

Dismissed!

Black, red and silver, the helmet's hard dome summons the pomp of a ramrod Empire, spike on top like the stem on a pepper – these Irish loyal servants were hot-housed by officers from crack British regiments. Poor Catholic boys already schooled in obedience drank down the seductive potion – safety in uniform and rank, standing rifle-straight outside the barracks they guarded. How could they not have been divided? Even before the revolution an aged sergeant was heard in his confusion issuing commands that ricocheted between haggard and barracks yard– *Yessir! Nosir! At Once! Dismiss! Halt! Woah back, Whee! Gee up! That's the gurl! Fine Hay! Pike it up there, Jim! Dismiss! Yessir! Nosir, At once Sir!*

*Martina Evans*