



RADIO SCRIPT

Dorothy's Prison Notebooks

Radio Documentary

Dorothy's Prison Notebooks



The making of performance based on the Civil War Gaol Journals of Dorothy Macardle

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*DMAPP is an acronym for the Dorothy Macardle Archive and Performance Project

Recording Locations

UCD Archives, James Joyce Library, St. Patrick's Campus, DCU, Kilmainham Gaol, National Archives of Ireland, Contact studio, Rua Red Tallaght, Curious Broadcast Studios, Louth County Archives Dundalk old Gaol, An Táin Arts Centre, Dundalk.

EPG

Prison Notebooks follows Sharon McArdle and Declan Gorman as they delve into archives to create a theatre performance from gaol diaries of Irish writer and revolutionary Dorothy Macardle.

BILLING

In 2018, actor Sharon McArdle and playwright Declan Gorman set out to create a theatre piece based on diaries kept by revolutionary and writer Dorothy Macardle during her incarceration at the time of the Irish Civil War. This documentary traces the artists' voyage deep into the archives, visits to the gaol cell where Dorothy was held and back to the rehearsal room where the performance gradually evolves.

Dundalk-born Dorothy Macardle is remembered as author of *The Irish Republic*, a history of the foundation of the State from a Republican perspective. Already an Abbey playwright at the time of her arrest, she went on to author innovative Gothic Horror novels, including *The Uninvited*, which became a major Hollywood film. Her gaol diaries offer extraordinary insights into the evolving consciousness, dreams, and psychic experiences of an emerging writer of immense gifts, whose importance in the shaping of modern Ireland has only recently been acknowledged.

RADIO TRANSCRIPT

OPENING SONG Beacon Song

UCD Archives, James Joyce Library with Kate Manning

KATE So, we will go up to the strong rooms and I will show you where the diaries are held.

SFX - BIG DOOR SOUND & FOOTSTEPS

KATE So this is the inner sanctum - very few people get in this far (laughter)

SHARON Oh my gosh, I feel so privileged.

NARRATOR (31sec) Deep in the vaults of the UCD Archive, actor and researcher Sharon McArdle is about to set eyes for the first time on a series of documents that will take her on a remarkable journey into the mind of a visionary Irish artist and revolutionary.

KATE Here, I've taken out the box with the diaries. I'll just take them out for you now. The 1st one is this lovely, marbled cover notebook; 'Vigil a journal of Mountjoy November 22, by Dorothy Macardle'.

CONTINUE OPENING SONG - Beacon Song. FADE UNDER TO NARRATOR

NARRATOR (1m19s)

Sharon McArdle and Declan Gorman are theatre makers from the Northeast of Ireland.

SHARON In 2017, we were invited to perform a play called *Ann Kavanagh*, along with a group of Dundalk actors at a conference organised by the Dorothy Macardle Society in Dundalk. The play script had been rescued from the great Abbey Theatre fire of 1951.

DECLAN I suppose neither of us had a great knowledge of Dorothy Macardle at that point, but that conference set the two of us off on a journey. We were going to write a play about the whole of her life and her achievements but then we were rehearsing in a barn in the middle of nowhere in north county Louth and you came in and you had a piece of news.

SHARON We had thought up until that point that all her papers and manuscripts had been burned after her death. We found out that three of her gaol diaries might have survived. When we met Kate Manning at the archive and she showed us the journals, her actual words were, 'this is holy grail material'. I was absolutely stunned at that point.

NARRATOR (2m25s)

And thus began a 5-year process journey of investigation and creative endeavour that would take Sharon and Declan into archives, historic libraries and even the very prison cells where Dorothy and her fellow Republican women prisoners were held.

Dublin City University with Dr Leeann Lane

LEEANN Dorothy is a very interesting woman. But unfortunately, from the perspective of a historian, her brother burnt her papers when she died so there is a lot of sleuthing to do in terms of accessing her voice.

