



HER, SIVE

ABBAY THEATRE RESOURCE PACK

*Written by Sean Farrelly
with additional material by Claire McDermott, Phil Kingston &
students of Larkin Community College*



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PRIMING THE CANON

WHAT IS “PRIMING THE CANON”?

In the Priming the Canon series, the Abbey creates plays for young people and performs them in schools, libraries, and arts centers all over Ireland. The aim of the project is to bring classic Irish plays into the heart of your classroom.

HOW DOES THE ABBEY DECIDE WHICH PLAY TO USE?

The Abbey works closely with a group of talented writers in Ireland. These writers select a classic piece of Irish theatre and write a monologue (a long piece of text or speech made by one character alone) from the perspective of a young person in the world of that play. *Her Sive* is based on *Sive* by John B Keane and is written by Kat Woods.

WHY BRING PLAYS TO SCHOOLS AT ALL?

Lots of reasons. Most simply because some students don't have access to go to physical theatres, so the Abbey endeavours to bring plays to them.

WHY SHOULD ANYONE CARE ABOUT THEATRE?

Plays are another way to express yourself and put a form on big ideas. Everyone has a story. Your voice matters and audiences are hungry to hear it!

TURN AND TALK

In small groups or pairs, take 5 minutes to discuss your experience with theatre. It doesn't matter if you've never been before.

There are no wrong answers.

SOME QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

What does the word theatre mean? How is a play different to a book or a movie?

Who are the different people involved in making a play?

What is the role of the audience?

INTRODUCTION TO *HER, SIVE* RESOURCE PACK

Dear Teacher,

This resource pack has been designed to prepare your students for our live performance of *Her, Sive* and to reinforce their learning afterwards. It isn't necessary for your students to use all these resources to enjoy the play and they are offered for you to pick and choose what will work for you. We do think Claire McDermott's History Lesson is a good introduction to the historical context of the play and we'll be reinforcing some of those topics during our visit. As we are touring *Her, Sive* to both primary and secondary schools this year we have added supplementary materials to cover a range of levels.

The aim of Priming the Canon shows is to give children access to the world of an Irish classic that they'd usually only see as adults. This means coming into contact with adult themes like death by suicide (the dramatic conclusion of John B Keane's original play *Sive*). We don't dwell on this topic in *Her, Sive* and leave it up to you on how you wish to discuss it in class. But we will touch on how to talk to someone in distress and there are links to organisations like Jigsaw that can address this topic in more depth.

Our thanks go to Sean Farrelly who prepared this material, to Claire McDermott who was our primary level consultant and finally Year 103 of Larkin Community College who assessed it for secondary schools. I wish we had time to include all their suggestions.

Finally, we do hope you enjoy our visit. While this pack is designed to support your students learning we also feel their encounter with outstanding actors and playwrights is the priority of our work.

- Phil Kingston, Community and Education Manager



Image Ros Kavanagh

HISTORY: Cuntas Míósúil Lesson Plan by Claire McDermott

Teacher:	Date:	Class level: Sixth Class
History		CM
LEARNING OUTCOMES/CONTENT OBJECTIVES: The child should be enabled to Sixth Class > Life, society, work and culture in the past > Life in Ireland since the 1950s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • become familiar with aspects of the lives of these people Sixth Class > Continuity and change over time > Food and farming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the factors which may have caused or prevented change 		
DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS/CONCEPTS/ASPECTS/LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS: The child should be enabled to Sixth Class > Working as a historian > Change and continuity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop an understanding of change and continuity by exploring similarities and differences between the past and the present and between different periods in the past Sixth Class > Working as a historian > Cause and effect <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recognise some factors which may have caused, prevented or delayed changes in the past 		
LEARNING OBJECTIVES : WALT-We Are Learning To... ...have a better understanding of life, society, farming and agriculture in Ireland in the 1950s.		
LEARNING ACTIVITIES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In preparation for the performance of <i>Her, Sive</i>, teacher and children will complete the reading activity titled 'Ireland in the 1950s'. • Class discussion using the following questions as assessments and conversation starters. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you think government decisions had an impact on how poor people were? 2. In what ways were women's lives oppressed during the 1950s? 3. In your opinion, did the matchmaker have an important job? 4. Explain why marriage was so important to rural Irish in the 1950s. 5. Tell me about the ways in which Ireland has changed since the 1950s. 6. Why do you think the 1950s was known as the lost decade? 7. Would you have liked to have lived during this time? 		
LINKAGE AND INTEGRATION: Drama (<i>Her, Sive</i>), Art (Draw a portrait of what you think Sive looks like), English (Reading and oral language).		
DIFFERENTIATION: Teacher will use a variety of questioning.		
ASSESSMENT: Teacher observation and questioning		
RESOURCES: <i>Her, Sive</i> Resource Pack, photocopied sheets.		

