

# PROGRAMMANUS

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## THE CAMBRIA

### Episode six – The minstrel's show

*INTRO:* This is the true story of the escaped slave and asylum-seeker Frederick Douglass and his journey to Ireland in 1845 aboard the trans-Atlantic paddle steamer the Cambria. The story is told in the present by Colette and Vincent sitting in their living room, recording a story for a Nigerian girl, Leanna, an asylum-seeker who has been deported from Ireland. Two of the passengers on board are Mr. Dodd, a slave-owner and his daughter Matilda who thinks that Douglass is a minstrel, an entertainer. During the whole trip, she has wanted Douglass to perform for her, but he has repeatedly said no. Finally, Mr. Frederick Douglass' identity is revealed and he is put in prison on board. Now, Miss Hutchinson has opened the prison.

CECILY: Mister Douglass! You're free.

FREDERICK: (INTERNAL) I step into the light.

*INTRO:* But Mr. Dodd comes after Mr. Douglass and points a gun at him.

DODD: Five, four, three, May God have mercy on your heathen soul.

*INTRO:* Suddenly, Matilda turns up. She thinks it's showtime.

MATILDA: Dodda! You're in Mister Johnson's show! And he's given you a gun! I bet it fires a sign that says bang! You're funny Mister Johnson!

DODD: Matilda! Go back to the cabin!



MATILDA: Dodda! You're in Mister Johnson's show! And he's given you a gun! I bet it fires a sign that says bang! You're funny Mister Johnson!

DODD: It's not a show Matilda!

MATILDA: Oh yes it is!

DODD: Oh no it's not!

FREDERICK: Anyone who wants to can be a minstrel Matilda. I learned that from you. Miss Hutchinson will show you where my tricks box is.

MATILDA: Oh goody! Do you think that's a good idea Dodda?

DODD: Yes Matilda. Go!

CECILY: This way Matilda!

MATILDA: See you in the show, Dodda!

DIGNAM: Freddie jump run clamber up a ladder fast – through a door across a floor.

DODD: Seize the renegade!

**renegade**  
*här: rebell*

FREDERICK: I breathe .. I breathe ..

DODD: Heave him ho ..

**heave**  
*häva/ kasta*

DIGNAM: Stop I roar I reach to tear their grip away I bite a rumped fist I twist a finger rip an ear let him go I banshee ..

**rumped**  
*skrynklig*  
**banshee**  
*kvinnlig fe/  
dödsomen*

DODD: Send him DOWN! Damn you DOWN!

FREDERICK: (SLOWLY, INTERNALLY) Momma's tired surging eyes .. twelve miles she walked to see me, twelve miles more to the slave-driver's call at dawn .. Go now Momma ..

**surging**  
*här: tårfyllda*

DODD: Down, damn you, down!

JUDDY: (SUDDENLY) Mister Dodd! I have here the ship's manacles! Implements I know are dear to your heart! I would shackle and confine you NOW were it not for your daughter! You will remain in your cabin for the rest of this voyage!

**shackle**  
*boja*



DODD: Don't be a fool! Mister Cunard is a close friend of mine!

JUDDY: If he is, he has lost himself the services of the captain of his flagship The Cambria! Mister Douglass! Come up here beside me!

JUDDY: Pitch into them like bricks, Douglass! Use my speaking-trumpet!

FREDERICK: That box that Miss Hutchinson is holding – will you open it please?

CECILY: Certainly, Mister Douglass!

FREDERICK: Lift out the first item please!

DIGNAM: She lifts out this thick ring of rusty iron –

FREDERICK: This is an iron collar which was taken from the neck of a young woman who had escaped from Mobile. If you look closely, you can see that it had so worn into her neck that her blood and flesh still clings to it.

DODD: It's a concoction!

DIGNAM: The choir-leader lady passes it to me. It is no concoction.

FREDERICK: Take out the second item please.  
These are fetters used in chaining the feet of two slaves together. I was present when they were sawn off the ankles of both screaming men who had run more than forty miles over rough ground.

DODD: These are cock-and-bull stories!

FREDERICK: This is a pair of handcuffs taken from a fugitive slave who escaped from Maryland into so-called free Pennsylvania. I knew this man well.

DODD: If any of you believe this grotesque fantasy, you are a gullible fool!

MATILDA: Hullo-oh!

DODD: Matilda! How did you get up there!?

