

The Great Irish Potato War

A Short Play

By Richard Medugno

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Characters (in order of appearance):

GRANDPA SPUD

TATER TOT #1

TATER TOT #2

TATER TOT #3

GENERAL SHEPHERD PYE

HASH BROWN – A YOUNG POTATO SOLDIER

CHIP SAINT-RUSSET – A YOUNG POTATO SOLDIER

ENGLISH MUFFIN MAN

SETTING:

In the wilderness.

Scene One: Irish intro music plays. GRANDPA SPUD and his grandchild walk on and sit around a campfire at night.

GRANDPA SPUD

Gather 'round the campfire, my darling tater tots.
But don't be gettin' too close now, if you don't
want to become crisps.

TATER TOT #1

Grandpa Spud, will you tell us a scary story?

GRANDPA SPUD

Indeed, I will, indeed, I will, if that's what all ye
tater tots be wantin' to hear...

TATER TOTS

(all together excitedly)

Yes! Yes! Please, please, Grandpa Spud. Please!

GRANDPA SPUD

All right then! Settle down, and I'll tell you the story of the Great Irish Potato War. It happened when I was a wee murphy of a boy back in the old country...We potatoes were having of a devil of a time growing in the small rocky lots of Ireland that the bloody English forced us into. The Irish people were starving to death and finally we spuds had had enough. And we started a revolt against the English Muffin Men who oppressed us. At first, we were having a wee bit of success, but really we were just throwing peat briquettes and dirt clods against the sharp metal swords and iron pitch forks...

TATER TOT #1

You did not have potato guns, Grandpa Spud?

GRANDPA SPUD

Are you taking the piss out of me?! Ach! There was no potato guns back then, ya eejit! This was long before they were invented. But we had a fearless leader from County Mayo by the name of General Shepherd Pye...And in the middle of a fierce fight he gathered us around...

Scene Two: *Sound effects: distant bombs, yelling, and battle mayhem. GENERAL SHEPHERD PYE stands on a crate as he tries to rally his troops. HASH BROWN and CHIP SAINT-RUSSET are wearing uniforms, CHIP has a green beret.*

GENERAL

All right, ya brave young tubers, desperate times call for desperate measures. The bloody English Muffin Men are getting the best of us. Any of you spuds have a grand idea how we can save our skins and take back control?

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HASH BROWN

(Raising his hand)

General Shepherd Pye, Sir?

GENERAL

Aye, Sgt. Hash Brown, do ye have an idea to save us from being scalloped alive?

HASH BROWN

I do, sir, but I don't know if—

GENERAL

Well, out with it, we haven't time to dither! Don't be a hesi-tater!

HASH BROWN

All right, then. It's kind of a suicide mission. I'm not sure any of us is ready to die—

GENERAL

Feck that! Our motto has always been: live free or fry.

HASH BROWN

Okay, then. My plan is called the Kamikaze Catapult.

GENERAL

Jaysus, Mary, and Joseph! What the feck is a Kamikaze Catapult?

CHIP SAINT-RUSSET

Let him explain, sir.

HASH BROWN

Aye, sir, we create a slingshot like David and the Giant Goliath from the Bible. Only instead of loading the sling with a stone, we put in a hot potato. One of us.

GENERAL

But why is it better to sacrifice one of us instead of using a stone?

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HASH BROWN

Splatter, sir. An Irish potato upon impact will break apart like a drunken priest's teapot on the rectory wall. Potato splatter will take out 10 or more English at a time.

GENERAL

I'm likin' what I'm hearin', Hash Brown. Now, who's willing to be the first to sit in the fires of hell for a spell and then climb into the slingshot?

CHIP SAINT-RUSSET

I will, sir!

GENERAL

Chip Saint-Russet, as I live and breathe! Thou art a brave tuber indeed! More than worthy of the green beret!

CHIP SAINT-RUSSET

Well, I thinkin' I'm an eejit, so let's go before I change my mind!

HASH BROWN rolls out a bedsheet and throws an end to the GENERAL. They wind it up and create a sling, where CHIP SAINT-RUSSET gets in the center and prepares to be flung across the stage.

HASH BROWN

Are you ready, Chip?

CHIP SAINT-RUSSET

Dunno...I'm starting to feel a bit of a pringle in the pit of me stomach.

GENERAL

Wait! We forgot to lays potato Chip in the fire!

CHIP SAINT-RUSSET

Too late now, General. I'm ready as I'll ever be. My salad days are over. Besides, revenge is best served cold!

HASH BROWN & GENERAL

One, two, three, go!

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HASH BROWN and GENERAL launch a screaming CHIP SAINT-RUSSET offstage. They watch in horror as CHIP doesn't land well. They turn to console each other swearing.

HASH BROWN & GENERAL

Ah, fook! Sweet suffering Moses! Ah, for the love of St. Patrick! Ah, for Pete's sake! Ah, mother of God! I can't believe what I'm seeing...

ENGLISH MUFFIN MAN walks on stage with a pitchfork and a big potato wearing a green beret stuck on the end of it.

ENGLISH MUFFIN MAN

I say, old chaps, did you lose something? Hahaha.

Jabs at them with the pitchfork. HASH BROWN and GENERAL run offstage, screaming in fear. ENGLISH MUFFIN MAN laughs.

Scene Three: *GRANDPA SPUD and his grandchild still sitting around a campfire, but the TATER TOTS are holding each other tightly, scared out of their minds.*

GRANDPA SPUD

It's true we lost many a good tuber that day and the fields ran red with—

TATER TOT #2

Blood?

GRANDPA SPUD

Catsup!

The TATER TOTS scream in horror.

GRANDPA SPUD

Believe it or not, things only got worse. They poured salt into our wounds. Next came a blight on all the potatoes on the Emerald Island and turned us to mush. That led to the Great Famine and the Irish diaspora.

TATER TOT #3

Grandpa Spud, what happened to you and the other Irish tubers?

GRANDPA SPUD

Oh, my sweet potatoes, it pains me so to tell ye this, but I'll be yammed it if don't. We was kicked off the island without even a bloody vote. And everywhere we survivors landed we was roasted, baked, broiled, and mashed. Why, in France, they even sliced us into thin strips and boiled us in deep vats of oil.

Again, the TATER TOTS scream in horror.

TATER TOT #1

But things got butter when you came to America, right, Grandpa Spud?

GRANDPA SPUD

Not at first, lassie, not at first. When we arrived, they diced us up and threw us into salads and soups.

Again, the TATER TOTS scream in horror.

GRANDPA SPUD

But slowly, things changed. America began to accept us...They began to treat us like royalty, rolling us up in silver and serving us in the finest restaurants stuffed with cream and chives!

TATOR TOT #2

So, your scary story has a happy ending?

GRANDPA SPUD

Feck no! Ya pea-brained banshee! The English Muffin Men followed us here!

The English Muffin Man jumps out with his pitchfork.

ENGLISH MUFFIN MAN

I say, little spuds, who wants their eyes poked out first?! Hahaha.

The TATER TOTS run off screaming and the ENGLISH MUFFIN MAN chases after them.

GRANDPA SPUD
(directly to the audience)

Oh, don't worry about them, it's all just a big joke.
Every so often, I need to teach these young'uns to
respect their elders by taking the starch out of
them.

BLACKOUT.