

# Charlie & Nora

(One-act play & two short film scripts)

Tina O'Rourke



# **Charlie & Nora**

Tina O'Rourke

A character study in one-act and two short film scripts

## **Clockworkarts Publications**

Published by Clockworkarts Publishing  
Galway, Ireland.  
[www.clockworkarts.net](http://www.clockworkarts.net)

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Published with the assistance of the  
Arts Office,  
Galway County Council.

Cover photograph  
Chris Monaghan & Adriana Taheny  
by Jamie Howard.

ISBN 0-9553383-2-8  
978-0-9553383-2-8

## **Dedication**

For Margaret Fitzpatrick  
always remembered & sadly missed.



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## **Charlie & Nora**

First presented in Ireland at the Town Hall Theatre,  
Galway on the 7th June 1999  
with the following cast:

Charlie	Gerry Considine
Nora	Bernie Guinane

Producer	Alan Fitzpatrick
Director	Tina O'Rourke

### **CHARACTERS**

Charlie  
Nora

Scene: The action takes place in an  
inner city park late in the evening.





*There is an old wooden bench centre stage. Next to the bench is a tall streetlight. It is the middle of the night and the light from the streetlight diffuses a soft warm glow on the bench. It is an overcast night, but dry and not too cold. In the distance the sound of an active city hums in the background.*

*For the first thirty seconds the sound is loud, then over the following thirty seconds it starts to fade out until it is a slight hum in the background. Then for a further thirty seconds we can only hear the hum of the city in the far off distance and the silence surrounding the bench. Suddenly there is the sound of a couple laughing heartily from stage left.*

Charlie            'O' she doth teach the torches to burn bright! Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of the night'.

*Enter Charlie and Nora from stage left. They are both in their mid fifties. Charlie is wearing a long overcoat and his hair is neatly combed into a side parting. He is neat and carries himself well. Nora is dressed in an eclectic and eccentric manner. She wears all her hair up under a large floppy peaked hat and carries a large brown bag. It has the look of a bag that contains a woman's life.*

Nora              And you say he has only just met her!

Charlie           'fraid so.

Nora              Foolish, foolish boy. Sure it will never work.

Charlie           Will you stop trying to jump ahead in my story? Now, where was I?

Nora              Night.

Charlie           Oh yes, I remember now, he waffles a bit more about the same stuff and then says, 'did my heart love till now? Foreswear it, sight! For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night'.

Nora              See I told you.

Charlie           What?

*Charlie makes an elaborate seating gesture towards Nora.*

Charlie            Well your ladyship, shall we sit?

Nora                I don't see why not!

*Nora sits down first and places her bag on her lap. Charlie straightens his coat and sits down next to her. They sit in silence for a few seconds. Charlie is breathing in and out serenely. Nora is looking around slowly at the view. There isn't much to see so she gets bored pretty quickly.*

Nora                So, aren't you going to finish the story? (*Looking at Nora*)

Nora                (*Smiling*) Aren't you?

Charlie            Would you like me to?

Nora                Of course I would.

Charlie            Are you sure it's not really because you're bored?

Nora                I'm not bored, not at all. (*Lying*)

Charlie            Mmh, I thought so. 'For tis in vain to seek him here that means not to be found'.

Nora                What nonsense is that?

Charlie            'He jests at scars that never felt a wound'.

Nora                Look now, stop this nonsense and continue with the story.

Charlie            I am.

Nora                Well, I never heard anyone speak those lines in the film.

Charlie            What film?

Nora                The film of the story you are telling me.

Charlie But I thought you didn't know the story?

Nora Arra sure I do!

Charlie But all of those lines that I've quoted are in the play, even the ones I said earlier. I thought you knew I was telling you about a play.

Nora No... Sure I was only humouring you back then.

Charlie Humouring me?

Nora Sure I thought you had made them up. I didn't know there was a play based on the film.

Charlie (*frowns*) The film is based on the play.

Nora So you know the film.

Charlie Of course I do, everyone knows Westside Story is based on Romeo and Juliet.

Nora Really?

Charlie Yes, really.

*Charlie straightens himself up and sits stiffly. There is a short silence.*

Nora But sure I think your words are far more romantic than the ones in the film.

Charlie Do you think so?

Nora Positively.

Charlie There is only one problem.

Nora And what's that?

Charlie They're not my words.

Nora No?

Charlie Afraid so, they're Shakespeare's.

Nora Arra get away outa that.

Charlie No, it's true.

Nora He sounds like he's a right romantic auld chap.

Charlie So you like his words then?

Nora Arra sure, I do.

Charlie Oh, that's just great Nora.

Nora Now mind you though, I still think he's foolish. Falling for a young one and all he has done has seen her.

Charlie But that's the romance of it.

Nora That's the stupidity of it.

Charlie But...

Nora And as I have said, it will all come to wrong in the end. I've seen the film and I know. All that because of a pretty looking girl.

Charlie But Nora, it's only a story.

Nora Sure I know that, but what else do I have to get excited about?

Charlie I know, but you know while you're here you are lady over all you can see.

Nora Charlie, there's not a lot for seeing here.

Charlie Oh, but there is.

Nora It's just a cold bench, in a cold park, on a winter's night.

Charlie It may be that, but to me it is something far more.

Nora How Charlie?

Charlie Did you know I was born near here?

Nora            No, I thought you were from out the country.

Charlie         That's true, but I started here.

Nora            I started here myself, not that it's much to talk about.

Charlie         I know the feeling.

*Silence.*

Charlie         I still haven't explained to you why I call this my silent place.

Nora            You will.

*Charlie stands up and walks over to the streetlight. He looks up into the light and as he does it flickers.*

Charlie         (*He points to the light*) that's what they are like - my memories.

Nora            (*Amused*) like a streetlight?

Charlie         No, like flickers of light; a slow motion film in segments.

Nora            Segments?

Charlie         Pieces, sections, small bits, but never the complete picture.

Nora            It takes other people to make up the full picture, you know.

Charlie         Only too well.

Nora            So, what are these memories like?

Charlie         Like I've said, like parts of old films, you know silent films.

Nora            Is that why you call this your silent place?

Charlie I wish, no, I may not be able to hear in my memories but I sure as hell can feel. There is no silence where volcanoes erupt.

Nora How do you mean?

Charlie Memories hurt, even silent ones.

Nora Not all memories are bad Charlie.

*Charlie smiles at Nora and sits back down. Nora starts to root through her bag. After rummaging for a bit she pulls out a photograph.*

Nora See. *(She shows the photograph to Charlie)* I remember when he was born.

Charlie Who is he?

Nora My grandson.

Charlie You're not a grandmother?

Nora I am.

Charlie Nora, you astound me.

Nora I was very happy when he was born. He is such a lovely little chap.

Charlie *(Taking the photograph)* How old is he?

Nora He's two, just gone, born on the 14th October.

Charlie Almost a Halloween baby.

Nora Almost.

Charlie So what's it like to be a grandmother? *(He hands her back the photograph)*

Nora Normal, the only thing that's different is, I can't run after him all that quick. It makes me realise how old I've gotten.

Charlie        You're not old Nora.

Nora            No, just a bit creaky.

*Charlie laughs.*

Nora            The only thing that's strange is my baby having a baby.

Charlie        Is it your daughter's child?

Nora            Oh no, she's not interested in babies at all; he's my son's baby.

Charlie        (*Joking*) Oh, a bit of a mammy's boy is he?

Nora            No, not at all.

