

Book 1, Chapter 8 (Anna Livia Plurabelle), *Finnegans Wake* by James Joyce

Finnegans Wake was James Joyce's final novel before his death in 1941, published in 1939. It is widely considered one of the most challenging books to read. Joyce uses a language affectionately known as Wakese which is an amalgam of dozens of languages, primarily English, crammed together in a portmanteau of various, nearly limitless, meanings. The book begins with the second half of the final sentence, giving it a cyclical nature. Joyce's novel is nearly a compendium of the world in words, incorporating world religions, customs, languages, mythologies, folktales, histories, events, and figures. Its endless enigma of meaning and story is filled with puns and humor as well as life lessons. The day before his 55th birthday, Joyce wrote, "Either the end of Part I [ALP] is something or I am an imbecile in my judgement of language."


The main characters are Mr. Porter (in the dream he is primarily Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker [HCE]) and his wife Mrs. Porter (she is known as Anna Livia Plurabelle [ALP]) who live above their pub in Chapelizod, a suburb of Dublin, with their twin sons, Jerry and Kevin (primarily Shem and Shaun in the dream), and their daughter, Isobel (Issy). Porter is a type of beer so it is appropriate for the name of a tavern owner. Just as *Ulysses* takes place over a single day, *Finnegans Wake* takes place overnight as the Chapelizod family sleeps. This accounts for the dreamlike Wakese language and ever-shifting characters, scenes, and events. According to Anthony Burgess, "...HCE has, so deep is his sleep, sunk to a level of dreaming in which he has become a collective being rehearsing the collective guilt of man. Man falls, man rises so that he can fall again; the sequence of falling and rising goes on till doomsday." This connects with the title of the book as *fin* is *end* in French so end-again-wakes. Burgess continues, "The record of this, expressed in the lives of great men, in the systems they make and unmake and remake, is what we call history. What Joyce is doing, then, is to make his hero re-live the whole of history in a night's sleep." This explains the many languages, myths, historical figures, and events. After all, as Burgess states, "the purpose of a dream is to obscure truth, not reveal it."

One of the most iconic and beautifully written chapters of *Finnegans Wake* is the Anna Livia Plurabelle chapter: Book I, Chapter 8. Anna Livia (ALP), is not only HCE's wife, but the personification of the River Liffey which flows from the Wicklow Mountains through Ireland and empties into the sea in Dublin. Just like the water cycle, ever-flowing, so does the novel never end as stated above. In this chapter, two washerwomen are cleaning the clothes of HCE on either side of the River Liffey. They gossip about the lives and rumors surrounding HCE and ALP. HCE is caught up in some sort of scandal involving two girls in Phoenix Park which we never fully comprehend and ALP spends the chapter either trying to distract from it or defend him. The water of the River Liffey (ALP) is washing away her husband's guilt, redeeming him. As the chapter continues, the river widens, the banks grow farther apart, and the washerwomen have to shout to hear one another. As night falls, one of the washerwomen turns into an elm tree and the other turns into a stone.

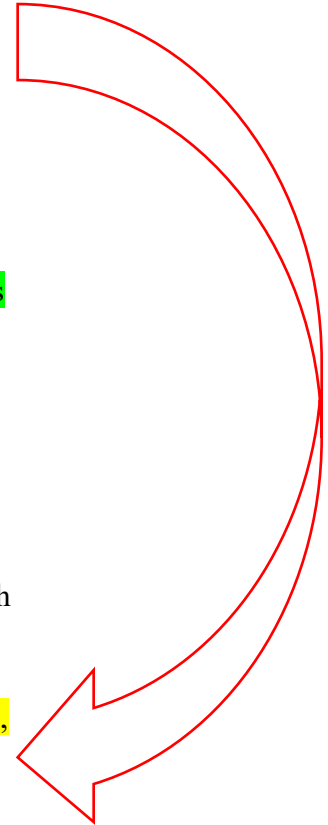
O

tell me all about

Anna Livia! I want to hear all

 = the end of a section to study.

