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Song of Joy--Or the Old Reliables: A Sequel to Sean O'Casey's Juno and the Paycock

--Written by David J. Marcou, Playwright. For the Casts, Crews, Readers, and Audiences That Make This Play Real and Ideal.--Copyright©2000-2010+, David J. Marcou and Matthew A. Marcou.

"I believe that in a great city, or even in a small city or a village, a great theatre is the outward and visible sign of an inward and probable culture." -- Sir Lawrence Olivier

"If a play is what it ought to be, it must be a religious function, whether it is played before a community of thousands or a community of ten." – Sean O'Casey

"But then, ain't all religions curious? If they weren't, you wouldn't get anyone to believe in them." – Joxer Daly, in 'Song of Joy—Or the Old Reliables'.

"Only God or Time can vindicate the judgment of man. To me one thing alone is certain – we are all one in the tremendous and glorious bond of humanity. Jew, Gentile, bond and free, Tory and Communist can never break away from this grand bond. We are born, we die and we must do the best we can between the day of birth and the night of death." – Sean O'Casey

"When he reached his eighties his vision had deteriorated so rapidly that he could see nothing except the difference between light and dark... But he never surrendered. He remembered that Beethoven wrote his greatest symphonies when he was deaf...and that Renoir went on painting when he was so rheumatic that he had to tie the brush to his hand... He never considered himself too old to be instructed about anything from any source.... But he was creative and imaginative and he was spiritually alive until the last moment. He had the moral courage of an idealist. Whatever his religious ideas may have been, I think God had reason to be proud of Sean O'Casey. – Brooks Atkinson

"Sacred Heart o' the Crucified Jesus, take away our hearts o' stone... and give us hearts o' flesh! Take away this murderin' hate... an' give us Thine eternal love!" – Mrs. Tancred, 'Juno and the Paycock'

"I have found life an enjoyable, enchanting, active, and sometime terrifying experience, and I've enjoyed it completely. A lament in one ear, maybe, but always a song in the other." – Sean O'Casey

Introduction: 'Song of Joy—Or the Old Reliables' is based on five characters from Sean O'Casey's 'Juno and the Paycock,' with the Dublin tenement setting and plotline moved ahead 18 years, to 1940, with several new characters added. This sequel involves the potential for a rise in fortune of the Boyle Family -- the Captain and wife Juno, and their daughter, Mary, who married a physician after giving birth to a daughter out-of-wedlock from a previous affair. Also key is the remembrance in 'Song of Joy' of Johnny Boyle, murdered in 'Juno' when he betrayed an IRA comrade. 'Juno and the Paycock' was strong tragicomedy, while 'Song of Joy' focuses mainly on comedy and redemption, though comedy often springs from tragedy, or the 'tragic irritation,' as Phyllis Diller once said. But the question must be asked: Is it human goodness that motivates the reformed characters most, the difficult truth of their situation, or the scent of money?—Transcribed by David J. Marcou from the impressions of Colleen M. Hogan, first director of 'Song of Joy—Or the Old Reliables.'

Dramatis Personae:

"Captain" Jack Daniel Boyle

Juno Rosemary Boyle, his wife

Johnny Boyle, the Boyles' murdered son, apparition, and the apparitions who killed him

Mary Boyle Fitzgerald, the Boyles' grown daughter

Dr. John Dennis Fitzgerald, Mary's husband

Shivaun (Gaelic: Siobhan) Fitzgerald, John's adoptive and Mary's teenage daughter

John "Johnny" Fitzgerald Jr., John Sr. and Mary's teenage son

Joxer Daly, the Captain's pal

David and Diane George, a newly arrived American businessman and his wife

Fr. Michael "Rocky" Murphy, pastor of St. Bartholomew's Church

Agnes (Aggie) Ida Objong, Joxer's mulatto girlfriend

Lizzie Objong, Aggie's mother

Alan Matthews, a friend of Johnny's and a newsboy

Stephen Fitzgerald, a news reporter and cousin of the John and Mary Fitzgeralds
Tommy Malone, a friend of the Boyles
Claudine O'Malley, a solicitor
Ray O'Reilly, a barkeeper
Ray's family (including wife Polly), musicians and singers
People at pub, church, and cemetery
Mrs. Tancred.

Actions:

Act I - Interior of St. Bart's Church, Dublin, the day after Ash Wednesday.
Act II, Scene 1 - Living room and kitchen of the Boyle's apartment, Dublin, that night.
Act II, Scene 2 - Same apartment, the next Tuesday.
Act III, Scene 1 - A pub, late on Holy Thursday afternoon.
Act III, Scene 2 - The Boyles' apartment, supertime, Holy Thursday.
Act III, Scene 3 - Same apartment, two hours later.
Act III, Scene 4 - The Boyles' bedroom, late that night.
Act IV, Scene 1 - Interior of St. Bart's, Good Friday.
Act IV, Scene 2 - Front steps of St. Bart's, Good Friday.
Act IV, Scene 3 - Interior of St. Bart's, before Easter Sunday services.
Act IV, Scene 4 - Grave of Johnny Boyle, Dublin outskirts, Easter Sunday afternoon.

Period of Play: Lent, 1940.

Start Music: 'Danny Boy' and 'My Wild Irish Rose'

Intermission Music: 'The Minstrel Boy'

End Music: 'Amazing Grace'.

Musical Interludes Between Scenes: Of Directors and Musicians' Choosing, in Consultation with Playwright, Et. Al.

Act 1

Action: The interior of St. Bart's Church, the day after Ash Wednesday, 1940. We see a portion of the right side of the church with a confessional at back-center stage, and candles at right. The priest's area is lit with a red light. There are no penitents present yet. There are pews. The door of the church, off stage left, opens and shuts. Two voices can be heard, arguing.

FIRST MAN (*too loud a voice*): I keep tellin' you, Joxer, I'm not goin' to tell the Father all me sins, just the big ones.

SECOND MAN: (*half-whispering, with his finger to his lips*) Shhhh – or the father will have us for supper. But you said you're not goin' to tell him about you-know-what. Don't you think that's a big one?

They enter, stage left. The First Man is "Captain" Jack Boyle, a lean man, though he was somewhat portly earlier in life. He's in his 70s, with a semi-bald, shaggy-sided head of gray hair, and he carries an old sea captain's black hat and wears lived-in clothes and spectacles. Though his language seems coarse, he's not unhandsome or completely without charm. The Second Man, his pal, is Joxer Daly, about Boyle's age. Joxer's of slightly taller than medium height, and is slim, with spry good looks. He wears an ironic smile, as well as only slightly better lived-in clothes than the Captain's. He is still wearing a dark green beret.

BOYLE (*still somewhat loud, grabbing Joxer's beret*): Take that thing off in here, will you? Jesus be praised, what have you got for brains? Peas?

JOXER (*looking at his cap in Boyle's hand, smiling*): Now, now, Captain, I was just about to remove me cap. Don't I know the right way to praise the Saviour, even if I haven't been in church – same as you – since Johnny's funeral. But then, ain't all religions curious? If they weren't, you wouldn't get anyone to believe in them.

BOYLE (*giving the cap back*): Just keep it off a little while, will you? I want to have me confession heard, and I don't need you talkin' about how negligent I've been for the last 18 years, at least as far as church manners go.

JOXER: I hope ya know that Joxer respects the time we've spent together for a lot longer than 18 years.

BOYLE: Jesus above us, you're me pal, Joxer, but you don't know the first thing about church. Confession is confession, and pals is pals, and never the two should mix.

JOXER: Do you really think Jesus wants to hear the likes of that? If I was God Himself, I surely wouldn't want to see my creatures quarreling about such paratoces. Sure, tis Himself that'd want us talkin' more 'bout the great emotions, like the paaaassions we feel -- the great loves and hates that inspire the two of us and others besides.

BOYLE: My goodness, Joxer, 'twas a mouthful coming from the likes of you. Since when did you learn about paratoces?

JOXER: Oh, I just picked it up on me own, and I read a little, too.

BOYLE: Never mind, not now about your reading. I need to go to confession. If Mrs. Boyle's ta forgive me about, well, you-know-what -- which isn't a big sin, mind you, especially not a mortal one -- then I need to be getting behind the curtain, NOW!

JOXER (*the curtain in the priest's stall moves*): Jeez, did you see that? What's goin' on there?

BOYLE (*looking where Joxer points*): Here, here, Joxer, don't you know the priest's in his element there. That's how you know he is ready, willin', and able to take us on.

JOXER (*the priest coughs and Joxer looks twice*): By the grace o' God, the priest has a smoker's cough. Aren't you glad you never took up that wicked habit, Captain? But what I mean is, with so many tempting habits in the world, it's a wonder more people don't take up smoking to rest their emotions.

BOYLE: I know what you mean, Joxer, me boy. Still, I'm happy none of me own family has ever smoked. Mind you, I've been tempted. When you sit in a pub long enough, some things start to look awfully good.

JOXER: Yes, and the women that smoke now make me think the world is in a terrible state o' chassis.

BOYLE: That it is, Joxer, that it is. Why I saw Mrs. Madigan smoking like a fiend the other day, with her stogies and ciggies, and she in a pub besides.

JOXER: Mrs. Madigan, ya say. And wasn't it Joxer Daly that was beside you when you saw herself sinning against the tobacco laws o' God, pretty as ya please? I've even heard she likes women better than men. What do you think of that?

BOYLE: Yeah, she's a regular laesbian, I'd guess. Anyway, maybe it's time for me to be preparing for my first confession in more than twenty years. (*Nodding toward the altar-area.*) It's a church this is, so let's kneel down and say us a prayer.

JOXER: So it is, Captain, so it is. (*They make a production of kneeling in a pew, at a safe distance from the confessional.*) What should we say, then, Captain, to get started?

BOYLE: First, we have to make a sign -- of the cross (*He begins to do so, gingerly.*) Yes, that's how it goes. (*Completing it in Russian Orthodox fashion.*)

JOXER (*slowly signing*): I remember it, too. It's like so, then? (*finishing up correctly.*)

BOYLE: Yes, I think you've got it right, Joxer, me boy.

JOXER: Now what, Captain?

BOYLE: I suppose next we should ask for the Lord's help. Let's see... something like: Oh Lord, what brought us here is the sort of things only You can know. Me and Joxer, we haven't been so good always, though we do our best. Help us -- me -- confess the big sins I've done... you know, venal, or mortal, ones. And once I've confessed them, help Mrs. Boyle forgive me for not being a bigger man than I've been the last 18 -- make it 20 -- years. You know what I mean, Lord.

JOXER: I think He does, Captain, He does. And what are the big sins, then?

BOYLE: Well, for one thing, my friendship with some pretty unparticular fellows, excepting present company. And my drinking and the chassis I've brung on me family for so long, if it's it my own fault, a-tall.