Charlie        I bet you still cook some dinners for him.

Nora            No I don't. Only the odd time. Well, I have to now.

Charlie        Why?

Nora            He's by himself and he works a lot.

Charlie        Oh.

Nora            Oh, it's not bad, it just didn't work out.

Charlie        Married were they?

Nora            Not at all, sure you know the young ones of today.

Charlie        I do.

Nora            You'd never have had that in our time.

Charlie        Yes you did.

Nora            Not the way I was raised, you didn't.

Charlie        You even had it in our parents' time, Nora.

Nora            Well, I wouldn't know about that.



Charlie I do. My father made off when I was a baby, and my mother couldn't cope so I went to live with me aunt. That's why everyone thought I was from the country. I was born right next door to the house I live in now. Just like the Salmon I say, we will always come back to the place of our birth. Nora, am I boring you?

Nora No.

Charlie Is there anything wrong?

Nora I think we had best be getting home.

Charlie So soon?

Nora I'm cold.

*Charlie starts to undo his overcoat.*

Charlie Well, you can have my overcoat if you like.

Nora No, we must go now.

Charlie Listen Nora, what is wrong?

Nora (*Angrily*) Nothing, just nothing.

*Silence.*

Nora Well they were married, weren't they?

Charlie Who?

Nora Your parents.

Charlie Yes, but...

Nora See, it didn't happen back then.

Charlie But, Nora it's just as bad if your parents were married or not.

Nora            No, it isn't.

Charlie        Don't be silly Nora, being without your parents, whether they were married or not, is tough on any child.

Nora            I'm not being silly.

*Nora gets up to leave.*

Charlie        Why do you have to be so embarrassed that your son isn't married?

Nora            I'm not.

Charlie        Yes you are.

Nora            No Charlie, I'm embarrassed because my mum wasn't married.

*Nora sits back down on the bench and Charlie walks to the side of the bench. Silence.*

Charlie        I'm sorry.

Nora            It's ok, it's out now.

Charlie        I didn't mean to.

Nora            I know.

Charlie        You know you don't have to be embarrassed.

Nora            Oh yes Charlie, I do.

Charlie        Nora, I remember how it felt when I was a child, not having any parents around. Me aunt was great, but...

Nora            But still she was family Charlie.

Charlie        I know that, look Nora what can I say?

Nora            Nothing Charlie, nothing.

*Silence.*

Nora            Do you know what the word illegitimate means?

Charlie        Yes, I do know what it means. Why?

Nora            No Charlie, do you really know what it means?

Charlie        Born outside of wedlock, but that doesn't really matter any more, it never really mattered.

Nora            Jesus Charlie, yes it did.

*Charlie looks at Nora. He takes her hand in his.*

Charlie        Nora?

Nora            What Charlie?

Charlie        You know it doesn't matter to me.

Nora            But that's just it Charlie, it doesn't matter to you, it matters to me.

*Nora slowly takes her hand back out of Charlie's hand. Silence.*

Nora            You know, I used to have to mind all the babies as they arrived.  
It's what the nuns thought I was good at.

Charlie        Nuns Nora? Where you in a convent?

Nora            No Charlie, an orphanage run by nuns.

Charlie        Oh!

*Silence.*

Nora            Now do you understand Charlie?

Charlie            Sometimes Nora I'm just really stupid, all the sight in the world and I can't see what's under my nose.

Nora                Not an awful lot of people can.

*Nora smiles.*

Charlie            I suppose Shakespeare doesn't get us very far out here.

Nora                No Charlie, not out here.

*Charlie smiles at Nora. Silence.*

Nora                Now you see, it's not my son, it's me. Still you're right though, it would have been nice if he was married.

Charlie            Do you think so?

Nora                Well, it's a bit selfish but I'd have liked to have seen them have the big wedding, you know the white dress and everything.

Charlie            Yes, but now they'd be getting divorced.

Nora                Oh, yea, I don't know much how I'd feel about that.

Charlie            Lack of thought and commitment is how I feel about it.

Nora                There wasn't much thought in our day either Charlie. It was just the done thing.

Charlie            (*Wistfully*) Yea.

*Silence.*

Charlie            So tell me, does it really bother you that much today?

Nora                What?

Charlie            Being brought up in an orphanage.

Nora                Yea, it does you know. It's not so much that people care today, particularly not with how everything is opening up with the church. It's funny, they now think we're the victims, but we didn't know any different at the time. People don't really understand the stigma attached to us back then, but once you've felt it you will always carry it (*taps at her heart*) in here.

Charlie            Is it that bad?

Nora                Not really Charlie, It's just a way of life and you learn to live with it and try your best to avoid talking about the subject.

Charlie            Not succeeding very well are you?

Nora                (*Smiles*) No. You know I never really spoke about it, not until I had me own kids. Then you couldn't stop me. The kids loved to hear stories about the nuns and all the mischief I used to get up to. It was like I'd take them on a great adventure every time I told them a story.

Charlie            Their heroine.

Nora                Oh, I don't know about that, more like their own Oliver Twist. The one they loved to hear the most was how I used to sneak down to the pantry and hide in one of the presses that was stuffed with homemade jam. Oh, I used to love the homemade jam, it was the closest thing we had to sweets at the time. I'd just sit there and eat and eat. I had only done this a few times, particularly on Sundays because it was quiet and you didn't have any chores, when I got caught. 'Nora' she said, she frightened the life out of me, and I knew I was for it. The punishment back then, if you did anything bold, was to cut all you hair off, and they always had a scissors handy deep in the pockets of their big black habits. Well I decided I was having none of it, I hadn't been caught for being bad for quite a while so my hair was pretty long. I also knew the nuns couldn't run very fast in their long frocks so I jumped out of the press, ducked underneath her and ran out the door. She turned like a

Nora  
(cont.) devil and started to run after me, but she just kept sliding on the shiny wooden floor, the one we had to polish every week. I had just reached the top of the staircase as she was almost about to catch me, but she missed and went flying down the stairs. But as luck has it she was ok. The only thing that happened was the scissors went into her knee. Serves them right for carrying their scissors in their long pockets.

Charlie And was she ok?

Nora She was fine; she just had a bit of a limp.

Charlie And what about you?

Nora They cut off my hair, I didn't tell the children that bit, but that was their favourite story now for ya. I actually used to enjoy telling them the story, I can still see the excitement in their eyes, and it was funny when they used to run around the house one pretending to be me and the other the nun. Kids are so funny at times.

Charlie I'd love to have had kids.

Nora Yea, kids are great.

Charlie (*Sadly*) Yea.

Nora They also got to meet their Grandmother.

Charlie So you knew your mother.

Nora I suppose you could say that. I met her once when I was a child, on my first communion and then when you reached sixteen you went and joined your mother in the laundry. I wouldn't even speak to her then, I hated her so much. But then again I suppose you mellow as you get older, then after I had my kids I saw her a couple of times before she died and every thing was ok. My last memory is of her wearing old plastic bags over her boots, it was snowing you see and it was to keep them dry, she gave the kids an old ten pence each and I gave her a hug good bye. I never saw her again.

Charlie            I never saw my mother, she went insane after my father left her and she killed herself. My aunt never spoke about her.

*Nora looks at Charlie.*

Nora              I'm sorry Charlie, I'm really, really sorry.

Charlie            Me too.

*Charlie stands up and walks over to the streetlight. Silence.*

Charlie            You know, you should have told me you knew the story I was telling you.

*Nora looks at him puzzled.*

Charlie            You know, Romeo and Juliet.

