

Act One

When the play opens Michael is standing downstage left in a pool of light. The rest of the stage is in darkness. Immediately Michael begins speaking, slowly bring up the lights on the rest of the stage.

Around the stage and at a distance from Michael the other characters stand motionless in formal tableau. Maggie is at the kitchen window (right). Chris is at the front door. Kate at extreme stage right. Rose and Gerry sit on the garden seat. Jack stands beside Rose. Agnes is upstage left. They hold these positions while Michael talks to the audience.

Michael When I cast my mind back to that summer of 1936 different kinds of memories offer themselves to me. We got our first wireless set that summer – well, a sort of a set; and it obsessed us. And because it arrived as August was about to begin, my Aunt Maggie – she was the joker of the family – she suggested we give it a name. She wanted to call it Lugh* after the old Celtic God of the Harvest. Because in the old days August the First was *Lá Lughnasa*, the feast day of the pagan god, Lugh; and the days and weeks of harvesting that followed were called the Festival of Lughnasa. But Aunt Kate – she was a national schoolteacher and a very proper woman – she said it would be sinful to christen an inanimate object with any kind of name, not to talk of a pagan god. So we just called it Marconi because that was the name emblazoned on the set.

*Lugh – pronounced 'Loo'. Lughnasa – pronounced 'Lōō-na-sā'.