about Anna Livia. Well, you know Anna Livia? Yes, of course, we all know Anna Livia. Tell me all. Tell me now. You'll die when you hear. Well, you know, when the old cheb went fut and did what you know. Yes, I know, go on. Wash quit and don't be dabbling. Tuck up your sleeves and loosen your talktapes. And don't butt me — hike! — when you bend. Or whatever it was they threed to make out he thried to two in the Fiendish park. He's an awful old reppe. Look at the shirt of him! Look at the dirt of it! He has all my water black on me. And it steeping and stuping since this time last wik. How many goes is it I wonder I washed it? I know by heart the places he likes to saale, duddurty devil! Scorching my hand and starving my famine to make his private linen public. Wallop it well with your battle and clean it. My wrists are wursty rubbing the mouldaw stains. And the dneepers of wet and the gangres of sin in it! What was it he did a tail at all on Animal Sendai? And how long was he under loch and neagh? It was put in the newses what he did, nicies and priers, the King fierceas Humphrey, with illysus distilling, exploits and all. But toms will fill. I know he well. Temp untamed will hist for no man. As you spring so shall you neap. O, the roughy old rappe! Minxing marrage and making loof. Reeve Gootch was right and Reeve Drughad was sinistrous! And the cut of him! And the strut of him! How he used to hold his head as high as a howeth, the famous eld duke alien, with a hump of grandeur on him like a walking wiesel rat. And his derry's own drawl and his corksown blather and his doubling stutter and his gullaway swank. Ask Lictor



Hackett or Lector Reade of Garda Growley or the Boy with the
Billyclub. How elster is he a called at all? Qu'appelle? Huges Caput
Earlyfouler. Or where was he born or how was he found? Urgothland,
Tvistown on the Kattekat? New Hunshire, Concord on the Merrimake?
Who blocksmitt her saft anvil or yelled lep to her pail? Was her banns
never loosened in Adam and Eve's or were him and her but captain
spliced? For mine ether duck I thee drake. And by my wildgaze I thee
gander. Flowey and Mount on the brink of time makes wishes and fears
for a happy isthmass. She can show all her lines, with love, license to
play. And if they don't remarry that hook and eye may! O, passmore that
and exus another! Don Dom Dombomb and his wee follyo! Was his
help inshored in the Stork and Pelican against bungelars, flu and third
risk parties? I heard he dug good tin with his doll, delvan first and
davlva after, when he raped her home, Sabine asthore, in a parakeet's
cage, by dredgerous lands and devious delts, playing catched and
mythed with the gleam of her shadda, (if a flic had been there to pop up
and pepper him!) past auld min's manse and Maisons Allfou and the rest
of incurables and the last of immurables, the quaggy waag for
stumbling. Who sold you that jackalantern's tale? Pemmican's pasty pie!
Not a grasshoop to ring her, not an antsgram of ore. In a gabbard he
barqued it, the boat of life, from the harbourless Ivernikan Okean, till he
spied the loom of his landfall and he loosed two croakers from under his
tilt, the gran Phenician rover. By the smell of her kelp they made the
pigeonhouse. Like fun they did! But where was Himself, the timoneer?
That marchantman he savied their scutties right over the wash, his
cameleer's burnous breezing up on him, till with his runagate bowmpriss
he roade and borst her bar. Pilcomayo! Sucheaghtawan! And the
whale's away with the grayling! Tune your pipes and fall ahumming,

you born ijypt, and you're nothing short of one! Well, ptellomey soon and curb your escumo. When they saw him shoot swift up her sheba sheath, like any gay lord salomon, her bulls they were ruhing, surfed with spree. Boyarka buah! Boyana bueh! He erved his lille Bunbath hard, our staly bred, the trader. He did. Look at here. In this wet of his prow. Don't you know he was kaldt a bairn of the brine, Wasserbourne the waterbaby? Havemmarea, so he was! H.C.E. has a codfisk ee. Shyr she's nearly as badher as him herself. Who? Anna Livia? Ay, Anna Livia. Do you know she was calling bakvandets sals from all around, nyumba noo, chamba choo, to go in till him, her erring (cheel) and tickle the pontiff aisy-aisy? She was? Gota pot! Yssel that the limmat? As El Negro winced when he wonced in La Plate. O, tell me all I want to hear, how loft she was lift a laddery dextro! A coneywink after the bunting fell. Letting on she didn't care, sina feza, me absantes, him man in passession, the proxenete! Proxenete and phwhat is phthat? Emme for your reussischer Honddu jarkon! Tell us in franca lingua. And call a spate a spate. Did they never sharee you ebro at skol, you antiabecedarian? It's just the same as if I was to go par examplum now in conservancy's cause out of telekinesis and proxenete you. For coxyt sake and is that what she is? Botlettle I thought she'd act that loa. Didn't you spot her in her windaug, wubbling up on an osiery chair, with a meusic before her all cunniform letters, pretending to ribble a reedy derg on a fiddle she bogans without a band on? Sure she can't fiddan a dee, with bow or abandon! Sure, she can't! Tista suck. Well, I never now heard the like of that! Tell me moher. Tell me moatst. Well, old Humber was as glommen as grampus, with the tares at his thor and the buboes for ages and neither bowman nor shot abroad and bales allbrant on the crests of rockies and nera lamp in kitchen or church and giant's

