

# DAVE

Lady Gregory

(Three Last Plays)

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*Title:* Three Last Plays: Dave

*Date of first publication:* 1928

*Author:* Lady Gregory (1852-1932)

*Date first posted:* Aug. 15, 2018

*Date last updated:* Aug. 15, 2018

Faded Page eBook #20180863

This ebook was produced by: Barbara Watson, David T. Jones, Cindy Beyer & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <http://www.pgdpCanada.net>

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THREE LAST PLAYS

*Sancho's Master*

*Dave*

*The Would-Be Gentleman*



*THREE LAST PLAYS*  
*BY LADY GREGORY*

*London & New York*  
**G. P. Putnam's Sons**  
1928

FIRST PUBLISHED MARCH, 1928  
REPRINTED AUGUST, 1928

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 70-131728  
ISBN 0-403-00615-5

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**DAVE**

*To*  
*A. E.*

## **PERSONS**

NICHOLAS O'CAHAN, *elderly, very neatly dressed in old-fashioned clothes, with knee breeches.*

KATE O'CAHAN, *his wife, a good deal younger. She is winding a ball of wool from skeins on the back of a chair. She walks back and forward to this.*

TIMOTHY LOUGHLIN, *a serving man.*

JOSEPHINE LOUGHLIN, *a young girl, his niece.*

DAVE, *a youth in poor working clothes. Looks sullen and slouches. His hair hangs over his forehead.*

*Time: A hundred years ago.*

## DAVE

*Scene: A room well furnished with old-fashioned things, a settle, a chest, an armchair, a turf basket. The door L. opens into a little entry; door R. leads to the kitchen. Timothy is on his knees arranging the fire.*

*Timothy (shouts):* Bring in, Dave, the turf! *(No answer)* Come on, you lazy cur! Hurry now.

*(Dave comes in with an armful.)*

Couldn't you come when I called you?

*Dave (sullenly):* I could if I brought the turf wet.

*Timothy:* Don't be giving impudence. You know well you were scheming or slouching around some hole or corner.

*Dave:* Have it your own way so. *(He is putting the turf in the basket.)*

*Timothy:* If I had my own way it's walking the road you would be—put out of this house.

*Dave:* I wouldn't please you to go out, or it's out of the reach of your tongue I'd be gone before now.

*Timothy:* I'll get quit of you in spite of yourself. Hurry on, now, go get another load of the turf. What, now, is keeping that little girl of mine so long in the village?

*Dave:* There she is at the door. *(Josephine enters as he goes out.)*

*Josephine:* I left the message for the driver of the long car, that Nicholas O'Cahan and the Missis would be wanting a seat to the town when he'll be passing.

*Timothy:* You took your time doing that. Idling in the shop I'll engage you were, and the dark of the evening coming on. Fingering ribbons and fooleries.

*Josephine:* You're out there. I was not in the shop at all.

*Timothy:* What kept you so? Fooling and gabbing with idlers, the same as yourself. Here now is the Missis.

*(Kate comes in from the other door.)*

*Timothy (getting up):* Josephine that is after bidding the car to wait for you and the Master, ma'am, to bring you to the town for the night.

*Kate:* I thought you were talking as if vexed with someone.

*Timothy:* So I am vexed with that lad that's slow bringing in the turf. Come on, now—come, fill up the basket. *(Dave comes in and begins putting in more sods.)* And I was telling this niece of mine she had too much time lost with chattering down in the village.

*Josephine:* Well, I was not chattering or saying any word at all—but listening.

*Timothy:* That's it. To some person with as little sense as yourself.

*Josephine:* You're out again. It was to a holy man was preaching in the street.

*Kate (interested):* Was it a priest that was preaching—or a friar?

*Josephine:* I don't rightly know. He was a stranger—a sort of a missionary. Asking help he was for the people of Iar Connacht that are down under the fever and the famine.

*Timothy:* What brought him questing here? All the help we have to give, it is for ourselves we should keep it as is right.

*Kate:* Tell me, now, Josephine, what account did he give?

*Josephine:* The fever is running through the country, he was saying. It is a terrible scourge. It is what he said, the people are dying in empty walls with no roof over them, or in a shed in the haggards, or out by the side of the road.

*Kate:* God help them, they are surely under great trouble.

*(Dave has stopped filling basket, and is listening.)*

*Timothy:* The right place for them is the poorhouse, that was built for the like of that class.

*Josephine:* It is what he was saying, the poorhouses are filled till there is no more room in them. The people are dying, he said, without help of priest or friar or anything at all.

*Kate:* That is a terrible story, if it is true.

*Josephine:* And worse again——

*Kate:* There could hardly be worse than that.

*Josephine:* The breath would hardly be gone out of them, he said, before they'd be put into the earth. No one to give them burial, but a bag made and the body put in it and thrown in a hole in the wild bog, and the shaking sod closing over their head. And he said "in Connemara over it is the dogs bring the bodies out of the houses, and ask no leave!"