JOXER: That's a good start, Captain. What's next?

BOYLE: Well, I could tell the Father how I got drunk the night Johnny died at the hands of his IRA buddies, and that I haven't worked a day since, or for a while even before that.

JOXER: That's good, too. What now?

BOYLE: Well, I don't want to tell him about, you-know-what... (*Joxer looks at him directly*), but... (*hard for him to say*) I suppose I could tell him that I came upon a blessing through no goodness of me own.

JOXER: Ah, Captain – that's a darlin' proposal, a darlin' proposal.

BOYLE: There you go again, Joxer Daly, mixing up darlings and confessions. Don't you know that darlings don't have anything to do with Captain Jack Boyle and his state o' grace right now.

JOXER (*sneezing twice*): Oh Lord, the air in here is gettin' cool, don't you think?

BOYLE: No, it isn't. Are you editerrorizing on me own state o' grace, you ignorant ol'...

JOXER (*gently raising his hand in protest*): Now, now, Captain, watch your tongue. And I don't think you mean editerrorizing -- editorializing is more like it. You know, if we start a brawl here in church, the good Father'll be hearing that you've got no reverence for the atmospherics in God's House? And innocent ol' Joxer'll be dragged into his upset, same as if the devil himself pitched in, just like the British did when the famine struck a hundred years ago.

BOYLE (*restraining his temper*): I suppose you're right, but I still don't like people sneezin' when I'm talkin'.

JOXER (*trying to distract the Captain*): Look there, Captain. (*Pointing.*) The Father's movin' about in there. I just saw the curtain move again, and the light blinked three times.

BOYLE: Maybe I ought to go in and talk to the good Father, don't you think?

JOXER: I expect so, Captain, and no time to waste about it either.

BOYLE: Aye... I'll go in – just got to clear me head first. (*He shakes his head.*)

JOXER: It's time, Captain, it's time....

BOYLE: Right you are, then; I'm going in, Joxer. Let me go, then, let me go – while I've still got me courage up.

JOXER: It ain't me, Captain, who's holding you back, go right ahead. (*Pushing the Captain.*)

BOYLE (*Pushing back, then standing*): Don't you push at me, Joxer Daly, don't push...

Suddenly, the priest -- a good-looking, well-built man about 40 -- emerges from his stall. Seeing the Captain standing and sensing the old man is here for confession, the priest points back at the confessional and Boyle nods his head yes. The priest re-enters his stall, and the Captain, after looking back at Joxer, makes his move and enters a stall. Joxer sits down as the green light above the penitent's stall goes on, and whispers can be heard. After a moment, the church doors open and close. Mrs. Juno Boyle enters. Instinctively, Joxer makes a move toward the confessional, as if to warn the Captain, but Juno enters too quickly and spots Joxer too abruptly for him to do anything further about it. Juno is dressed in a dark green dress and black shoes, with a red wool sweater, holes in the elbows. She's a woman about her husband's age, somewhat beautiful in a hard-working way, with salt-and-pepper-colored hair and no spectacles.

JUNO (*whispering loudly*): Joxer Daly, where is himself?

JOXER: It's beyond me knowin', Mrs. Boyle. I came in here to pray, and that's all I know.

JUNO (*ironically*): You came in here to pray, then, Joxer Daly, a man who hasn't darkened the church's doorstep since Johnny's fune-ril? What Shamrocks from Bantry have you been picking? Or has the brew from St. Patrick's Irishfest got to your brain at last? God be praised, if you weren't caught in such a lie.

JOXER: But you know how much I'm in need of prayer, Mrs. Boyle. After all (*working at this*), isn't it fair that I be praying for those who've yet to make their first million? And couldn't you say one for me on the way home? (*He tries to guide her out of the church, but Juno will have none of it.*)

JUNO: Don't try tricking me, Joxer. Himself's in the confessional, isn't he?

JOXER (*not able to stand up to Juno's will*): Yes, himself's in there. (*Shyly pointing.*)

JUNO: And why is it he's gone to confession after all these years?

JOXER: It's beyond me ways of knowin', Mrs. Boyle, beyond me ways of knowin'.

JUNO: It is, is it? Well, something tells me 'tis a sin or two of his I should be knowin' about.

JOXER (*lying through his teeth*): It's the usual sort of thing, Mrs. Boyle, cursin' 'n' drinkin' 'n' idleness, those sorts o' tings.

JUNO: Joxer Daly, that may be part of his agenda, but that's not what brought him into church after 18 years away. So what is it -- has he got a little girlfriend now?

JOXER: No, nothing like that, Mrs. Boyle -- (*mumbling out of the side of his mouth*) though that's not a bad idea, if you ask me, if you can find one, do...

JUNO: What did you say, Joxer? Speak up, you old fool!

JOXER: I said, it's nothing like that -- it'd be nothing but a bad idea to find one, too.

JUNO: Whatever it is, I'm going to find out. But it'll have to wait till I talk with the Captain. Now, I don't suppose you'd be going to confession, too, Joxer Daly (*looking at him hard*) -- are you?

JOXER (*his smile has disappeared; he speaks hesitantly, for the idea isn't his*): I-I-I suppose I am, Mrs. Boyle. I suppose I am.

JUNO: Good, it's about time you were makin' your peace with God. You know, a little faith could turn even you 'round, Joxer, not to mention the Captain.

JOXER (*trying to comprehend what this new development might mean*): Yes, it's about time I was making my peace with the Lord, all right. (*Trying to bluff.*) I agree with you one hundred percent, Mrs. Boyle.

JUNO: In any case, you won't regret so many things when ya make a good, clean confession, Joxer. I go every month myself, and I always feel better after I've made my peace with God through the Father. You know, Father Michael Murphy is a gem of a man, and it won't hurt you to get to know him.

JOXER: I suppose you're right, Mrs. Boyle; after all, God never closed a door when he didn't open two or three windows.

JUNO: Yes, I expect you'll have to close a door or two in confession to open up even one window for the rest o' your life. Same goes for the Captain, but you already know that.

JOXER: Indeed we do, Mrs. Boyle, the both of us.

JUNO (*more satisfied*): Good, now I've got to be getting home. But I'm going to find out soon enough what the Captain is so concerned about, that he's come to confession for the first time in more than 18 years. Mum's the word, Joxer, or I'll have your heart for supper.

JOXER (*cleverly*): And I know why, Mrs. Boyle, it just wouldn't be right.

JUNO: Oh, what good does it do to talk to you two, confidentially anyway; your right ear is in his grimy mouth, when his grimy ear isn't in your mouth. Still, I'll get to the bottom o' this.

JOXER: To the bottom o' this, then, Mrs. Boyle, that's where we need to go next, if the Good Lord is willing. (*Gesturing for her to leave.*)

JUNO (*half-scornfully*): Now, when himself gets out of confession, I want you to pretend I wasn't here, right? But you tell him he'd best head home for supper -- tell him a little bird told you it's a special meal and he'd better not miss it. It'll be liver or Dublin Coddle, both of which he hates, and my money says he should bet on liver, but don't tell him that.

JOXER: Yes, Mrs. Boyle.

JUNO (*exiting*): God bless you, then, Joxer Daly, because I doubt anyone else would.

(*The stall curtain opens and its light turns green. Captain Boyle emerges and heads for his pew. Joxer is kneeling again.*)

JOXER (*nervous*): Oh, Captain, how's yourself? (*Looking to the back of church*) And how did it go in there?

BOYLE (*relieved*): Mother o' God, it's like I've been waiting a lifetime to get all those things off me chest.

JOXER: What did you tell Father Michael -- everything?

BOYLE: For a fact, I did. I even told him about you-know-what, though I didn't want to.

JOXER: You told him about that, too? How Charlie did that for us, despite our shortcomings? What did he say?

BOYLE: He says not to worry -- all's well that ends well. Now, isn't that a fine thing to be saying in the confessional.

JOXER: Did he give you any ideas about how to tell your wife and family?

BOYLE: He said, "Just leave it up to the Lord. You'll divulge the news when He wants you to." Fine words -- but now I'm thinkin' Juno'd have a flare-up if she found out from anyone but me. And even if I tell her, I'll be lucky if she doesn't boil me alive.

JOXER: I don't have any doubts about that. You'll tell your wife a lot before you'd like to. I know that much about your usual way of doin' things.

BOYLE: I know that, Joxer, and I know Mrs. Boyle won't understand, unless I let her know I went to confession about it. It's me only chance. She'll understand, Joxer, won't she? She's really a darlin' woman, Joxer, and I should be thankin' me lucky stars she's still around. Know what I mean?

JOXER (*looking to the back of church again*): I'm not sure, Captain. But, I mean -- Mrs. Boyle's a darlin' woman. Didn't she stand behind Mary after your Johnny died and that four-flusher Bentham left her high and dry? But don't talk so loud, Captain. We're in church.

BOYLE (*half-whispering*): You're right, Joxer, but that Bentham was nothin' but a jackass, while John Fitzgerald is next to St. Peter. God, I'm grateful I was able to persuade Charlie about the you-know-what, before he went to America. What a darlin' man!

JOXER: Yes, Captain. A darlin' man.

The church door opens and closes once, then a moment later, it does so again. A man and woman enter. The man, David George, 30, is six feet tall, and wears a light blue suit and brown shoes. He also wears spectacles and carries a brown umbrella, with his beige fedora hat also in hand. His wife, Diane, is a handsome young woman of 28, who wears a red and green dress and dark blue shoes, and carries a dark brown purse. They have come from America for business and pleasure. Right now, they are looking for the priest. Boyle is just starting his penance.

DIANE (*standing at stage left, front, in view of the audience*): David, it looks as though there are some people here. (*Looking toward the confessional*) And there's a priest in the confessional. It must be Father Michael. Let's ask those two men about it.

They walk over to the pew where Boyle and Joxer are 'praying'.

DAVID: Excuse us, Gentlemen.

BOYLE (*he has only been half-praying*): G'day, Sir and Missus. Anything we can do for you?

DIANE: Yes. Is the priest hearing confessions Father Michael Murphy?

JOXER: That he is, Father Michael himself.

DIANE: Good, we've been looking for him. No one answered the rectory door, and we were worried he might not be around today.

BOYLE: I'm not an expert on the comings and goings of priests, but 'tis Father Michael you've found, just the same.

DIANE (*looking at Joxer*): Have you been here long?

JOXER: It seems like it, but we've probably not been here more than 10 or 15 minutes, right Captain?

BOYLE: Aye, 'tis true, Joxer.

DAVID: By the way, my name is David George, and this is my wife, Diane. We've just flown in from the States, looking to find out about my wife's family history, while doing some business, too.

DIANE: Yes, we're trying to find out more about my father's side, the Fitzgeralds.

