ireland that had been passed in 1800.

The British prime minister, William Ewart Gladstone, supported home rule for Ireland and prepared Home Rule Bills in the 1880s. But these failed to pass into law. In the story, this is the period of Irish history that Finn's young English friend is researching at Oxford University.

After the failure of the movement for home rule, nationalist feeling in Ireland continued to grow. In 1916 came the Easter Rising. Irish nationalists in Dublin proclaimed the Irish Republic and for five days fought against British troops before being forced to surrender. Fifteen leaders of the rebellion were executed.

However, strife with the British continued. In 1920, Britain sent a force known as the Black and Tans to assist the Royal Irish Constabulary in suppressing Irish nationalism. The Black and Tans were a makeshift force composed largely of unemployed World War I veterans. Numbering two thousand men, they were ill-trained for the task they were asked to perform and gained a notorious record for brutality. The memory of the Black and Tans has been passed on generation after generation in Ireland, which is why in the story Finn hears about them from her grandmother.

In 1922, Ireland finally won its independence, although this did not include the entire island. Ireland was partitioned into the mostly Catholic Irish Free State in the south and Ulster in the north. Ulster was predominantly Protestant, and remained part of the United Kingdom.

In 1932, Eamon De Valera, who had been one of the leaders of the Easter Rising, became president of the Irish Free State. In 1937, the Free State changed its name to Eire, and in 1949 it became the Republic of Ireland.

Northern Ireland and "The Troubles"

In 1967, the Northern Irish Civil Rights Association was set up to counter discrimination against Catholics in employment, housing, and political representation. In the shipyard in Belfast, for example, only four hundred of ten thousand employees were Catholics. Nonviolent protest marches were held, but in Derry in 1968 the marchers were subject to attacks by Protestants and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). Rising tensions finally exploded in August, 1969, when rioting erupted in Derry following the annual Protestant Apprentice Boys parade. The ensuing conflict between Catholic residents and the RUC, as well as Protestant loyalists, went on for two days and became known as the Battle of the Bogside. The following day, riots broke out in Belfast. Many Catholics (including Finn's grandmother in the story) were forced from their homes. After two days of disorder in which many people were killed and injured, British troops were sent to Derry and Belfast to keep the peace.

In September, 1969, a "peace line" was constructed between Catholic and Protestant areas of Belfast to try to prevent rioting. This is the peace line referred to early in the story (the library administrators do not want their staff crossing the peace line when they go home at night). Later, a more substantial "peace wall" was built. It separated the Protestant Shankhill Road area from the Catholic Falls Road in west Belfast.

In December 1969, there was a split in the Irish Republican Army (IRA). The splinter group became known as the Provisional IRA, which was abbreviated to the Provos, as Chrissie refers to them in "Naming the Names." The original IRA became known as the Official IRA. It was the Provos who carried out most of the terrorist attacks that were soon to follow. The aim of the IRA was to force the British out of Northern Ireland and create a unified Ireland.

In August 1971, the British government introduced internment in Northern Ireland. This meant that suspected terrorists could be arrested and jailed indefinitely without trial. In "Naming the Names," this event so shocks Finn that she begins to help the IRA. On the first day of internment, 342 men, almost all of them Catholics, were rounded up and imprisoned. Internment, however, did nothing to quell the violence. Riots immediately broke out in Derry, Belfast, and other towns in Northern Ireland, and within three days twenty-two people had been killed. Internment also created a groundswell of sympathy for the IRA cause among the local Catholic population. It also helped the IRA to raise funds.

The following year, 274 people were killed in violence related to the political situation. Britain increased its troops in the province to 22,000. In one incident on January 30, 1972, British troops fired on demonstrators after an anti-internment rally in Derry. Fourteen civilians were killed, none of whom was armed. The tragedy became known as "Bloody Sunday." Two months later, Britain suspended the Northern Irish parliament and imposed direct rule on the province from London.

Critical Overview

In general, Devlin is better known as a writer of plays than of short stories, and *The Way-Paver,* the volume in which "Naming the Names" appeared, did not attract much critical attention. However, "Naming the Names" became Devlin's best-known story when she adapted it as a play for BBC television in 1987. Since then, assessments of it have cropped up in a number of books and articles about the work of contemporary Irish writers. In her book *The Living Stream: Literature and Revisionism in Ireland,* for example, Edna Longley noted that the story focuses on Finn's "mixed familial, sexual and political emotions" and that "Her mantra of street names . . . represents a lost childhood stability." In *Fortnight,* Elizabeth Doyle, reviewing the television adaptation, also commented on the naming of streets in the story: "The naming is a creation through language of the Belfast of her childhood, which is being dismantled all around her by the bombers and planners." And Susanne Greenhalgh, in "The Bomb in the Baby Carriage: Women and Terrorism in Contemporary Drama," offered the view that the streets of Belfast that Finn recites "themselves commemorate an imperialistic military past and encode the maze of a violent history from which there seems no escape."