*Kate (puts her hand over her eyes):* The poor creatures! What are we doing that we cannot come to their help! The Lord have mercy on them, and bring them to the comfort of Heaven!

*Timothy:* I wouldn't believe a word of it. It's certain the half of them should be in gaol, as it's likely the gaol fever is rotting the most of them.

*Josephine:* I tell you the Missioner said it, and he rising up his hand.

*Timothy:* Talk is easy. It's hard trust any of Adam's race.

*Dave (comes a step forward, lets fall the sods of turf from his arm. To Josephine):* Where is it that man was preaching? Is he in the street yet?

*Timothy (taking hold of his arm):* Mind your own business. Have you the gap in the wall settled yet? Come on, now. There are things to make ready before the master will make his start.

*(Pushes Dave before him out of door. Kate takes her skein of wool that is on the back of a chair, and begins winding it into a ball.)*

*Josephine:* I'm in dread, Ma'am, you'll get a wetting going to the town. There is rain overhead yet, and all that came down through the night and through the morning is lying in pools and in splashes on the road.

*Kate:* What is weather and a wetting beside what we are after hearing? That is as pitiful a story as any ever I heard.

*Josephine:* Ah, the weather might cheer up before you will make your start. It's myself would like to be going with you, and to see all the grandeur and the people of the town.

*(She goes into kitchen as Nicholas comes in.)*

*Nicholas (closes a book he has been reading as he comes in, keeping his finger in the place):* This is a great book I got from the pedlar. I nearly begrudge going to the town, and not to be reading it through from start to finish.

*Kate:* Indeed, I myself have not much heart to go there after all I have been hearing of the fever and the famine, but to stop and say a prayer for all that are under trouble.

*Nicholas:* Pup, pup, woman. You know your witness is required at the court-house along with my own in that case that concerns Thomas O’Cahan’s right of way, and he my third cousin by the two great-grandfathers. Stop now interrupting me till you’ll hear what this old poet says (*sits down in his armchair, and reads*):

*The Kingdom started up altogether,  
To put out the Danes who put trouble on Ireland;  
The Kennedys and the strength of the Lorcans,  
Morans and Brogans armed and dressed* (looks up)

—the whole of them were in the battle of Clontarf.

*Kate:* The poor men!

*Nicholas:* Don’t be interrupting me!

*They travelled from Munster as may be read,  
O’Sullivan out from the west of Ireland—(excited)*

Ha! Here it is put down clear and plain!

*Kate:* What is it?

*Nicholas:* The name I was in search of! And that I made sure should be in the poem. And that is my own name.

*Kate:* Is it Nicholas O’Cahan?

*Nicholas:* What about Nicholas? That is a name is well enough, but that likely may not have been in the world in those early times. Listen, now:

*O’Donovan of the deer, O’Maher and O’Cahan.*

The Battle of Clontarf was not fought without them being in it!

*Kate:* That should be a long time ago.

*Nicholas:* Near to a thousand years!

*Kate:* And was he killed in it?

*Nicholas:* Killed or not killed what signifies? How do I know did ever he strike a blow, or get a blow? Battle or no battle he would be dead now anyway.

*Kate:* It is for the people dying of the hunger at this time I am fretting. You might have heard the Missioner down in the village?

*Nicholas:* Wait now till I'll see is it put down were there any more of my old fathers in the world at that time. O'Malley, O'Mara—O'Shaughnessy. It is a great book. You would know, reading it, what people are worth nothing, and which of them are worth while.

*Kate:* We'd mostly know that living anear them.

*Nicholas:* Believe me, high blood and ancient blood is the best property at all to run in a family.—Do you know what I'm thinking?

*Kate:* I do not, without you'd tell me.

*Nicholas:* It is going through my mind that if the Lord had sent us a son we would find it hard to make our mind up what name to bestow on him, among all the big names in my family.

*Kate (coming back with her ball of wool, interested):* I used often to be thinking I would call him Patrick.

*Nicholas:* Not at all. It is well enough for people with no genealogy to go seeking a name among the saints. But where there is family, it is right to show respect to the family. I should have a good deal of quality belonging to me.

*Kate:* I was only saying——

*Nicholas:* Go easy, now! It is natural for you to be running down race. I am finding no fault with yourself. But it is the first time an O'Cahan ever joined with a Heniff! You'll be saying, I suppose, that lad Dave, that is a foundling is not far from being equal to myself!

*Kate (turning back to her chair):* You need not be running down my people. I never saw poverty out of my father or my mother. Everyone belonging to me came from the old stock of the parish, and my grandmother coming to Mass every Sunday on a pillion and a black mare!

*Nicholas:* Don't be talking. Where is Timothy? (*calls*) Timothy! I must tell him about the antiquity of the O'Cahans.

*Timothy (coming in):* I sent the message, sir, to the driver of the long car

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*Nicholas:* Stop a minute and listen (*takes up book*). Did you ever hear news of the families that drove out the Danes, the Lochlanach, from Ireland?

*Timothy:* What way would I hear it, sir? I have not learning like yourself.