BOYLE: I'm Captain Jack Boyle and this is me pal, Joxer Daly. (*The four shake hands.*) Flown in, you say? I've heard there's some airplane traffic about these days; what an invention; but I didn't know you could fly in from the States yet. And the Fitzgeralds, you say? That's me son-in-law's name – John Fitzgerald.

DIANE: We took a roundabout route, from Chicago to New York to Paris to Liverpool to here. Where is John's family from?

BOYLE: Well, I know his ancestors came from near Limerick, but I don't know much more about them than that.

DIANE: My Irish ancestors did, too, though I don't know the full details yet. We'll go there and learn more, I hope.

BOYLE: My son-in-law is a doctor. He's given me plenty of relief for the pain in me legs the last 17 or 18 years. He's a gentleman, too.

DAVID: We're here for extended business. My company has asked us to live here a year, while I set up a branch office. Sarah & Sons is in the export-import business. I hope we can meet Doctor Fitzgerald, your son-in-law, soon.

BOYLE: Oh, it wouldn't be too much trouble. John is home every night by six, unless he makes a late house-call. Usually he's home until six or seven the next mornin'. You can phone him sometime. His number's 1-6-8-8.

DIANE: That's not a bad plan, Captain Boyle.

JOXER: Yes, 'tis a fine plan.

DIANE: We are temporarily staying at the Green Coulee Hotel on O'Connell Street. Where do you live, Mr. Boyle?

BOYLE: My wife and me stay at 1-4-8 Gallagher Road, a few blocks from here. We even have a tellyphone. The number is 1-9-1-6. If you like, Joxer and me can take you there, to meet me Missus and have some tea. I'd invite you for supper, but Mrs. Boyle might be cookin' liver and most people aren't in love with it as much she is – includin' me.

DIANE: We wouldn't want to inconvenience you, Mr. Boyle. Could we stop by some other time? We've just arrived in town and have to get a bit more situated.

BOYLE (*thinking*): Yes, that'll be fine. Meantime, Joxer and me will make sure we've got plenty of provisions for your visit. Now, it's time for me to get home to supper. Mrs. Boyle'll have a flare-up if I'm not there. (*Winking to Joxer*)

JOXER: Yes, master o' her domain, she is, master o' her domain.

DIANE: Good, then we'll look forward to seeing you and your wife soon. Maybe by then, we can find out more about your John Fitzgerald. And maybe we could visit Doctor Fitzgerald and his family, too. Well, it was nice meeting both of you.

BOYLE: And it was decent meetin' the two a you, too.

DAVID: We'll be seeing you soon, then.

BOYLE: Right you are.

The priest emerges from the confessional, as the Captain and Joxer exit. He's built like an ex-boxer, which he is. He comes over to the Georges.

DAVID: Hello, Father. Are you Father Michael 'Rocky' Murphy? We're the Georges, David and Diane.

FR. MICHAEL: Yes, 'tis me himself. *(They shake hands.)* And the Rocky comes from the rocks I knocked out of guys' heads in the ring. Once or twice, they did the same to me, too.

DAVID: We did hear you are a boxer.

FR. MICHAEL: Make that past tense – *was* a boxer. Don't do it anymore. Bad for me health.

DIANE: We understand, Father, but we did hear you were a very good boxer.

FR. MICHAEL: Yes, I could hold me own, especially against Billy Quinn when I fought him for the championship in 1922...

Noise is heard, as an organist begins to intone, off stage right, Beethoven's "Song of Joy," also known as "Ode to Joy," set to the lyrics "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" for church use by Henry Van Dyke.

FR. MICHAEL *(loudly)*: It's getting a little loud in here. Let's go to the rectory, so we can talk.

DAVID AND DIANE *(loudly, too)*: Yes, Father. That's a good idea.

The three exit, as the music comes up louder.

Act II, Scene 1

Action: The living room and kitchen of the Boyle's apartment just before suppertime, same day. The Boyles have moved up modestly within their class since 1922, due to financial aid from Mary and her husband. There is a radio, stage right front, with a telephone on top. Further back, offstage right, is Juno and the Captain's bedroom. Also at back is a cabinet with delftware in it. Above it is a picture of the Sacred Heart, with a smaller picture of the Blessed Virgin below it. Also on the cabinet is a red votive candle. At back, stage left, is the hallway door. Juno is cooking supper, stage left. Near her is a table, with delftware and utensils. A small ice-box and cupboard are nearby. The bathroom is in the hallway and is shared with one neighbor. Near the cooking fire is a rocking chair. Center right is a couch. Magazines are stacked next to it, old issues of Britain's 'Picture Post'. Juno is humming as she works – "Immaculate Mary." Mary, her daughter, enters from the bedroom. She is auburn-haired, pretty, in her late 30s, and shows empathy for others and a bright-enough mind.

MARY: Ma, where are the pictures you had of my brother, Johnny? I remember in the old apartment you kept them on the bedroom shelf. Since you moved here last year, everything's been shifted round. Now, I can't seem to find them.

JUNO: They're in the cabinet out here, bottom drawer. I had them in a box until the other day. *(Smiling.)* Something just said to me, "We're gonna need them soon." Now they're in an album.

MARY *(she sets down her own pictures, then opens the cabinet drawer and finds the album)*: Yes, they're here. I wanted to compare my Johnny's early pictures with Johnny Boyle's. I brought a few of my Johnny's along. *(She sits on the couch with the Boyle family pictures.)* I'd like to make another family album and could use one or two pictures of Johnny Boyle for it, too.

JUNO: (*turning some liver in a pan over the fire as she glances at Mary comparing the pictures*): What are you finding out, Mary?

MARY: It looks like there's a great resemblance between the two of them, early on. Now I'm going to compare their teenage pictures. There aren't many photos of my brother Johnny here, but there may be enough. Yes, there's a resemblance later, too.

JUNO (*placing a tray of sliced bread and butter on the kitchen table*): I suppose it needs sayin' that your brother was a good boy and would have been a successful man, if he'd steered clear of a couple of the Republicans, though we do have a republic today, because enough good men put it through.

MARY: That's true, Ma. I hope my own Johnny appreciates the good things we have today, but I still wish Johnny Boyle were around to enjoy them with us.

JUNO: As do I, Daughter, as do I. My Johnny may never have had his chance for his own family, but he did add to ours while he lived.

MARY: Yes, he did. I remember when he was about 6 or 7, pulling home turf on his rickety, old wagon from them that had plenty, to burn on our fire.

JUNO: Yes, I wish I had a picture of him doin' that. He was a scrapper then, all right .

MARY: Who was to know they'd kill him. My God, this country asks an awful lot from its young people. It's almost too much for some – impossible for others.

JUNO: I was glad enough, then, when your little Shivaun, then your own Johnny, came along. And you might not be here today, if it weren't for John. He was a lifesaver.

MARY: Yes, imagine, meeting a doctor soon after Johnny died, because Da was tryin' to relieve (*exaggerating her father's accent*) "the pain in me legs", and John marryin' me, with another man's child just-born and few prospects for Shivaun and me.

JUNO: Well, he fell for you as fast as you for him. Of course, you couldn't have a church weddin' then, but, thank the Lord, you were able to get back with the Church later. It might have been different if you'd been divorced. Thank God you never married Bentham, because any man who loses our entire inheritance, by mis-writing the Will, and makes you pregnant, then leaves you high and dry, deserves Hell on Earth.

MARY: Yes, well, with John, we're very happy we're still Catholic. It would've been terrible for us, if we hadn't been allowed back in. I don't know why it's taking Da and Joxer so long to turn round. They can be such bloody fools.

JUNO: They weren't human a-tall until the last few weeks, but they're not truly good yet. Your Da did have a revelation, though, that's what you'd have to call it. He told me the other day that he woke up one night in a cold sweat. He'd seen himself lyin' still, killed by a bullet, like my Johnny. It must have been too much for him, because he went to confession today.

MARY (*looking skeptical*): You're teasin', right.

JUNO: No. But it's a secret that also helped turn him round. If I'm any judge of me power, he'll be tellin' me this Lent what that secret is. (*Putting a pitcher of milk on the table. The entry door opens and in comes Boyle.*) Well, it's about time you got home. Mary's here, too. She had to be in the neighborhood this afternoon, to visit old Mrs. Murray, so she stopped in for supper here.

BOYLE: Hello, Mary. How are you?

MARY: Fine, Da, and how are you?

BOYLE: Fine.

MARY (*teasing*): The liver smells good, and I know how much you love liver.

BOYLE (*grimacing*): You do, do you? (*Thinking better of complaining.*) Well, at least my lovely daughter and wife will be here to enjoy it with me.

MARY (*pleased*): My, Da, why are you in such a good mood?

JUNO: Yes, Captain, what's up?

BOYLE: Just put it down to good livin', for once in my life.

JUNO: Like I said, then, what's up, Captain?

BOYLE: Well, Joxer and me were just saying our prayers, for the first time in 18 years. It helped me insides.

JUNO: That isn't all it helped, I'll wager. Is there anything else you want to be tellin' us?

BOYLE (*hesitating*): No, there's nothin' else I need be tellin' you now. But I do feel like a terrible weight's been lifted from me chest just the same.

JUNO: Really? Well, you're goin' to have to be unburdening more of yourself to us soon, I expect.

BOYLE (*defensively*): Why are you sayin' that, Mrs. Boyle? I said a terrible weight's been lifted from me chest. It doesn't need to be lifted again, does it?

JUNO (*only somewhat more understanding*): We'll see. (*Changing the subject.*) Mary, tell your Da about the pictures?

MARY: Oh sure. Da, I just found some old pictures of the two Johnnys, and I know you'd like to see them. (*She motions to the couch, and they sit.*) First of all, here's a picture of my brother Johnny at age two, and here's one of my own Johnny at three. What do you think?

BOYLE: Like twins. (*Showing Juno.*) Isn't it amazin', Mrs. Boyle? I'm tellin' ya, we're all family, no doubt about it.

JUNO: 'Tis a striking resemblance. I wonder what Johnny would say today if he could see his nephew.

MARY: He'd probably be kicking the football around with my Johnny, teachin' him about girls and how to shave.

BOYLE: Aye, it's too bad our Johnny wasn't more impressed by girls near the end of his life.

MARY (*looking to her right.*) Should I turn on the new radio while we eat, Ma?

JUNO: That will be fine, Dear. Go ahead, it's a beautiful device.

MARY (*getting up and turning the radio on*): It's 6 o'clock, time for BBC News.

ANNOUNCER: This is the BBC Evening News, and I'm Molly Zita-Robbins. Today, Britain is still at war. In accounts from Warsaw smuggled out by Polish resisters, it appears the Germans are rounding up Jews and herding them onto trains. The British Prime Minister has said: "We shall not abide the despotic power of Hitler, in Poland, Britain, or the rest of Europe. This is quickly developing into another Great War, and Britain shall not let freedom die in any land. We will restore democracy on the Continent, and do so without unfairly sacrificing our own sons and daughters."

