THE WEIR

The play is set in a small pub in rural Leitrim. Four men have their usual night of ghost stories and crack enlivened when Finbar escorts a beautiful young woman, Valerie, to the pub to show her off and to introduce her to a group of friends. The men's glasses repeatedly empty and are filled again as they share their stories, revealing something of their inner selves as they do so.

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

Jack , played by Marty Maguire, owns a garage in the town. He is a is a bachelor in his fifties and a regular in the pub with a beer belly to show for it. He wears a dark suit that looks a bit big for him, and a white shirt open at the collar. Over this is a dirty anorak and on his feet are a pair of old boots. Jack's full face is framed with short, receding grey hair and a neat beard, also grey, with tinges of white on the chin. His eyes dart about taking everything in.

Patrick Ryan plays Brendan who in his thirties, owns the pub and is its only barman. He is of medium height, about 5ft. 10ins tall and is well built. He has black, shiny hair receding slightly but long enough for waves to fall over his forehead. His dark eyebrows shade his brown deep set eyes and his nose and mouth are well shaped. Brendan has a close cropped beard around his chin and mouth. He is dressed in beige trousers and a blue checked open neck shirt with sleeves rolled up.

Frankie Mc Cafferty who has the role of Jim is another bachelor in his forties. Besides looking after his ailing mother he is a mechanic and does some work for Jack fixing cars and tractors. He is also a dab hand at tipping a winning horse. Jim has a long nose, a long face and he tends to frown a lot. He has thinning grey hair and moustache. However his goatee beard is white and it emphasises his pointy chin. He sports a long grey woolly jumper over his black trousers and a white open necked shirt.

Finbar, whose character is brought to life by Garrett Keogh is in his late forties and married. His thinning hair and his well manicured beard are grey. He is a successful business man and his dress style reflects this. His well fittted suit is silvery grey and it is teamed with a pale blue shirt whose collar is white - exceptionally white. Finbar's shiny brown shoes complete his outfit. He is quite tall and distinguished looking. He doesn't frequent the bar too often but tonight he is introducing a young woman to his friends.

The role of Valerie is played by Kerrie Quinn. She is tall and slender with long brunette hair. Her face is oval shaped and her features attractive. Valerie smiles a lot and engages totally with the present company. She wears a beige coat and handbag, jeans and a pink sweater. Her flat shoes are very elegant.

SCENERY NOTES FOR THE WEIR

The action takes place entirely in a small rural pub in the South of Ireland. The pub is part of a farm house and is on the ground floor, with the living quarters upstairs. The scenery is static and few props, other than those inside the pub, are used.

The pub floor is plain rough pine-coloured wood, and a pine dado rail runs all the way round the walls which are painted a burnt orange colour except for a section of pine tongue and groove panelling surrounding the bar counter itself.

From the right of stage we see a high square wooden stool with foot bars near its base, and above it mounted on the wall by two supports is a wide shelf where one can set their glass. On the wall above the shelf is a black and white photograph of a ruined abbey, and above that is a pair of wall lights with fluted glass shades. The lights are on.

To the left of the stool is the pub entrance which is a double door, the bottom quarter of each door is a wooden panel, with long rectangular glass sections above. There is a glass panel that stretches across the top of the door. Light shines into the room from outside, but we are unable to see the exterior.

The L shaped bar counter is set into the corner of the room, with the walls around it panelled with tongue and groove pine onto which is hung a few small pictures. There are 2 high square stools in front of it, and 1 similar stool on the shorter side of the L. The counter top is light coloured wood, while the lower part is painted black and has a foot rail running round the base.

The longer part of the L faces us and has seventies style decorative shelving cut into the wooden part that faces us. While sitting at the bar one would tuck their knees beneath this. The shorter part of the L runs at right angles away from us and in this part the counter top opens on a hinge to allow access behind the bar. It is permanently in an upright position lying against the back wall of the bar allowing the men to get themselves drinks when the bar owner is elsewhere. On the wall to the side of the bar there is a shelved recess with numerous bottles of alcohol. On the bar counter are beer pumps one bearing the word “Harp”, but one of the pumps isn’t working, and so the customers have to have bottles instead of draught.

At the back of the bar is a door leading to the upper living quarters of the house, we can see glasses stacked on a shelf just beyond the door. Above this door, and beneath the dado rail is a high shelf which is cluttered with various items such as a radio, vases, jugs, and a sporting trophy in the corner. There is a small picture hanging from the dado rail.

There are a few coat hooks on the wall to the left of the bar for customers, and beyond these is a door with a square pane of glass in the upper half that leads to the male toilets in the yard, which, we are told, are rather messy and not fit for a lady which is why the barman will later take a lady visitor up the stairs to use the toilet in the living quarters.

To the left of the toilet door there is a small picture on the wall. The chimney breast juts out slightly into the room and has a seventies style rough stone effect fireplace with a wooden mantelpiece. There is a cast iron stove in the fireplace with a front opening for turf or other fuels. On the wall above the fireplace are 2 framed photographs, one of the ESB weir erected some years earlier, and one of a town in a cove with mountains around it. Higher on the wall is a set of wall lights that match the ones near the entrance to the pub. A plastic bag containing turf leans against the wall to the left of the fireplace.

There is an old fashioned comfortable chair with a wide square wooden seat, a high back and arm rests sitting to the left of the fire. There are no cushions on it. On the wall above the chair are two small framed pictures of landscapes.

In front of the fireplace is a round wooden table with 3 small square wooden stools around it. On the table top is an ash tray.

Few props are used in the play, just things that would be used in a small pub before the smoking laws were introduced. There are ash trays, beer glasses which the bar man fills with beer from bottles. A bottle of wine for the lady visitor is brought down from the living quarters, which has been there for some time because the pub doesn’t stock it due to the lack of requests for it. It is poured into a shorts glass as there are no stemmed wine glasses.

The fire has a small red glow in the cast iron stove, and we can hear the sound of moaning wind outside the pub, which is lounder when the door is opened to admit customers.