*Nicholas:* Long ago as it was, Timothy, near to a thousand years, they were not without one of my own race and name.

*Timothy:* Why wouldn't there be one of them? It's easy know that out of yourself—or twenty-one of them! The O'Cahans are a great breed surely. It's the finest thing in the known world to have high generations behind you.

*Nicholas:* It is proud my third cousin Thomas O'Cahan will be to-morrow, hearing he had a far-off father living close on a thousand years ago. Hurry on, now, Kate, and make ready for the road.

*Kate:* I will, so soon as I'll have this ball of wool wound. I have but to put on my bonnet and my shawl. I hope no bad thing will happen the house, and we away from it through the whole of the night time.

*Nicholas:* Timothy Loughlin will be in charge, and the little girl Josephine, his niece, till such time as we'll come back to-morrow.

*Timothy:* Believe me, sir, I'll take good care of all—only that lad——

*Nicholas:* Give me here my Sunday boots (*begins taking off the boots he is wearing*).

*Timothy (bringing boots):* It is what I was saying, that lad Dave——I'd sooner you'd bring him along with you. It is hard for me keep control of him. He is a bad class of a scamp.

*Nicholas:* I have it in my mind you were making some report of him a while ago.

*Timothy:* I give you my word, sir, in the twelve-month I lived with you, I had but the half of it peaceable, before that lad was brought in here. (*He kneels to lace Nicholas's boots.*)

*Nicholas:* I have some memory it was yourself brought him in from where he was standing, a *spailpin* with his spade in his hand, seeking work at the Easter fair. Saying, you were, he would be easy brought on his back, having no kindred to be running to.

*Timothy:* There is not a day but I'll hear some troublesome thing of him. Rambling and idling, card-playing up in the mountains—that's where he was through last night.

*Kate:* Ah, there's boys will do that sort of thing to the end of time.

*Timothy:* He's tricky, and has too much tricks in him. He is a holy terror.

*Kate:* Well, he should be as God made him.

*Nicholas:* Do not be taking his side now. It was against my own judgment I brought him into the house. A lad whose race and kindred no one knows, and whose father and mother no one knows.

*Kate:* He is but a youth of a boy. It's a pity to put on him the sins of the generations before him.

*Nicholas:* He has no generations before him, bad or good, to give him that excuse.

*Timothy:* That's it. A by-child reared in the workhouse. It's likely a tinker's brat.

*Nicholas:* That's a class I don't like, and I wouldn't like it, and I'm a man that couldn't like it.

*Kate:* He was maybe born into his troubles. It's easy be good having good means and a good way and plenty of riches.

*Nicholas:* Hurry on, now, Kate, and make ready. Give me here the key till I'll lock this book in the chest. (*Takes keys and puts one in the lock.*)

*Timothy:* The vagabone! It's a skelping he should get to bridle him that would take the skin off him. He is bad out and out. He brought badness into the world with him, the same as you might bring a birthmark.

*Kate (going over to take last threads of the skein off the chair.):* Maybe so, maybe so. I never got learning out of books. But it's often I heard said there is no child comes into the world but brings with him some grain of the wisdom of Heaven. It's the mother can know that, watching his little ways. The Spirit of God given in the beginning wasn't given to one or to two. I myself can tell you that much if I never had a child of my own (*goes*).

*Timothy (as Nicholas is about to lock the chest):* There is Dave coming. Have a care, sir, where you would conceal your choice things——

(*Dave comes in.*)

*Timothy:* Where were you?

*Dave:* Where you bade me go. Putting up the gap in the wall——

*Timothy:* I'll believe that when I'll see myself is it done. It's likely you would make a poor job of it with the drowsiness is on you after being out rambling through the night time.

*Dave:* I hear what you're saying.

*Nicholas (who is turning over the pages of his book, and putting a mark in):* Tut, tut, try and behave now.

*Timothy:* You see the way he is, sir, a sullen miserable hound.

*Nicholas:* It is right you should learn behaviour. But I would not be hard on you, as I would on one who had a good rearing and a good name.

*Dave:* What fault have you to find with my name? Anyway I got no other name. Dave, short and sharp like you would shout for a dog.

*Timothy:* Have some shame on you! I tell you, you not to have come into the world would be no loss at all.

*Nicholas:* That's enough, Timothy. I don't know where are my glasses? *(He puts down the book and looks for them.)*

*Timothy:* Hearken now. Your master is going away for one night—or two nights. I myself will be in charge of all here. I lay it on you that you will not be drinking or stealing, or be going to night sports or dance-houses with scamps and schemers, gambling or smoking or snuffing—fighting and quarrelling—bringing bad lads into the house on top of me.

*Dave (with a bitter laugh):* Go on with your A.B.C. Put on me all the sins you can find to put on me, and I'll not deny them! Swearing big oaths and blasphemy! To laugh at my neighbour's downfall! To make nothing of breaking the Ten Commandments! I've right to be put running with a price on my head, the same as a wild dog of the hills.

*Timothy:* Oh, to listen to him! It is to the assizes he should be dragged by the hair of his head!