IRELAND IN THE 1950S

Her, Sive takes place in rural Ireland in the 1950s. Let's explore some aspects of life and society, which will help us prepare for the performance.



Éamon de Valera

ECONOMY

This period is sometimes referred to as 'the decade of doom and gloom', the 'worst decade since the Famine' and the 'lost decade'. This is partly because old ways of farming were in decline and no new industries were being developed by the government. Ireland depended on its farming for a healthy economy, it was its main industry. By the late 1950s Ireland was in an economic crisis with a lot of people leaving and little industrial growth. One problem was that the government put high taxes on goods imported from outside Ireland. They hoped this would encourage people to buy products made in Ireland (known as 'protectionism').

In 1959 Éamon deValera became President and the new Taoiseach, Seán Lemass, decided to change the government's approach. He started the first Programme for Economic Expansion. Ireland got rid of taxes on imports, encouraged foreign companies to locate here and stopped insisting all companies had to be Irish owned. It even gave money to Irish companies to export their goods abroad.

AGRICULTURE

Many Irish people depended on farming and agriculture to make a living. Horses were very important in those times. They were used to pull ploughs through the fields. They also pulled carts to transport hay or to bring milk to the creamery. A lot of the machines and tractors that we have now did not exist back then. Potatoes had to be picked by hand and hay was cut with a sharp tool called a scythe. People harvested peat from their bogs. It was cut, dried, and sold for people to heat their homes.



Seán Lemass

THE ROLE OF WOMEN

In 1950s, Ireland was an extremely patriarchal (controlled by men) society. Women were expected to do all the domestic work such as cooking, cleaning, caring for children and general upkeep of the home. Most girls left school early to fulfil these duties. Women were not given the chance to enjoy the same freedoms and opportunities as men. Catholicism very prominent in Ireland during the 1950s. Some cultural traditions within this religion and in society meant that women were often made feel shame for having a child if she was not married. Nowadays, this time in history is seen as shameful for the way the Catholic Church and many in our society treated women of this time.

MATCHMAKING TRADITIONS

Old Ireland had a history of matchmaking. This is where a couple are brought together by a matchmaker, who thinks the pair have a chance of getting along because of their similar backgrounds or interests. Families relied on marriages to keep a farm or a family business up and running, so often the matchmaker was paid to 'arrange' a marriage between two single people. As you can imagine, this did not always have a positive outcome for those involved in the pairing. The tradition of matchmaking is still alive today in rural Ireland. A festival in Lisdoonvarna, Co.Clare attracts thousands every year, hoping to find a partner.



Willie Daly, The Matchmaker at Lisdoonvarna

PRE-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What do you think living in Ireland in the 1950s was like?
- How is life today different to life in the 1950s?
- Do you think arranged marriages or “matchmaking” is a good idea? Why?
- How would feel if you were told you had to leave school early to get married?
- How do you find out what’s going on in your local community?
- Is that different from the 1950s?
- Do you have any friends who are older than you? What do you talk about?
- What do you expect to see in the play?