MARY (*turning the radio off*): Ma, what do you think about the Germans? Are they as evil as the Brits say in this so-called Emergency?

JUNO: It's not the German people we need to fear as much as their leaders. Hitler is greedy for land and blood, and has his people in tow. But I don't know what Britain can really do about it for now.

BOYLE: The Great War was a terrible business, and this Emergency is, too. I hope John Senior doesn't enlist. We all need him here.

MARY: He's not been talking about enlisting, Da. He knows we've few doctors in Ireland. But he's said he hopes the war, because that's what it really is, doesn't come to this part of the world.

JUNO: Well, if it does, we'll have to put up or shut up. In that case, we'll be forced to fight.

BOYLE: Aye, put up or shut up, that's what we Irish will have to do.

MARY: But wars are such bloody businesses, sometimes you end up fighting when you don't even know what you're fighting for. Look at Johnny Boyle. He was fighting a kind of war here, and he ended up killed by his own side. They may have thought him a traitor, but that doesn't mean the IRA was right about everything. He was just a scared kid, who didn't know how to protect himself in close company.

JUNO: And for all the fighting in Ireland, the North's still not free. Now, let's eat. Supper's ready.

BOYLE: You may be right, Mrs. Boyle.

(Mary and Boyle sit down at table, and Mrs. Boyle serves them, after they say silent grace.)

BOYLE *(eating)*: You know, this liver tastes better than I remember it ever did. What did you put in it, Mrs. Boyle – champeen?

JUNO: Oh, just a pinch o' this and a pinch o' that, and the finest calf's liver Butcher Bob had in his shop. Ever since he came over from London last year, he's been creatin' masterpieces with his tools and cuts of meat.

MARY: Yes, this is delicious, Ma. I've got to stop more at Bob's, and get your new recipe, too.

JUNO: That's what I'm here for, Daughter-o-Mine.

The telephone rings and Juno answers it.

JUNO: Hello, Mrs. Boyle here. *(She listens.)* Yes, John, Mary's still here... *(She listens, then motions to Mary, who comes over.)* John said he's going to be a bit late tonight; he's got to make a house-call.

BOYLE: He's always makin' house-calls; wouldn't be a good doctor, if he didn't.

MARY *(taking the receiver from Juno, who goes to the table to eat)*: Hello, John. Where are you now? Oh, you're still at the office. When will you be home? About 9:30? Good. I'll start out from here in about an hour and be home before you. Ma and Da, John sends his best and says he is looking forward to seeing you soon.

JUNO: Send him our best, too, Dear.

MARY: Ma and Da send their greetings, too, John. Well, my supper's getting cold, so I'll see you at home about 9:30? Yes, I love you, too. *(She hangs up, and sits back down to eat.)*

BOYLE: It's too bad John's parents have passed on, because they'd love to know more about our family. It's nice to track your family's whole story, don't you think?

MARY: Yes, Da, it's sad about their passing, but they raised a good, strong son, and had grandchildren, like you and Ma have. What about your family, and Ma's? Do ya know much more about them these days?

JUNO: We know my Ma, along with my sister, raised not only me, but a bit of you and Shivaun, too, before they died, but that my Da died before he saw either of his grandkids -- you already know that. What about you, Captain?

BOYLE: I know me Ma and Da both died before they saw their grandkids, and that they went to a finer place than they ever knew on Earth. Of course, you know about cousin Ellison and all that nonsense, Mary. I didn't have brothers or sisters to speak of. The kids I was raised with were cousins, and it took me a long time to talk about the nasty things we did to each other.

MARY: Like what, Da?

BOYLE: Like the time my cousin Larry and me run up against the law for stealin' candy from Ol' Mr. Kennedy's store. God Almighty, I thought the gard'd put us in jail for sure. But he just kicked us each once in the seat o' the pants and

told us to straighten up and fly right. Larry told the gard he hadn't swiped the sweet poison; I had. Never did I steal candy again after that. (*Looks.*) Well, almost never.

JUNO (*smiling at Mary, who smiles back*): And tell Mary about the time you and Kenny O'Kelly went off the deep end of that pier on the Liffey, and had to be pulled up by your bootstraps.

BOYLE (*warming more*): Yes, well Kenny 'n' me, we went down to the Liffey to see about fishing. There was some sort of fryin' fish we were after. Before I knew what had happened, Kenny was pokin' me with his pole and I was pokin' him back. Next thing you know, we poked each other into the river! By the grace o' God, there was a fisherman close-by who saw us and pulled us up. Neither one of us boys could swim, even though I'd go to sea later. I was good at sea, because I knew me limits, at least it seemed I did: I stayed away from the railings and close to the innermost. In any case, Kenny 'n me were blessed that day, I tell you.

MARY: And your other cousins, Da. Did they go fishing with you, too?

BOYLE: Just little Sheila, the runt o' me Ma, Susie's, sister's litter. She may have been small, but she could fish like the best of 'em. And she was cute to boot.

JUNO: Yes, she was the only cousin of yours still free when I married you, Captain. It's a pity she married that Australian gentleman at 17 and moved there with him. She was cute, and funny.

BOYLE (*drinking some milk*): Aye, I'll bet she grew to be six foot tall, a regular Amazon! (*The women laugh.*) Well, stranger things have happened, Ladies.

(*The telephone rings again. Mary answers it. Juno finishes eating, then begins to clean table.*)

MARY (*answering phone*): Hello. Yes, this is Mary, Mrs. Murray. Is everything okay? It's your heart? Well, the pills are on your bedroom dresser. I thought I told you that when I was there this afternoon. Yes, I'll wait while you get them. (*Waiting, she speaks.*) Ma, I'll help you with those as soon as I get off the phone.

JUNO: That's okay, Mary. You take care of Mrs. Murray first, then you can help me, if you've time.

MARY: Da, will you bring my coat from the bedroom. Even if Mrs. Murray finds her medicine, I'll need it before long.

BOYLE: Aye, Mary. (*Boyle enters the bedroom, while Juno hums "Danny Boy", working. Boyle emerges with the coat and a sweater.*) Here you are, Mary. It may be getting colder tonight, so you'd best take this sweater, too. (*He gives them to her, then sits down on the couch and looks through a 'Picture Post'.*)

MARY: Thank you, Da. I just might need it. (*She talks on the phone again.*) Yes, Mrs. Murray, I knew they'd be there. Can you take them okay? Remember: One now, and one at bedtime. Then you'll be fine. I know it's scary when your chest hurts, but the pills will help. After you've taken each one, lie down a while. You should feel better soon. If not, give me or John a call, here or at home. Now, take your pill. (*Waiting.*) That's okay, Mrs. Murray. I hope you feel better soon. Have a good night now. Yes, good-bye. (*She hangs up, goes to the kitchen, and begins drying dishes.*)

JUNO: Is Mrs. Murray okay, Mary?

MARY: Yes -- she found her pills. I don't know what she would do without them. They help her in two ways -- they're part crutch, but they also stimulate her heart, when the blood's not flowing right.

JUNO (*finishes putting the leftovers and milk into the ice-box*): I probably could use one myself from time to time. I've plenty of stress on my old heart during bad times. Thank goodness, we're going through a rather good time.

MARY: Yes, we've been fortunate lately. The poor people on the Continent are fighting a war, but at least it hasn't touched us yet.

JUNO: We should be thankful; our situation used to be much worse than it is now.

MARY: It's true, Ma. When John came into our lives, our own Johnny had just left. But when the Lord closed one door, he opened a window at least. He truly does work in mysterious ways.

JUNO: Do you think you should check in on Mrs. Murray again tonight? I can get the rest of the dishes, Mary.

MARY: Would you mind, Ma? I'd just like to make sure she gets her pills okay, and then lies down.

JUNO: It's all right. You stop at her place on your way home. It'll be dark soon, and I'd like to make sure you're home before sunset.

MARY: All right, then I'll get my things and go. *(She picks up her mother's sweater and puts it on, then the coat. Then, she bends down to kiss her dad.)* Bye, Da, I have to go.

BOYLE: Aye. 'Twas good seein' ya again, Darlin'. Will you be all right?

MARY: I'll be fine, Da. Thanks for looking at the photos with me. *(She picks up her photos plus two of her mother's.)* Ma, will it be okay if I borrow these two of Johnny Boyle?

JUNO: Of course, Dear. Just make sure you get them back to me after you make copies. Paul's Camera can do them reasonably. *(Coming out of the kitchen.)*

MARY: I'll have them back to you soon. Maybe I'll even drop them by before I visit Mrs. Murray this weekend.

JUNO *(drying her hands on her apron, then buttoning Mary's top button and hugging her)*: It was good to see you again, Mary. We'll see you soon.

BOYLE *(getting up and kissing his daughter on the cheek)*: Yes, Mary. By the way, me and Joxer met an American couple today; the lady said her ancestors are Fitzgeralds, from around Limerick no less. We should have them over for supper, so they can meet John and Mary. The Georges are nice -- said they'd phone us soon. We'll all get on like Kenny O'Kelly and me did, before we went into the river. *(They laugh.)*

MARY: I hope so. Thanks for supper.

JUNO: Say hi to Mrs. Murray from us. Tell her to take her pills, eat, and sleep right. After Mr. Murray's death, she was almost a shut-in, but thank goodness she's allowed you and your family to visit her lately.

MARY: Yes, she's got more faith in people now than she did right after her husband died. That was 10 years ago already. She's holding her own at 82.

JUNO: It doesn't hurt that Father Michael hears her confession and brings communion Sundays. He may have been a boxer once, but he takes off his gloves to do the Lord's work.

MARY: Yes, he's a fine man and priest. Well, thanks again. *(Juno and Boyle smile and nod.)* We love you two very much, so take care until we see you next.

JUNO: We will, Dear. Say hi to John and the children.

MARY: I will. See you soon. *(She opens the door and heads briskly down the hallway.)*

BOYLE *(waving)*: Don't talk to any strangers on the way home, Mary.

MARY *(in the distance)*: I won't, Da. Thanks!

BOYLE *(closing the door)*: That girl is magical, Mrs. Boyle, don't you think?

JUNO: Yes, she is, Captain... Oh, I just remembered -- Mrs. McCarthy is baking a cake for her grandson's birthday tomorrow and she asked me for some flour. *(Going to the kitchen, she pours flour from a canister into a bowl.)* I need to talk with you about earlier today, but it'll have to wait. Meanwhile, you be on your best behavior, and don't go out nippin' brew with Joxer. Though you two have been better lately, Joxer still likes mischief. Now, did you hear me, Captain?

