

THE DEVIL'S LARDER

AN ADAPTATION ON LOCATION IN 17 SCENES

**"There are no bitter fruits in heaven
Nor is there honey in the Devil's larder"** *Visitation 7.11*

We are approaching again our favourite subject, the impact of food on human society. After *Gargantua* (1998), which celebrated a carnivalesque weekend of feeding, constrained by the tyranny of the nine-five working week (staged in an abandoned bank and its vaults, which we christened the Underbelly), and *Fermentation* (2002), the study of a pregnant woman haunted by erotic dreams fuelled by her craving for cheeses (staged in an abandoned fish market and again in the Underbelly); we tackle, with great relish, Jim Crace's bewitching novella *The Devil's Larder*.

"We mean, at last, to cross the barriers of taste"
'Curry No.3', The Devil's Larder

What I found so extraordinary about his book was the extent to which it moves beyond the clichés inherent in the subject and interrogates food as if it is a language in its own right, though an extraordinarily flexible language that adapts itself to the widest possible variety of situations. Perhaps, anyway, food is the most intercultural and international language there is, more so even than sex. Unfortunate hotel guests, mothers and daughters, bored friends at a dinner party in desperate need of excitement, the unexpected disappointment of champagne, the culinary afterlife of the produce of an old man's guts, the ritual of eating the old year out... and many more angles on the subject make up Crace's tapestry of stories. We have selected seventeen chapters of the sixty-four in the book which seemed to us most appropriate for the creation of this location theatre piece.

"Beware the chilling phrase: "This calls for some champagne!"
'Champagne', The Devil's Larder

Crace's novella unleashes all the human passions and conflicting emotions: feelings of revenge, lust, hope, anger, empathy, disappointment, chagrin and love which seethe and surge beneath such seemingly everyday items as the shopping list, the menu and the recipe book.

"You can't eat grief. It's far too strong and indigestible...you have to let the sorrow swallow you." *'Ashes to Ashes', The Devil's Larder*

Crace's work, teasing, sometimes erotic and sometimes unexpectedly tender and moving, has inspired a team which unites previous Grid Iron collaborators with several guest artists from Cork, where the show was created; as the company, in the spirit of Corcadorca's Relocation event of which it is a part, relocated its entire operation to the city.

"Jerusalem artichokes. The gift of a patient. He grew them himself."
'The Old Man's Artichoke', The Devil's Larder

The two sites: in Cork, the building which contains the old City Morgue and in Edinburgh, Debenhams on Princes Street, could hardly be more diverse. Each site has framed the text in a different way. Often, the building has proved the final dramaturg, the final editor and certainly the final sequencer of these stories. Crace's work, which looks at the uncanny beneath the surface of the everyday, the genteel (one of his major themes in *The Devil's Larder* seems to be an attack on the small-mindedness of small towns, the seething jealousies, rivalries and even latent violence of those who have perhaps become too cosy and comfortable for their own good), finds different but complimentary resonance in the two contrasting spaces.

"His water is quite clear. Not salty either. His kidneys have removed the salt." *'Piss or Brine', The Devil's Larder*

In a way, the project unites two strands of our location work, the work in hidden, abandoned or forgotten spaces on the one hand (underground vaults, a derelict house, abandoned bank offices, the foundations of a weir) and the very public spaces whose primary and on-going use is not theatre (a hospital, a children's playground, a department store) on the other. The fetid cupboards of our site in Cork and the everyday shop floor of our Edinburgh location have made us interrogate and re-assess the text in ways we could never have dreamed of.

"He should not miss this second opportunity to recreate himself with food" *'Unique Shopping Fingerprint', The Devil's Larder*

BEN HARRISON, THEATRE DIRECTOR, GRID IRON

NB The titles for the stories or chapters referred to in this programme are the invention of Ben Harrison and were used for the adaptation. In Crace's original the chapters are simply numbered 1-64.



Devils Larder

Rosina Ehmann



Devils Larder:

The Top Books of the Year Devils Larder The year 2023 has witnessed a remarkable surge in literary brilliance, with numerous compelling novels captivating the hearts of readers worldwide. Lets delve into the realm of popular books, exploring the engaging narratives that have captivated audiences this year. Devils Larder : Colleen Hoover "It Ends with Us" This heartfelt tale of love, loss, and resilience has captivated readers with its raw and emotional exploration of domestic abuse. Hoover skillfully weaves a story of hope and healing, reminding us that even in the darkest of times, the human spirit can succeed. Devils Larder : Taylor Jenkins Reids "The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo" This spellbinding historical fiction novel unravels the life of Evelyn Hugo, a Hollywood icon who defies expectations and societal norms to pursue her dreams. Reids absorbing storytelling and compelling characters transport readers to a bygone era, immersing them in a world of glamour, ambition, and self-discovery. Devils Larder : Delia Owens "Where the Crawdads Sing" This captivating coming-of-age story follows Kya Clark, a young woman who grows up alone in the marshes of North Carolina. Owens weaves a tale of resilience, survival, and the transformative power of nature, captivating readers with its evocative prose and mesmerizing setting. These top-selling novels represent just a fraction of the literary treasures that have emerged in 2023. Whether you seek tales of romance, adventure, or personal growth, the world of literature offers an abundance of captivating stories waiting to be discovered. The novel begins with Richard Papen, a bright but troubled young man, arriving at Hampden College. Richard is immediately drawn to the group of students who call themselves the Classics Club. The club is led by Henry Winter, a brilliant and charismatic young man. Henry is obsessed with Greek mythology and philosophy, and he quickly draws Richard into his world. The other members of the Classics Club are equally as fascinating. Bunny Corcoran is a wealthy and spoiled young man who is always looking for a good time. Charles Tavis is a quiet and reserved young man who is deeply in love with Henry. Camilla Macaulay is a beautiful and intelligent young woman who is drawn to the power and danger of the Classics Club. The students are all deeply in love with Morrow, and they are willing to do anything to please him. Morrow is a complex and mysterious figure, and he seems to be manipulating the students for his own purposes. As the students become more involved with Morrow, they begin to commit increasingly dangerous acts. The Secret History is a masterful and thrilling novel that will keep you speculating until the very end. The novel is a warning tale about the dangers of obsession and the power of evil.

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Devils Larder Introduction

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