The subject and themes of "Naming the Names" are also typical of Devlin's work as a whole. All the stories in *The Way-Paver* feature a young firstperson female narrator, and several are concerned in some way with the Irish situation. Like "Naming the Names," they also deal with romance and intimate relationships. In many of them, dreams play a part, as they do in "Naming the Names."

The conflict in Northern Ireland and its effect on women is also the subject of many of Devlin's plays. In her 1981 play, *Did You Hear the One About the Irishman,* a Protestant girl and Catholic boy fall in love, and Ourselves Alone (1987) features three women who are involved passively or actively with the IRA.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
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- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

Aubrey holds a Ph.D. in English and has published many articles on twentieth-century literature. In this essay, Aubrey analyzes Finn as a woman pulled between two worlds and also discusses the involvement of women in the Irish Republican Army during the conflict in Northern Ireland.

In her article, "Women, War and Madness," Elizabeth Doyle states that "Ambiguity about identity is a constant preoccupation in [Devlin's] work." The question of identity is particularly apparent in "Naming the Names." In a time of civil unrest, Finn, the protagonist, is a confused young woman, pulled in different directions by sexual, romantic, familial, political, and religious pressures that disturb her deeply and eventually lead her astray.

The odds are stacked against Finn from the beginning. For some reason that she never satisfactorily explains, she was raised by her grandmother, even when her parents were still alive. This may in part have been due to that fact that her grandmother and her father were involved in a feud over her father's choice of wife. But this also is unexplained.

Whatever the circumstances of her early life, at the age of about fifteen or sixteen, Finn was clearly unhappy. She sought security and love in sexual relationships. Until she met her boyfriend Jack, she was, as she puts it, "screwing around like there was no tomorrow." She left school at the age of sixteen, when she might have been expected to stay on for two more years. The fact that she received six "Olevel" passes suggests her intelligence. (O-levels, an abbreviation for Ordinary Levels, were the exams taken by all British schoolchildren of that era at the end of the equivalent of tenth grade in an American school.)

Perhaps the most significant thing about Finn's childhood was the fact that her grandmother had strong connections to Irish nationalist history. She passed this on to her granddaughter, awakening in Finn a strong interest in Irish history. Her grandmother told her of how she met Eamon de Valera, one of Ireland's greatest freedom fighters, and she passed on stories of the hated British Black and Tans. After her grandmother's death, Finn retained in her house a framed photograph of Countess Markievicz. Markievicz was one of the leaders of the Easter Rising in 1916, and she served several prison terms for her involvement in the nationalist cause. Finn's grandmother visited Markievicz in prison.

Thus is the link created between Finn and Irish history. She herself gets a reputation at the bookstore for her knowledge of the subject. But the burden of it, the weight of the accumulated past, proves too much for her to carry. She feels the enclosing, stifling pressure of living in a city that is so beholden to the past, a city that nurses such ancient grievances. Much of this comes out in an unconscious way. Most significant is her nightmare, in which her grandmother grabs her hands and tries to pull her out of her bed. Finn resists fiercely and there is a desperate struggle between them. It is as if she

is wanting to escape the world in which she was born and raised, and yet she cannot acknowledge this in her conscious mind. Later, when she is left alone in the police cell, she remembers the dream, and even the memory of it is powerful enough to cause her to faint.

This is clearly a young woman who is pulled between two worlds. The other world that tugs at her is the one that might be expected. Like any young person, Finn wants romance and love; she responds like any girl would when her lover says things like, "Your soul has just smiled in your eyes at me—I've never seen it there before." But what Finn failed to realize when she first took up with this young Protestant man from England was that her two worlds would soon, inevitably, be on a collision course. She was already assisting the IRA, but what that organization would eventually ask her to do (or perhaps it was even she who instigated the plot) was not then within the bounds of her imagination. Indeed, she thought she was safe in other ways too. Since both she and the young man had lovers, she thought there would be no complications in their relationship.

Given the stifling and dangerous world in which Finn lives, it is clear that she does not have the maturity to navigate her way through it successfully. Much of the time, Finn is closed in on herself, emotionally speaking. She does not confide much in others, or say a great deal, even to her lovers. She is introspective and good at controlling her feelings — at least it must appear that way to an outside observer—but she is also given to violent outbursts in which she throws things across the room (as she does in her quarrels with Jack for example). And she sleepwalks through the summer of her romance virtually unaware of what is going on around her. She is "like one possessed."

Finn drifts inevitably to the fateful moment when personal loyalty, love, and affection are thrown aside in one terrible act of betrayal; the social and political cause in which she believes is given priority over the individual right to live. Although Finn makes a victim of her lover, who has nothing to do with the Irish conflict except in his misfortune of having an English judge for a father, it is hard to escape the conclusion that Finn is a victim too. As Susanne Greenhalgh puts it in her article, "The Bomb in the Baby Carriage: Women and Terrorism in Contemporary Drama," "[Devlin's] women characters are depicted as passive victims of a history they cannot control, even when they are themselves agents of terrorism."