BOYLE *(nodding as Juno exits)*: You can count on me, Mrs. Boyle. I'm never going to drink again -- Never! *(As the front door closes, Boyle goes to the phone and dials.)* C'mon, Katie Lynn McShane, answer the bloody tellyphone! Katie -- it's Captain Boyle. Is Joxer there? He is? Then let me talk to him. *(He drums his fingers on the radio, then pulls something from his pants pocket.)* Joxer, the Missus just left. I don't feel right about me confession. Juno might

find out about you-know-what, too soon. And I've got to contact Charlie's agent. If Mrs. Boyle finds out too soon, something bad'll happen. I've got her phone number, but I don't want to call her till you and me have talked. Okay, I'll meet you at McGinty's in 10 minutes. Maybe I can get back home before Mrs. Boyle misses me. Very funny – if you were married, your Missus'd be used to missin' you, too. (*He slams the receiver down.*) Damn that Joxer -- he's a smart one now, and forever will he be one! (*He gets his coat from bedroom and exits. Lights out.*)

Act II, Scene 2

Action: The Boyles' apartment, the next Tuesday. There are extra chairs at back. The guests haven't arrived yet. Juno stirs a pot of stew and replenishes the fire with turf. Next, she goes to the cupboard and retrieves two loaves of bread. She gets butter from the icebox, humming "If You Ever Go Across the Sea to Ireland" There's a knock at the door. Juno opens it. It's Joxer, holding his beret.

JUNO: Joxer! What a surprise. (*He's suddenly deathly afraid to come in, slams his beret back on his head, and turns fast to leave.*) Oh no, you don't, Mr. Joxer Daly! (*She grabs him quickly on his belt in back and pulls him into the apartment. She then walks him over to the couch and forces him to sit.*) Now, what brings you here?

JOXER (*Feeling wholly out-of-place, but finding a bit of courage*): I, I, I came to meet Captain Boyle, and I didn't think you were here. Mrs. Madigan said I should be here... (*half under his breath*) Bloody Madigan Mischief... (*louder*) but I don't know why she said that.

JUNO: Okay, you're here, so tell me more about the other day – the confession the Captain made, and how you figure in. You don't have to stumble over words, just tell me what happened, and what the good and bad news is.

JOXER (*nervously moving beret in his hands*): Well, I'm not used to puttin' my mind at rest like this. No disrespect, Mrs. Boyle, but it's been a long time since I've been in your home when you've been present and accounted for. But, it's like this – the Captain is settin' on somethin', somethin' like, well, like a... good deal... yes, a good deal. You see, we are about to do some work in trade for some furniture. That is, if we play our cards right. But the Captain thinks if he tells you now, he won't get the deal that's cookin' It's part superstition, yet 'tis strong superstition just the same.

JUNO: When is this good deal going to happen, Joxer Daly?

JOXER: Oh, around Easter.

JUNO: Doesn't sound like superstition to me, but guilt for mixing business and Easter comings and goings. How do you propose for the Captain to let the cat out of the bag?

JOXER (*More guarded*): Well, I don't know, but the Captain'll know -- when it's time. If the Captain tells you when it's right, it will be because he's handled things right and gone away from sin. And if he thinks he's done that, maybe it'll be because he has.

JUNO: He has a funny way of doing things, but I think that's a fair summin' up, Joxer, even though the Truth will win out. I'll know what to do when the time's right, too. Now, you'd better go find the Captain and bring him home. We'll be eating as soon as Mary and John's family and the Georges get here, so hurry. One other thing, Joxer, why did you tell me this, when for 18 years you and I haven't spoken a civil word to one another?

JOXER (*half-true*): It's like this, Mrs. Boyle -- I've met a lady meself. And she likes me just for being me! I don't want to jinx my chances with her by seeing my best buddy foul it up any more with you. I know it sounds strange, but stranger things have happened. Mum's the word, then, Mrs. Boyle?

JUNO (*chuckling a bit*): Yes, mum's the word. Now, I'd guess that's a good confession -- so, out you go. But tell the Captain to bring you along for supper this time. Cook up a reason. Tell him you saved my life on the street today, and I asked you to join us, in thanks. Then relieve his misery by letting him know that what you did, any Paddy off the street could do, and that you didn't really save my life so much as made me laugh. Tell him that.

Having pushed Joxer out the door, Juno returns to the fire, to stir and taste the stew. She goes to the radio to turn it on. Billie Holiday sings "Pennies from Heaven", and Juno dances to it. She then slices bread, to the beat. She puts the slices on plate and sets it on table. There's a knock at the door -- she turns the radio off and answers it. It's Mary, John, and their children. John Sr. is a tall, handsome man, about 45, with brown beard, full head of hair, and wire-rimmed glasses. He wears a brown suit with black shoes and tie. His overcoat is dark blue and heavy, and he has two bottles of wine. Shivaun is 16, pretty and firey, with short red hair. She wears a bright red dress, dark blue shoes, and coat. Her freckles stun. John Jr. is 14, of medium build, with brown hair. He's less presumptuous than his quick-witted

half-sister, but a bit feisty, as well. He wears black pants and tie, a white shirt, and heavy brown overcoat. His shoes are black. He's handsome, intelligent, and generally sympathetic to others.

JUNO: Hello, all. It's good to see you.

MARY and JOHN: Hello, Ma.

KIDS: Hi, Gran'.

JUNO (*motioning them in and towards the couch*): Come in and sit down. The Captain and Joxer should be here soon. I asked Joxer to come, too, so it will be an unusual supper for a couple of reasons. What's become of the Georges?

MARY: Oh, Diane will be here soon. David George can't be here tonight, Ma. He met a fellow at a newsstand -- a reporter for the *Dublin Times* named Stephen Fitzgerald, a shirt-tail cousin of John's. David's with Stephen now, and you'll meet both of them sometime soon.

JUNO: I'll bet Diane was happy to meet this Stephen.

JOHN SR.: And Stephen's Da, too. She'll be here shortly.

JUNO (*She grabs the group's coats, goes into the bedroom, emerges, and hands the teenagers some 'Picture Post's*): Children, now I know these magazines once were your parents, but if you haven't read very far in them, maybe you can read more now. (*Pointing out something*.) I see there's a story on animals at the London Zoo in this one. I read the whole story and it's first-rate. Tells all about the funny things the animals do for people, and how the kids love them. Look at the picture of a penguin reading a newspaper. It's very funny!

SHIVAUN (*laughing*): He reminds me of a teacher at school -- Mr. Engen. Shouldn't say this but I'll bet old Mr. Engen would look just like that penguin, if you dressed him in tie and tails and handed him a newspaper.

JOHNNY: Yeah, Mr. Engen'll be on your case a year, if he finds out you're comparin' him to a readin' penguin.

JOHN SR.: That'll be enough, you two. Mr. Engen has taught you how to read and write, Shivaun, not berate teachers. (*To Juno*) He teaches English at Patrick Pearse School. Thankfully, he teaches better than this picture suggests.

(A knock at the door. Mary answers it, as Juno returns to the fire and stirs the stew.)

MARY (*opening the door*): Oh hello, Diane. Mother, it's Diane George.

Diane enters, wearing a dark green overcoat, which she removes and Mary takes for her. Underneath, Diane wears a dark blue dress with a bright red scarf and shoes.

JUNO (*shaking hands*): Welcome to this humble home, Mrs. George. It's a pleasure to meet you.

DIANE: The pleasure's all mine, Mrs. Boyle. I've heard a lot about you -- but do call me Diane.

JUNO (*laughing*): Fine. All great and grand, I hope!

DIANE: Yes. I've been looking forward to meeting you and seeing the Captain and Joxer again, too. I only wish my husband could be here, but he's with Stephen Fitzgerald, whom I'm sure Mary has told you about.

JUNO: Yes. The Captain and Joxer'll be along soon. Meantime, you can sit down. Mary, get a chair or two. (*Mary obliges. Juno speaks to Diane.*) I've got some photographs for you to look at. (*Juno goes looking for the album.*)

JOHN SR.: Kids, move over. You sit on chairs and let Mrs. George and your Gran' have the couch. (*The two children do what their father says.*) Now, what would you two like to drink? I've brought two bottles of good French wine. It's a bit dry, but will wet your whistle.

DIANE: Yes, it will. This bottle will be fine. (*Sipping the cup just poured.*) It's Merlow, isn't it?

JOHN SR.: Right. Do you know it well.

DIANE: David used to drink it by the half-gallon at suppers with customers. It went well with beef, and there's a lot of that consumed in Chicago.

JOHN SR.: The American Midwest – Heart of the U.S.A., right?

DIANE: Heart and Soul.

MARY: Yes, you must have been happy in Chicago.

DIANE: Reasonably happy, but the adventure of living there began to wear thin, which may be why we were transferred here – that and David couldn't drink with the big-shots anymore. He got very sick more than once. A single glass now hits the spot, same for me. This morning, he signed a deal with a new customer worth 100,000 pounds. Before, he'd drink all night over that, but no more of that early death for him.

MARY: His business was very good today. But what did you find out from Cousin Stephen Fitzgerald's Da?

DIANE: Well, we learned that Stephen's da fought in the trenches at Arras in 1915, same as my da. What did the poet Sassoon say? "When all is said and done, the war was mainly a matter of holes and ditches."

JOHN SR.: Yes, men mowed down by the thousands by machine-gun fire as they charged across "No Man's Land" -- all to move the line a few feet. It must have been Hell for those men.

DIANE: Stephen's da said he'd never enlist in anybody's army after that, even if they asked him to fight Hitler – which is what my father said, too, after moving to America.

MARY: Hitler is evil, and our men may have to fight him more, but I still don't see why the Great War had to be fought. It was two-way power politics. Neither side was just.

JOHN SR.: Some people say Hitler would have never come to power, if the Great War hadn't been fought. It had a lot to do with the war reparations the Germans were forced to pay – they depleted the German economy, making Hitler's rise possible. That, and America's Army pulled out of Europe. The Americans may have bowed out then, because President Wilson was sick and didn't live long enough to see his League of Nations take proper hold. Other people say he lived much longer than he should have. Either way, the Great War wasn't Great, but it did it lead to another war, the present war, that should be called 'World War II', to my way of thinking.

SHIVAUN: Hitler's a twirp! He wants land and power and will stop at nothin' to take them. It says so in this magazine.

JOHNNY: Oh Shivaun, give it a rest. What do you know about Hitler?

SHIVAUN: I know he came to power in 1933 and hates Jews and Catholics.

MARY: Who told you that, Shivaun?

SHIVAUN (*mischievously*): Funny thing: I learned it from Mr. Engen.

JOHN SR.: Well, Mr. Engen knows more than you first gave him credit for, doesn't he, Daughter?