**concoction**  
*påhitt*

**fetters**  
*bojor*

**gullible**  
*lättlurad*



MATILDA:	It's called the hurricane deck! I'm in the show, Dodda. And so is Mirabelle! I've decided I'm going to set Mirabelle free. It's not fair that she should spend so much time cooped up in that box. Just to entertain us, Dodda! It's unforgiveable. Here!	
MATILDA:	She's out of her box and the music still plays. See!? She wants to be in the show. As a trapeze girl! She can fly now, Dodda. Catch!	<b>trapeze</b> <i>trapets</i>
DODD:	Matilda, Matilda, you'll cry until you die  if Mirabelle breaks from the fall unless I –  throw myself across the deck, slide in the mud,  splinters in my chin damn it worth it if I could just –	<b>splinter</b> <i>sticka</i>
SOLOMON:	Mirabelle, Mirabelle, the siren of the sea,  back to the furnaces, my comrades and me ..	<b>furnace</b> <i>smältugn</i>
JUDDY:	Released from Papa's mast, released from my past, my albatross is soaring, Miss Hutchinson she laughs ..	<b>soar</b> <i>stiga</i>
CECILY:	Frederick Douglass, the hero of the day, minstrel most magical, you have performed your play.	
MATILDA:	Mirabelle is falling, awfully fast, I hope she learns the flying thing she's leaving until last ..	
DODD:	Stretch my hand, knuckles burn against the wood, I – catch little Mirabelle! Matilda – she's good!	
MATILDA:	Good man Dodda! You caught her! Now we can sing!	
CREW:	(SING) Paddle steamer paddle steamer paddle steamer paddle steamer Way, haul away, we'll haul away together  Way, haul away, we'll haul away Joe.	



FREDERICK: You don't need to use me as an excuse for a champagne breakfast.

JUDDY: You haven't forgotten my pledge to you when I showed you to your cabin!? Champagne breakfast if we seize the Blue Riband!

**pledge**  
*löfte*

FREDERICK: I fear my presence on board cost you the Blue Riband for fastest crossing.

JUDDY: You gained me the real Blue Riband of truth to oneself. To curse my father is to bless my children. With the ability to laugh. Did you see the look on Dodd's face when I told you to pitch into them like bricks!? And you did. You pitched into them rightly!

FREDERICK: I reckon Mister Dodd owes me a two hundred dollar performance fee.

JUDDY: Mister Dodd has served me with legal papers. I and the Cunard Line are impelled to hold you and take you back to Boston. As a carrier we are bound by international agreements. You are, in their eyes, stolen goods.

**has served**  
*här: har delgivit*  
**impel**  
*tvinga*

FREDERICK: (POINTEDLY) What do you suggest?

JUDDY: My father made his living from the Slave Trade. He was a ship's captain. I followed in his wake. The price he received for his work paid for my training in the merchant navy. I would not be here otherwise. (PAUSE) Two years ago I saw a slave-ship. I had cause to go aboard. I knew in that horrific instant why my father never smiled.

**wake**  
*här: kölvatten*

FREDERICK: We cannot be our father's keeper. Certainly, I could not be mine.

JUDDY: In Queenstown, we walk together. Gallows-companions. If we swing, we swing for freedom.

**gallow**  
*galge*

JUDDY: Oh no! There's a bloody band. On the dockside. Telescope .. And Cunard himself on the bandstand. He's travelled to claim the Blue Riband. But we've lost it. A calamity!

**calamity**  
*katastrof*



DODD: (LOUD) Quite a reception Mister Cunard's organised, don't you think, Captain!? Pity that I'll be serving him with the deposition you have brought upon his head!

JUDDY: Do as you think fit, Mister Dodd!

DODD: I do only what is right and proper! Stolen property must be returned to lawful owner! Carry out your duty, Captain!

JUDDY: Lower the gangplank!  
(INTERNAL) The bandleader stands waiting, baton poised.

DIGNAM: Freddie, look! There's Daniel O'Connell! There's the man you want to meet! They've got a platform erected! Look!

JUDDY: The Cambria bleeds its passengers. Finally, Dodd stands at the top of the gangplank. Hand out for Matilda.

MATILDA: Wait Dodda! (CALLS) Mister Douglass –

DODD: Stop that Matilda –

MATILDA: But I have to do something Dodda!

DODD: His name is not Mr. Douglass!