After she is tried and no doubt convicted of conspiracy to murder, Finn will join the many women who were imprisoned in Armagh Prison for Women during the Northern Ireland troubles. The involvement of women with the IRA was not especially unusual at the time. Although the actual job of planting bombs and killing was usually carried out by men, there were exceptions. One was the practice, alluded to in the title of Greenhalgh's article, of placing a bomb under a baby in a carriage. The woman who volunteered for this task would then push the carriage through an army checkpoint. Since soldiers were unwilling to rummage around inside the baby carriage, they let the woman pass. She would then grab the baby and make a run for it, leaving the bomb to go off. Elizabeth Shannon, who reports this risky tactic in her book, *I Am of Ireland: Women of the North*

Speak Out, points out acidly that usually it was not the woman's own baby whom she pushed through the checkpoint.

Even the way Finn arranged her lover's death was not too dissimilar to a number of incidents that took place in the early 1970s. Some of the first British Army deaths in Northern Ireland came when four soldiers were lured to a Belfast house by four Irish women they met in a pub. The unspoken promise was that the women would make themselves available for sex. Once the unsuspecting soldiers were in the bedroom, a male accomplice of the women emerged from a closet where he had been hiding and shot all four soldiers dead.

Some of the women who were imprisoned emerged unrepentant after completing their prison sentences. Shannon interviewed Mairead Farrell, who came from Belfast and served ten years in prison, from 1976 to 1986, for possession of explosives and membership in the IRA. Farrell told Shannon that she "would bomb or kill again in a minute if called upon to do so."

Although "Naming the Names" does not follow Finn through the years of her imprisonment, it seems unlikely that she would echo Farrell's statements. She may have been able, after her fatal meeting with her friend at the park, to return home "without looking back," but eventually look back she must. Her conscience will not let her rest, and the moving conclusion to the story suggests that she is ready to face up to what she has done. When she comes to examine "the gradual and deliberate processes [that] weave their way in the dark corners of all our rooms," she does not fully understand what drives them. She does not understand how or why history, including the history in which she was caught up, takes the shape it does, why the web is spun the way it is, but she does know that "when the finger is pointed, the hand turned, the face at the end of the finger is my face, the hand at the end of the arm that points is my hand." And she is also ready to admit, "I only know for certain what my part was, that even on the eve, on such a day, I took him there." In other words, Finn now seems willing to accept her guilt as an individual who wronged another individual, rather than to justify her behavior as being in service of a political ideal.

Today, when terrorism is very much in the public mind and there are people, in the Middle East and elsewhere, who are ready to place their political cause above the rights of innocent individuals to go about their lives undisturbed, "Naming the Names" seems especially relevant. Occasionally, real life stories of terrorists and their victims echo the ending of Devlin's story. American journalist Laura Blumenfeld, for example, in her recent book *Revenge: A Story of Hope,* tells of how she wrote to a Palestinian terrorist who shot and wounded her father in a random attack in Jerusalem in 1986. The terrorist, who was serving a prison sentence in Israel, at first justified his act as part of a legal attack on what he called the Israeli occupation. Like Finn, he felt that the rightness of his cause justified the killing of an innocent civilian. But later, after Blumenfeld visited him, he dropped his ideological and political justifications, apologized to Blumenfeld and promised never to commit a violent attack again. Like Finn, he too must have seen the finger pointing, not at an external enemy, but back towards him, the doer of the deed, the one who must answer for it.

Source: Bryan Aubrey, Critical Essay on "Naming the Names," in *Short Stories for Students,* The Gale Group, 2003.

Critical Essay #2

Hart has degrees in English literature and creative writing, and she focuses her writing on literary themes. In this essay, Hart explores the sometimes transparent, sometimes concealed foreshadowing of events that appear throughout this short story.

In some ways, Anne Devlin has created her short story "Naming the Names" in the form of a murder mystery, inviting the reader to take on the role of the detective. She throws hints along the way, enticing readers to answer all the questions. These clues, however, are not easily detected even during a careful first reading. Most readers will have to make their way to the end of the story before the clues to the final outcome become fully comprehensible, thus making a second reading even more deeply appreciated.

The foreshadowing commences with the first line of the story. If the reader is to believe the protagonist, Finn McQuillen, the list of names presented represents the names of streets. This may be true. However, there is hidden meaning in the street names. Whether this is a coincidence or a conscious plan by Devlin is not clear; but by choosing these specific streets, a certain complex shadow casts itself on the reader's mind, providing clues as to the state of Finn's mind even before her clandestine activities are disclosed.