SHIVAUN: I may have been a little hasty, Da, but he still looks like a penguin.

DIANE: What's this?

MARY: Oh, the children were looking at a magazine picture of a penguin looking like he's reading, and Shivaun said it looked like her English teacher.

JOHN SR.: It's a bad habit of hers – comparing teachers to animals. I've tried to break her of it, but she's as notoriously tenacious about it as ever.

JUNO (*returning with a picture album*): I got lost a minute in me own bedroom. I thought I knew where this family album was that I wanted you to see, but it was in the closet, not where I last put it. Here, have a look. (*She hands it to Diane, then resumes stirring the pot at the fire.*)

MARY: Ma, I put it in the bedroom closet after we looked at it last week. Didn't I tell you?

JUNO: Either my mind or my hearing must be slipping.

MARY: Look here, Children. That's your Uncle Johnny Boyle when he was small. You know a little about him, but you don't know about when he was small. He was a real character then.

JOHNNY FITZGERALD: What kind o' character, Ma?

MARY: Well, when he was just a tyke, he'd pull his rickety, old wagon to the neighbors and gather a few pieces of their extra turf, to bring home for our fire. When he got home, he'd look so proud and tell Gran' he'd saved the fire again. It was great theatre, if a little sad.

JUNO: I was so proud of him. I'd have given my life for Johnny rather'n see him dead at the hands of the IRA.

JOHNNY FITZGERALD: And why did he die?

JUNO: Because the IRA said he gave away a Republican man. He didn't really turn traitor, but they murdered him all the same. It must have been a case of mistaken identity. Our Ireland is still a cruel mistress.

DIANE: It seems that way sometimes.

(The front door opens and the Captain and Joxer enter.)

BOYLE: Hello, everyone. How are you doin'?

JUNO: Where have you been, Captain?

BOYLE: Joxer and me have just been transacting some business – makin' a deal. I'll tell you about it later.

JUNO *(only partly mollified)*: Oh okay, as long as you tell us sooner rather than later. I'm glad you brought Joxer round for supper; he made me laugh at something today.

BOYLE: Aye, Mrs. Boyle, I know. As for everybody else, how's my fav-rite group of humanity?

SHIVAUN: Grandda, how many Nazis does it take to screw in a light bulb?

BOYLE: You've got me, Shivaun -- how many?

SHIVAUN: Twenty-one – 20 to kill the Communist ladder-holder and one to study a year to figure out how it goes in.

JOHNNY: And you know the Communist ladder-holder don't ya, Sis?

BOYLE: That's a good one, Shivaun. But what does the Pope say for grace?

SHIVAUN: In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Whoever eats the fastest gets the most!

BOYLE: You're learnin', Darlin', you're learnin'.

JUNO: Speaking of eating, everything's ready. Come and sit at table, Everyone. *(Motioning, the group sits.)* Now Captain, since you're the expert on grace, you say it for us.

BOYLE: I'm not an expert on anything, except eatin' and drinkin', but here goes: Lord, thank you for bringin' us all together today, to eat this food and drink this wine... and milk. If Your willin', let us all be together at Easter, too. And let us be treasures on this Earth for a very long time, before You lead us to Heaven when our days are done.

EVERYONE: Amen! *(Lights out.)*

Act III, Scene 1

Action: A pub on O'Casey Avenue, late Holy Thursday afternoon. Stage left is the bar. The bartender is Ray O'Reilly, a friend of the Captain and Joxer's. Tyler and Joy's Sporting Pub is owned by the Yeatses. "Belle of Belfast City," also

known as "I'll Tell Me Ma," is being played and sung with fiddle by the barkeeper's grown family. There are customers at the bar and tables, working-class types, and a nicely-dressed woman. She's Claudine O'Malley, a solicitor, wearing a smart green dress, red coat, and blue hat and shoes. She's nursing a gin and tonic; everyone else drinks stout. Fr. Murphy is talking with a man at a table. The song ends. A newsboy enters.

RAY: Hey, Alan, how's it going?

ALAN (*handing Ray a paper*): Good, Ray. Traffic is picking up outside on O'Casey Avenue.

RAY (*giving Alan his money*): That's just fine, because I like it busy in here, too.

ALAN: It should be busy tonight, even if it is Holy Thursday.

RAY: Yeah, and I'm glad of it. It would make me and my family mighty poor, if people didn't patronize me place, even on religious holidays.

ALAN: Know what you mean, Ray. Well, see ya later.

RAY: Thankin' ya, Alan. Give me best to your Ma.

ALAN: Will do. (*He exits.*)

The fiddler begins plucking the melody for 'Danny Boy,' until the dialogue starts again.

CLAUDINE: Barkeeper, what time is it?

BARKEEPER: It's quarter to five, Ma'am. Why?

CLAUDINE: I'm waitin' on a couple fellows, and can't wait much longer.

RAY: Which coupla fellas?

CLAUDINE: Captain Jack Boyle and Joxer Daly.

RAY: Haven't seen them since Monday, but they come by often enough. Why, have you got business with them?

CLAUDINE: You could say that. Did you ever know a man named Charlie O'Keeffe?

RAY: As a matter o' fact, I did.

CLAUDINE: Well, I'm his solicitor, Claudine O'Malley.

RAY: Pleasure to make your acquaintance, Miss O'Malley. (*They shake hands.*)

CLAUDINE: Do the fellas I'm lookin' for ever talk about Mr. O'Keeffe?

RAY (*watching his p's and q's*): No, not ta speak of.

CLAUDINE: That's good. I don't need them spreading rumors about poor old Charlie.

'Danny Boy' is plucked once more. But two male customers start a fight with words that overcome the melody.

FIRST MAN: Well now, Jerry, what makes you think you can take me, even on your best day?

SECOND MAN: Paddy, I can take you on my worst day, and today ain't my worst.

PADDY: Well then go ahead and try it, you paltry-poor excuse for 'Two-Ton Tony'.

JERRY: I will, then, you loudmouthed hooligan.

PADDY: Loudmouth yourself.

Jerry throws a drink in Paddy's face, and Paddy punches him in the nose. The two men wrestle, and Ray comes out from behind the bar. Father Murphy is attempting to referee the fight.

FR. MICHAEL: Marquis of Queensberry Rules, Men, Marquis of Queensberry Rules!

Ray isn't able to pry the two brawlers apart, so he goes back behind the bar and pulls out a handgun. He fires it into the ceiling, and the two men stop fighting, stunned by the gun's noise.

RAY: Now, you two shake hands and make up or I'll put some lead into your bottoms and elsewhere, too. Anyone else want a piece o' me pistol? (*No one moves.*) They don't call me Old-Reliable Ray O'Reilly for nothin', just like a great Army unit. (*He puts the gun away.*)

The two brawlers shake hands, and begin talking with others.

THIRD MAN: Hey, that's my drink, Paddy.

PADDY (*drinking some*): Not anymore.

RAY: That's enough, me buckos. Make peace, not war. Remember: There are Shamrocks in Bantry, and brew enough here for every one of you, just like at St. Patrick's Irishfest.

FR. MICHAEL: Right ya are, Ray, right ya are.

PADDY: Yeah, right ya are, Ray. (*Half-smirking*) Let's drink to peace and love, then; 'tis as good as anything.

He drinks rest of glass. Ray fills others' glasses, while Miss O'Malley gives both Paddy and Jerry her business card. One of the women from the band has signaled Ray, and now comes over and gets some half-pints, then heads back.

POLLY: Hey, Ray, can we get some halves.

RAY (*filling glasses, then...*): There ya go, Me Beautiful Wife -- that should keep the family happy for a while.

POLLY: Thanks, Dear. I hope business picks up again, after that tiff.

RAY: It should, Me Darlin' Polly, that it should.

Captain and Joxer enter. Captain's wearing a green shirt. The two men say hi to Ray and stand next to Miss O'Malley.

BOYLE: What happened here, Ray? A tiny typhoon?

RAY: Sort of, you could say. We had us a near-donnybrook, but I took care of it with me pistol. So, what'll you have, Fellas? Or are ya still on that no-Guinness-for-me regime?

BOYLE: Aye, Ray. How about two orange juices?

RAY: Sounds good. I'll set 'em right up for you.

BOYLE: Thanks. (*Turning to Claudine.*) Miss O'Malley, 'tis a fine day today. My pal Joxer and me have been noticin' the weather, inside and outside. (*The three men at table exit. The priest moves to where they had been and sits down; the man he'd been talking with before, comes over and also sits down there.*) What's our deal look like today? Remember: What did Charlie want us to have -- before he died suddenly in that auto accident in America?

CLAUDINE (*confident*): You know the deal, Captain: you get 60% and I get 40% -- like I've been saying all along.

BOYLE (*feeling his oats*) Well now, the other day, Joxer and me were talkin' with another solicitor, and he says it's nearly highway robbery, that deal you've been cookin' up this Lent.

CLAUDINE: Take it or leave it, Gentlemen.

BOYLE: Not so fast, Miss O'Malley. Our friend says we can take you to court and get a lot more than 60% from you. That's what Charlie wanted -- he had it in his Will.

CLAUDINE: Well, to be truthful, I could hold this whole matter up in court a few months, or even much longer. You might never see a penny of Charlie's money.

BOYLE: That's a possibility, but I say 'tis time we both put up or shut up.

CLAUDINE: What do you mean?

JOXER: Tell her, Captain.

BOYLE: Hear me, Miss O'Malley: I've been chewin' on this, and I've decided I need three-quarters of Charlie's 100,000 pounds, or 75,000. My solicitor-friend says no good solicitor takes more than 25%. We've got Rights on our side -- not like when my daughter's first man-friend fouled up our inheritance from cousin Ellison, 18 years ago.

CLAUDINE: You may have your Rights, but I have mine, too, and I deserve a decent share of Charlie's inheritance. Charlie's estate was in a big mess until I started working on it. You're just lucky he stuck to his guns about you two. It seemed like a drinkers' night out to me. Not to Charlie O'Keeffe, though. But you'd still best be taking what I offer, because no one will think you were longtime friends of Charlie's.

BOYLE (*he's memorized this speech beforehand*): We respect all that, Miss O'Malley, though we did spend a couple of nights with Charlie, but maybe this will do better. If you'll take just a little bit less than 40,000 pounds, say 30,000, we can do business. If that ain't good enough, we won't have any choice but to take you to court and draw things out, even if neither one o' us gets the money.

CLAUDINE (*Thinking, as she sips her drink*): Well, seeing you put it that way, Captain, we might have a deal, if you're willing to sign the papers soon. But I want 35% for my work, or 35,000 pounds. Your take will be 65,000. Should I draw up the papers?

BOYLE (*looking at Joxer, then Miss O'Malley, then back at Joxer*): That you should, Miss O'Malley. Joxer, me boyo, what d'ya say you and me head to my place for a tasty beef and potato supper?