holes in Grafton's causeway and deathcap mushrooms round Funglus grave and the great tribune's barrow all darnels occumule, sittang sambre on his setti, drammen and drommen, asking queasy quizzers of his ruful continence, his childlinen scarf to encourage his obsequies where he'd check their debths in that mormon's thames, be questing and handsetl, hop, step and a deepend, with his berths in their toiling moil, his swallower open from swolf to fore and the snipes of the gutter peeking his croes, hungerstriking all alone and holding doomsdag over hunselv, dreeing his weird, with his dander up, and his fringe combed over his eyes and droming on loft till the sight of the sternes, after zwarthy kowse and weedy broeks and the tits of buddy and the loits of pest and to peer was Parish worth thete mess. You'd think all was dodo belonging to him how he durmed adranse in durance vaal. He had been belching for severn years. And there she was, Anna Livia, she darent catch a winkle of sleep, purling around like a chit of a child, Wenda wanda, a fingerthick, in a Lapsummer skirt and damazon cheeks, for to ishim bonzour to her dear dubber Dan. With neuphraties and sault from his maggias. And an odd time she'd cook him up blooms of fisk and lay to his heartsfoot her meddery eygs, yayls, and staynish beacons on toasc and a cupenhave so weeshywashy of Greenland's tay or a dzoupgan of Kaffus mokau an sable or Sikiang sukry or his ale of ferns in trueart pewter and a shinkobread (hamjambo, bana?) for to plaise that man hog stay his stomicker till her pyrraknees shrunk to nutmeg graters while her togglejoints shuck with goyt and as rash as she'd russ with her peakload of vivers up on her sieve (metauwere rage it swales and rieses) my hardey hek he'd kast them frome him, with a stour of scorn, as much as to say you sow and you sozh, and if he didn't peg the plateau on her tawe, believe you me, she was safe enough. And then she'd esk to

vistule a hymn, *The Heart Bowed Down* or *The Rakes of Mallow* or Chelli Michele's *La Calumnia è un Vermicelli* or a balfy bit ov *old Jo Robidson*. Sucho fuffing a fifeing 'twould cut you in two! She'd bate the hen that crowed on the turrace of Babel. What harm if she knew how to cockle her mouth! And not a mag out of Hum no more than out of the mangle weight. Is that a faith? That's the fact. Then riding the ricka and roya romanche, Annona, geboren aroostokrat Nivia, dochter of Sense and Art, with Sparks' pirryphlickathims funkling her fan, anner frostivying tresses dasht with virevlies, while the prom beauties sreeked nith their bearers' skins! — in a period gown of changeable jade that would robe the wood of two cardinals' chairs and crush poor Cullen and smother MacCabe. O blazerskate! Their porpor patches! And brahming to him down the feedchute, with her femtyfyx kinds of fondling endings, the poother rambling off her nose: *Vuggybarney*. *Wickerymandy!* Hello, ducky, please don't die! Do you know what she started cheeping after, with a choicely voicey like waterglucks or Madame Delba to Romeoreszk? You'll never guess. Tell me. Tell me. *Phoebe, dearest, tell, O tell me and I loved you better nor you knew.* And letting on hoon yar daft about the warbly sangs from over holmen: *High hellskirt saw ladies hensmoker lilyhung pigger:* and soay and soan and so firth and so forth in a tone sonora and Oom Bothar below like Bheri-Bheri in his sandy cloak, so umvolosy, as deaf as a yawn, the stult! Go away! Poor deef old deary! Yare only teasing! Anna Liv? As chalk is my judge! And didn't she up in sorgues and go and trot doon and stand in her douro, puffing her old dudheen, and every shirvant siligirl or wensum farmerette walking the pilend roads, Sawy, Fundally, Daery or Maery, Milucre, Awny or Graw, usedn't she make her a simp or sign to slip inside by the sullyport? You don't say, the sillypost?

Bedouix but I do! Calling them in, one by one (To Blockbeddum here!
Here the Shoedienigacaddie!) and legging a jig or so on the sikh to show
them how to shake their benders and the dainty how to bring to mind the
gladdest garments out of sight and all the way of a maid with a man and
making a sort of a cackling noise like two and a penny or half a crown
and holding up a silliver shiner. Lordy, lordy, did she so? Well, of all
the ones ever I heard! Throwing all the neiss little whores in the world
at him! To inny captured wench you wish of no matter what sex of
pleissful ways two adda tammar a lizzy a lossie to hug and hab haven in
Humpy's apron!