*Dave:* Have a care now. I could put curses out of myself as quick as you!

*Nicholas (putting on his hat):* Leave off that uproar and go in there to the Missis. *(He goes. Calls out.)* Hurry now, Kate, or we'll miss the car. Dave will bring out all your little packages and wearables.

*(Kate comes out, followed by Dave, with packages. She is dressed for the journey.)*

*Timothy:* God speed you, sir, and come back to us safe and sane. I'll mind the house well. *(They go out.)* It's a pity you're not bringing that lad before the judge that might put the terror of the law on him!

*(He turns back as Josephine comes in, bringing a kettle in her hand.)*

*Josephine:* Oh, are they gone! *(Calls from door.)* Oh, Ma'am, won't you stop a minute, and I'll have the tea wet for you! *(She turns round.)* She beckons she could not come back. *(She puts kettle down on hearth.)*

*Timothy (looking from window):* They are going down the road in a hard trot. I was in dread the wet would come down again, and turn them back from

making their start.

*Josephine (flinging herself into Nicholas's armchair):* My joy go with them in a bottle of moss. If they never come back they'll be no great loss! Here's his old book on the floor! (*Kicks it.*)

*Timothy (giving it a kick, and then picking it up):* Himself and his ancient generations! And looking at myself over the top of it as if I was dirt! If I didn't make up my mind to humour him I'd like well to face him on the head of that.

*Josephine:* He hasn't a great deal of sense. Will you look what they left after them? Their whole bunch of keys. Stuck in the lockhole of the chest one of them is.

*Timothy:* Do you say so! I never knew Nicholas O'Cahan leave that chest open till now.

*Josephine (opening it):* Well, we'll take a view of it. Here is a grand shawl I never saw. It would suit myself well. (*Puts it on, gets up on a chair to look at herself in the mirror.*) A great pity it to be lying there idle. (*Looks in chest again.*) And the silk skirt she put on at the time of the wedding at the Keanes. (*Slips it on.*) I would be well pleased to wear silk clothes, and to have a lady's life.

*Timothy (who has taken the keys and opened the cupboard):* Here is where he keeps his cellar. (*Takes out a jar, pours some of its contents into a glass, and drinks it off. Pours some more into the glass and leaves it on the table.*) That's good stuff, and no mistake.

*Josephine (kneeling at the chest):* Linen sheets as white as if they were for her burying—and towels of the finest flax, fit for any bishop, or any big lord.

*Timothy (stooping over chest):* Here is some weighty thing——

*Josephine:* A teapot—and a milk jug. Is it silver they are?

*Timothy (examining):* White pewter they might be—no it's silver, sure enough.

*Josephine (putting her hand deeper in the chest):* There is some weighty thing here below—a stocking——

*Timothy:* Give it here to me. (*Unrolls it.*) Why wouldn't it be weighty, and the foot of it being full of golden guineas! (*Shakes it.*)

*Josephine:* Gold! That is better again than silver.

*Timothy:* What use is it to him where he has full and plenty? He cannot bring it with him to the tomb. (*Starts, and drops stocking.*) There is some

noise!

*Josephine (getting up, goes to window):* It is but thunder. I was thinking it would be coming with the weight of blackness gathering overhead. There now is the rain pouring down.

*Timothy (taking stocking again, and weighing it in his hand):* By cripes! if I got this I'd knock a good turn out of it.

*Dave (comes in unheard, shakes the rain from his hat, claps his hands, and calls ironically):* God bless the work!

*Timothy (hastily stuffing stocking into his pocket while Josephine shuts lid of chest):* What brings you snaking in here, idling and spying around?

*Dave:* It's well for yourselves it is not Nicholas O'Cahan that came in and his Missis. *(He takes up the glass of whiskey, and drinks it off.)*

*Timothy:* If they did itself what signifies? I'm not like yourself that no one would trust with a fourpenny bit without he'd keep his two eyes fixed on you through the hours of the day and night.

*Dave:* You can save your chat. I know you well to be a class of a man that is gathering up for himself. You not to have crookedness in you, how would you go picturing it in every other one? I know well what happened the three lambs you told Nicholas O'Cahan were torn and ate with the fox!

*Timothy:* You'll go bringing every lie and every bad story to him, I suppose?

*Dave:* Why would I? It is not for him I ever said a prayer, or to please him I'll ever turn informer.

*Timothy:* You'd best not. There's many a thing I can say about yourself.

*Dave:* Do your best! There is no wrong thing ever I did since I came to the place but you have it told out ere this, and ten times as much told, and the most made of it, and the worst, the way I never got a penny in my hand for wages, but all stopped for fines or for punishment. I don't know at all what is it holds me back from doing every crime and every robbery, when there could not be put upon me a worse name for badness than what is put upon me now.

*Timothy:* What could there be in you but badness, you that were left at the side of a ditch by vagabones of tinkers that were travelling the roads of the world since the day of the Crucifixion!