For instance, the first group of names includes Abyssinia, Belgrade, and Bombay, three names that bring to mind British colonial rule. Alma and Balaclava are names of British military regiments. Bosnia, of course, brings images of ethnic cleansing. Later names include Gibson, Granville, Garnet, and Grosvenor, which one character mentions as being names of people involved with British foreign policy. The name Theodore could refer to the Abyssinian king who fought against the British army.

Names are very significant and very prominent in this story, but there are also more subtle clues and references throughout this story. For instance, Finn mentions that the used bookshop had at one time been an old cinema and that the only movie she remembers seeing there was *A Town like Alice.* This movie is about a British woman who becomes a prisoner of war during World War II. It is also a love story, a love torn apart because of the war, thus possibly referring to Finn's own love affair. The message of the film is that one woman discovers that she can make a difference in the world, a theme that Finn might use to justify her involvement in the rebellion.

Another subtle foreshadowing involves the young girl who comes into the bookstore in search of murder mysteries. "I want three murders for my granny," the girl states. Since Finn mentions her own grandmother several times in this story, there is an association between this young customer and Finn. When the girl chooses the book *Murder in the Cathedral,* she is told that it is not, in fact, a murder mystery but rather a book about martyrdom. How else would Finn describe her own role in the IRA other than to use the term "martyrdom"?

One more subtle clue, cited in the same part of the story, is a statement by Miss Macken, the manager of the bookstore. She yells out to Finn, "Finnula, the Irish section's like a holocaust! Would you like to do something about it." Of course, Miss Macken is referring to the book section on Ireland. The books are probably out of order. However, her statement is right on target with Finn's life. Finn probably believes that the British involvement in Ireland is like a holocaust, and she is determined to do something about it. This is not known by the reader at this point of the story; but it is as if, through incidents such as these, that Devlin projects Finn's most inner thoughts onto the external reality, allowing the other characters to fill in the void created by Finn's silence about what she is doing.

Finn's political involvement is also foreshadowed with the mention of two books on orangeism, a movement throughout the United Kingdom that promotes Protestantism and an adherence to British rule. Orangeism is at the heart of the conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Ireland. Finn's first contacts with the young man, with whom she will become most intimate in this story, involves his search for two classic works on orangeism. Finn volunteers to hunt down these books.

It is during this same part of the narrative that Finn makes a curious statement, a statement that makes no sense until later on, closer to the end of the story. As she and the young man are negotiating the purchase of these books, she says, "I looked at the name and address [of the young man] again to make sure." On first reading, one might either miss this statement or might ask what she meant by "I looked at the name and address again to make sure." What is she making sure of? The young man's name and address have nothing to do with the books, except that she might have to mail them to him. However, why would she have to make sure of his address to send books there? She's not asking him to repeat his address to confirm it, she's merely re-reading it. Of course, at the end of the story it is revealed that she recognized the address as being the residence of the young man's father, a judge—a man the IRA was after. Her making sure of the address implies that she wanted there to be no mistake that the young man standing in front of her was the judge's son.

In future meetings between Finn and her young man (who is never given a name), it becomes obvious that they each favor a different side of the conflict between Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants. He mentions his research work on William Gladstone, who fought for but lost home rule for the Irish, the defeat of which the young man describes as a rational one on the part of the Protestants, and she mentions Eamon De Valera, an Irish hero who fought against British colonial rule. Later, she also mentions Countess Constance Markievicz, a woman who fought for Irish independence. Although the surface narrative appears to be bringing the young man and Finn closer together, linking them first in a sexual relationship and eventually showing Finn becoming emotionally involved with him, the undercurrent between them exposes that they live on opposite poles of the political world in which Finn is immersed, thus foreshadowing the events that will soon unfold.

At one point, one of the clerks at the bookstore where Finn works responds to the young girl who is still trying to locate murder mysteries for her grandmother. "This is just too,

too grisly," Chrissie said, examining the covers. "Do they always have to be murders? Would you not like a nice love story?" The young girl replies, "She doesn't like love stories. . . . She only likes murders." These statements, upon a second reading of this short story, appear somewhat prophetic. Finn is given a chance to love. She falls for the young son of the judge and is momentarily torn between her love and her commitment to the IRA. If the young man had loved her in return, maybe his life would have been spared. Maybe he did love her, but not enough, for in spite of his feelings for Finn, he is to be married to another woman. Upon his telling her that he is to be married, Finn turns her back on him, thus also choosing murder over love.

Finn also talks about a previous affair that she had with a young man named Jack. She describes him:

Jack was always extremely practical: if you killed someone he would inform the police, get you legal aid, make arrangements for moving the body, he'd even clear up the mess if there was any—but he would never, never ask you why you did it.

Finn's reference to her being involved in a murder could also foreshadow the murder of the other young man in Finn's life. There is irony in her statement, however. Not only is Jack not there when Finn gets involved in the murder, but when he does show up, he does none of the things that Finn had predicted he would do. He does not try to help her by getting her legal aid, and the only reason he reappears is to ask her why she did it.