NARRATION (2m56s)

Dr Leeann Lane of Dublin City University, author of a biography of Dorothy Macardle

LEEANN I think we can certainly as historians create a timeline of what she did but what she felt about what she did is harder to access. So, when I began my biography of Dorothy Macardle, that was a big problem for me. But I did discover by chance that a fragment of her gaol journal which she kept from November 1922- March 1923 remained in the De Valera papers so somehow it managed to escape the burning.

NARRATION (3m34s)

So, who was Dorothy Macardle? Born in 1889, she was already an established Abbey playwright at the time of her arrest and imprisonment in 1922 for writing Anti-Treaty propaganda. Later in life, she published a number of acclaimed novels one of which, "The Uninvited" was turned into a major Hollywood horror movie in the 1940s. She was the author of a significant history called "The Irish Republic" published in 1937. After the Second World War Dorothy Macardle wrote a human rights report into the plight of minors orphaned and separated as a result of Nazi atrocities in Europe. And yet, in spite of her many remarkable achievements in her lifetime, memory of Dorothy was all but erased for several decades after her death in 1958. In common with many women who contributed to the formation and early years of the Irish State – her work was generally overlooked by historians. On top of this, her personal papers and manuscripts were burned on more than one occasion, including three of her gaol diaries. Over the past decade, however, significant work has been undertaken to understand and restore Dorothy's legacy. Sharon and Declan's artistic quest was inspired by this recent movement to reclaim the voices of notable women so often omitted from the received narratives of Irish history.

LEEANN

Other ways of accessing Dorothy's voice is the journalism that she produced. So, she was a journalist and a political propagandist when she emerged out of the civil war gaols. And you can access her political opinions through her journalism for example *The Irish Republic*.

NARRATOR (5m29s)

During her time in prison, Dorothy composed poetry and song lyrics. She also completed "Earthbound", a collection of ghostly short stories. But it was her unpublished diaries above all that fascinated the two artists. What clues might they contain about the lives of the many women imprisoned by former comrades, as political differences over the Anglo-Irish Treaty descended into a deadly Civil War? What insights might these personal accounts of trauma and deprivation offer into Dorothy's own later emergence as a public figure and visionary artist? On Leeann's advice, Sharon's research began with a visit to the UCD Archive, situated in the James Joyce library at Belfield, where she met with principal archivist Kate Manning.

UCD Archives, James Joyce Library

KATE

The Dorothy Macardle Gaol Journals form part of the Eamon DeValera papers at UCD. We know that her papers were destroyed in a fire - the fact that these survived they clearly weren't in the same location. The Journals themselves are very interesting. They are not typical of what diaries normally contain. They are very literary. They are kind of self-consciously literary. She writes very well, in imaginative way. I mean some of her accounts in the diaries are not anything I've seen before in diaries like that. So, they tell us a lot about Dorothy Macardle. They tell us a lot about the conditions within the gaol at the time. They tell us a lot about the relationships with other prisoners. What happened when is not the most important aspect of the diary. They are much more emotional in context of material created by women in prison, they are unique. Wonderful things to have survived.

Dublin City University

LEEANN

Initially when I saw them, I thought 'what is this?'

NARRATOR (7m29s)

Historian Leeann Lane is one of few scholars who have previously studied Dorothy's diaries in detail.

LEEANN They are not clearly organised chronologically, so they move back and forth between different time periods. A lot of very quick writing - the so-called journal entries are interspersed with poems, musings, almost propagandist pieces on what it means to be a Republican. There are early versions of some of the short stories *Earthbound*. There is writing along the margins. It is in copy books- I personally definitely think it is a fragment of a larger journal because there is no reason why she would have finished it in March mid-March 1923, while she continued to be imprisoned and write about imprisonment right until early May 1923. It very much gives importance to me a historian as it gives her Inner voice. All we could say if we didn't have these gaol journals is Dorothy went to prison. But what we find from these journals is her almost kind of talking to herself and teasing out some of issues she has around what it means to be a Republican, her fear at losing her job, she had a very comfortable middle class life mapped out, she had a very good job, she talked about losing her job, losing so much more than just her job, she would not be able to travel any longer.