Image Ros Kavanagh

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

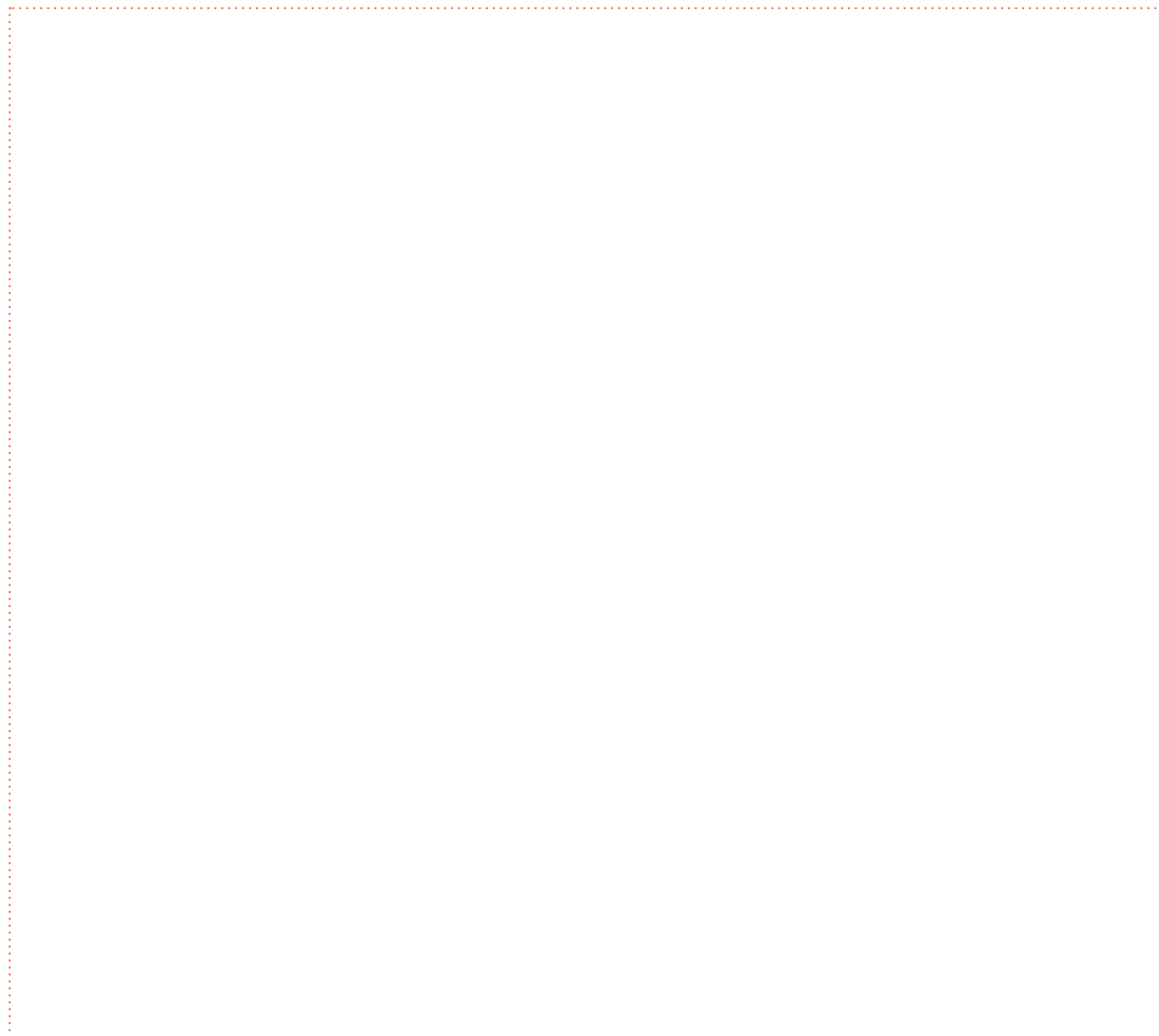
- What do you remember about Sheila's story?
- How did you feel while you were watching it? How did this change as the story went on?
- Are there any particular images that stay with you?
- What's Sheila like as a character?
- Is she treated differently to her brother John? How?
- How did Nana's feelings change during the story?
- Did Shelia change during the play? Did she make up her mind about anything?
- Do you think the play ended on a hopeful note?
- How do you think Sheila's Dad will react to being told she's not going to marry Seán Dóta? And her Mum?



