

The Cave by Kevin Barry

Audio Description Introduction for the matinee performance in the Abbey Theatre Saturday 28th June 2025, at 2pm

Welcome to this introduction to **The Cave**, by **Kevin Barry**. The play is directed by **Caitríona McLaughlin**. Set and Costume Design is by **Joanna Parker**, and Lighting Design by **Stephen Dodd**. The Composer and Sound Designer is **Sinéad Diskin**, the Video Designer is **Mike Dunne**, Hair and Make-up is by **Leonard Daly**, and the Fight Director is **Alan Walsh**.

The performance runs for approximately two hours and twenty minutes, including one twenty-minute interval. This production contains haze.

ABOUT THE PLAY

"We're safe from it all... for a while... when we're up here"

We meet the McRae brothers in a dead zone in the mountains of south County Sligo. Sleeping rough in a cave and in trouble with the law, Archie and Bopper are running out of road. This desperate pair have only each other to rely on as they try to restart their van, their lives and their WiFi connection.

And then there's the local sergeant who is becoming more and more entangled in their lives...

The Cave is an unforgettable black comedy from the pen of one of Ireland's most beloved writers.

ABOUT THE SET

We find ourselves at the top of a limestone mountain in South County Sligo, the landscape a cave opening in the centre of an expansive white papermache like sculpture that reaches across the stage sloping upwards at the back and sides. It's pitch black behind the mountain, sometimes the characters stand on the edge looking to the town below which is out of our sight. The mountain is uneven, on either side of the cave opening it slopes downwards reaching up

again at either end. Sometimes when Archie and Bopper clamber over the mountain top it seems so desolate, like an excerpt from Mary Shelley's 'Frankenstein'. The cave opening is wider at the front so that we see the brothers coming through the darkness within.

In front of the mountain is a plateau, resting upon it to our left, a van lies in pieces waiting to be fixed, on it's undercarriage, an upturned bottle crate accompanies the drivers seat, the engine open to the elements. Hanging from the ceiling high above is the roof of the van, beside it an exhaust hangs vertically, sometimes smoke represented by haze pours out of the exhaust, it wafts across the audience to our left, the smell of it identifiable. Beside the undercarriage is a battery, jump leads, a generator which the men refer to as a genny, an extension lead, a number of chargers, a wheel and a small industrial standing lamp that they set on beside the cave opening. To our right of the cave is a battered old oil can that the men use as a fire pit. When the play opens there is also a small guitar amp beside it.

Archie and Boppers make shift encampment appears like a junkyard. Helen enters their encampment from both left and right of the stage.

At the far back wall a large caption unit hangs high in the darkness. It displays the name of the scenes in white writing on a black background. On two occasions the caption unit becomes a monitor that presents a video or photo, I'll describe these along with the change of scenery from the encampment to Helen's kitchen during the live show.

ABOUT THE CAST AND COSTUMES

In order of appearance **Archie** played by **Tommy Tiernan** will crawl onto the mountains plateau from the mouth of the cave, **Bopper** played by **Aaron Monghan** will boulder in from the cave within a few minutes, later **Helen** played by **Judith Roddy** will travel up from the town.

All three are in their forties, **Archie** the eldest amongst them has white wirey hair and a short beard to match, a constant look of childlike worry on his face, his shoulders a little turned in with the anxiety of his life experiences. Archie wears a cheap black suit jacket and trousers dusted from the limestone of the mountain cave. Underneath it he wears a rusty red jumper with blue and green lines running through it. On his hands black fingerless gloves, on his feet

shabby runners. There's a chaplainesque vagabond look about him. When we first meet Archie a dusky violet silk sleep mask rests above his eyes.

His younger brother **Bopper** appears more comfortable in this environment, there's a look of a primitive caveman about him as he boulders about with his broad shoulders and wild eyes, grimacing, clenching his muscles to control the fire within him. His short brown hair thick and unkempt, Bopper first appears bear chested in bikini cut briefs, a filthy long 1980s style purple bedspread has a hole cut out for one arm fashioned into a roman like robe that trails behind him. Later he will put on his runners and black shell suit trousers with a pink motif on one knee, a sky blue motif on the other, like his brother his clothes are covered in lime stone dust. On his torso he wears a filthy vest and tight bomber jacket zipped up, perhaps comforting his broken heart.

Helen is a garda sergeant from the local town, she is also in her forties. Helen appears sometimes in her garda uniform, on her belt hangs a key and a pair of handcuffs. Later when we visit her in her home she wears comfortable civic clothes, dark blue shorts or grey sweatpants with a lilac coloured t-shirt and slip on slippers with blue shin length socks. Her long thick wavy auburn hair hanging loose, it's usually tucked under her sergeants cap held together in a ponytail. Helen appears organised, assertive, in control.

That concludes the audio description introduction to **The Cave**. It was prepared by me, **Mo Harte**, who will also provide audio description for this performance. A Touch Tour will also be held before the performance, meeting in the foyer at 11.50am. Audio description at the Abbey Theatre is supported by Arts & Disability Ireland, and The Arts Council. For updates about audio described and captioned performances, text **ACCESSARTS** to **51444** or head to **www.adiarts.ie** for more information. Thank you. Go raibh maith agaibh.