UCD Archives, James Joyce Library

SHARON Just seeing these for the first time, they look so beautiful these books. They are 100 years old

KATE One of thing that always strikes me about this kind of material, they are not just diaries, letters personal - how strong peoples voices are - you hear peoples voices from the rhythm of their writing, topics, the strength of feeling, their facility to express what they are thinking or feeling whether it is about being separated from people, about prison conditions or about the current State of politics or the causes of what they are fighting for, you hear their voices. It's an incredibly powerful aspect of looking after personal papers. But having this kind of very personal extremely well written and well cared for material. It is a privilege.

SHARON I mean It takes you directly to her voice and her soul. I can't wait to read these.

I don't know how I'm going to do it. But looking at the writing on the 1st page, it just looks like squiggles, beautiful squiggles to me, but I'm willing to give it a try anyhow.

KATE It's a challenge but it's a worthy challenge

FADE OUT - IN THE MICROFICHE ROOM - FADE IN

KATE Ok Sharon, so we are at the microfilm reader. I have loaded up the reel for you, but i'll show how it works: fast forward, you press this button here. To go reverse, press this button. Slow forward, fast reverse...

SHARON I'll give it a go.

NARRATOR (11m)

SFX: This is overlaid above the continuing sound of the whirring machine – gradually machine FX fade out.

Sharon spends days on end at the projector, attempting to decipher and decode Dorothy's diaries. It proves very difficult. While some pages are legibly laid out, in other places the handwriting is almost impenetrable. There is a sense that some of the writing was done furtively in poor light. Kate offers to send Sharon photocopies of the diaries, and for several months, Sharon works from home squinting at words, typing up reams and – more and more - immersing herself in Dorothy's world.

SOPHIE - Singing Caiseadach Ban - humming

DOROTHY 'For a little while only, in those solitudes, thought and imagination live and work: Out of memories the mind goes weaving dreams and philosophies again, out of the very stuff of its imprisonment...'

NARRATOR (11m56s)

She transcribes verbatim the three surviving diaries, all 50,000 words of them, reliving Dorothy's descriptions of everyday jail life and politics, as well as her dreams, inner fears and doubts, hearing anew the voices not only of Dorothy herself, but her fellow prisoners: Lily O Brennan a veteran of 1916; Mary McSwiney whose hunger strike mobilised public opinion in favour of the women; Nora Connolly daughter of James Connolly, and Noreen Cogley whose singing from her gaol cell gave comfort to the women in their darkest hours.

REHEARSAL STUDIO

DOROTHY

'On arrival at Mountjoy we were delivered into the hands of the wardresses, searched, and shown into a long bare cell. This was the hospital. We seven, the Suffolk Street women, were to be kept here'.

NARRATOR

In the rehearsal room, Declan and Sharon discuss the challenges of adapting a fragmented diary into a piece of theatre.

DECLAN

The huge difference here, if you take a biography on Frank O'Connor biography of Michael Collins, it's a story. Frank O'Connor has already done the work of laying it out as a story. So, for the dramatist transposing that as a narrative drama, the fundamental work is already done by the original author. Whereas with the diaries, it is just not like that. While they do follow a chronology of sorts, they begin in November and run on until March, she didn't write it as a story.

SHARON

You're right, there's no set chronology, but she sets them out in episodes so the front page of one of the notebooks, she lists the chapters almost, so you have prison moods, prison vigils, prison letters, prison dreams. I suppose the next thing, is where are the climactic points in the piece? What is happening in prison that will excite our audience - the mundane life in prison in 1922?

