

(Ebook free) Brian Friel's Dancing at Lughnasa: Screenplay

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Frank McGuinness, Brian Friel
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Frank McGuinness, Brian Friel : Brian Friel's Dancing at Lughnasa: Screenplay before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Brian Friel's Dancing at Lughnasa: Screenplay:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. "Dancing...the very heart of life and all its hopes."By Mary WhippleSet in Donegal in 1936, during Ireland's change from an agrarian to a more industrial economy, this

screenplay of Brian Friel's haunting ensemble drama, on which Frank McGuinness collaborated, tells the story of five sisters and their priest brother in the rural community of Ballybeg on the eve of the harvest festival of Lughnasa. Fortynish Kate, who sees herself "in charge," is the only real wage earner in the family. Rigid, severe, and completely lacking in humor, she believes pagan celebrations, such as Lughnasa, which provide fun and enjoyment in the countryside, are "uncivilized." Her brother Jack, the priest, however, on furlough from his missionary work in Uganda, is now virtually a pagan himself. His work has shown him the need of the poor for happiness, dancing, and community celebration, even if it is not church-sanctioned. The other Mundy sisters help illustrate the ironic chasm between Kate's attitudes and those of Fr. Jack. Maggie, the fun-loving, free-spirited, and most humorous of the sisters, constantly bursts into song and dance and longs to go to the town dance. Christina feels no shame whatever about her son, a love-child, and thoroughly enjoys the summer visit of his father, Gerry Evans, with whom she dances spontaneously. Aggie and Rose, who earn small wages knitting gloves, work tirelessly as the family's sad, "unpaid servants," constantly chafing against Kate's imposition of her own values on them. When the local priest fails to rehire Kate because of Fr. Jack's apparent paganism, the family is devastated, but it is at that moment that they recognize the need to celebrate life itself. The message in this screenplay is weaker than in the stage play, with much less criticism directed at the "clan of the round collar" and its harsh edicts. Kate is less hostile in the film, and the fates of Aggie and Rose are withheld until the end, for dramatic reasons, and not revealed early, as in the play. Fr. Jack's paganism, regarded as a mental aberration in the screenplay, is treated empathetically in the play, which, though dark, is ultimately a joyful celebration of life itself, a life not bound by organized religion. The film, perhaps in the interest of not offending its audience, suppresses this point of view, presenting a less assertive, and perhaps less realistic, viewpoint. n Mary Whipple

A screen adaptation of a Brian Friel stage play. Set in a house just outside the Irish village of Ballybeg, it depicts two days in the life of the five Mundy sisters, their brother Jack, who is a missionary priest, and the illegitimate son of the youngest sister.