Nora              (*Joking*) Arra sure, I had to let you have something to talk about.

Charlie            (*Smiles*) Sure.

*They smile at each other; Nora gets up and walks over to the streetlight. She stares up at it.*

Nora              So Charlie, why do you find this streetlight so interesting?

Charlie            You know, I'm not sure.

Nora              Arra, go on outa that, you don't get to our age without knowing why we do things.

Charlie            Some people do.

Nora              You're not just some people though, are you Charlie?

Charlie            Neither are you Nora. You know, there is one thing I do see when I stand here and look up, but it's not a memory; it's more of a dream.

Nora                Well?

Charlie            I'm not so sure I should tell you.

Nora                After all I just told you. (*Joking*) The cheek of ya.

Charlie            Well, I suppose I should tell you then.

Nora                No supposing in it.

Charlie            As long as you promise not to laugh or say I'm silly

Nora                Of course I won't.

Charlie            Promise.

Nora                I promise.

Charlie            Are you sure?

Nora                Positively.

Charlie            Ok then, you see when I was a teenager I never really fitted in. You know, the awkward stage, well my awkward stage lasted most of my life and when I used to go to dances.

Nora                Dances?

Charlie            Yes dances, you know the ballroom of romance type of thing.

Nora                Oh, I know them all right Charlie.

Charlie            Didn't you go to them?

Nora                Once or twice.

Charlie            Is that all? You weren't still in the laundry then?

Nora                Oh no, I was out in the early sixties.



Charlie            So, how come you only went once or twice?

Nora                Well, I went to England.

Charlie            Straight away?

Nora                Oh no, after a couple of years.

Charlie            Didn't you go out?

Nora                Oh yes, I liked going out.

Charlie            So how come you didn't go to the dances?

Nora                Well, you know the stories, don't you Charlie?

Charlie            No.

Nora                You know, about the girl in Sea point, and it wasn't just there it was all across the country.

Charlie            What Nora?

Nora                Well you see, there was this young girl who was asked to dance by this handsome gentleman, so she said yes and they spent the entire evening dancing. All of her friends were jealous of her, and just as the evening was about to finish he bent over to give her a kiss, she was a shy sort of a girl so she tilted her head down, and just as she did, didn't she notice that the man she was dancing with had no feet, only two big black hoofs. So that's why I didn't go to many dances, I was too afraid to dance with anyone. You know they said it was the devil.

Charlie            Ah Nora, you didn't really believe that?

Nora                I did at the time Charlie.

Charlie            Well, maybe that's why no one danced with me.

Nora                Ah, don't be silly Charlie. The only thing I can't believe is that you never heard the story.

Charlie            Oh, I did, it's just I never paid much attention to it. It was just a story the church cooked up.

Nora            You must have been brave then Charlie.

Charlie        No, just different.

Nora            So are you ever going to tell me?

Charlie        What?

Nora            About your dream.

Charlie        Oh yes, you see I used to go to the dances but I never actually had the courage to ask any one out so before I got there I used to imagine I was... now promise you won't laugh.

Nora            I won't. So who?

Charlie        Dean Martin.

*Nora has to hold in a giggle.*

Charlie        See I told you.

Nora            I'm not laughing Charlie. (*Trying to hold it in*)

Charlie        No, but you want to.

Nora            I don't, I don't, it's just, well...

*Charlie looks at her.*

Nora            All the other boys wanted, was to get a kiss and a cuddle of us girls and all you wanted to do was croon to your girl.

Charlie        All I wanted to do was have a dance.

Nora            Yes, but you have to admit it Dean Martin did a lot more crooning than necking in his films.

Charlie        Maybe.

Nora Charlie what's this leading to?

Charlie Well, I suppose it was the long way round to ask you. But, what I'd like to say is, will you dance with me Nora?

Nora Dance with you?

Charlie Yes.

Nora Where?

Charlie Here?

Nora Oh no.

Charlie Why?

Nora Because we're outside.

Charlie If you mean, it's because people will see us, well they won't because there is no one around.

Nora Oh, I don't know Charlie.

Charlie You can even check my feet first.

Nora I won't need to do that now, will I?

Charlie Well?

Nora I can't really dance with out music.

Charlie But we have music Nora.

Nora Where?

Charlie It's all around us.

Nora All I can hear is the city in the distance.

Charlie It's there too, but you have to listen carefully.

Nora Ah Charlie, don't be silly.

Charlie See I told you, you'd say I was silly.

Nora But this is silly.

Charlie You'll be breaking your promise if you don't at least give me a chance to show you.

Nora You tricked me.

Charlie No I didn't, I just want to share something with you.

Nora Ok, what do I have to do?

Charlie Nothing, the sound will find you when you stop looking for it.

Nora I don't understand what you mean.

Charlie Ok, we'll make it easier, just sit down comfortably. *(Nora sits and Charlie sits next to her)* Now close your eyes. *(Charlie runs his hands over her eyes to close them)* and listen to the silence.

*Nora opens her eyes and looks at Charlie.*

Nora I can't hear anything Charlie.

Charlie I know Nora, but you will, trust me.

Nora Ok, but it's easier to listen to the sound of the city.

Charlie Well listen to it then.

*Nora closes her eyes again. Charlie takes hold of her hand and bends over to whispers something in her ear. Nora smiles and suddenly we can hear the faint hum of music coming from the city. Charlie holds Nora's hands tightly. The music starts to increase until it fills the stage and the city sounds have disappeared. Nora opens her eyes and looks excitedly at Charlie.*

Nora Charlie, I can...

*Charlie puts his finger to her lips and then stands up. He gestures*

*for her to dance with him. Nora holds her head coyly and holds out her hand. They dance together under the streetlight. Charlie holds her head delicately. Nora has her head on his shoulder. They dance for a while and then Nora raises her head and kisses Charlie on the cheek. This startles Charlie and he jumps back. The music stops and the sound of the city in the distance can be heard again. Nora stands looking at Charlie.*

Charlie            I'm sorry.

Nora                I didn't mean to...

Charlie            It's ok.

Nora                I'm a free woman you know Charlie.

Charlie            Look you're not, and for Christ sake will you stop saying my name.

Nora                I'm not Charlie.

Charlie            Yes you are. *(He turns away from her)* Why do you have to keep saying my name? *(Angrily)*

*Nora turns away shocked, puts her head in her hands and starts to cry.*

Charlie            *(Turns to face Nora)* Oh Nora, don't do this to me, just don't do this to me.

Nora                *(Annoyed)* Do what Charlie? Show you some affection and talk to you? Is there something wrong with that Charlie? What's so wrong with it Charlie? You're just like him. No, you're worse you open all the right doors and then slam them in my face. Why do you do that Charlie? Why?

*Charlie sits down.*

Charlie            Please stop saying my name.

Nora            How can I?

Charlie        I hate my name Nora; you don't know how much I hate it.

Nora            Why did you bring me here?

Charlie        To talk to you Nora.

Nora            But why?

Charlie        Because I care about you.

Nora            But Charlie I care about you, that's all I was showing you.

Charlie        I don't want to know it that way Nora.

Nora            Why Charlie? I don't understand.

Charlie        Because that's the way it is.

Nora            That's just what he says, that's the way it is, so you just have to accept it. I don't want to accept it, not anymore. I do love him you know, Charlie.

Charlie        I know you do Nora.

Nora            Then you know how hard it is for me to be here with you.

Charlie        But Nora I didn't mean it that way.