NARRATOR (13m58s)

Not only was the role of women in public life diminished in historical accounts, in Dorothy's own lifetime, there were attempts to silence her. Her precious papers and literary manuscripts were publicly burned on the street by Free State soldiers at the time of her arrest in 1922. She felt deeply frustrated by the 1935 Conditions of Employment Act and the 1937 Constitution overseen by her erstwhile mentor Eamon DeValera, both of which reduced the status of women. Closer to home, even during her time in prison, her own father and mother sought to rein in their wayward daughter.

Dublin City University

LEEANN

Her Father wanted her to sign the form. This was a form given to all prisoners stating they would be released if they promised not to

destabilise the State that was in the process of being formed. Dorothy refused to sign the form and she resented her father for trying to suggest that she would. Her father did agitate as I said to have her released. He wrote to Cosgrave, using his influence as a very powerful businessman. I think really interesting, suggesting that he said he would manage her. Dorothy is in her early 30's at this point. She was certainly no girl, but he calls her a girl, it's very patriarchal.

NARRATION (15m20s)

To find out more, Sharon and Declan paid a visit to Elizabeth McEvoy, archivist at the National Archives where a file exists of correspondence between Dorothy's parents and the Free State authorities.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES WITH ELIZABETH MC EVOY

ELIZABETH

To summarise the contents file, its Correspondence written in an effort to have Dorothy released. Her family are horrified at the turn Dorothy's life has taken. There is an element of trying to preserve the family's name. It is important to bear in mind Dorothy is 33 when she is incarcerated and 34 when she is released. She is not a child or a young woman either. By the lights of the day, she would have been regarded as middle-aged spinster and a troublesome one (laughs) at that. The impression I got when reading the letters is that it is quite patronising and condescending. Her parents are very eager to minimise the harm or the danger that the authorities think that Dorothy poses. As a result, in the process they are undermining her agency. They are robbing her of her freedom of action, of her autonomy, of her independence to make her own decisions. But because she is in prison, she doesn't really have a choice. If she wants to get out, she is dependent on this letter writing campaign that her parents get up. But an example of the Infantilising tone that some of the letters take. Her father says that Dorothy edited 'a little paper' called *Freedom*. Even the use of the word 'little' - 'little paper', 'little woman' - 'little paper'. He says in the same letter- he says he needs to make allowances for feminine exaggeration. Now I don't think you need to be a firebrand feminist to bristle at language like that even if it's in the 1920's. I think most women would really rebel against terminology like that. Her mother wrote about 'harmless articles in a paper'. She says, 'my daughter has been foolish - she has been influenced and led astray by the woman released last week'. Now that woman is Maud Gonne MacBride. And I think her parents very much see Maud Gonne and Constance Mark. as a very bad influence on Dorothy. Now again she is

33 /34, she's not led away that easily, but I think when her mother writes - I did smile when reading her mother write, 'you don't know my daughter, she will not sign that letter, I know my girl'. So, despite their best attempts to paint Dorothy as this very gentle shrinking violet her mother knows there is no way in Hades Dorothy is going to sign that form of undertaking.

SOUND EFFECT – PRISON KEYS & DOOR OPENING

NARRATOR (18m15s) In February 1923, three months into her incarceration, Dorothy was transferred along with 45 other women from Mountjoy Gaol to Kilmainham. Nowadays a notable museum, Kilmainham had already achieved a certain sacred status by the time of the Civil War, as the place where the 1916 Leaders had been held and executed. But conditions were grim, as Curator Brian Crowley explains.

KILMAINHAM GAOL

SFX Footsteps to typical cell

BRIAN This is a very typical prison cell. She found it very oppressive initially and that is what they are designed to do. When she was here, the gaol had been used obviously after the 1916 rising briefly, but it had been closed as a criminal gaol from 1910. They use it a little but during WW1 for soldiers. They use it after the rising. They use it again during the war of independence and again it's abandoned so it's a semi abandoned building, so it has all that mustiness. She's coming from Mountjoy, a working building. it was a better functioning building. She's very scathing about conditions here when she arrives.