*Dave:* Didn't I hear enough of that story the seventeen years I am in the world? In the poorhouse, in the street, in this house, nothing but the one bad

word. I got no chance in any corner but what my two hands gave me and God! I don't know in the world wide what kept me back that I didn't kill and destroy the whole of ye, and bring down the roof over your head. I declare to my God it's often I'd have choked the breath out of yourself and your master if it wasn't there is a look of pity in the old woman's face, if she hasn't the courage to stretch a hand to me itself.

*Timothy:* Why would any Christian stretch a hand to you or the like of you?

*Dave:* What now is the worst thing and the most thing I could do to punish the world and the whole of ye?

*Josephine:* Ah, let you quieten down, and not be shouting to call in the country entirely.

*Dave:* To put a wisp of lighted straw in among the lumber in the chest, and to put another in the thatch of the roof? To burn the house and all that's in it, and to leave the whole of ye without a roof over your head! That is what I owe to the world that gave me nothing only insult since ever I made my start upon its plains! (*He begins flinging things into the chest.*)

*Josephine (seizing his arm):* Stop, now—can't you only let on to have burned them, and we ourselves will share with you whatever is worth while.

*(Timothy hastily collects what things are best in the chest and puts them in the basket, from which he throws out the turf.)*

*Dave:* Bring here and throw on them the vessel of sheep's fat was rendered for to dip the candles! That will make a bonfire will sparkle up to the rafters of the roof. I'll put fire to the house, and all that's in it—only that jar I'll bring out on the road till I'll call to some of the wild class—thieves and sheepstealers, and the worst of the world's rogues! (*To Timothy.*) It's yourself should come drink with me then! (*He seizes a handful of paper thrown out from the chest, and lights a twist of it at the fire.*)

*Josephine:* There is someone opening the door. Who could be coming in on this night of thunder and of rain?

*Dave (going to door with the lighted wisp in his hand):* Come in, come in fellow law-breakers! There's a fire lighting will make you a ladder to the stars! There is whiskey before you in the jar!

*(Nicholas and Kate O'Cahan come in, she shaking the rain from the umbrella she holds before her. Dave falls back.)*

*Nicholas:* Dave! Leave down that wisp of fire in the hearth! Are you gone

clean mad! (*Snatches wisp from him, and puts it out.*)

*(Timothy rushes at Dave from behind, gives him a violent blow, and strikes him down. He falls heavily with a cry, striking his head against a chair, and lies senseless.)*

*Kate:* Oh, is it killed he is!

*Timothy:* Lift him up on the settle till I bind him to it. (*He and Nicholas lift and bind him with the cord that has bound the parcels.*)

*Nicholas:* You did well to down a lad of that sort. He is a terrible type of a ruffian.

*Timothy:* He's one of the old boy's comrades. If you had seen him ten minutes ago, he was all one with a wild beast. (*He binds Dave's feet.*)

*Kate:* I give him up now. He is a holy terror to the whole world.

*Timothy:* It would be well to put a gag in his mouth.

*Josephine:* He can say nothing. He has his senses lost with the dint of the fall.

*Timothy:* With the dint of drunkenness. But I now have something to say. Look now the way the room is. He that got hold of the keys—it's likely picked them from your pocket, and he attending you along the road——

*Kate:* Oh, no! I couldn't hardly believe that!

*Timothy:* Myself and the little girl being in the kitchen—attending to the work we had to do—and when we came in—there as you see—(*points to chest*)——

*Kate:* Ah, to look at the way all is tossed and turned. No, but the choice things put within in the basket.

*Timothy:* He was to bring them away through the darkness——

*Nicholas:* He should be a thief out and out.

*Timothy:* He'd take the sheet from your side, with respects to you. And when he got at the drink——

*Kate:* Ah, it should be the drink that did it——

*Timothy:* He drank the devil into him. He rose the shovel at me to let my blood, and maybe knock out my brains. Only for I have a good coat on my shoulders he'd split me.

*Nicholas:* The Lord be praised he has no family to bring under disgrace!

*Timothy:* And worse again. He was to put a light in the clothes that's within the chest—and in the rafters, and to burn the house entirely, the way you would not see all he had robbed. He was on the brink of doing it!

*Kate (covering her face with her hands):* Oh, tell me no more. The fire is the last of all!

*Timothy (to Josephine):* Here's my little girl can bear witness did he call for the pan of sheep's tallow for to give a heart to the flame.

*Josephine (sullenly):* You can tell your own story without me.

*Nicholas:* I will commit him to justice in the morning. Let the Sheriff come bring him away with his men.

*Timothy:* It is this very minute he should be brought away. He is that crafty you couldn't trust him not to make his escape. He might rise up in his senses and break his cords and make an attack on us all.

*Nicholas:* It is likely the car-driver went no farther than the post-house at the cross. Out on the car, and the rain down, we got more wet than all the men of the world. You should go around the whole of the province before you would come to the town.

*Kate:* The flood had us made fools of. The water on the public road had leave to cover the bridge.

*Josephine:* Oh, let me loosen your cloak, ma'am. You are wet-drowned and perished.