Nora            Well what way did you mean it?

*No answer.*

Nora            (*Angrily*) Charlie, what way did you mean it?

*No answer.*

Nora            You see you are the same, when it comes to the

Nora (cont.) crunch you ignore me. The same way he does. Just sits in the couch and ignores me. All I want to do is have him talk to me. That's all, it's not much.

Charlie I'm not the same as your husband Nora.

Nora Oh, so now you're listening to me.

Charlie I never stopped listening to you.

Nora No?

Charlie No Nora, I haven't. But there is one thing I have to know.

Nora What?

Charlie That's it Nora, what? What do you want?

Nora I just want to be happy; my life has been bad enough without knowing it is going to be the same when I'm old.

Charlie I know that Nora, but what is it you really want?

Nora Peace Charlie, that's all I want, is some peace. You know, to be able to sit in the sitting room watching television, not being ignored. To have someone to go for walks with me and the odd time to go to the pub for a drink.

Charlie And?

Nora And maybe the odd hug now and then.

Charlie You know Nora that's not a lot to ask for.

Nora I know Charlie.

*Silence.*

Nora We get on, don't we Charlie?

Charlie I'd like to think so.

Nora            Then why can't...?

Charlie        No Nora.

Nora            Is it because I'm married?

Charlie        No.

Nora            You know I'm not happy there. You know that Charlie don't you?

Charlie        I do.

Nora            You know, Charlie I can move with the times, I see all the young ones today, when they're not happy they can leave. No one says anything today. People would understand. No one would be mad at you being with a married woman.

Charlie        That's not the point Nora.

Nora            But it is Charlie, you even said it yourself earlier, it doesn't matter to day. It did matter but it doesn't matter any more.

Charlie        I don't want us to be that way Nora.

Nora            All I want is for us to care for each other.

Charlie        I want that too, but it can't be the way you want it to be.

Nora            Why Charlie?

Charlie        Because that's the way it is.

Nora            Is it Charlie, is that the way it really is?

Charlie        Yes.

Nora            Is that why you never married Charlie?

Charlie        What?

Nora            Because you couldn't commit.



Charlie No.

Nora You know that's what they say about you.

Charlie Who?

Nora Our group that meets.

Charlie What group?

Nora The bingo group.

Charlie What do they say Nora?

Nora That you lead women up the garden path and then you run away from them when it gets too serious.

Charlie That's not true.

Nora It is from where I'm standing Charlie. They warned me not to meet you for a drink, 'don't trust him' they said. But I thought you had such a nice face Charlie. I didn't believe them, but now I know I was wrong.

Charlie Nora, please let me explain.

Nora Why should I?

Charlie All I want is for you to be my friend.

Nora And that's it?

Charlie Yes that's it. A friend.

Nora You see I was right, you can't commit.

Charlie But I can, I can commit to being your friend.

Nora What sort of nonsense is that?

Charlie It's not nonsense.

Nora It is with the way you talk, saying that you would have liked to have had children.

Charlie But I would have liked to have had children.

Nora            How could you have had Charlie? You couldn't commit to anyone long enough. I'd even wonder if you could commit to your children.

Charlie        Nora, please don't say that.

Nora            What? That you couldn't have cared for your children if you'd have had any.

Charlie        How could you be so cruel Nora?

Nora            I'm not the one being cruel here Charlie.

Charlie        Yes you are.

Nora            Oh, I've had enough of this. I'm leaving, goodbye Charlie.

Charlie        Nora, please don't go.

Nora            No Charlie, good-bye.

*Nora starts to walk away. Charlie stands up trying to contain what he has to say.*

Charlie        (*Shouts*) Nora please. (*No answer.*) You don't understand. (*No answer.*) I'm gay.

*Nora stands still. Silence. Nora turns around and walks back over to the bench slowly. She sits down. All the time Charlie is looking at her intently for some sort of a reaction, but there is none. Nora then looks up at him.*

Nora            I don't understand.

*Charlie sits down next to her. Nora moves away from him slightly.*

Charlie        I'm gay.

Nora            No, not about that, about all of this.

Charlie            Now, I don't understand.

Nora                This game you're playing with me.

Charlie            I was never playing a game with you.

Nora                Yes you were, you were never interested in me.

Charlie            But, Nora I am interested in you.

Nora                How could you be, you just told me you're... (*She nods at him*)

Charlie            I am gay, but that doesn't mean I can't like you, Nora.

Nora                Oh, yes it does.

*Nora pulls her bag in closer to her and sits very stiffly.*

Charlie            You're uncomfortable.

Nora                No, I'm not.

Charlie            Look Nora, I can tell by the way you are sitting.

Nora                It's just I've never been around anyone like that.

Charlie            Like what?

Nora                You.

Charlie            I'm still me.

Nora                No, you're not.

Charlie            How am I different Nora?

Nora                Well, you're not the same person that I knew.

Charlie            So who is the person that you knew?

Nora                Well he was polite.

Charlie            Same.

Nora            Kind.

Charlie        Same.

Nora            Interesting.

Charlie        Same.

Nora            (*Annoyed*) Good at listening.

Charlie        Same.

Nora            (*Angrily*) No, you're not.

Charlie        Yes I am, and I've just discovered that you're the same.

Nora            Of course I am.

Charlie        Yes, the same as all of the other self-centred, bigoted people I know.

Nora            I am not.

Charlie        Oh, yes you are. You were only interested in me because I listened to you.

Nora            That's not true.

Charlie        Then, why was it? Because maybe we could have become intimate and then you would have an excuse to leave your husband?

Nora            How dare you!

Charlie        No Nora, how dare you.

Nora            What?

Charlie        How dare you only like me when it's convenient to you!

*Nora looks at him stunned.*

Charlie        How dare you expect me to listen to all your stories and accept them when you won't accept mine?

*Nora stands up to walk away.*

Charlie            But most of all, how dare you to expect me to care for you unconditionally when you won't for me.

Nora                *(Angrily)* I don't expect you to care for me.

Charlie            *(Angrily)* Then what do you expect.

Nora                *(Angrily)* All I really wanted, was for us to be friends.

*They both stop still and look at each other. Silence. Nora sits back down deep in thought and Charlie walks over to the streetlight.*

Charlie            That's all I wanted.

Nora                I know. I haven't really been fair have I?

Charlie            No, not really, but you know...

Nora                Please... It's just... Well, you see, I'm a bit afraid.

Charlie            Of what?

Nora                You... No... Of what you are.

Charlie            Nora, I'm afraid too. Afraid that people won't accept me for who I am. Of being lonely for the rest of my life. Of waking up every morning and wondering if people are going to be able to see who I really am and not being given a chance to defend myself.

Nora                You mean no one knows?

Charlie            No.

Nora                Why not?

Charlie            Well, look at the way you just reacted.

Nora                Not your family, your Aunt, no one.

Charlie            No, no one except you.

Nora But Charlie, it's the done thing today I see it on the T.V. all the time.

Charlie But, it wasn't when I was younger Nora. You even said that about yourself earlier.

Nora It's not really the same though is it?

Charlie I suppose, but the stigma is the same, Nora.

Nora Well, then why didn't you leave? Even I left Charlie.

Charlie I did try to Nora. I remember I used to walk into the nearest town with my friends as they slowly but surely trickled out of the village and onto England. Each time I went to say good bye to someone, I kept trying to convince myself I'd be next, but no.

Nora Why?

Charlie Because of my Aunt.

Nora Your Aunt?