REHEARSAL STUDIO

DOROTHY 'It is altogether unlike our little prison hospital at Mountjoy. A long, high building, shaped like a narrow horseshoe: iron galleries, iron doors, iron staircase, iron gangway, iron grating from roof to floor - a great cage. Cells on the first gallery have been allocated to Betty and me. I felt as if I had been thrust living into a tomb: the tiny, barred window out of reach, the chill, the underground smell, like a mortuary chapel or a white sepulchre.'

KILMAINHAM GAOL

BRIAN When she came in initially, she seems to be in a ground floor cell, but she is very anxious to get an airier, brighter cell

SHARON She is very sensitive to the light -

BRIAN She writes in the diary that they are very excited the day the Matron announces that the upper floor is going to be open.

SFX of door opening

SHARON Can we get out of the cold cell? It's freezing, my fingers are getting numb! (laughing)

BRIAN (laughing) We will go up to the Elevated heights upstairs.

(Sfx Footsteps upstairs to upper gallery in East Wing)

SHARON It does feel quite heavenly up here, doesn't it?

BRIAN Yes, you're definitely up very high

SHARON Light coming through the glass...

BRIAN But you can also see why Dorothy was so excited about getting up here. They reference the names of the two cells, so one is called the *Green Flash* and the other is called *Hut 24* so those are those cells just up at the very top. She references them as well as the curve of the horseshoe, so we know exactly what two cells herself and Betty were in. Interestingly, she talks about the light, and she is very pleased because she is on the South facing part of the east wing so that is side of the wing that gets the most light and is the brightest. She is very excited by that, and it does her spirit good. But interestingly the one that's called the Green Flash, apparently there is a phenomena of the sun, it happens just at sunset and at sunrise, very rarely, you get this - the very last piece that goes green, there's a big green flash and in the 1880's there's a book by Jules Verne called the *Green Flash* and it was imbued with mystical properties that the person, if you saw that, you had truth seeing powers as a result of seeing it. I think the *Green Flash* would appeal to Dorothy's literary and affinity with the supernatural as well.

KILMAINHAM GAOL: Dorothy Macardle's Cell – 'The Green Flash'

BRIAN I suppose when we go in, you can see some of the features she described. It's built in a horseshoe shape.

SHARON She talks about a view she can see from the window (laugh). Do you mind if I climb up? She can see the Wicklow mountains from here ... oh look ... oh my goodness.

BRIAN Yeah, it's a beautiful view.

SHARON You can see the whole range... and you can hear the birds

REHEARSAL STUDIO

DOROTHY' Well! When the doors of our new "suite" were unlocked and Betty and I found ourselves in possession, each, of a wide, pure, brilliant beam of sun, it was a revival of dead hope, joy, and life beyond any words. (SFX FADE IN HERE) I climbed and looked out at one of the most beautiful views that any window of mine has ever shown. The happy suburban street; prams, trams and gay advertisement hoardings and sunlit green fields... and behind, the heart-lifting range of the Wicklow hills. It is a vision of freedom itself, in its holiest, (SFX FADE OUT HERE) its most everyday moods. Since I came in possession of that window, I have not felt like a prisoner at all.'

KILMAINHAM GAOL

SHARON She talks about the whitewashed walls and how she would love to see a bunch of daffodils on the shelf to brighten up the cell. She really made it her home from the descriptions in her diary.

BRIAN What's interesting is men and women, when they do share a cell, they develop this semi- quasi-domestic partnership. One person will do one set of chores. They also over time the women prisoners start to domesticate the space, so some of them start to make curtains out of prison blankets. What's interesting about this home-making that they are doing, in some ways it's very conventional. It is what is expected of women that they will make a domestic space but within a prison and prison architecture which aims to remove all personality its actually deeply, I think, a subversive act. To make your cell pretty and homely is complete opposite to what the people who built this gaol of the 19th century intended it to be.