JOXER: Sounds grand, Captain. (*He drinks up his orange juice.*) Ah! I'm getting in the habit of me orange juice, and Miss O'Malley brings out the best in me thirst.

BOYLE: Now, Miss O'Malley, if you'll call me when the papers are ready, we'll do some real business.

CLAUDINE: Yes, we will. I'll phone you when I've got them ready. (*Boyle nods yes.*) I have to be goin' myself, so I'll be in touch. (*She starts to pay for her drink.*)

BOYLE: It's me own treat, Miss O'Malley. (*Puts money on bar.*) I'm feelin' right 'bout us at last.

CLAUDINE: Thanks, Captain. (*They shake hands.*) I'll see you and Mr. Daly soon, then?

BOYLE: Aye, we'll see you soon.

(*Claudine O'Malley exits.*)

BOYLE: Joxer, this might work out better than I first thought. I used ta think someone like Miss O'Malley was a pretty bit o' skirt, but sometimes it pays to go back to the old-reliables: finding out what's what, making your mind up about what to do, and sticking to your guns. We liked Charlie O'Keeffe a lot, before we even knew who he was and what money he had. We were good friends of his soon enough.

JOXER: Aye, Captain, you're making a lot o' sense these days. It reminds me of when we were in school. Father McGarty used ta say, "Find the truth, and act on it." I didn't know what he meant then, but I'm beginning to see now. Old-reliables is what's needed today, just like Ray's nickname.

FR. MICHAEL: Did I hear someone say 'Old-Reliables'. (*He comes over to the bar.*) I know Ray here goes by that moniker, but it was also what they called Donny O'Toole, whom I fought in 1920 and '21. Now, there was a bloody old-reliable, if you'll excuse the pun. I bloodied him in both fights, and knocked him out, too. Neither o' those fights

was very pretty, but it led to me championship fight with Billy Quinn in 1922. O' course, Donny got his chance at the championship a few years later, and won it.

JOXER: You fought for the championship with Billy Quinn, Father? How did you do?

FR. MICHAEL: Well, it wasn't very pretty either. I was waaay ahead on points, mind ya, and I was bobbin' and weavin' like any good fighter'd do. All of a sudden, Billy hits me with an uppercut, and BOOM, down I go! Couldn't get up by the 10 count either. 'Twas a sad day for the Murphy Family, yes a sad, sad day. But I rebounded. I fought two more fights and won 'em both. Just didn't get another crack at the title.

BOYLE: Well, you're a good priest, Father, and we're grateful for that. You know, we just did a little business with the solicitor, and it's workin' out fine, what you and me talked about, early Lent. Won't be long 'til that inheritance is me and Joxer's. And we'll make sure the Church gets a share, too.

FR. MICHAEL: Sounds good, Captain. Ya know, if more people spent more time in the confessional *and* the boxing ring and less time pulverizin' pubs, the world would be a lot nicer place.

BOYLE (*looks at his hands*): Sayin' the rosary last night musta helped... Ray, where are Tyler and Joy?

RAY: They're producin' a play across the river. 'Tis a family ting. Kind of an orange juice for the soul sort o' drama.

BOYLE: Seoul, that's in Korea, right Ray? I heard a man say Korea's the Ireland of Asia and Seoul is its center. That's a pun. Anyway, hope the play's a hit. (*Handing Ray an extra pound.*) That's yours, Ray. Thanks for settin' 'em up.

RAY: Anytime, Captain. Thankin' ya. See you two later.

BOYLE: Yeah, see you, Ray. See you, too, Father. And I'm glad I donned me green shirt. Things seem ta have come round in good shape today.

FR. MICHAEL: G'day, Gentlemen. See you in church.

RAY (*He nods, then...*): And there go a couple of Old-Reliables, too.

(*The Captain and Joxer exit; music comes up again -- 'The Wearing of the Green' is played and sung. Lights fade out.*)

Act III, Scene 2

Action: The Boyle's apartment, Holy Thursday, almost suppertime. Juno and Mary are preparing a roast beef dinner. There are extra chairs again. Juno is humming 'Amazing Grace' as she checks the meat. Mary emerges from the bedroom with the photo album.

MARY: Ma, your sewing and ironing for the neighbors is hanging in there. I don't know how you do so much of it.

JUNO: It's not so much, Mary, when you think of what others do.

MARY: Ma, isn't it nice Mr. Penney took photos when Johnny Boyle and I were young?

JUNO (*fondly*): Yes, Mr. Penney had a gift. Pity we didn't see him even more often then, but he had his business to run.

MARY: He was a good grocer. (*Putting the album on the table by the couch.*) Lucky he had help -- he could take pictures when he delivered things. It's too bad grocers don't deliver anymore; doctors still do.

JUNO (*smiling*): Yes, it's a different business today. And there's some unfinished business I need to address tonight.

MARY: What d'ya mean, Ma?

JUNO: Oh somethin' your Da needs to reveal to us. (*Doorknock*) At last, by the grace o' God. (*Loud*) Who's knockin'?

MALE VOICE AT DOOR: It's most o' the rest o' the Fitzgerald family.

MARY (*opening door*): Hello, My Darlings. Where have you been?

SHIVAUN: We've been talking to Mrs. George on the telephone. She'll be here soon.

JOHN SR. (*Setting down his medical bag*): Yes, sorry we're late. Hope we haven't missed supper.

MARY: Not a-tall, Dr. John, not a-tall. (*They kiss.*)

JOHNNY: Diane is goin' to bring me a present. Isn't that what she said, Da?

JOHN SR.: Yes, she did, Son. I'm lookin' forward to that myself.

JUNO: Good, but has anyone seen the Captain and Joxer?

JOHN SR.: Diane saw the two of 'em out walkin' on O'Casey Avenue. Didn't say what they were doin' other than that.

JUNO: 'Tis a mystery they've been settin' on, all this Lent. I just hope they're handlin' today as well as they need to.

Another knock at the door.

MARY (*loudly*): Who is it?

FEMALE VOICE: It's Diane George. (*Mary opens the door.*) Hello, Mary, hope I'm not late.

JUNO: Better late than never, Diane.

DIANE: I was running ahead of schedule till I ran into Father Michael. He said we should come to Easter Sunday services and others, too. He also gave me more information about my great-grandfather, who turns out to be John's great-grandfather, too, Sean Fitzgerald.

MARY: What was that?

DIANE: Well, it seems Great-Grandfather Sean was a gardener, something your husband and I share an interest in. Sean loved to raise roses and gladiolas, and used to send the church in Limerick, St. Rose's, a bouquet every Sunday, in-season. Father Michael knows the priest there very well. We brought along a photo you'll want to keep, plus a pair of good boots Sean only wore once. He died the day after he bought them. He had his picture taken wearing them, with his family, and that picture and the boots are yours, Johnny. We hope you enjoy them.

JOHNNY (*accepting the gifts*): Thanks. These are great. (*He looks at the picture closely, then the beautiful leather boots.*) 'Tis a good picture of me great-great-grandda. And these boots'll fit me soon. I'll wear them, too. I never had my own pair of leather ones before!

JOHN SR.: They are beautiful, Diane. Who gave them to you?

DIANE: Our cousin Sammy Fitzgerald in Limerick. He said these would be better for a youngster, and since he's none of his own, he said Johnny should have them. He also talked about John's and my great-grandfather. We'd been told by an Irish man near where we live in Chicago, to look up Father Murphy about these matters. The good Father knows the priest at St. Rose's, and he put us up to this. Along the way, we learned more about the Fitzgeralds, including Sean.

JOHN SR.: I have to say that Mary and I raise roses, and have got a few gladiolas in our greenhouse, too.

SHIVAUN: Oh, Da, you don't raise them. Mother does.

MARY: Thanks, Daughter, for declarin' the truth. Your Da likes to putter, but I do most o' the work. (*Laughter. John looks at his wife.*) But your Da does his share o' work, as the leadin' physician in Dublin.

The door opens and Boyle and Joxer enter with a friend of Johnny's. Alan Matthews, also the newsboy, is a handsome 15-year-old Cockney youth with a broad smile, though one of his eyes is ulcerated. The three are dressed well in new shirts, pants, and shoes. But Boyle and Joxer still wear the same caps as before.

BOYLE: I hope you don't mind. I found Alan Matthews kickin' about, and we asked his ma, Susan Patricia, if he could eat supper with us. I thought Johnny'd get a kick out of seein' him.

JOHNNY: Hey, Alan, what's cookin'?

ALAN: Hey, Johnny -- your gran's supper, by the sweet aroma o' things. (*Laughter.*)

BOYLE: Once we had Alan farther along the street, we had to buy him some new clothes and shoes. Show everyone, young man, like you did in the store.

Alan turns slowly round to oohs and aahs. The two youngsters then go to the couch to look at magazines.

JUNO: We're getting some use out of those English magazines you brought from your house, Mary. Alan, when you and your parents lived in London, did you see those magazines?

ALAN: A bit -- my family didn't buy them, but I had a friend whose parents did.

MARY: Well, the pictures and stories are so alive. I hope there's a magazine in Dublin like it soon, made by the Irish.

JOHN SR.: There will be, Mary. But photo-magazines cost money, and the Irish are not rich by English standards. Of course, *Picture Post* caters to everyday people, too -- in England. But with shipping, it runs into a bit of coin to purchase a subscription here.

JUNO (*looking around*): That's all good, but supper's ready. Let's sit down and eat our humble fare.

Mary gets the boys to come to table, bringing extra chairs first, and the group sits.

JUNO: Now, if the Captain'll lead us all in prayer...

BOYLE: Aye -- Bless us, Oh Lord (*the others join in*), and these Thy gifts, which we are about to receive, from Thy bounty through Christ, Our Lord, Amen.

Juno and Mary begin handing dishes around, as do the others.

MARY: Mother, this meat is delicious. What did you add to it?

JUNO: Just salt and pepper, and a bit of wine. What do you think, Diane?

DIANE: It's a reminder of home, a very nice reminder. Yes, it tastes just like my mom's. Where did you get the recipe?

JUNO: Mary said you were talking about American food with her, and she remembered what you said went into your mother's roast. It's little enough I can do for a Fitzgerald.

DIANE: Well, thank you. What do you think of it, Boys?

ALAN and JOHNNY: Tastes great, yuppity, yup, yup, yup!!

DIANE: You're even talkin' like Americans, American comedians, that is.

JUNO (*looking*): Captain, don't you have something you want to say about America?

BOYLE (*stunned*): I-I... no... except, America is a grand place to find freedom for the Irish. (*He raises a cup of milk.*) Toast to America, the Americans, and the Irish. (*Everyone joins in.*)

ALL: To America, the Americans, and the Irish!