Charlie I couldn't leave her, I was her family. The only reason she had taken me in was because she had none of her own.

Nora She never married.

Charlie Oh, she did, but he was much older than her and it was more of a marriage of convenience, but when she never, shall we say fulfilled her part of the bargain, the convenience went out of it.

Nora It must have been rough on her.

Charlie It was, but then as she used to say, she had Charlie, her little boy Charlie. It just didn't matter how big her little boy got.

Nora So you just stayed behind and watched all your friends leave.

Charlie Yes.

Nora            That must have been hard on you.

Charlie        I got used to it.

Nora            Yes Charlie, like I got used to it, but that didn't mean, I didn't hate it.

Charlie        Good God, no Nora, I hated every minute of it, but it never finished. She had to know where I was all the time, just in case she needed help with something, and as she got older it got worse.

Nora            Charlie?

*He stops and looks at her.*

Nora            Well, I hope this doesn't sound silly, but if you never went away, or from the sounds of things met many people how do you know you are...

Charlie        Gay.

*Nora tries to say it.*

Charlie        It's ok, it's not catching you can say it.

Nora            Gay.

Charlie        I didn't really know when I was young, but what I did know was that I wasn't very interested in girls. At the time though I thought it might be because I was resentful towards my Aunt. So I tried, there was this girl that lived about a mile from us, her name was Mary, she was so pretty, little soft pink lips and long blonde hair. Everyone thought she was the prettiest girl around, I even have to admit I was mesmerised by her. So we courted for a while, all the lads were jealous and complained about how lucky I was. The funny thing was that I didn't feel as lucky as everyone thought I was. She wasn't much for talking and I wasn't much for necking. She got fed up with me after a while dumped me and never spoke to me again.

Nora But, that doesn't mean you're gay if you don't fancy one girl, maybe you should have seen others.

Charlie No Nora, it was after her I discovered. You see this boy, well he was sixteen at the time a year older than me, came to our village. He had been sent to stay with his cousins for the summer. I can remember the day I first saw him as clearly as if it was yesterday. I was driving the cattle home from the field, when there he was; sitting on one of the old stonewalls. He was sketching one of the trees in the field. I had never seen anyone so beautiful. His skin was so dark against his white shirt, the type we only ever wore to mass, and he had thick shiny black hair that fell cheekily in to his eyes. As I passed him, he looked up, nodded at me and my heart missed a beat. That was when I knew.

Nora You'd fallen in love.

Charlie Love at first sight.

Nora Did he feel the same way about you?

Charlie That was too much to wish for, or so I thought. I spent the entire summer trying to make up any excuse to pass the house he was staying in, but there was no sign of him, until one day when I had almost given up all hope, I saw him again in the same place we had first met. By this time I had given up hope and put all foolish ideas of anything happening out of my head. I was even embarrassed by my thoughts, which made me blush bright red as I approached him. But just as I got there he jumped off the wall and smiled at me. It was then I saw his eyes and knew he had to have felt the same way.

Nora So what happened?

Charlie He asked me to meet him as he was returning to England the following day. I told him it was difficult for me to get away, so he said he'd follow me back to my home and wait in the barn until all of my chores were done. That day everything seemed to take so long to do, but they had to be done well or my Aunt would be calling for me. Eventually, I got there; he was sitting in amongst the bails of straw,



Charlie (cont.) reading, when I arrived. He told me he had seen me all summer passing by his house but didn't have the courage to talk to me. He was afraid that he had imagined the feeling and that I could end up boxing him. As he spoke all I could do was look at his perfect lips as they moved around each word. He then became silent, we looked at each other and finally I raised the courage to touch him. I lifted my finger to his lips and then suddenly she started to call. 'Charlie, Charlie me boy, you know I need you Charlie'. He was so startled by her that he just ran away.

Nora Did you ever see him again?

Charlie No. And that's why I hate my name being said.

Nora Oh, I see.

Charlie There is one consolation though.

Nora Where?

Charlie As he ran away he forgot to take the book he was reading with him. When I found it, I felt like there was some hope. Then for the next thirty years I sat in the barn every evening and read it over and over again.

Nora What was the book?

Charlie (*Smiling*) Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare.

Nora So that's why you like Shakespeare.

Charlie Yes, and I have a confession to make to you.

Nora Well?

Charlie I've never read any of his other plays; actually the only book I have ever read was that one.

Nora Now, I'm not so surprised about that, Charlie.

Charlie No?

Nora No. The thing I am most surprised about is how you stayed sane and had all this tied up in your heart.

Charlie For a while, I convinced myself that I would be able to go to England one day and find him. But as the years went by the dream just grew fainter. Then as my Aunt grew sicker I had more and more to do, so I tried not to think about it.

Nora So when did you eventually leave the farm and move here?

Charlie Five years ago.

Nora Oh, Charlie.

Charlie And I'm still looking after my Aunt.

Nora You mean she's not dead.

Charlie Goodness no, you can't kill a bad thing all that quickly. She had to have her leg amputated, gangrene had gotten into it, so she moved to an old folks' home. It's nearby; I go and visit her most days.

Nora You know Charlie, I'm really sorry about earlier.

Charlie It's ok.

Nora I just didn't know how to react, and what's really silly is I reacted to you like I was afraid people would react to me if they found out I was illegitimate. I suppose we all have our own crosses to bear.

Charlie It's just life Nora, that's all it is.

Nora I don't know how you can feel all right about it all.

Charlie I don't Nora, that's why I come here.

Nora Your silent place.

Charlie Precisely.

Nora I still don't quite understand though.

Charlie As I've said you will, you're almost there.

Nora Well, what do I have to do?

Charlie            Just sit back and relax.

*Nora sits back and she looks very relaxed. Charlie sits next to her. Silence. The sound of the city in the background slowly disappears.*

Nora              You know Charlie; this is the first time in years that I have felt this relaxed.

Charlie          I felt that too when I found it.

Nora              What?

Charlie          The silent spaces between the memories.

Nora              You're right, I'm not thinking about the past or what I have to do tomorrow, I'm just enjoying being here with you.

Charlie          I'm glad.

*Nora slides her hand over to touch Charlie's hand.*

Nora              Thank you.

*She grabs his hand and squeezes it affectionately.*

Charlie          No, thank you Nora.

Nora              What for?

Charlie          Staying and listening.

Nora              You know Charlie; I do feel like a lady here. I'm the lady over my entire life.

*Charlie smiles.*

Charlie          We never finished that dance, did we?

Nora            No.

*Charlie stands up and gestures towards Nora.*

Charlie        Well, my lady would you like to dance?

Nora            It would be a pleasure my lord.

*They start to dance slowly. The music fades up.*

Charlie        Friends?

Nora            Friends.

*They start to laugh. Lights and music fades out slowly.*



Still from 'Charlie & Nora'  
Gerry Considine as Charlie & Bernie Guinane as Nora  
Photo Jamie Howard

## **Charlie Boy**

Short film  
(Short-listed for the GFC/RTE Script Award)



## **CHARACTERS**

Charlie senior  
Charlie teenager  
Young woman on bus  
Old woman  
Anne  
Teenage boy

Scene: The film takes place on a bus journey  
between Galway and Castlebar.





**FADE IN:**

**EXT - COUNTRYSIDE - DAY**

A bus is traveling through the countryside.

**INT - BUS -DAY**

The same countryside, as seen from the P.O.V. (point of view) of a girl sitting on the bus. We never see the girl, only everything through her P.O.V. She begins to fall asleep; a local radio station is playing in the background, it disappears as she drifts off to sleep.