REHEARSAL STUDIO

DOROTHY 'On the top shelf I have placed five books and a tall empty glass. How beautiful tulips or daffodils would look in it against the bare, white wall! There is a pot of face cream and a powder-box, relics of an almost forgotten civilisation.'

NARRATOR

Brian makes reference to Dorothy's literary sensibilities and her affinity with the supernatural. Sharon and Declan search her prison journals for evidence of Dorothy's connection to other worlds and dimensions.

REHEARSAL STUDIO

DECLAN Shall we have a look at that scene? They have been in the cell of Mary McSwiney who has been weakening. She has not yet come to the end of her Hunger strike yet, so my sense is that they step outside the cell and are on their knees as they were all the time, just constantly praying outside the cell...

SFX rosary

DOROTHY Tessie and I were both kneeling outside her door when a strange mystery happened.

TESS (whispers) Dorothy? Did you....? Someone passed. I heard a foot fall. Didn't it stop beyant on the stairs.

DOROTHY (softly) Ssshhh! (She rises and peeks in the sick woman's door.) She's wide awake in there.

TESS Who was it Dorothy? There was someone.... Like a –

DOROTHY A brotherly presence?

TESS Jeeeezis! Terence MacSwiney? Well, that's alright, like! Terence MacSwiney, here!

NARRATOR (26m10s)

Professor Luke Gibbons of NUI Maynooth discusses the supernatural in Dorothy's short story collection, *Earthbound*.

Dublin City University with Prof. Luke Gibbons

LUKE What is very intriguing about the *Earthbound* stories given they were written under duress in prison is that they raise all kinds of questions about testimony. They are full of enigmas and conundrums and unresolved issues, so that you read the story and it has come to an end because the person has stopped telling it but sometimes you are no wiser than when you began. So, what is really happening here? Did I miss something? So, you go back to read the story. But the enigma is

that unless there is an intervention from the other world, we do not know the truth. But then there's questions over whether this otherworldly intervention is actually a paranormal event or whether it is a genuinely unconscious psychoanalytical event that can be explained in material terms like a dream or whether it is a genuine intervention of the otherworld.

REHEARSAL STUDIO

SHARON She has a section in her diary called *Prison Dreams*. She writes them one after another, so she goes from one dream into the next. Here she is with her mother and Mona on a hill path. She calls it a 'land of hearts desire'

V/O WITH FX

DOROTHY' A tunnelled passage leads us into utter darkness- so steep that I cry out, "No! We shall fall backwards with every step"

SHARON It is seldom these dreams make her feel safe. She is usually escaping or being hunted or free only on parole.

V/O WITH FX

DOROTHY 'I am with Donald in London again. I catch his arm. Donald! Listen- do listen!.... Donald this is a dream! In a minute I shall wake in gaol! Donald! O Donald- the walls! The walls!'

SHARON The walls caving in on top of her... she wakes up in that dream or in that nightmare on her mattress with her hands pressed against the white wall of the cell and Donald is leagues away across the sea.

NARRATOR (28m54s)

Dorothy's gaol journals are interspersed with handwritten poems and lyrics for songs, and also passages from some of her *Earthbound* stories. In Kilmainham, Brian brings Sharon to an area of the prison where an ancient carved inscription became the inspiration for one of Dorothy's most haunting stories, *The Prisoner*.

KILMAINHAM GAOL

FX Sound of Footsteps

BRIAN *The Prisoner* is definitely seems to be set in KG. *The prisoner* centres around a man, during the war of independence who is in solitary confinement. He hallucinates due to hunger strike. He sees ghost of young man who claims to be a servant of Lord Edward Fitzgerald. There is a specific reference to the inscription in the infirmary. So, this is an inscription from 1798 carved into the windowsill by a man who was part of the United Irishmen.

SHARON *Patrick Mc Cann of the County Down - late of the city of Dublin August 14...1798 ... imprisoned...* It fades out here - it says here imprisoned- it's just lost...