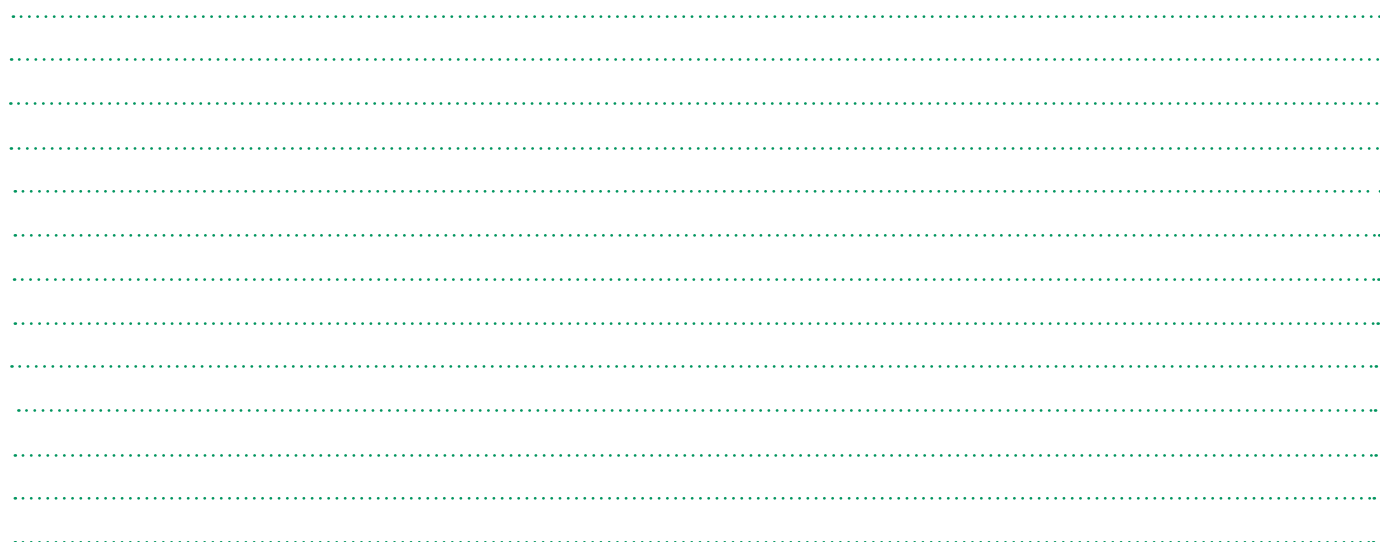
Image Ros Kavanagh

FEEDBACK SHEET

DRAW A PICTURE OF SOMETHING YOU SAW OR FELT DURING THE PLAY



CAN YOU WRITE SOMETHING ABOUT WHAT YOU THOUGHT OF THE PLAY?



DRAMA ACTIVITY: FREEZE FRAME

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!

- Step one: split into small groups of three or four.
- Step two: identify three key moments from the play *Her, Sive*.
- Step three: stage the three moments in silent “snapshots” in your groups. Everyone should be involved in each snapshot, so be imaginative in your casting (someone could be an apple tree in the orchard, for example).
- Step four: Perform your snapshots in front of the class and allow everyone to guess which moments each group chose.

HINT:

You can pick moments that happen “off page”, for example: Pats and Daddy discussing Sheila’s fate; Sheila and her brother John turning turf or Sive and Sheila picking apples from the orchard.



Image Ros Kavanagh

TRANSCRIPTION OF VIDEOS

VIDEO 1 SEXISM

Hello. Lovely to see everyone again, I'm Ciara and I played Sheila.

This is the first of the Priming the Cannon video series about *Her, Sive* by Kat Woods. The Abbey hopes you can use these videos to prompt further discussion and explore more in-depth the themes that feature in the play. All you'll need is some paper and a pen or pencil.

This video is going to deal with the theme of sexism, specifically the sexism that women faced during the late 1950s when the play is set.

Before we get into the details, why don't you take a moment to pause the video and chat about your understanding of what the word "sexism" means. What are some examples of sexism - either from the play or in life more broadly?

Take a few minutes here to pause and discuss.

(option to insert title card with prompt questions here.)

Welcome back. Thank you for getting stuck in and participating straight away. For the purposes of this video, we're going to define sexism as the unfair treatment, stereotyping or discrimination, particularly against women, on the basis of their sex or gender.

In *Her, Sive*, Sheila deals with sexism on both a micro and a macro level. Some small ways in which she gets treated unfairly are by being made wash clothes instead of cutting turf like she'd rather be doing and being told off by her Mam for being "too independent for her own good" when "the boys can go off and do whatever they want".