**EXT - BUS STOP - DAY**

A man in his late fifties, CHARLIE, is standing at a bus stop. He is neatly dressed in a well-worn suit. His hair is brill-creamed and he has dark sad brown eyes. He has a small, old brown bag placed neatly beside his left foot. He is standing motionless.

**INT - BUS - DAY**

We can see the other passengers on the bus through the P.O.V. of the girl. Her eyes flit from one passenger to another, she is not paying much attention. She is just occupying the space in front of her eyes with colours. The passengers on the bus are all talking, but they are slightly out of sync as if underwater.

**EXT - BUS STOP - DAY**

Charlie is still standing at the bus stop. He has not moved at all since the last time he was in shot. Now, there is absolutely no sound. The only difference in the shot is in the window behind him a face is twitching ever so slightly.

**EXT - BARN - DAY**

A young black haired teenager runs frantically from a barn. As he is running away an old woman's voice fills the air.

OLD WOMAN (V.O.)  
You know I need you to help me.

**INT - BUS/BUS STOP - DAY**

The girl is staring at the bus stop where Charlie had been standing, she is staring at the edge of the red sign, some of the paint has been chipped away. There is no one at the bus stop. Suddenly a voice interrupts the girl from her thoughts.

CHARLIE (V.O.)  
Hello.

**INT - BUS - DAY**

She is immediately struck by Charlie's face as he smiles a wide grin at her. He quickly sits down beside her and starts a one way conversation.

CHARLIE  
It should be a grand day today, thanks be to God. I'm going to Castlebar. You see, it's me Aunt. She's been there since she lost her leg. She had it amputated, you know.

**INT - BUS - DAY**

Charlie continues to waffle away, while the girl tries her best to politely ignore him. The countryside wizzes past as the bus continues on its journey.

CHARLIE (V.O.)  
You've never been to Castlebar before, have you?

Charlie never gives her a chance to interact with him.

CHARLIE (V.O.)  
Well, that's the new golf course.

The girl looks out at ordinary fields that do not look like a golf course.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

It's open for viewing this Saturday,  
but it won't really be open for a few  
months.

**INT - BUS - DAY**

Charlie turns to look straight at the girl.

CHARLIE

You're not married, are you?

The girl finds this a very strange question and stares at  
him back at him. Charlie continues to chat away.

CHARLIE

No, I didn't think so. I'm not meself  
either. Never had much of a mind for it.

All the girl can see is Charlie's mouth moving. She is  
not listening to him, but she is watching all the move-  
ments of his face. Eventually, all we can see is his face  
in E.C.U.(extreme close-up). This is happening as he is  
speaks.

CHARLIE

But, I do a bit of gardenin' and  
decoratin' and paintin'.

**EXT - FIELD - DAY**

Charlie appears younger, a teenager. He is lying in a field  
looking up at the sky.

We see him through the girl's P.O.V. who is directly above  
him looking down on him. She tries to get away but is un-  
able to and falls to the ground beside him.

Charlie's face is now in profile, a hand appears over his  
face and slowly drops daisies. Suddenly Charlie turns to  
face the girl and acknowledges her presence.

The girl again tries to get away as Charlie jumps up and  
runs away.

Suddenly he reappears and falls back down to earth in slow motion.

ANNE, the teenager with long blonde hair, she is responsible for dropping the daisies on his face, has pushed him to the ground and jumps on top of him.

ANNE

Why won't you kiss me Charlie?

Charlie closes his eyes tightly and wrinkles his nose. Anne presses her lips against his cheek. Charlie's lips are tightly pressed together.

**INT - BUS - DAY**

E.C.U. of older Charlie's lips moving but there is no voice.

Abruptly, his voice becomes audible.

CHARLIE

But it's good to be occupied.

The girl is shocked back to reality when she hears him.

CHARLIE

There's a lot of people on the bus to day.

He stands up to count the passengers, he is still talking and the girl is watching him awkwardly.

CHARLIE

I always travel every Saturday to see me aunt, you know.

Beat. He counts the passengers on the bus.

CHARLIE

I like ta count the people on the bus, there're ten today, you know.

He sits down and looks straight at the girl.

CHARLIE

She likes ta see me.

Beat. He nods and smiles strangely at the girl.

CHARLIE

I don't drink meself, or smoke. I don't mind people having a drink or two, but you know, arra sure, you know yourself.

**INT - BUS - DAY**

The girl straightens up, she is bored and confused.

Charlie is still talking.

CHARLIE

You don't have any brothers and sisters do you?

The girl turns quickly to look at Charlie again.

He crosses his legs and places his hand precisely over his knee. She focuses on his hands as he is talking.

CHARLIE

I don't. It's a pity, you know. But me mother was good.

**EXT - FARM HOUSE/BARN - DAY**

E.C.U. of an older woman's hands.

She is standing in the middle of the farmyard.

There is a farmhouse behind her and a barn in front of her. She is calling to someone.

OLD WOMAN

Charlie, Charlie, where are you boy? You know I need you to help me.

The teenage Charlie walks out of the barn and towards the old woman.

OLD WOMAN

Come here Charlie me boy. You know I'd  
be losht without you.

She hugs him into her very large chest. He is lost in his  
own thoughts.

His eyes try to hide a desperate secret. Suddenly he  
blinks.

**INT - BARN - DAY, A FEW MINUTES EARLIER**

There is a low murmuring sound coming from behind erract-  
cally stacked bales of hay.

Moving closer, eavesdropping, Charlie and another boy are-  
kneeling opposite each other.

The unknown teenager has his shirt off. He is tanned with  
dark hair. He raises his hand slowly and touches Charlie's  
lips sensually.

Suddenly a voice from outside breaks the moment.

OLD WOMAN (V.O.)

Charlie, Charlie where are you boy?

The boys are startled and jump up.

The black haired teenager disappears.

Charlie looks around frantically. Fear of discovery is  
etched into his face.

**INT - BUS - DAY**

E.C.U. of old Charlie's face. He has the same expression  
as the young Charlie. The girl pulls back from him.

Charlie turns away and starts to fix his tie nervously.

CHARLIE

Well, I think I'll sit up closer to the  
top. It'll be me stop soon you know.

Charlie grabs his bag and moves to the top of the bus. Relieved the man is gone the girl falls asleep again.

The countryside wizzes past.

The girl wakes up abruptly.

The radio station is playing loudly and all the passengers are talking.

Charlie has disappeared, as though he never existed.

**FADE OUT:**

**THE END**





Still from 'Paper Dolls'  
June Murphy as young Nora  
Photo Jamie Howard

## **Paper Dolls**

Short film

(Winner of the GFC/RTE Short Script Award)

First screened during the Galway Film Fleadh  
June 1998 with the following cast:

Young Nora	June Murphy
Nora mid 20s	Chris Monaghan
Nora senior	Bernie Guinane
Nora's daughter	Adriana Taheny
Mary (Nora's friend)	Emma King
Nun	Grainne Moore
Voice over mother	Grainne Moore
Voice over daughter	Emma King



## **CHARACTERS**

Young Nora  
Nora mid 20s  
Nora senior  
Nora's daughter  
Mary (Nora's friend)  
Nun  
Mother  
Child

Scene: The film takes place over a period of fifty years, focusing on three key moments.



**FADE IN:**

The titles appear over the following.

FX

A school bell and children running  
out into a schoolyard.

A young child and her mother talking as  
they walk home from school.