*(She takes Kate's cloak and bonnet and shakes them before the fire.)*

*Timothy:* To follow the car-driver to the post-house, and to catch him, he could bring word to the barracks to send a sergeant to our aid. Let you go tell him that sir, and I'll stop and mind this lad.

*Nicholas:* Not at all, but you will come holding the lantern. The night is come on, and the road is as slippery as a road of ice. *(To Kate.)* We'll be back in a while's time.

*Kate:* Oh, what way can I stop here in the room after all has happened. The fright is gone into my heart!

*(She takes cloak and bonnet from Josephine and goes through door to kitchen.)*

*Nicholas (sarcastically):* The girl Josephine will maybe have the courage to stop for ten minutes, or twelve minutes, of time to guard you against a lad that has lost his senses and is tied with knots and with a rope.

*(They go out, Timothy carrying lantern.)*

*Josephine (stands looking out after them):* I'll go back to my mother's friends in the village. I'm not willing to stop longer in this place, and my uncle beckoning me to tell lies. *(She slips out, knocking over the umbrella that is in her way. Bangs the door after her. The room is almost dark. Dave stirs and moans. Kate, coming back, goes over and looks at him. She lights a candle, then goes to him again.)*

*Kate:* They were surely too hasty and too hard, treating him the way they did. I would hardly believe looking at him he could be so bad as what they say. And if he was itself, is it his fault, being as he was a child without a home? *(She touches his hair.)* There is blood on it, and a sharp wound upon his head.

*Dave (cries out):* Where am I? Loosen my hands. I cannot move!

*Kate:* Lie quiet, now, and I will do what I can for you.

*(She takes one of the fine towels from the chest, takes the silver bowl and pours water into it from the kettle.)*

*Dave:* Let me up out of this! Are they gone out, the cowards! My thousand curses on them! Loosen my hands till I will light a wisp in earnest! I'll get my revenge on them! That death may perish them! That I may see them kicked roaring through the provinces! Oh! there is a sting of pain—I cannot move—I cannot see—the blood is coming into my eyes *(his voice fails as his head sinks back, and he lies still).*

*Kate:* Close your eyes now till I'll wash the blood from them. *(She rolls up a sheet, and puts it as a pillow under his head, and washes the blood from his face.)* Here now is a knife. I will cut the cords from your hands *(does so)*, and from your feet *(he moves his limbs, and then lies quite still)*. He is in a doze of weakness. The poor child, all of them telling him he was bad, what way could he believe there was the breath of God in him? *(He moans as she washes the blood from his hair.)* Astray in the lonesome world, he never met with kindness or the love of kindred, to make his heart limber. *(She stoops and listens to his breathing.)* That he may get comfort in his sleep, where he is used to little comfort in his waking! That is all I can do for him now, but to bless him with the sign of Christ's cross. *(She makes the sign over him, and sits down on a chair near the fire and bows her head.)* Oh, King of Mercy come to his help! He is as lonesome as a weaned lamb gone astray among the stones. It is as if he had lost his way in the world, and been bruised on the world's roads. The dust has darkened his eyes, it is hard for him lift his head into the light. He is under clouds of trouble. Bring him to the dawn of the white day. Send a blessing on him from the Court of the Angels! *(She sings.)*

*There lust and lucre cannot dwell,  
There envy bears no sway,  
There is no hunger, heat nor cold,  
But pleasure every day.*

*Thy gardens and thy gallant walks  
Continually are green,  
There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers  
As nowhere else are seen.*

*Quite through the trees with silver sound  
The flood of life doth flow  
Upon whose banks on every side  
The wood of life doth grow.*

*There trees for evermore bear fruit,  
And evermore do spring;  
There evermore the angels sit  
And evermore do sing!*

*(Music is heard outside as she ceases.)*

There is music outside—sweet quieting music. It might be some poor wandering fiddler going the road through the provinces. (*She stands up and looks at Dave, then sits down again facing him.*) He is sleeping very easy. There is surely someone having a wish for him, in or out of the world.

*Dave (moves and mutters, then raises himself on his elbow as if listening. He laughs.):* I am coming—I could not see the path, but I heard the music and the laughing—merry laughter, not mocking. Is it me you're calling brother? It is long since I was called by that name. Am I your brother, and you with your head held so high? I see the door open—but there is a dyke between us. Reach me out your hand—it is hard to get over the dyke. There is the music again. (*He closes his eyes.*)

*Kate:* He is maybe listening to the Birds of Heaven. It is sometimes a vision is sent through the passion sleep of the night.

*Dave (he has moved a little, but is still listening):* I had a bad dream. I dreamed I was on a rough road—with ugly words—with mean company—the mud was splashed on me and the dirt—(*listens*)—I will, I will do your bidding as it is your will. I will go back till I have leave to come to you—till such time as you will beckon me to come. (*He lays down his head and sleeps again.*)

*Kate:* He surely got comfort in his sleep. There is a bright appearance on

his face.

*Dave (starting up):* Where am I? What is this place?

*Kate (standing up, and coming nearer):* Where were you, agra?