Then, on a bigger scale, Sheila's dreams of becoming a vet are endangered because she may be forced into an arranged marriage. To make matters worse, the prospective husband isn't appealing at all; it's Seán Dóta, the horrible old man who wanted to marry Sive.

Arranged marriages and matchmaking were common practices in 1950s Ireland. In exchange for their daughter's hand in marriage, men would offer parents a dowry – or payment – of money or goods like livestock or land. Often daughters never got a say in when or to whom they married and had to leave school early to fulfil domestic duties.

Does that seem fair to you? *(pause)*

Ireland's attitude towards women and gender equality has improved a lot since the 1950s but there is still work to do. Gender Equality is one of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and people are working to decrease sexism around the world every day.

For this video's activity, I'd like for your class to split into groups and discuss ways of promoting equal treatment for all genders. How could you make sure everyone is paid the same, for example, and what would you do to give everyone equal opportunities for education?

Feel free to make a poster and present your ideas to the whole group once you're finished.

Thank you for your attention and good luck with the activity!

TRANSCRIPTION OF VIDEOS

VIDEO 2 MENTAL HEALTH

Hello. Lovely to see everyone again, I'm Ciara and I played Sheila.

This is the second of the Priming the Cannon video series about *Her, Sive* by Kat Woods. The Abbey hopes you can use these videos to prompt further discussion and explore more in-depth the themes that feature in the play. All you'll need is some paper and a pen or pencil.

This video is going to deal with the theme of mental health.

Before we get into the details, why don't you take a moment to pause the video and chat about your understanding of what the term "mental health" means and why it's important to talk about it. You can use examples from the play or from your own life.

Take a few minutes here to pause and discuss.

(option to insert title card with prompt questions here.)

Welcome back. Thank you for your participation.

Mental Health is a big theme in both *Her, Sive* and John B. Keane's original play *Sive*. Both pieces revolve around the Sive's untimely death. Sive's inability to express her worries and Nanna and Mena's refusal to directly answer questions about her parents all contribute to play's tragic conclusion.

In *Her, Sive*, Sheila has a healthier approach to communication. Nanna Malvin encourages her to approach her father and clearly express her ambitions of following his footsteps and becoming a vet, which she resolves to do at the end of the play.

Getting your problems out of her head can often reduce them, either by saying them out loud or writing them down. For this video's activity, I'd like for each of you to write a letter (just like Sheila's letter to Nanna Malvin in *Her, Sive*). Address your letter to yourself exactly one year in the future and give it the title: "Dear My Best Future Self".

Before you write anything, take a couple of minutes to imagine what your ideal self will be doing. Are they in a different country? Do they have a new hobby? What are they eating for breakfast? Visualising your goals clearly is proven to help you achieve them.

There are only two rules for this activity.

Rule number one: write in the *present* tense. For example: *I* woke up and had pancakes for breakfast. Then *I* rode my bike to...wherever you'd like to go.

Rule number two: keep the letters positive. This activity is about visualising your best self so try to focus on all the good things you'd like to come your way.

Give yourselves at least ten minutes of writing time. And, if you like, repeat this activity for three days so you have a series of letters addressed to your future self.

Thank you for your attention and good luck with the activity!

TRANSCRIPTION OF VIDEOS

VIDEO 3 CHURCH AND STATE

Hello. Lovely to see everyone again, I'm Vlad and I played The Young Teacher.

This is the third of the Priming the Cannon video series about *Her, Sive* by Kat Woods. The Abbey hopes you can use these videos to prompt further discussion and explore more in-depth the themes that feature in the play. All you'll need is some paper and a pen or pencil.

This video is going to deal with the theme of Church and State.

Before we get into the details, why don't you take a moment to pause the video and chat about your understanding of what the term "Church and State" means and what role the Church and government play in Irish life. You can use examples from the play or draw from your own life.

Take a few minutes here to pause and discuss.

(option to insert title card with prompt questions here.)

Welcome back. Thank you for all your work on Priming the Canon so far.

Although arguably less relevant in society today, the Church played a huge role in the lives of Irish people in the 1950s, particularly in rural areas. Sive is referred to as a "by-child" in both *Sive* and *Her, Sive*, which means her parents had her out of wedlock. While this may not have much, if any, bearing on someone today, having a child out of the sacrament of marriage was seen as a scandal in times past and could affect your child's prospects of employment and/or marriage.