**INT - ST ANNE'S ORPHANAGE, TAYLORS HILL, 1943 - MORNING**

Nora a nine-year-old girl is walking slowly down a grey  
shadowed corridor.

Reaching her dormitory she walks over to her small grey  
bed and reaches under her pillow pulling out a matchbox.

She opens the matchbox and takes out a small paper doll.  
She places the paper doll in her palm of her hand and be-  
gins to stroking it.

Mother (V.O.)

I'm here love.

Nora

I'm here love. (Sync S.)

**TITLE - PAPER DOLLS**

FX

Children in the schoolyard.

**INT - COUNCIL HOUSE, PRESENT DAY - MORNING**

A large dressing table full of stuffed toys and Pound shop  
plastic dolls, dotted inbetween are framed photographs  
that are barely seen.

FX

A child among the crowd runs towards her  
mother.

Child (V.O.)

Mommie, Mommie...

**EXT - PARK, 1973 - MORNING**

Nora, in her early 20's, is walking through the park. She is wheeling a pram with a baby boy in it (John). Suddenly Fiona, Nora's five-year old daughter run up to her. She has long blonde hair.

Mother

Slow down. Now, how was school? (V.O.)

Fiona

Slow down. (Sync S.)

She continues to run after her mother and grabs onto the side of the pram. They walk slowly together.

Child (V.O.)

I know my prayer and I got a gold star from my teacher.

Mother (V.O.)

Very good, so can you say

**INT - CHURCH - MORNING**

Nora, in her mid fifties, is sitting at the back of an empty church. She has some empty plastic bags with her. She puts the bags down beside her and kneels down.

Mother (V.O.)

"The Our Father" for me.

Child (V.O.)

Ok, but you'll have to help me a little bit.

Mother (V.O.)

I will. So shall we start? Our Father

Nora

Our Father. (Sync S.)

**INT - DORMITORY - DAY**

Young Nora is ripping out the shape of a paper doll carefully. Her face is tearstained.

Child (V.O.)  
Ah.. Mommie I know that bit.

Mother (V.O.)  
Well then?

Child (V.O.)  
Ok, so. Our Father...who...who...

Nora  
Father...who...who...(Sync S.)

**EXT - CHURCH - MORNING**

Nora (Mid 50s) leaves the church.

Mother (V.O.)  
Art...

Child (V.O.)  
Oh yea. Our Father who art in heaven  
in heaven...in heaven...

**EXT - PARK - MORNING**

Fiona is on a swing in the park and is being pushed by  
Nora.

Child (V.O.)  
Mommie.

Fiona  
Mommie (Sync S.)

Nora turns towards the baby boy in the pram.

Mother (V.O.)  
Hallowed.

Nora  
Hallowed. (Sync S.)

The baby smiles back at her.

Child (V.O.)  
Hallowed be thy name.



Mother (V.O.)  
Very good. Can you say them again?

**EXT - ST VINCENT DE PAUL SHOP - MORNING**

Nora, (Mid 50s), enters the shop.

Child (V.O.)  
Our Father who art in heaven.  
Hallowed be thy name.

**INT - DORMITORY - DAY**

The matchbox and two paper dolls are lying on the bed.

Mother (V.O.)  
Ok, so what's the next bit?

Child (V.O.)  
Your Kingdom come

Mother (V.O.)  
No, not quite. Thy

**EXT - PARK - MORNING**

Fiona is running around the park with a big rag doll in her hand. She drops it, picks it up and runs over to her mother to hand it to her.

Nora sits the doll on the bench next to her.

Child (V.O.)  
Thy kingdom come Thy will be...  
No Mommie, I know it ...done.

Mother (V.O.)  
Good girl.

Nora  
Good girl. (Sync S.)

**EXT ST VINCENT DE PAUL SHOP - MORNING**

Nora, (Mid 50s), leaves the shop with one of her plastic bags full.

Child (V.O.)  
On Earth as it is in Heaven.

Mother (V.O.)  
Give us.

**INT - DORMITORY - MORNING**

Next to the paper dolls is an extra matchbox. Beside the matchbox are some paper doll clothes, but they are ripped.

Child (V.O.)  
Yea, yea. Give us our daily bread.  
And...Oho...

**EXT - SIMON SHOP - MORNING**

Nora, (Mid 50s), enters the shop.

Mother (V.O.)  
And forgive

Child V.O.)  
Us our trespasses

**EXT - PARK - MORNING**

Nora is sitting on the bench in the park. She picks up the rag doll and places it on her knees.

Mother (V.O.)  
Now sweetie can we have the full sentence.

Child (V.O.)  
And...

**INT - CORRIDOR IN ORPHANAGE - MORNING**

Nora is creeping along the corridor, next to the wall.

Child (V.O.)  
Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive

Nora  
Forgive us our trespasses (Sync S.)

**EXT - SIMON SHOP - MORNING**

Nora, (Mid 50s), comes out of the shop with the second plastic bag full.

Child (V.O.)  
Those

Mother (V.O.)  
Mmmh...

Child (V.O.)  
Who trespass

**EXT - PARK - MORNING**

Nora is sitting on the bench. Fiona, her daughter is sitting next to her, she has the rag doll on her knees.

Mother (V.O.)  
Mmmh..

Child (V.O.)  
Against us

Fiona hugs the rag doll and smiles at her mother.

Mother (V.O.)  
Very good

Nora  
Very good (Sync S.)

**EXT - CEREBAL PALSEY SHOP - MORNING**

Nora, (Mid 50s), enters the shop.

Child (V.O.)  
And

Mother (V.O.)  
And lead us

**INT - ROOM IN ORPHANGE - MORNING**

A small hand enter a large sweet jar. It is half full.

Child (V.O.)  
And lead us not into tem...

**INT - CORRIDOR IN ORPHANGE - MORNING**

A nun in a long black and white habit floats along the corridor.

Child (V.O.)  
Tem...

Mother (V.O.)  
Temptation

Nun  
Temptation (Sync S.)

**INT - CEREBAL PALSY SHOP - MORNING**

Nora, (Mid 50s), looks around very quickly and grab her bags into her.

Child (V.O.)  
Temp...

Mother (V.O.)  
ta...

Child (V.O.)  
Temp...ta...

**EXT - PARK - MORNING**

Nora pulls her daughter into her tightly and hugs her.

Mother (V.O.)  
tion

Child (V.O.)  
Temp...ta...tion

**INT - DORMITORY - MORNING**

Nora is sitting on the bed. The sweets are all unwrapped and in a pile on one side of the bed. The wrappers are all smoothed out and in another pile on the other side of the

bed. She is very carefully ripping a small dress out of one of the sweet papers.

Mother (V.O.)  
Ok, again.

Child (V.O.)  
Temp...ta...tion

Mother (V.O.)  
Good, now once again.

**INT - DORMITORY - MORNING**

Suddenly the nun is standing at the end of the bed.

Child (V.O.)  
Temp...ta...tion

Nun  
Temptation (Sync S.)

Mother (V.O.)  
Now, say it with me. We're almost...

**INT - DORMITORY - MORNING**

The nun's hand comes down on the bed, grabs the paper dolls and crushes them.

Mother (V.O.)  
There

Mother & Child (V.O.)  
Temptation

The nun bends her body over to look closely at Nora.

Child (V.O.)  
Temptation

Nun  
Temptation (Sync S.)

Mother (V.O.)  
Now, the whole lot

**INT - DORMITORY - MORNING**

Nora is kneeling by the side of her bed. The nun is standing over her.