*Dave:* Some good place it was—a very green lawn. It had no bounds to its beauty (*puts his hand over his eyes*).

*Kate:* It was surely a good dream.

*Dave:* There were some that held the hand to me. Who were they? I was to find something. Oh! it is going astray on me! I cannot keep it in my mind!

*Kate:* It will likely come back to you again.

*Dave:* It was as if all the herbs of summer were in blossom—I think no one could be sick or sorry there. I would nearly say it had what should be the sound and the feeling of home.

*Kate:* It was maybe not in this world you saw that good harbour.

*Dave:* And a very laughable thing. It was nearly like as if I was a king's son or a great gentleman. I could not but laugh thinking that. (*He lays down his head.*)

*Kate (moving away):* It is nearly a pity he had not the power to awake at the time that door was open. It is likely he will walk with his head up from this out, for it may be it was himself he saw in that dream.

*Dave (sitting up on the side of the settle):* Tell me, now, will it ever chance me to get there again?

*Kate:* It will surely at the last, with the help of God.

*Dave:* I will never be content or satisfied till I will come again to that dream.

*Kate:* You will come to it again surely, and it will be no dream.

*Dave:* I want to be in it now.

*Kate:* Any place that has the love of God in it is a part of that garden. You have maybe brothers under trouble to reach a hand to, and to beckon them to it, as there was a hand reached out to you.

*Dave:* What way could I do that, being as I am all badness, without goodness or grace?

*Kate:* Poor child, it is because they were always putting a bad name on you that you don't know you are good.

*Dave:* Good—You are the first ever said that to me.

*Kate:* It is certain the Man Above never sent you here without some little flame of His own nature being within you.

*Dave:* That is a great thought if it is true.

*Kate:* It is true, surely. Mind you never let that flame be quenched in you.

*(Dave buries his face in his hands.)*

*Kate:* You might maybe sleep again. The Lord be with you by noon and by night from this out, in the day and in the darkness! *(Goes taking candle.)*

*Voice of Nicholas (at the door):* I hear no sound. It is likely his senses are astray from him yet.

*Voice of Timothy:* A great pity it failed us to get word to the sergeant. With all the run I put on myself, the car was gone before me.

*(They come inside.)*

*Nicholas:* It will be time enough to get help in the morning. He is well tied and bound.

*Timothy:* He to start defaming or blaspheming, it's what we'll put a gag over his mouth. Or to redden the tongs, and threaten him with cruelty. It's little myself or the world would care he never to rise up again. He is a danger to the whole of the universe.

*Nicholas:* Bring in here the lantern before we'll fall over some chair.

*(Timothy brings it in at the same moment as Kate comes back with the candle. Dave stands up.)*

*Timothy (going behind Nicholas):* His hands are free! He'll do murder on us!

*Nicholas (seizing a chair, and holding it up):* Have a care now!

*Dave (as if surprised):* I have no wish to do hurt or harm.

*Timothy:* Do not trust him!

*Nicholas:* It is best for you quit this house before any worse thing might come about!

*Dave:* I will go. I think I did some foolish thing a while ago. *(Puts his hand over his eyes as if trying to remember.)* There was anger on me—I must have done with foolishness.

*Nicholas:* Whether or no, you will go do it in some other place than this.

*Timothy:* That's right—let him go beg his bread.

*(Dave goes towards the door.)*

*Kate:* Ah, Dave, stop awhile! I would be sorry to see you go begging your bread.

*Dave:* It would not be for honour, I to go quest or beg. I am going out as I came in, with my spade and the strength of my two hands that are all my estate. I am going in search of—to give help to—*(passes his hand over his eyes)* my people.

*Timothy:* It is in the gaols you will likely find them, or among those paupers that are rotting with the fever, and are thrown out by the side of the road.

*Dave (turning back, his eyes shining):* That is it! Those are the ones I will go to! The miserable people the preacher was seeking aid for. I will go look for them in Connacht over, and through the whole wilderness of Connemara!

*Timothy:* Much good you'll do coming to them, unless drinking and scheming!

*Dave (taking up his spade and hat):* If it should fail me to earn a handful of meal to keep the life in them, I can show service to the dead. Those that die on the roadside I will not leave to be dragged by a dog, or swallowed down in a boghole. If I cannot make out a couple of boards to put around them, I will weave a straw mat with my hands. If the dead-bells do not ring for them, I will waste a white candle for their wake!

*Kate:* Oh! You aren't hardly fit for that work, and your cheeks so pale, and the drops of blood on your brow.

*Dave:* I give you my word I never felt so merry or so strong. I am like one that has found his treasure and must go share it with his kin. Why wouldn't I be airy doing that? *(Goes out.)*

*Timothy:* A good riddance. I hate the living sight of him. Strutting out like a lord on the mall!

*Kate:* Stop your bad talk, Timothy. He is a good boy, and a decent boy, and a boy that doesn't deserve it from God or man.

*Timothy:* He is a thief and a robber. I will swear to it before any judge. Dave is a lad that belongs to the gallows.

