

SYNOPSIS

Translations is set in 1833, when the Irish community in a small village of Baile Beag must face an Ordnance Survey of Ireland. The story is started in a hedge school, when Manus is teaching Sarah to speak. Manus is the oldest son of Hugh Mor O'Donnell, the headmaster of the hedge school. Sarah is unable to speak, and she has difficulties in saying a word. When Manus is teaching Sarah, Jimmy Jack Cassie always disturbs them. He is a student who always proud of Greek literature.

After a while, Maire, a strong-minded woman, enters the class. When Manus and Maire talk about the British Army in Baile Beag, Doalty and Bridget enter. Doalty is a surveyor's pole, and Bridget is an open-minded girl. Both of them talk about the British Army who tries to get detail information of Baile Beag by digging the ground. Then, they talk about a new national school and potato blight in Baile Beag, along with its effect for the Irish community itself. They are still discussing about the condition in Baile Beag, when Hugh enters. He comes from the baptism of Nellie Ruadh's baby, and on the way to the hedge school, he meets the British Royal Engineers, Captain Lancey and Lieutenant Yolland. Hugh feels disappointed when he knows that both of the Royal Engineers cannot speak Irish. For him, English is not a suitable language for the Irish community. But Maire says that English should be learned if they want to progress.

Suddenly, Owen, Hugh's youngest son enters. He arrives from Dublin, and comes back to Baile Beag as a British translator. He arrives with the British Army

who will take an Ordnance Survey in Baile Beag. The Royal Engineers (Captain Lancey and Lieutenant Yolland) will lead the survey. Captain Lancey will make the new map of Baile Beag, and Lieutenant Yolland will standardize the Irish language into English. On the other side, Manus disagrees with Owen's position as a translator. He thinks that the survey is only for the benefit of the British Empire. This condition has caused conflict among the Irish community itself.

A few days later, the sappers start to map most of Baile Beag. Owen and Lieutenant Yolland also begin to standardize the Irish language into English. Owen helps Lieutenant Yolland to pronounce the Irish place names and translate it into English. On the other side, Lieutenant Yolland wants to learn the Irish language. But he knows his position as an outsider in Baile Beag. Even if he can speak Irish, he still can not be a part of the Irish community. He also feels that Ordnance Survey in Baile Beag is an eviction of sorts. After a while, Manus enters and says that he will work in an island south of Baile Beag, Inis Meadhon. He is offered a job in the hedge school there. Then, Maire enters, and Owen tells her that Manus will work in Inis Meadhon. Owen tells Maire because he knows that she is Manus' girlfriend. But Maire says that there will be a dance party in the following night. She asks Owen to invite Lieutenant Yolland to attend the party.

The following night, Maire and Lieutenant Yolland dance together. They talk to each other by using their own different language. Maire speaks Irish, and Lieutenant Yolland speaks English. Even though they speak in different language, they try to understand each other feelings. Through their gestures, Maire and Lieutenant Yolland know that they fall in love to each other. The silent condition

causes them show their sympathy, and suddenly they kiss. But they do not know that Sarah is staring at them, and she runs to tell Manus about what she has seen there.

After the dance party, in the following evening, Sarah and Owen are alone in the schoolroom. Then, Manus enters and says that he will leave Baile Beag. Owen tries to stop him because Lieutenant Yolland is missing, and the British Army thinks that the Irish community is the suspect. But Manus still insists to leave. After a while, Doalty and Bridget enter and say that there are many soldiers outside. They try to find Lieutenant Yolland by destroying Baile Beag. Suddenly, Captain Lancey enters, and he says that the British Army will take some actions if the Irish community does not give information about Lieutenant Yolland. The British Army will embark a series of evictions and levelling of every place in Baile Beag. For Hugh, the destruction of Baile Beag has reminded him about the 1798 rebellion. Knowing that Captain Lancey will destroy all area of Baile Beag, Owen regrets of what he has done in helping the British Army. He feels that the destruction of Baile Beag is his mistake. The destruction of Baile Beag has made the Irish community feel desperate to accept their condition.