After meeting the judge's son at the bookstore, Finn takes the young man to her apartment, where he notices an enormous spider web. "Good Lord. Would you look at that web; it looks like it's been there for donkeys!" he comments. Finn tells him that she likes spiders. "My granny used to say that a spider's web was a good omen. It means we're safe from the soldiers!" Of course, in this story, Finn turns out to be the spider. She spins her web then lures the young man into it, where he is finally captured and sacrificed for the cause. She justifies her actions, believing that she is helping to make Ireland safer from the British soldiers, just as her grandmother had justified keeping the webs as a good omen.

Close to the end of the story, on the day of the young man's murder, Finn is walking to the park, where she had met him in the past, when she hears footsteps. She states "I always listened for footsteps." This is the statement of someone who is either a bit paranoid, or someone who is leading a secretive life, a life in which she does not want to be followed. At this point in the story, it is not yet revealed that she is involved with the IRA, so her fears foreshadow events yet to come. "I'd walked all through those streets at night but I had never been afraid until that moment" she relates. This statement sets up the tension of the moment. Things unmentionable are lurking in the dark. Things that she is aware of but, in some way, does not want to know about and definitely does not want to tell.

Finally, there is the scene in which she is running away from him. She's thinking that it all should have ended before she became so involved with him. The words "should have ended" predict his death, not the break-up of their relationship. Her words, "He

was my last link with life and what a way to find him," are understood only after the realization of who he is and of what the consequences of his death imply. Then she describes his murder, though the reader remains unaware of the significance of the images that she is depicting:

a car screeches to a halt: a lone dog barks at an unseen presence, the night walkers pause in their walk past— the entry. Whose is the face at the empty window?— the shadows cast on the entry wall—the shape in the darkened doorway.

Immediately following this passage, she awakes from a dream to the sound of screeching brakes that mimic a human voice calling her name in anguish "Finn!" Her young lover is dead, a fact that the reader will not know until later in the story, when most of the shadows will be illuminated, at least partially. Although Finn mentions that she was awakened by the screeching brakes, she remains lost in her dream, connected only by a thin thread to the world around her; through the naming of names, not the names of her fellow terrorists but rather by naming the names of the streets, ordinary things, on the surface only.

Source: Joyce Hart, Critical Essay on "Naming the Names," in *Short Stories for Students,* The Gale Group, 2003.

Critical Essay #3

DeFrees is a published writer and an editor with a bachelor's degree in English from the University of Virginia and a law degree from the University of Texas. In the following essay, DeFrees discusses Irish author Anne Devlin's shifting use of time to create foreshadowing in her short story.

Like a dream or an unsolved mystery, Anne Devlin's story, "Naming the Names," demands that her readers fill in the blanks. Devlin creates suspense through the omission of detail, by flipping back and forth through time, offering eddies of information that must be parsed together to understand the full picture. She does not bury the reader in detail; instead, she hints at the historical background of the play, allowing it to frame the story with a whisper. It is a subtle telling of a tale, in which every instance of dialogue, each seemingly innocuous detail of a person, place, or time takes on significance as the story progresses. By the end, Devlin has woven a web so intricate that it is only by reexamining the story that the reader begins to peel back the layers of the narrator's tale.

The story is a delicate marriage of language and shifting time, and by manipulating time, Devlin is able to manipulate her reader, as well. The first person narrator meanders through vignettes from her past in a seemingly unrelated, stream-of-consciousness sequence. But, as the story progresses, the reader begins to see that it is a carefully constructed story and that the narrator is parsing out information in an attempt to delay the admission of a crime. Finn chooses what to tell, and when to tell it; the facts are bundled into non-linear units, as discrete details that keep the reader in suspense. It is as if she wants to create sympathy before admitting what she has done, or at least, to give her reader the full story, so as to judge her on the merits of the facts as she chooses to present them.

The story begins with a list of names, written in alphabetical order. The next two lines place the reader in proximity of three different time periods: "It was late summer—August, like the summer of the fire. He hadn't rung for three weeks." Immediately, the reader is sensitive to the importance of time. These three time frames become the three periods between which the narrator jumps as she relates her version of the story. The first time period is ostensibly the present—the end of summer, August—which encompasses the days leading up to her capture and questioning by the police. The second time period—the summer of fire—invokes memories of the narrator's past, specifically, her former lover, her grandmother, and the history of her involvement with the IRA. And, the third time period—suggested by the phone call three weeks prior—covers the period during which she met and fell in love with the English journalist whom she later leads to his death. How these three time periods weave together and build to the climax becomes the unifying thread of the story.