The church and government also contributed to the oppressive atmosphere and sexism as mentioned in the first video of this series. At one point in *Her, Sive*, Sheila wonders how housekeeping is, as her mother describes, a natural vocation "if it is the requirement of Church and State". However, the Church has had some positive influences on Ireland as well. It built communities and funded things like schools and hospitals.

For this video's activity, I invite you to split your class in half and have a debate under the topic: "Overall, religion is a force for good." You're welcome to use Christianity in *Her, Sive* as a jumping off point, but feel free to reference other religions too.

Thank you for your attention and good luck with the activity!

TRANSCRIPTION OF VIDEOS

VIDEO 4 THEN VS NOW

Hello. Lovely to see everyone again, I'm Vlad and I played The Young Teacher.

This is the final video of the Priming the Cannon series about *Her, Sive* by Kat Woods. The Abbey hopes you can use these videos to prompt further discussion and explore more in-depth the themes that feature in the play. All you'll need is some paper and a pen or pencil.

In this last video we're going to think about Then vs Now. In what ways is Ireland different from the 1950s and how has it remained the same.

Before we get into the details, why don't you take a moment to pause the video and chat about what you imagine life was like back then and how it compares to the present day.

Take a few minutes here to pause and discuss.

(option to insert title card with prompt questions here.)

Welcome back. So, before we get into today's activity, let's recap on everything we've done so far. By now, you have hopefully seen a production of *Her, Sive* and gone through the videos discussing Sexism, Mental Health and the Church and State.

There are still similarities between now and then. No doubt some of you who saw the play could sympathise with Sheila's feelings of frustration at being dismissed by her parents or empathise with her longing to go traveling abroad to see the world before settling down. We also share a history and a culture.

However, there's no denying that people's attitude towards each of the themes we've discussed in this series has changed significantly in the last 70 years. Not only that but we now have access to technologies of which people in the 50s couldn't have imagined, as well as entirely new approaches to things like travel, fashion and music.

For a final activity, I'd like you to cast your imaginations *forward*, to 70 years into the future. Your teacher can decide how best to do this, but the challenge is to create an idea of what society will look like in the 2090s. Perhaps you can split into groups and each tackle one facet of future Ireland. What will music sound like? What will people think of our take on discrimination? How big a part will religion play? What will people eat and wear?

Will Ireland be a better or worse place to live in? What will be some of the challenges we face, and what tools will we use to overcome them?

You have complete creative freedom for this activity.

Thank you for your attention throughout this video series. As always, you are welcome to come into the Abbey Theatre and say hello.

Best of luck and keep up the great work!

APPENDICES

SYNOPSIS OF *SIVE* BY JOHN B. KEANE

ACT ONE

Scene One

The play opens on a poorly furnished country kitchen where Nanna (Sive's grandmother) and Mena Glavin (her aunt) trade insults. Sive appears from school and questions Nanna about her parents, who died when she was a baby. Unknown to them both, the local matchmaker, Thomasheen Seán Rua, enters and proposes that Mena marry Sive to Seán Dóta, an elderly bachelor who has money. Sive doesn't want to marry Seán Dóta as she would prefer to marry Liam Scuab, her admirer.

Scene Two

Thomasheen brings Seán Dóta to visit the house. Seán behaves brashly and tries to attack Sive while out on a walk outside the cottage. Meanwhile, Thomasheen reveals that if Sive marries Seán Dóta he'd be paid handsomely. His only concern is the threat of Liam Scuab.

Scene Three

Travelling men, Pats Bockock and Carthalawn, arrive and reveal the news of Sive's match to Nanna. The old woman challenges Mena and Thomasheen but is bullied by them. When Sive arrives home, Mena takes the opportunity to speak to her alone. She tries to persuade her of all that Seán Dóta can offer, finally telling Sive the truth about her birth in order to expose her uncertain prospects, in essence: because she's a "by-child" (her parents weren't married when they had her), she won't have the same opportunities as her peers.

ACT TWO

Scene One

Having learned of the marriage from Pats and Carthalawn, Liam Scuab comes to visit Sive but is met by Mike (Sive's uncle) and Mena. Liam begs them to stop the match, but after he's gone Mena tells Sive that he wishes her joy for the wedding and has left for good.