MATILDA: (CLOSEUP TO FREDERICK) Here's Mirabelle, Mister Douglass! Take her please! I want you to take good care of her! I'm never going to put her in that tiny box again.

FREDERICK: I will, Matilda.

MATILDA: I knew you were a minstrel!

FREDERICK: Oh no I'm not!

MATILDA: You're the best minstrel ever. Goodbye.

DODD: Matilda! Mister Cunard and the band are waiting! Damn bandleader doesn't seem to recognise me.

DIGNAM: Then Freddie lifts up his tricks box and his luggage case and steps onto the gangplank!



DIGNAM: And the music bursts forth! And an almighty roar breaks from the surging crowd! A fountain of hats and caps in the air! And Daniel O'Connell raises his arms above his head and claps his hands in applause.

FREDERICK: I walk down the gangplank puzzled by all the noise. Then I hear the chant of the crowd.

**chant**  
*taktfast ropande*

DIGNAM: "Douglass ... Frederick Douglass"

JUDDY: I watch Frederick Douglass shake hands with Mister Cunard, and talk long and earnestly with Daniel O'Connell MP.

**earnestly**  
*ärligt, uppriktigt*

O'CONNELL: Ladies and Gentlemen, it gives me the utmost pleasure, tempered with humility in the presence of one who has suffered so much at the hands of a violent system of repressive governance fuelled by slave labour, to introduce to you Mister Frederick Douglass, known, may I humbly submit, among the freedom-loving people of the Northern United States as - the Black O'Connell! Frederick Douglass -

**tempered**  
*mildrat*  
**humility**  
*ödmjukhet*  
**fuelled**  
*pådrivet*  
**submit**  
*presentera*

FREDERICK: We want you to speak to those in America and say "while your hands are red with blood, while the thumb screws and gags and whips are wrapped in the pontifical robes of the Law, we will have no fellowship with you."

**pontifical**  
*påvliga*

DIGNAM: "Douglass ... Frederick Douglass"

FREDERICK: "I have travelled from the Hill of Howth to the Giant's Causeway, and from the Giants' Causeway to Cape Clear. I can truly say I have spent some of the happiest days of my life since landing in this country. I seem to have undergone a transformation. I live a new life. The warm co-operation extended to me by the friends of my despised race; the liberal manner in which the Press has rendered me its aid; the spirit of freedom which seems to animate all with whom I come in contact, and the entire absence of prejudice against me, contrasts so strongly with my bitter experience in the United States, that I look with wonder and amazement on the transition.

**despised**  
*föraktad*  
**rendered aid**  
*hjälp*



FREDERICK (CONT): I had been in Dublin but a few days when a gentleman of high office offered to conduct me on all the public buildings of that beautiful city. And soon afterwards I was invited by the Lord Mayor to dine with him.

V/O OBAMA on TV: “Frederick Douglass, an escaped slave and our great abolitionist, forged an unlikely friendship right here in Dublin with your great Liberator Daniel O’Connell”.

VINCENT: Frederick Douglass did speak on a platform with Daniel O’Connell. Not as he got off The Cambria! We made that up. No, he spoke with O’Connell in the Conciliation Hall in Dublin. Do you know where that is? It’s where you were brought that night all the way from Sligo to be deported, Leanna – the Garda national Immigration Bureau on Burgh Quay in Dublin. Where the Guinness ships were docked when I was twelve like you are now. He declared his famous motto there. “Power concedes nothing without demand; it never did; and it never will”.

COLETTE: Frederick Douglass, one-time asylum-seeker and refugee. Just like you, Leanna! Just like you! A hundred and seventy years later, in these more enlightened times. History is full of occasions when people challenged the system that calls itself order, as Frederick Douglass did.

VINCENT: Wherever you are now, we send this message to you Leanna –

COLETTE: We apologise for what was done to you in our name.

VINCENT: And we promise to make sure no other child is violently restricted in their growing years as you were in our name.

COLETTE: Every time I open my musicbox I’ll think of you. Until I give it back to you, and watch you open the lid again, when you’re welcomed here in Ireland, as warmly as Frederick Douglass was, and offered an apology for the wrong done to you.

EXTRO: *That was the sixth and final episode of The Cambria. All parts were played by Sorcha Fox and Donal O’Kelly. Music by Trevor Knight. The Cambria was written and directed by Donal O’Kelly of Benbo Productions for Ocean FM, Ireland.*