After placing the reader in a specific time, the narrator enters the story, talking about the late summer referenced a few sentences earlier. The narrator, who we soon learn is a woman, Finnula McQuillen, describes various employees and patrons of the second-

hand bookstore where she works, in West Belfast. She goes into great detail about characters who are later to have little or no import to the main thrust of the plot. However, they offer clues about the historical backdrop of Finn's story and also create a present time, so that Finn has a starting point from which to diverge and piece together, at will, her story. After greeting her coworkers and noting some of the vagabonds who regularly populate the bookstore, Finn and some of coworkers take a break. As they walk along the street, they gossip about the neighborhood.

'Quincey's being transferred to Ballymacarrett when the library's reopened.'

'Och, you don't say?'

'It's the new boss at Central—that Englishwoman. It's after the bomb.'

'But sure that was when everybody'd gone home.'

'I know but it's security, you know! She doesn't want any more staff crossing the peace line at night. Not after that you—but wait till you hear—he won't go!'

'Good for him.'

'He says he's been on the Falls for forty years and if they transfer him now they might as well throw the keys of the library into the Republican Press Centre and the keys of the Royal Victoria Hospital in after them.'

'He's quite right. It's ghettoization.'

In the span of a short conversation, Devlin creates a vivid picture of the political backdrop of the story. A bomb blew up the local library. Peace is a loosely-held commodity. The women talking are anti-English and anti-Republican, and they fear they are being forced into poverty and despair. Finn states that the events occurring are "inevitable," but Chrissie retorts, "It's not inevitable, it's deliberate." Finn then notes that "security works both ways," intimating that where the Republicans enforce security measures on them, they will retaliate. The conversation ends, but the tension is left hanging in the atmosphere of the story.

Finn makes it clear that the women she knows are loquacious, lower-class, and gossipy. "There was little on Falls Road that Mrs. O'Hare didn't know about." "After that, Chrissie left us to go down the yard to renew her suntan." "Oh here! You'll never guess what Mrs. McGlinchy at the bakery told me—." These women talk almost constantly when they are present in the text. Thus, the fact that, when Finn whispers to a customer, "I think I can get him to the park," they say nothing, hints at ominous events. And later, when police are escorting Finn away from the bookstore for questioning, all of the people in the store and along the street see her with the officials and grow silent, again, the reader senses that something serious is about to be relayed. But what that thing, or event, is has only been proffered in hints and whispers. There are no answers; only questions and conjecture.

When describing her first encounter with the journalist with whom she falls in love and whom she later betrays, Finn writes: "Senior: Orangeism in Britain and Ireland; Sibbett: Orangeism in Ireland and throughout the Empire. Ironic. That's what he was looking for the first time he came in." Finn tells us that the fact that he is looking for a book on orangeism is ironic, but offers nothing more. The reader is left to wonder at the possible political ramifications of his interest in orangeism, and at Finn's possible relation to it, and to read on. Finn meets the journalist at a café to deliver the book a few weeks later. He is effusive with thanks, and Finn tells the reader, "And so it started." Just what started is not relayed. Both of them are dating other people, "[s]o there didn't seem to be any danger." There didn't seem to be any danger of what? The paragraph seems to hint at the beginning of a love affair, but only vaguely does the reader gain a sense, later elaborated, that Finn is actually describing the beginning of events that would culminate in the British journalist's death.

Finn returns to the chance meeting with the journalist throughout the story, describing bits and pieces of their ensuing relationship. This story is scattered between Finn's telling of the events of the present day, through a series of flashbacks. One strain of the story describes how Finn offers to betray the journalist for the Irish Republican Army and lures the journalist to a park the next night, where, after she admits her love for him and is rejected, she walks away, leaving him to his death. Interspersed between these segments are memories of Finn's time with the journalist—how they met to talk about books and life, how they shared their first kiss, when she first brought him to her home. She also hints, and later, more explicitly explains to the police investigators after the journalist's body is discovered, that a love affair between them had ensued. What she does not tell the investigators, but hints at to the reader, is that the affair lasted even until the last night of the journalist's life.

Was Finn's betrayal an act of revenge? A political act? Her story makes it difficult to discern, but based on the version of history that Finn offers her readers, it appears that the act was inevitable— because the British journalist's father was a judge, he was a target of the political group of which Finn was a part, and he was destined to be murdered, whether or not Finn had a hand in it. She tries to convince the reader that she actually aided his life, rather than his death, when she writes: "I could not save him. I could only give him time." And again, when she is being questioned by the police, she explains that it was not her choice to have him killed. One of the investigators asks her, "Why did you pick him?" She replies, "I didn't pick him. He was chosen." From this, it becomes clear that Devlin had foretold the journalist's death earlier in the story, when the women at the bookstore were all gossiping about a dead body that was discovered that morning. Chrissie, another employee, pointedly says, "Oh, Finn, it's awful news," and later says, "[w]e knew him. . . . That young man. The one who looked like a girl. . . . They said it was because he was a judge's son." Devlin reintroduces the women from the bookstore to both reflect on and foreshadow events. The fact that Chrissie addresses Finn with condolences hints that Finn had personal knowledge of the man who died; however, a page later in the story, the reader learns that Chrissie had been present when Finn had told the customer at the bookstore that she could lure the man to the park. Suddenly, it is not clear what Chrissie is intimating when she says, "Oh, Finn, . . ." as she is turning to look at Finn. And earlier in the story, Finn described the