*Josephine (who has come in and heard his last words):* I hear what you are saying, and it is not truth. I saw Dave going down the road, and I have it in my

mind it was your lies turned him out. (*Comes forward.*)

*Timothy:* Take care what you are saying!

*Josephine:* I know well what I am saying. Give up now to Nicholas O’Cahan what you have your hand on at this minute, and are keeping for your own profit. Hold him, sir!——

*(Timothy goes towards door, but Nicholas seizes his arms from behind, and while he struggles she tears his pocket open, and bag falls on to floor. Nicholas picks it up.)*

*Nicholas:* The girl is speaking truth. It is best for you to quit this. It is often it came across me that you, having the bad word so ready on your tongue should have some bad drop in yourself. But I made allowance for you, because of you being of a poor class, and of no ancient family or good blood.

*Timothy:* Ancient, is it? Let me tell you that if your family is ancient my own is more ancient again! Yourself and your generations and your Battle of Clontarf, that was for driving out the Danes! My own family was of the Danes, and came in with the Danes, and it’s likely were long in the country before those families were born that drove them out! The seed and breed of the Loughlans is more ancient, and is seventeen times better than any O’Cahan at all!

*Nicholas:* Of all the impudence! Quit this house before I’ll give you up to the Sheriff that will put you in the dock! (*He takes up his book and hurls it at him. Timothy escapes by the door. He sinks into an armchair.*)

*Kate (tearfully):* That is best. He had a bad thought of everyone, and that breeds badness in a house.

*Josephine:* Will you put me out, Ma’am, along with him, or will you let me stop and care you?

*Kate (tearfully):* I’ll put no one out. But the world is turned to be very queer. Too many hard knocks, and I do be tired in my legs. I’ve near a mind to go follow that poor lad that went out, not having a red halfpenny to handle, and wear out what is left of my life poor and banished like himself. And maybe get more respect that ever I got here, with my name not showing out in any old book!

*Nicholas (agitated):* What is on you, Kate? Don’t be talking about leaving me, and the way the wheel is going around. I take my oath I will never bring down my pedigree upon you again the longest day I’ll live! (*Gets up and flings the book on the hearth.*) Let it turn to ashes and my joy go with it, for nothing

in the mighty world will ever make me open it again!

*Kate:* I'm in dread you will be fretting after it yet, and make that a new reproach against my name.

*Nicholas:* Well, will this content you, that I'll give up my own name, and call myself Heniff from this out?

*Kate:* You cannot do that, and Nicholas O'Cahan being cut in clean letters on the slab you have ordered for your burying.

*Nicholas:* Ah, my poor Kate, what can I do to satisfy you? Listen now, you have leave to call that lad Dave back here from his poverty, if it is your will.

*Kate (goes to the window and looks into the darkness, and then turns back):* I wouldn't ask it. God has surely some great hand in him. He had the look of being very glad in the mind. His head held high, and a light on his brow as bright as the bow of heaven. May friends and angels be around him and steer him to a good harbour in the Paradise of the King!

CURTAIN

## NOTES TO DAVE.

This play was produced at the Abbey Theatre on May 9, 1927, with the following cast:—

NICHOLAS O'CAHAN.....	Michael J. Dolan
KATE O'CAHAN.....	Maureen Delany
TIMOTHY LOUGHLIN.....	P. J. Carolan
JOSEPHINE LOUGHLIN.....	K. Curling
DAVE.....	J. Stephenson

A thought long dwelling in my mind and that I had heard put by a poor woman in a workhouse into such simple words as, "There is no child comes into the world but brings with him some grain of the wisdom of Heaven," was brought nearer to dramatic expression when I saw in the *Irish Statesman* a poem by its Editor, A.E., who has allowed me to print it here and to dedicate the little play to him:

*"The gods have taken alien shapes upon them  
Wild peasants driving swine  
In a strange country. Through the swarthy faces  
The starry faces shine.*

*Under grey tattered skies they strain and reel there;  
But cannot all disguise  
The majesty of fallen gods, the beauty,  
The fire beneath their eyes.*

*They huddle at night within low, clay-built cabins,  
And, to themselves unknown,  
They carry with them diadem and sceptre  
And move from throne to throne."*

The verses sung by Kate are from an old hymn given in the *Oxford Book of English Verse* as "Song of Mary, Mother of Christ," with the date 1608. I have seen it elsewhere with an earlier date, and attributed to St. Augustine.

*The hymn is sung to this Air:—*



There lust and lu-cre\_\_ can-not\_\_ dwell. There  
en-vy bears no sway. There is no hun-ger heat nor cold but  
plea-sure\_\_ ev-'ry\_\_ day. Thy gar-dens and thy\_\_  
gal-lant walks con-tin-u-al-ly are\_\_ green. There  
grow such sweet and plea-sant flowers as\_\_ no-where else are seen.

*This old Irish Air "The Wheelwright" is the one heard outside the house.*



## TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

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[The end of *Three Last Plays: Dave* by Lady Gregory]