Scene Two

Pats tells Nanna he has a plan to prevent the match. Sive should steal out of the house overnight and meet Liam; the pair will be married in secret. He gives Nanna a letter for Sive outlining Liam's plan. Mike comes upon them and discovers the letter but thinking it is a lover's farewell, he promises to give it to Sive without reading it. When Thomasheen arrives, he spots the letter and insists that Mike open it. The plot is exposed and Thomasheen burns the letter so that Sive will be ignorant of Liam's plan. She soon arrives home with Mena after a day of preparations for the wedding. Pats and Carthalawn arrive for a traditional wedding visit, which they have planned to distract attention from the girl's escape. While they provoke Seán and Thomasheen with their witty songs, a panicked Mena discovers that Sive is missing. Liam enters carrying Sive's body: she has drowned herself. Thomasheen and Seán quickly escape the scene. Mike's concern is for family respectability: will she be buried in consecrated ground? Mena's reaction is hysterical, contrasting with Nanna's silent grief. As Pats and Carthalawn leave to spread the news, the old woman stays alongside her lost granddaughter.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

RECEPTION

“It [his play Sive] showed rural Ireland for what it really was. A wonderful place in many ways, but in other ways a rough tough station. Poverty was paramount, where cruelty was part of everyday life, where people only barely survived.”

John B. Keane, interview 1998

Sive was initially rejected by the Abbey in 1959 but opened to Listowel Co. Kerry to instant success. The Abbey staged its own production of *Sive* in 1985, which ran for 42 performances.



Image Ros Kavanagh

WHAT SIVE MEANT FOR IRISH PEOPLE

In 1959, Ireland was on the cusp of change. The transition from the 1950s to the 1960s would see a gradual modernisation of Irish life, both in economic and cultural terms.

A rural audience might have recognised all too easily the tension in the play between traditional and modern ways of life; ideas like arranged marriage, leaving school early to work and the church's involvement in daily life were starting to be called into question and challenged for the first time.

ROLE OF WOMEN IN 1950S SOCIETY

One of the most intriguing aspects of *Sive* is its portrayal of women. Nanna and Mena Glavin don't like each other but do have a lot in common. Both women desire more independence than their society is willing to give them. Despite their strong characters, they cannot overcome their situation; neither has the financial or social freedom to escape the marriage that has brought them together. Similarly, Sive wants to be free to follow her heart, and her being forced into an unwanted marriage is what fuels the tragedy of the play.

In 1950s, Ireland was an extremely patriarchal society. Women were expected to do all the domestic labor — cooking, cleaning, general upkeep of the home — and most left school early to fulfil these duties.

SUPPLEMENTARY WORK

ENGLISH

Critical Vocabulary

Her, Sive is unusual because it's not performed in a traditional theatre.

- Where was the auditorium when you saw it?
- What do you call a play when only one character speaks?
- Where there any props in the play?
- The words are part of the story but how else did Sheila let you know what she was thinking or feeling?
- Where there any moments of suspense in the play?
- Where there moments when Sheila changed her mind or realised something?
- Was this a contemporary story?

Write for a Variety of Purposes

- Use what you've learnt from the play to write a speech about how unjust the treatment of women is in 1950s rural Ireland.
- Compose a newspaper article about The Skeleton Field for the local paper.
- Imagine you're Sheila and write a letter to your father persuading him to let you study to be a vet.

Responding to Spoken Texts

A dramatic monologue is one of the many different registers or ways in which English is spoken.

- How was Sheila's speech different from other ways people talk?
- What is the actor trying to do in performing the monologue? What's the purpose of it?
- How does the language draw us in? What type of language does the playwright use?
- Does the way Sheila is speaking change through the monologue, in response to how she feels about what she's saying?



Image Ros Kavanagh

SUPPLEMENTARY WORK

HISTORY: IRELAND 1945-1960 (*HISTORY IN FOCUS* CHAPTER 18)

Her, Sive takes place in rural Ireland in the 1950s. This period is sometimes referred to as ‘the decade of doom and gloom’, the ‘worst decade since the Famine’ and the ‘lost decade’.

Why would people describe it like this? What do you imagine might be happening?

This is partly because old ways of farming were in decline and no new industries were being developed by the government.

What did many of the young people in Ireland do about this when they started looking for jobs?