journalist when she first saw him: "a young man, tall, fair, with very fine dark eyes, as if they'd been underlined with a grey pencil. . . . "—very much the picture of "one who looked like a girl." Finally, Chrissie connects the death of the young man everyone is discussing with Finn when she mentions that he was a judge's son; a few pages later, Finn tells the police investigators, "It was his father they were after. He's a judge." The reader knows that the British journalist is the man who died; that Finn led the journalist into the park, where he was later killed; and that she voluntarily approached the IRA man with the information that "I think I can get him to the park." But there the clarity ends, and a mass of contradictions make it difficult to discern truth, motive, or facts. As Finn writes at the end of the story:

The gradual and deliberate processes weave their way in the dark corners of all our rooms, and when the finger is pointed, the hand turned, the face at the end of the finger is my face, the hand at the end of the arm that points is my hand, and the only account I can give is this: that if I lived for ever I could not tell: I could only glimpse what fatal visions stir that web's dark pattern, I do not know their names. I only know for certain what my part was, that even on the eve, on such a day, I took him there.

It is difficult to trust the narrator because she slyly deceives the reader at every turn, hinting at what is to come but never, even at the end, divulging the whole story. That she led the journalist to his death is certain, but because the narrator is not omniscient, the reader only gains a single perspective on the situation, and so is left to pursue final judgment through inferences and conjecture. Was Finn guilty of a political crime, a crime of passion, or both? The adage states that "only time will tell," but Devlin seems to be making the case that, when trying to discern what is real, and what is true, not even time reveals the answers.

Through her narrator's tale, Devlin eloquently points out that it is difficult to ever know the truth of things, to ever be able to sit down and write a history that "tells the whole story." There is no whole story, only tales, bits and pieces, versions of facts, and the inevitable passage of time.

Source: Allison DeFrees, Critical Essay on "Naming the Names," in *Short Stories for Students,* The Gale Group, 2003.

Adaptations

"Naming the Names" was adapted for BBC television in 1986 and starred Sylvestra Le Touzel as Finn McQuillen.

Topics for Further Study

Research the history of Ireland in the twentieth century. Much of the conflict has been over the question of whether Britain should retain control of Northern Ireland, or whether there should be a united Ireland under Irish control. What are the arguments for and against a united Ireland?

Can terrorism ever be justified? What makes people resort to terrorism? Why did terrorism emerge in the early 1970s in Northern Ireland, and why did it decline in the mid-1990s?

Research the British policy of internment without trial of suspected terrorists in Northern Ireland, from 1971 to 1975. What are the similarities and differences between internment as practiced by the British and the detainment of suspected terrorists linked to the al-Qaeda network by the United States? In either case, was or is internment without trial, evidence, or conviction justified?

By refusing to name her accomplices, Finn shows more loyalty to them than she did to her friend whose murder she brought about. Why do you think this is? Is Finn a very mixed up kid or a young woman with high ideals?

Compare and Contrast

1970s: The sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland is at its height. A political power-sharing agreement between Protestants and Catholics collapses. The IRA conducts bombing campaigns in England, and also assassinates Lord Mountbatten, Queen Elizabeth II's cousin, in August 1979 by blowing up his fishing boat. The same day, a bomb explodes in South Armagh, Northern Ireland, killing eighteen British soldiers. It is the largest death toll in one day since the troubles began. Protestant paramilitary groups carry out acts of terrorism against Catholic targets.

1980s: In 1981, IRA prisoners in Belfast's Maze Prison begin a hunger strike. They demand to be classified as political prisoners, with prisoner of war status. During the hunger strike, one of the strikers, Bobby Sands, is elected to the British parliament. The British government refuses to yield to the strikers' demands and ten of them die, including Sands. The strike causes anti-British feeling internationally, particularly amongst the Irish community in the United States. American donations to the IRA triple. An Anglo-Irish agreement in 1985, which gives the Irish Republic a limited role in the affairs of the north, fails to stop the violence, which flares up on both sides again between 1987 and 1989.

Today: After faltering movements towards peace in the mid-1990s, a peace agreement is finally signed in 1998. A new 108-member Northern Ireland Assembly is created, with responsibility for running the province. A North-South Ministerial Council is created made up of leaders from Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, to discuss matters such as the environment, tourism, and transportation. The Irish Republic gives up its territorial claims to Northern Ireland. The peace agreement meets with many obstacles, but remains intact. In 2001, a momentous step is taken when the IRA finally begins to decommission its weapons, as called for under the agreement.