BRIAN It's almost because he doesn't finish it makes it more a moment in time. Something that was started and never finished. Obviously, it is the oldest piece of graffiti in the building. It does feel like a message from the past and that would have appealed to Dorothy, that she has this little glimpse. Something very literary about it and interesting how she folds it into that short story of her own, this moment of the past in some ways. *The Prisoner* short story is the moment from the past coming into what was then the present which is now ironically is part of our past.

SHARON Do you mind if I read a couple of lines from the story? We are talking about time, and she does talk about losing a sense of time in prison

(Sharon reads from the prisoner)

I used to think that time went past outside like a stream, moving on, but in prison you are in a kind of whirlpool - time going round and round with you, so that you'd never come to anything, even death, only back again to yesterday and round to today and back to yesterday again...

NARRATOR (31m24s)

Luke Gibbons sees the ghost stories of Dorothy Macardle as pioneering and modernist, while emerging from a genre referred to as Republican Gothic.

Dublin City University

LUKE Conventional gothic in Freudian terms would be the return of the repressed. But the Republican Gothic is the Return of the oppressed, that the oppressed have not gone away and rather than being a source of terror they are a source of consolation, a source of recovery, and

indeed a source of deliverance. Remarkable in Dorothy Macardle's fiction and others but Macardle's primarily, the threat is coming from the future rather than the past. So, Macardle's fiction is full of forebodings, fascinated with what's called foreknowledge or prevision. Macardle was steeped in John William Dunne's theories of prevision, and it comes up in the dialogue in *The Unforeseen*, when someone doubts the capacity of so-called prevision to foretell the future. Time is relative to where you are standing. So, what you see in Macardle is a very advanced modernist take on notions of time and history and space. And she was in tune long before she read Dunne. Dunne was published in 1927. And the stories of *Earthbound* obviously predate that. But the stories of *Earthbound* are already preoccupied with dreams that foretell the future.

REHEARSAL STUDIO

- DOROTHY I dreamt I was going through a rejoicing crowd in Dundalk, to meet Mary MacSwiney and DeValera. The Chief had arrived alone- I saw him in a carriage driving away from the marketplace up-hill. But when the carriage was halfway up, he jumped down and began to walk back saying he would like to meet Mary MacSwiney. She appeared, stepping out of a railway carriage. I put her into a carriage and drove with her into town. It was not until we had driven some way that I remembered the Chief, walking down to meet her. I was stricken with remorse and fear. He was hunted and I had forgotten him- left him wandering in the open street, the inconsiderate unkindness of it. The dream turned into something quite different then- A ghastly vision on the roadside - a man and a boy caught in a whirligig which, gaining mad impetus before my eyes, went out of control and whirled them horribly to death.
- DECLAN I mean that dream is particularly uncanny because she is anticipating the spilt in the republican movement, as Mary MacSwiney and Dev eventually did go their separate ways.
- SHARON There is no way of knowing it at this point.
- DECLAN That sense that she is dreaming the future. And that she wonders what it means – she is troubled about it - she sees trouble ahead in the movement.

NARRATOR (34m37s)

Dorothy's days of relative calm and creativity in her new upstairs cell are short-lived. On April 30th a catastrophic event occurred. It was announced that 81 women were to be removed that evening to a temporary gaol at the North Dublin Union. The women determined to resist this forcible transfer.

Kilmainham Gaol

BRIAN Their concern about this is that there will be nobody left to look after Mary McSwiney and Mrs O' Callaghan who are both very weak on hunger strike. Mrs O Callaghan is released but Ms McSwiney is not. Part of the women's strategy is to come up to the top gallery and hunker down.

NARRATOR (35m43s)

Dorothy's diary account of this dreadful day is lost. However, an article she wrote which was smuggled out of the North Dublin Union does survive. She describes how the prisoners' linked arms and clung to the railings to resist, but the military policemen sent in to remove the women showed no mercy, applying brutal violence to force them down from the upper gallery.

