

- SAMPLE SCRIPT LAYOUT -

Finding Hans (Episode One) by Rebecca Bartlett

1

➤ FX: MOBILE PHONE.

1 DARIUS:

Freya ... where are you?

2 FREYA:

We've found her Darius ... she was tied up ...

3 DARIUS:

(INTERRUPTING) Salengra knows we've recruited you. She's probably right behind you ...

4 GERDA:

Look ... coming out of the river ...!

➤ FX: THUNDER.

5 FREYA:

There was a crash of thunder, then from under the water came a thick blue light. It threw out sparks of itself which danced in front of our eyes and made us dizzy. Then Salengra was there walking towards us out of the river. By her side was the biggest wolf I've ever seen. As Salengra came close he bared his teeth and then lifted his head to howl.

➤ FX: WOLF HOWL.

6 DARIUS:

(FROM THE MOBILE PHONE) Freya what's happening? Freya! Talk to me ...

7 SALENGRA:

Oh, do shut up Darius!

8 FREYA:

Salengra simply clicked her fingers and the phone went dead.

➤ FX: THE WOLF GROWLS.

[This page represents approximately one minute of playing time including music & effects.]

RTÉ  
PJ O'CONNOR  
RADIO DRAMA AWARDS  
2023



RTÉ

# PJ O'CONNOR RADIO DRAMA AWARDS 2023

To commemorate the late head of RTÉ Radio Drama  
PJ O'Connor





## AIM

To encourage new writers of radio drama and to increase awareness of the possibilities and scope of radio as a medium in the field of drama.

## AWARDS

Professional production of the best three 40-minute plays with  
€5,000 to Winner  
€4,000 to Runner Up  
€3,000 to Second Runner Up

## Rules Of The Competition

1. The competition is for radio plays of duration no longer than 40 minutes only
  2. Plays must be specifically written for radio. Stage plays or plays requiring adaptation will not be considered.
  3. Entries should be typed, double-spaced and on one side of the paper only. The standard size of a radio script is A4. Please follow the **sample script layout**
  4. The writer should be Irish or resident in Ireland.
  5. The play may be in Irish or English.
  6. The competition is open to (a) new writers. (b) writers with a maximum of one-hour of radio drama professionally produced.
  7. Only one entry per person is allowed and plays previously submitted are not acceptable.
  8. There will be no professional involvement other than that provided by the RTÉ Radio, Drama on One Department.
  9. No correspondence will be entered into regarding this competition, except notification of winners.
  10. Please keep a copy of your play as no entries will be returned.
  11. Submissions should reach RTÉ Radio, Drama on One at **pjoconnorscripts@rte.ie** by **5:00 pm on Friday 26th January 2024**
  12. 1st place, 2nd place and 3rd place winners will be awarded a contract. No amendments shall be made to the contract. RTÉ will not broadcast the winning play(s) until the contract has been executed by the winners and RTÉ. RTÉ will have the right to broadcast unlimited FM and digital rights on any platform now available or yet to be invented including streaming or download. To view contract go to [rte.ie/dramaonone](http://rte.ie/dramaonone)
  13. Writers are requested to fill in the Entry Form and where a pseudonym has been used, please also state your real name. Your name should only appear on the entry form and not on the script.
  14. RTÉ, Drama on One can no longer accept hard copy scripts
- SEND ALL ENTRIES TO: **pjoconnorscripts@rte.ie**

**Note: Many winning entries from previous years can be heard at [rte.ie/dramaonone](http://rte.ie/dramaonone)**

Many winning entries from recent years can be heard at any stage on the Drama on One website at [www.rte.ie/dramaonone](http://www.rte.ie/dramaonone).

## THE NATURE OF THE MEDIUM

Radio is a deceptive medium. On the surface it has obvious attractions for the writer in its very simplicity and freedom from technical restrictions. It offers greater freedom from the bounds of time and space than any other medium. It can span centuries and continents and can present extremes of action and movement without the limitations imposed by the cost of sets and costumes. It can explore the recesses of a person's mind without the problem of how to fill the rest of a stage or screen. In short, it is bound only by the limits of the individual listener's imagination.