Child (V.O.)  
And lead us not into temptation.

Nora  
And lead us not into temptation.  
(Sync S.)

Mother (V.O.)  
Do you know what that means?

Nun  
Do you know what that means? (Sync S.)

Child (V.O.)  
No.

Nora  
No. (Sync S.)

**INT - DORMITORY - MORNING**

The paper dolls, matchboxes and sweet papers have been ripped up and thrown in the waste paper basket.

Mother (V.O.)  
We are asking God to help us to be good people.

Nun  
We are asking God to help us to be good people. (Sync S.)

**EXT - PARK - MORNING**

Nora is wheeling the pram through the park.

Her daughter is next to her. She is carrying the rag doll.

Child (V.O.)  
How Mommie?

Fiona  
How Mommie? (Sync S.)

Mother (V.O.)  
By helping us to understand what is good  
and bad. It would be bad to take your  
friend's toy and break it. Wouldn't it?

Nora  
By helping us to understand what is good  
and bad. It would be bad to take your  
friend's toy and break it. Wouldn't it?  
(Sync S.)

Child (V.O.)  
Yes, Mommie?

Fiona  
Yes, Mommie? (Sync S.)

Mother (V.O.)  
But, it is good to share your toys.

Nora  
But, it is good to share your toys.  
(Sync S.)

Child (V.O.)  
Yes I like it when we share our toys.  
(Child starts to giggle)

Fiona  
Yes, I like it when we share our toys.  
(Sync S.)

Fiona giggles and throws the rag doll in the air. They are  
all laughing.

A FREEZE FRAME PHOTO of Fiona, Nora and the baby laughing.

We can see the foot of the rag doll in the top of the  
frame.

**EXT — CEREBAL PALSY SHOP - MORNING**

Nora exits the shop with her third plastic bag full.

Child (V.O.)  
But Mommie, there's one girl in our  
class that never has any toys.

Mother (V.O.)  
I hope you share yours with her then.

Child (V.O.)  
I do Mommie

**EXT - ORPHANGE - MORNING**

Nora and one of her friends are walking around a big grey building.

Mother (V.O.)  
Now, where were we? Oh yes, but deliver.

Friend  
Now, where were we? Oh, yes, but  
Deliver. (Sync S.)

Child (V.O.)  
I know, I know. But deliver us from  
evil.

Nora  
I know, I know. But deliver us from  
evil. (Sync S.)

They stop walking, look at each other and smile. A FREEZE  
FRAME PHOTO of the two girls smiling at each other.

**EXT - BUS - MORNING**

Nora, (Mid 50s), gets off the bus with her three plastic bags.

Mother (V.O.)  
Good girl now, how do we finish the  
prayer?

**EXT - COUNCIL HOUSE - MORNING**

Nora, (Mid 50s), is at the door. She takes her keys out



slowly. She struggles to open the door because she won't let the plastic bags out of her hand.

Mother (V.O.)  
Honey?

Child (V.O.)  
Mommie?

Mother (V.O.)  
Yes love...

Child (V.O.)  
Well do you know the girl? The one I was telling you about.

Mother (V.O.)  
What girl?

**INT - COUNCIL HOUSE - MORNING**

Nora, (Mid 50s), walks up the stairs.

Child (V.O.)  
The girl

Mother (V.O.)  
What girl?

Child (V.O.)  
The girl that never has any toys.

Mother (V.O.)  
Yes dear

Child (V.O.)  
Well...

Mother (V.O.)  
Yes...

Child (V.O.)  
I let her play with Raggy Susan.

Mother (V.O.)  
When did you do that?

Child (V.O.)  
Today in school at break-time.

Mother (V.O.)  
You didn't bring Susan to school with  
you today did you dear?

Child (V.O.)  
I did Mommie.

**INT - COUNCIL HOUSE - MORNING**

Nora, (Mid 50s), is sitting in her bed with the three plastic bags. She slowly starts to take out loads of cuddly toys and place them neatly on the bed.

Mother (V.O.)  
You know you're not supposed to bring  
your toys to school, it's not allowed.

Child (V.O.)  
I didn't mean to. It was by accident.

Mother (V.O.)  
Are you sure it was an accident?

Child (V.O.)  
Well... I put her in my school bag last  
night and I forgot to take her out.

Mother (V.O.)  
Ok, so where is she? Is she in your bag?

Child (V.O.)  
Not exactly

**INT - BEDROOM - MORNING**

Nora, (Mid 50s), is slowly taking a sticker for 20p of one of the cuddly toys.

Slowly it is revealed that room Nora is sitting in is full of cuddly toys and dolls.

The large dressing table is the centrepiece to the room.

Mother (V.O.)  
Did you leave her in school?

Child (V.O.)  
No, not really.

Mother (V.O.)  
So where is she?

Child (V.O.)  
Well...

Mother (V.O.)  
Look honey if you lost Raggy Susan, I don't want you to come crying to me about it.

Child (V.O.)  
Well... I gave a loan of her to the girl.

Mother (V.O.)  
What girl?

Child (V.O.)  
My new friend the girl with no toys.

Mother (V.O.)  
Oh...

Child (V.O.)  
She is going to keep her for the night and give her back to me tomorrow.

Mother (V.O.)  
You won't miss Susan now will you?

Child (V.O.)  
No, not for one night.

Mother (V.O.)  
That was very nice of you to loan the girl your toy.

Child (V.O.)  
She is my new friend and we are going to sit together in school.

Mother (V.O.)  
Well good for you. Now can we finish the  
prayer?

Child (V.O.)  
Ok.

Mother (V.O.)  
But this time we'll say it together and  
we won't stop.

Child (V.O.)  
Let's start.

**INT - BEDROOM - MORNING**

Tracking shot of the dressing table. The Framed photos on the dressing table are of Nora as a young girl with her friend and Nora in her 20's with her daughter Fiona.

Mother & Child (V.O.)  
Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed  
be thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will  
be done, On earth as it is in heaven,  
Give us this day, Our daily bread, And  
forgive us our trespasses. As we forgive  
those who trespass against us. And lead  
us not into temptation but deliver us  
from evil. Amen.

**INT - BEDROOM - MORNING**

Nora, (Mid 50s), reaches under her pillow and slowly pull out a matchbox. She opens it, takes out a paper doll and places it on the bed, smiling.

**BLACK**

FX  
Sound of a child giggle with her mother  
as their footsteps reach their front  
door. The door opens and closes.  
Then there is silence.

The titles start to roll.

FX  
Children playing in the schoolyard.

**FADE OUT:**

**THE END**



Still from 'Paper Dolls'  
Chris Monaghan & Adriana Taheny  
Photo Jamie Howard



Production Still from 'Paper Dolls'  
Photo Jamie Howard



Stills from 'Paper Dolls'  
Above June Murphy / Below Grainne Moore  
Photo Jamie Howard





## **Reviews**

“There is a quiet little gem playing in the Town Hall Theatre this week. Both actors give strong performances but Ger Considine while telling of the love story in his past gives a very special moment to the audience.”

The Galway Advertiser

“Tina O’Rourke’s two-hander is a simple but effective piece. Basically a conversation between two lonely middle-aged people on a “date”; It takes place on a rough hewn park bench serenaded by the sounds of ambient traffic - it gradually yields its story and its riches. This is a quiet, careful production that repays attention.”

The Irish Times

**Websites featuring plays by the same author**

[www.tinaorourke.com](http://www.tinaorourke.com)