SHARON The riot happened here, and they so they would have clung to these railings?

BRIAN They got up here to get as far out of reach as they could. There are descriptions of them being pulled down the stairs.

SHARON The noise must have been dreadful with the clanging of the metal...

SFX of women shouting

BRIAN Yes, the noise would have been exaggerated and echoed quite a lot.

REHEARSAL STUDIO

DOROTHY 'There was one man with a blackened face. When my own turn came, after I had been dragged from the railings, a great hand closed on my face, blinding, and stifling me, and thrust me back down to the ground among trampling feet. I heard someone who saw it scream and wondered how Miss MacSwiney would bear the noise. After that I remember being carried by two or three men and flung down in the surgery to be searched.'

SOPHIE SINGS "Siúl a Rún"

NARRATOR (37m25s)

According to her own account, Dorothy filled six notebooks with her jail journals. But only three have survived, the rest incinerated by her brother after her death in 1958. The burning

of her papers runs like a recurring nightmare through the full span of Dorothy's life and death. Malicious enemies, distressed relatives and outrageous fortune conspired, time and again, to silence her voice and erase her memory. One of the earliest entries in the surviving gaol diaries captures Dorothy at a moment of exceptional trauma. It's shortly after her arrest in November 1922. She has just received a letter from Maud Gonne McBride, telling her that Free State soldiers have desecrated her manuscripts.

REHEARSAL STUDIO

SFX The crackle of fire runs through the following clip.

V/O of MAUD GONNE MACBRIDE

'Dear Dorothy. There has been an appalling raid on Number 73. The house has been shot up. They painted skulls and cross bones on your sitting room walls with green paint. They made a bonfire in the road of all your papers and manuscripts, your plays ... even your college lectures. Some of your pupils were passing by. They were picking up fragments of your lectures on Hamlet in the street for souvenirs.

DOROTHY

Everything burnt! The people of my vanished plays- born out of my imagination, foredoomed, never to be given life.

Poor Cassandra is crying out to me from among the flames. Oh, Cassandra you were so wild and beautiful!

And Asthara! I cannot believe you dead.

And Dervorgilla, I am sure that she is gone.

My Rhythm Book: eight years of theory and quotations. All my work, I had published nothing - my poetry is all over now.'

NARRATOR (39m434s)

"My poetry is all over now!" the anguished cry of a wounded artist, grieving the loss of her life's work; a true moment of despair. But Dorothy may have underestimated her own resilience. Far from over, her literary strength returned, and her work took on an extraordinary new shape and vision. "Earthbound" signalled a new departure in Dorothy's literary writing; the dawn of her emergence as a major Gothic Horror author whose work would eventually take her to the heights of Hollywood acclaim. And while it is true that many of her personal papers and literary manuscripts are lost forever, she might have taken comfort from the efforts of modern historians, archivists, scholars, feminist publishing houses and diverse artists to retrieve her legacy and surviving work. On September 22nd, 2022, a group of those scholars and activists assembled at Kilmainham Gaol, in the Inner Hall where Dorothy would have been led on arrival at that grim prison, 100 years earlier.

FX of crowd murmuring begins here

They were there to attend a unique event.

---- (Cut away here to Declan intro and Sharon performing live at Kilmainham) ----

NARRATOR

The audience watched intently as the testimony and dreams of Dorothy Macardle were brought to vivid life through Sharon's speaking and movement. The recorded soundtrack resonated with the imagined rattles and shouts of Kilmainham a century earlier: the metal banging, slamming doors, the pained weeping and laughter of the women among whom Dorothy lived. And the old stone building re-echoed to one sound in particular, "The Beacon Song", given a haunting rendition by folk-singer Sophie Coyle. It was the first time the song was sung in a hundred years. Written to comfort and cheer her fellow prisoners, and found among her Prison Notebooks, it was composed by none other than the artist, revolutionary and visionary Dorothy Macardle.

SOPHIE SINGS The Beacon Song

THE END