It would be wrong to assume, however, that this freedom makes radio easier to write for than other media. While it may be comforting for the writer to imagine that directors, designers, lighting and costume experts and so forth will not be imposing their creative ideas on the production of the play, there is a corresponding burden on them to supply, in the dialogue, a richness of content and implication.

The dialogue of the play, in most media, represents only a part, however important, of the total emotional and intellectual impact of the whole production. Indeed, the burden of the emotional impact in many stage or screen plays is frequently conveyed by visual factors in the production which are wholly unspoken.

In radio, the writer must provide everything in the dialogue. The producer can underline, heighten or embroider by skilful casting, timing and use of effects and music, but can seldom, if ever, create from scratch an idea which is not originally planted in the dialogue. At the same time, the writer's dialogue must be capable of the same naturalistic style in radio as in any other medium.

It follows that radio dialogue and construction make the highest possible demands on the writer's skill. The idea that a radio play is "all talk" in a conventional, conversational sense is pure fallacy.

## SOME PRACTICAL POINTS ON CONSTRUCTION

1. In radio, scenes should only be as long as is necessary to make their point. "Padding" is unattractive in any medium. In radio it is fatal. Radio is very easy to switch off. It is also worth noting that too many extremely short scenes do not work well on radio.
2. When nearing the end of a scene, it is important to prepare the listener, as subtly as possible, for the next one. It is easy enough to make a rapid change of scene from a technical point of view, but the listener needs help. They have no programme and cannot see.
3. "Stage directions" for the producer's benefit only should be avoided. If it is important, it should be in the dialogue. If it is not, then nobody needs to know.
4. It should be remembered that the listener will always, quite involuntarily, supply their own mental images in response to what they hear. They should be given enough ideas to work on, but never so many that they become restricted or confused. Radio is not a definitive medium. At all levels, it should stimulate only.
5. When deciding the number of characters in a scene, it should be borne in mind that the only ways of establishing someone's presence unequivocally are either to have them speak or to have them be addressed by name. If there are too many characters in a scene, the listeners will lose track or become confused.
6. Sound effects, either singly or in sequence, should certainly be part of the writer's concept but they should be regarded normally as useful additions to, and only rarely as substitutes for, the dialogue.
7. Since radio involves only one of the senses, it is important to construct each

individual scene, and the play as a whole, to produce a variety of sound which will hold the listener's attention. This variety can be achieved in length of scenes, number of people speaking, pace of dialogue, volume of sound, background acoustics and location of action. For example, the difference between an interior and an exterior acoustic is considerable.

8. There is no formula for writing a successful radio play. It requires all the basic techniques of good dramatic writing plus an imaginative awareness of the restrictions and advantages of a medium where nothing is seen. It is only by listening as often as possible to radio plays that a writer can begin to judge what works and what does not work well.

## SOME PRACTICAL POINTS ON PRESENTATION

1. Submissions must be typed or printed, double spaced, and should be on one side of the paper only. Please follow the **SAMPLE SCRIPT LAYOUT**.
2. Following the Sample Script Layout, the script for a 40 minute play should not exceed 40 pages. Dramatic monologues will be considerably shorter at about 25 pages. In either case, the maximum word count should be 6,500 words. (Wordcount under Tools on the Toolbar is a useful guide.)
3. The standard size of a radio script is A4.
4. In the interest of clarity, it is important that the names of characters should be in capital letters and be clearly separated from their speech.
5. The names should be given in full throughout. You may know the characters well enough to call them, for example, Mr B, Miss C etc. after the first page, but the reader coming to the play for the first time does not, and their appreciation of the play will suffer if they have to continually check the first page to find out who is talking.
6. It is also important for clarity that any description of sound effects or other technical directions should be clearly differentiated from the parts of the script intended to be spoken.
7. It is of great assistance to the RTÉ Radio Drama Department if you attach a synopsis of the play to the beginning. A cast list, with brief notes on each character, is also very useful.
8. For ease of reference, the pages of a script should be numbered consecutively throughout. Please note that each speech should be numbered and each new page should begin with speech number 1.

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(SAMPLE SCRIPT OVERLEAF)