1960s: Education in Northern Ireland is almost entirely segregated. Protestants who control the local education boards insist that the compulsory instruction in religion should be Protestant. Catholics boycott the state system, and 98 percent of Catholics attend Church schools. Compared to Protestant schools, these schools are underfunded, have high teacher/student ratios and produce inferior results.

1980s: Inspired by the All Children Together Movement, which was founded in the late-1970s, the first integrated school in Northern Ireland is established in 1981. By 1989, there are ten integrated schools.

Today: In January 2002, there are forty-six integrated schools throughout Northern Ireland. However, the fourteen thousand students who attend them comprise only 4 per cent of the school population. The vast majority of children still attend segregated schools.

1960s: Protestants dominate political life in Northern Ireland in part because of the practice of gerrymandering (manipulating electoral boundaries to favor one group over

another). Gerrymandering occurs for example in the local government of Londonderry, the city that will later change its name to Derry. Although Protestants are in the minority, boundaries are drawn so that Protestants hold a majority on Derry City Council.

1970s: The British government reorganizes local government in Northern Ireland. Elections are held in 1973 to elect 526 councilors to the 26 new District Councils. Voting is by the system of proportional representation, which ensures representation according to the proportion of the vote won. In Derry, Catholics win a majority on the City Council.

Today: In Northern Ireland's new 108-member National Assembly, Protestants are allocated sixty six seats, while Catholics get forty-two seats. This is in proportion to their numbers in the population. However, the Assembly can make no decision without the support of the majority of Catholics and Protestants.

What Do I Read Next?

Ourselves Alone, first produced in 1987, is Devlin's best known play. Set in Northern Ireland, it explores the lives of three Catholic women who are involved with IRA men. The women are presented as being capable of much richer lives than the men, many of whom are unfaithful, abusive, and emotionally immature.

Seamus Heaney, a Catholic born in largely Protestant Northern Ireland, is Ireland's foremost contemporary poet. His *Opened Ground: Selected Poems, 1966-1996* (1998) contains many poems that allude to the violence in Northern Ireland, especially the selections from *North,* his 1975 collection.

In *Belfast Diary: War as a Way of Life* (1995), Chicago journalist John Conroy gives a vivid account of what it was like living in Belfast during the violence of the 1980s. Conroy lived there during this period, among the people most affected by the conflict. He gives clear explanations of what the "Troubles" are all about, and why they have their roots deep in history.

Hope against History: The Course of Conflict in Northern Ireland (1999), by American journalist and historian Jack Holland, describes how the conflict that began in 1969 eventually produced a perception on both sides that violence was counterproductive and had to stop. Holland credits Protestant, Catholic, and IRA leaders, as well as President Bill Clinton, for their contributions to the peace settlement of 1998.

William Trevor's story "Lost Ground," in his collection of stories, *After Rain* (1996) gives insight into the deep divisions that exist between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland. It revolves around a Protestant boy who believes he has been visited by a Catholic saint.

Further Study

Brown, Terrence, *Ireland's Literature: Selected Essays,* Barnes & Noble Books, 1988.

The most relevant chapter in this collection of essays is the final one, "Awakening from the Nightmare: History and Contemporary Literature," in which Brown discusses how Northern Ireland's poets and writers have interpreted the recent phase of their country's history. In the work of Frank McGuiness, Stewart Parker, and Brendan Kennelly, Brown sees signs of an openness to new interpretations of the past.

Devlin, Bernadette, *Price of My Soul,* Knopf, 1969.

Devlin took part in the early civil rights protests in Derry and became the youngest person ever to be elected to the British parliament. She was twenty-one when elected in 1969. Her vivid autobiography covers the early days of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland.

Lojek, Helen, "Difference without Indifference: The Drama of Frank McGuiness and Anne Devlin," in *Eire/Ireland,* Vol. 25, No. 2, Summer 1990, pp. 56-68.

Lojek analyzes Devlin's play, *Ourselves Alone,* as an example of radical feminism which posits the superiority of female values.

Sales, Rosemary, *Women Divided: Gender, Religion, and Politics in Northern Ireland,* Routledge, 1997.

The focus of this book is on the interrelation between gender and religious inequalities in Northern Ireland. Topics covered include the impact of the conflict in Northern Ireland on women; labor market inequalities; women and politics; and women and the peace process.

Sternlicht, Sanford, *A Reader's Guide to Modern Irish Drama,* Syracuse University Press, 1998.

This volume contains a useful introduction to Irish history and its literary and theatrical traditions. It features short articles on twentieth century Irish plays and playwrights, including the work of many contemporary dramatists, such as Devlin.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Short Stories for Students (SSfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, SSfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of SSfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of SSfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in SSfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by SSfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

SSfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Short Stories for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the SSfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the SSfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Short Stories for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Short Stories for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from SSfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Short Stories for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from SSfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Short Stories for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of SSfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Short Stories for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of SSfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Short Stories for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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