

**THE BUILDING
FUND, A PLAY IN
THREE ACTS**

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The building fund, a play in three acts by William Boyle

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WILLIAM BOYLE

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DUBLIN: MAUNSEL & CO., LTD.,
60, DAWSON STREET, 1905.

PERSONS.

MRS. GROGAN, a miserly old woman.

· SHAN GROGAN, her son, another miser.

SHEILA O'DWYER, her granddaughter.

MICHAEL O'CALLAGHAN, an elderly farmer.

DAN MACSWEENEY, a young farmer.

TIME—THE PRESENT.

THE BUILDING FUND was first produced by the Irish National Theatre Society in the Abbey Theatre, on Tuesday, 25th April, 1905, under the direction of W. G. Fay, with the following cast :—

<i>Mrs. Grogan,</i> ...	...	EMMA VERNON.
<i>Shan Grogan,</i> ...	...	W. G. FAY.
<i>Sheila O'Dwyer,</i> ...	...	SARA ALLGOOD.
<i>Michael O'Callaghan,</i> ...	...	F. J. FAY.
<i>Dan MacSweeney,</i> ...	...	ARTHUR SINCLAIR.

SCENE—A' Farmhouse Kitchen.

A month elapses between Acts I. and II., and three days between Acts II. and III.

THE BUILDING FUND.

ACT I.

SCENE : *A large, untidy farm kitchen. Loud knocking at door. Grogan discovered. He peeps out of door.*

Grogan. The collectors for the new chapel ! God direct the best way to avoid them ! (*Moves about uneasily, pauses, returns, and peeps out again. Speaks softly through room door.*) Whist there, girl ! Don't open the hall-door ! Be off into the garden and weed the onion-bed. (*Knocking repeated.*) I'm afraid it's no use ! They'll come round to the back when they can't manage it at the front. But it's a mean thing to give in without a blow, so I'll make tracks into the back bedroom. [*Exit.*

[*Enter O'Callaghan and MacSweeney. The latter carries a collecting-book in his hand.*

O'Callaghan. We might be rapping at the front door till Sunday.

MacSweeney. That's the only day the miserable creatures open it.

O'Callaghan. They 'll have to open it wide enough before long to let out the old woman's coffin. God knows she might grow a little tenderer at the end of her days, but it's harder and harder she gets. Still, she's decency itself compared to her son.

MacSweeney. Well, if they don't open their purse for the Building Fund, Father Andrew will read the Riot Act to them.

O'Callaghan. And why wouldn't he? (*Knocks on table.*) The Grogans must behave like other people. Everyone subscribes but them. If they won't subscribe, they ought to be made examples of. [*Knocks again.*

MacSweeney. Shan's coming at last. When he finds he can't shut the door in our faces, he'll try to put us off with blarney. [*Enter Grogan.*

Grogan. Boys, O boys! Is it yourselves that's in it? It's a cure for sore eyes to see the pair of you. Won't ye take the weight off your limbs, gentlemen? Come over here to the fire. Sorrow be off that lazy girl, she let it out again! Never mind. It's the fine, warm weather that's in it, glory be to God! only a little showery for the hay-making. And how is all your care, Mr. O'Callaghan? I was sorry to the heart to hear about the loss of your poor aunt. I wouldn't have missed the funeral on any account, only the mare had such a bad cough on my hands.

[*They remain standing.*

O'Callaghan. We call, Mr. Grogan, regarding the collection for the new church. Father Andrew hopes you'll give us something towards the building fund.

MacSweeney. He expects, Shan, you'll top the parish with a big subscription.

Grogan. Oh, but he's the joker! Me that has neither chick nor child to say a prayer in it after me!

O'Callaghan. You are the sort he expects the most from. Put down your name for a hundred and you'll never be forgotten, Shan, as long as grass grows or water runs.

Grogan. The chapel that's in it is good enough for my day.

O'Callaghan. The chapel that's in it is falling down on top of us.

Grogan. Well, there were very good people in Ireland when they had to hear Mass on the hill-sides—better far than now.

MacSweeney. That's neither here nor there, Mr. Grogan. This parish has decided, after due deliberation, that it wants a new one. *I* proposed the resolution at that meeting assembled. Will *you* follow up my efforts by giving fifty pounds to the fund?

Grogan. Fifty pounds! Young man, do you think that I'm going out to rob?

MacSweeney. Oh, there's easier ways of getting money than that.

Grogan. Marrying a girl with a fortune—the way you be trying to do, eh?

O'Callaghan. Come, come, Shan; the question is will you subscribe fifty pounds?

Grogan. I'll not give fifty pound because I haven't one pound of my own between me and death.

O'Callaghan. Oh, now, Shan, we're not gossoons. We all know one another here.

MacSweeney. You bought Moloney's place for seven hundred. You gave five hundred for the Mill Farm over the heads of people in it since the Flood. You and your mother have more money in the Bank than either of you knows what to do with; and you can't spare a trifle between you for the good of your poor, old miserable souls!

Grogan. Just listen to that, Mr. O'Callaghan. You'd think the decent boy was bargaining for a girl. He has good practice that way by all accounts, and knows everywhere there's a dry penny far or near.

O'Callaghan. I think it's very sound talk. People must support their religion, you know. If not, what would become of it?

Grogan (changing his manner). Sit down, Michael. Draw a chair over beside me, Mr. Dan.

[*They all sit down.*]

Grogan (confidentially). Ye both take me for a hard man, I suppose?

O'Callaghan (smiling). Well, now is your chance to make us change that opinion, Shan.

Grogan. Thank you, Michael dear, and change it you will. Would either of you think, now, that a person who gave half of all he had in the world would be doing well?