Ireland depended on its farming for a healthy economy, it was its main industry.

How would farming have affected some of the characters in *Her, Sive*, like Sheila’s father or the Glavins? How important is farming nowadays?

By the late 1950s Ireland was in an economic crisis with a lot of people leaving and little industrial growth. One problem was the government put high taxes on goods imported from outside Ireland. They hoped this would encourage people to buy products made in Ireland (known as ‘protectionism’).

What problems would protectionism cause? What’s the alternative approach?

In 1959 the new Taoiseach, Seán Lemass, decided to change the government’s approach. He started the first Programme for Economic Expansion based on some ideas written by T K Whitaker, the youngest person ever made Secretary to the Department of Finance.

What sort of changes do you think they made?

Ireland got rid of taxes on imports, encouraged foreign companies to locate here and stopped insisting all companies had to be Irish owned. It even gave money to Irish companies to import their goods abroad.

What do we call it when there are no restrictions on buying and selling between countries?

What do you think were the results of these changes?

SUPPLEMENTARY WORK

SPHE: HELPING A FRIEND/ ACTIVE LISTENING

Stress is a physical response. Not all stress is bad, sometimes we need that sense of pressure to get things done, to meet a deadline or finish a demanding project.

But sometimes stress isn't helpful and can make us ill.

One way to help is to work out why you are stressed, what the actual cause is. This can help put it into a bit of perspective and make clear what changes you might need to make in your life.

You can help a friend who is stressed by noticing they seem under pressure. Simply that, letting them know you see they are struggling.

If it feels right you can encourage them to talk about it, saying things out loud can really make a difference. And if it feels like talking does make it easier this can help them clarify what is causing the stress. If that's clear they can start to work out what to do.

What's most important though and what can be hard is that you listen without telling them what to do. You can find a good quote on that here:

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/7183051-when-i-ask-you-to-listen-to-me-and-you>

Active Listening means really being there for someone, letting them know you are completely focussed on them in a caring, attentive way. It means giving them the space to find what they need to say. It also means asking any questions you may need to help you understand what they are going through. It means not giving them advice, or trying to solve their problem or fix them in any way. It needs patience and kindness. Sometimes it can be the most powerful thing you can do for another person.

The Samaritans organisation was started based on this principle and sums up active listening very well.

We offer a safe place for you to talk any time you like, in your own way – about whatever's getting to you. We won't judge you or tell you what to do, we'll listen to you.

The above is drawn from the work of the mental health charity Jigsaw, whose work can be found here:

<https://jigsaw.ie/support-a-friend-who-is-stressed/>
[https://jigsaw.ie/dealing-with-stress/#tipsfordealingwithstress\]](https://jigsaw.ie/dealing-with-stress/#tipsfordealingwithstress)

SUPPLEMENTARY WORK

A POEM BASED ON THE PLAY

Write down a few lines in answer to these questions:

- What images do you remember from the play?
- If you were Sheila what would you see, hear and smell while walking Rex?
- What memories would the Glavin's farmhouse bring up in you?
- What's in your pockets?
- What does it feel like to make the decision you make at the end?

Now turn what you've written down into a draft

Read through the list of lines to see how they sound together.

Does it feel like there's a story there?

If you had to lose about a third of the words, what would you HAVE to keep?

Try changing some words or taking them away so you're just keeping the most important images?

What happens if you make the lines roughly the same length?

Are there other patterns you could make with the words and sounds?

Read through it again and see how it's changed.

Write or type out your poem again. See how different they are from each other.

LINKS, RESOURCES AND FURTHER READINGS

- History Link: For an insight into a child's life at that time: <https://www.ouririshheritage.org/content/archive/topics/miscellaneous/rural-childhood-in-the-1950s>
- Sive Study Pack: <https://www.abbeytheatre.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/2014-Sive-Study-Pack.pdf>
- Other drama games and activities:
dramaresource.com/101-MORE-drama-games.pdf
dramatoolkit.co.uk/drama-games/a-to-z
stagemilk.com/acting-games/
- <https://jigsaw.ie/support-a-friend-who-is-stressed/>
- <https://jigsaw.ie/dealing-with-stress/#tipsfordealingwithstress>

HER, SIVE RESOURCE PACK 2022

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