JUNO: Now, don't you want to tell about the business you've been doing? Joxer told me....

BOYLE (*pressured*): Don't know what you're talking about, Mrs. Boyle.

JUNO: Oh, I think you do, Husband.

BOYLE: But Mrs. Boyle, our guests should be served, not bored. We can talk later.

JOHNNY: Yeah, Gran', the food's too good to tell stories over. Let's just eat. I'm starved. (*Scooping up food quickly.*)

JUNO: As you say, then, Grandson, for now at least... (*Lights out.*)

Act III, Scene 3

Action: Two hours later. The group is near apartment-center, on or around the couch. Some chairs have been pulled up around it. Juno is putting up her apron after cleaning the kitchen. Mary is putting the bread away. The rest are talking about a photo-story.

ALAN (*holding photo-story*): Hey, Johnny, look at this picture. The doctors are operatin' on a fish. Look at how they've got at its insides. It's a gross sight, if I ever saw one.

JOHNNY (*Half-serious*): Just think, pretty soon you'll be takin' that fish's place, with that ulcerated eye surgery and all. Those doctors'll have you under their knives like the fishmongers on Moore Street.

MARY: Now, now, boys, stop it. Not everyone likes talkin' about those kinds o' things. Alan will cope with his surgery just fine, won't you Alan?

ALAN: Yes, ma'am, I will.

BOYLE: Besides, Johnny, you'll embarrass the only doctor we've got in our family, your Da, who does surgery like a great musician plays his strings

JOHN SR.: Oh, I've heard far worse than that, Captain. Boys'll be boys.

JOXER: Just think, a photographer gets paid to take those pictures. It seems like nothing but fun to me.

MARY: Oh, they don't get paid much, Joxer. This one's a man named Bert Hardy. The reason we subscribe to *Picture Post* is John has a cousin who works there, and we get a discount. This Mr. Hardy is a young photographer with natural skill and street savvy.

JOHN SR.: Yes, I've seen many samples of his work. He can be humorous or serious, with a good eye. Didn't you tell me, Alan, that you want to be a photographer someday?

ALAN: Yes, Doctor Fitzgerald. I still hope to be one someday.

JOHN SR.: Then, that's what you'll be, as soon as you've recovered from your surgery.

JUNO (*pulling the rocker up to the couch*): I like good photographs. We've picked up a few good ones by Irish photographers, and there are others I'd like to hang on these walls.

JOXER: Oh, if these walls could talk. But I guess we humans make up for it.

DIANE: Mr. Daly, where do you live? I've never heard about your place.

JOXER: I used to have a boarding house room. But I just moved into me own flat. It's not much in some men's eyes, but 'tis home to me.

BOYLE: Joxer, tell them about your new friend.

JOXER (*proud*): Oh, there's a lady taken a shine to me, thank God. Last Sunday, St. Patrick's Day, we got engaged.

MARY: Congratulations, Joxer!

JOHN SR AND OTHERS.: Yes, congratulations, Joxer.

MARY: What's her name, then?

JOXER: Agnes Ida Objong. She's younger than me, pretty as a picture, and twice as sweet.

MARY: Why didn't you bring her tonight?

JOXER: She's tending to her ma, Lizzie, who's not very well, and Aggie wants to make sure she sees a good Easter this year. Might be her last.

MARY: That's very decent, Joxer.

JOXER: Aggie's mother used to attend St. Bart's; now the priest at St. Patrick's has to bring her Communion at home.

SHIVAUN: At least she still has her faith and her daughter's love.

JOXER: Lizzie says she wants to hear her favorite hymn on Easter, because the congregation was singing it the day she met her husband. They were married more than 30 years ago, until he passed. But Lizzie can't attend Mass at St. Bart's; she's in a wheelchair.

SHIVAUN: Where does Lizzie live?

JOXER: With Aggie, near Johnny Boyle's cemetery. Captain and me see them regularly.

BOYLE: And I don't mind the walk, either. (*Looking at the magazine.*) What else is in the *Picture Post*?

JOHN SR.: Oh, talk about Hitler and Mussolini. There's even talk about the Japanese, who colonized Korea, which somehow fits in, too. Some people are saying the war in Europe isn't going well. Britain's PM thinks all the Western powers are on a collision course with Hitler. Maybe Ireland will be drawn in, too. I hope the war doesn't last long.

MARY: I'm afraid for the young. We adults can cope; it's the young that need protection.

JUNO: You're a good wife and mother, Mary, but you're also a good daughter. The Captain and me don't want to see anything bad happen to you or John, either.

ALAN: Hey, look at this! (*Holding up a photo-story showing a woman's legs on a roller-coaster.*)

JOHNNY: Yeah, wow!

MARY: Now, now, Boys, relax. No decent young woman wants to be ogled like that. It may be you boys will find women just as pretty when you grow up, but you won't want them showing off their legs.

JOHNNY: Sept ta us.

ALAN: Yeah, sept ta us.

BOYLE (*chuckling*): I hope you don't have giant ideas about women. They are very nice creatures, but they're not giants, right Mrs. Boyle?

JUNO: I guess. I used to think you and Joxer thought I was the giant who nearly ate Jack and the Beanstalk. I used to say, "Jack Daniel Boyle, you make me so mad sometimes, I could bite off your head and spit it back in your face!"

BOYLE: That's right, my good wife, I'm reborn, and don't see you as a giant anymore, but you surely are good, like Jack. (*Winking at John Sr. Then, a knock at the door.*)

JUNO (*loudly*): Who's knocking?

MALE VOICE AT DOOR: It's Father Michael Murphy.

JUNO (*opening the door*): Oh hello, Father. How are you, and what brings you here?

FATHER MICHAEL: Just fine, Mrs. Boyle. I've come to ask if you and your family will be at Good Friday services tomorrow.

JUNO: I think we'll be there, why?

FATHER MICHAEL: Because there will be a special petition sent to Rome with the names of all the Irish who have died from St. Bart's in the making of the Irish nation. I've included your Johnny's name. Do you want to send a letter, as well? If you do, I want to know if you can write one before services at Noon tomorrow.

JUNO: I'm not much for writing (*looking round*), but with the family's help, I suppose I could put something together.

FATHER MICHAEL: That'll be fine. I'm also wondering, though, if you can read your letter to the congregation. What do you think about doing that, too?

JUNO (*more anxious*): Well... I suppose I can, but I'm not much of a public speaker either.

FATHER MICHAEL: Mrs. Boyle, I'm asking for you to read it, too, because it will have a profound effect. Do you think that'll be okay?

JUNO (*pulling herself up for a duty she now thinks must be done*): Yes, it's fine. 'Tis the least I can do for the many who have died for Ireland.

FATHER MICHAEL: Good. Service is three hours, but you'll be able to read at the start. Can you make it by 11:15?

JUNO: Yes, I'll be there then.

FATHER MICHAEL: Thank you, Mrs. Boyle, and my thanks go to all of you, too. We'll see you tomorrow, then?

JUNO: Yes, see you then.

FATHER MICHAEL (*waving and looking back*): Good night to you all.

JUNO and THE GROUP: Good night, Father.

JUNO: Mary, bring me some paper and a pencil. With all your help, I've got some writing to do.

(*She sits in her rocking chair, as the lights dim.*)

Act III – Scene 4

Action: The Boyles' bedroom, lights low. Juno and the Captain are asleep. The Captain snores, and Juno breathes heavily. She's speaking groggily in the midst of a dream.

JUNO: Oh, my darlin' Johnny – where have you gone off to now?

The vision of Johnny Boyle appears, accompanied by some Irish Irregulars. Johnny is forced to kneel down and he begins to finger his beads anxiously, with his only hand. He says, "St. Patrick and St. John of the Cross, pray for me in my hour of vital-est need." He starts the 'Our Father', drops his beads, and picks them up with a look of dejection, as he surveys the faces of the men, desperate to see a glimpse of salvation. The word "Why?" is enunciated. The men prod Johnny with their guns and tell him to get back to his beads. He does, very slowly. Just after "And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us," guns are pointed at him. His final words are, "... deliver us from Evil..." as shots ring out. Another figure, too, is seen on the edge of the stage, and he, too, is shot. Juno, Johnny's mother, who has sat up in her bed to watch, in a kind of hazy, dim light, shouts upward, with arms imploring, as the silhouette of another mother is also seen, similarly imploring, "Blessed Virgin, where were you when my darlin' son was riddled with bullets, when my darlin' son was riddled with bullets? Sacred Heart o' Jesus, take away our hearts o' stone, and give us hearts o' flesh! Take away this murderin' hate, and give us Thine own eternal love!" Captain Boyle awakens.

BOYLE: What the devil? Juno, what's happened?

JUNO (*Awakened from her dream-vision by the Captain*): Oh, Captain, hold me. (*Boyle does.*) I don't know what's come over me, but I saw Johnny's dyin', and Commandant Tancred's, too. They came and went so quickly, but I know it was them. I've never seen their deaths' so clearly as tonight -- it was terrible. Just hold me, Husband. (*She clings to the Captain; he kisses and strokes her hair.*)

BOYLE: Why don't you lay back down. It was a bad dream, all right. But it doesn't have ta be somethin' to spoil our Easter. Maybe it's somethin' that'll make you feel stronger about somethin' we can only touch in dreams.

JUNO (*calmed a bit*): Thanks, Captain. It's been a long time since you and me have known much happiness. But this Easter season has been a relief, even if tonight's dream makes me sure this Easter will be Johnny's and Commandant Tancred's both – the reasons we still believe in the Resurrection, I hope because of the forgiveness God offers us, no matter how terrible our sins. Though I never really admitted it to myself until now, Johnny sinned against the Commandant and Ireland. But without us thinking there's a place where we can find all our sons' happy and at peace again, like when they were small, there wouldn't be any reason to hope in this world.

BOYLE: But we can hope. For somewhere's God and our boys are with Him.

JUNO (*smiling*): Yes, Captain. I hope you still remember Johnny like I do – the times he used to come in from playing, and ask for somethin' good to eat – like potatoes, sassijes, and onions – Dublin Coddle -- which you hate but he loved. We didn't often have the makings, but when we did, it was like a feast day of the Church Itself. That was before his troubles, when the troubles of Ireland got in his way, and he stumbled. He'd lost an arm for Ireland, but he shouldn't have turned against his comrade and the Republic.

BOYLE (*Kissing her hair again*): Right you are, me love. I feel so terrible about our Johnny, just like you. You see, I knew what he'd done a long time ago, but didn't have the courage to tell you. Today, though, I've been thinking of you all day. Somehow, Johnny Boyle must know we've always been made for each other.

JUNO (*only half-mollified*): Still, Johnny was killed again by their bullets tonight, like Mrs. Tancred's son.

The Captain nods affirmatively, with a smile, trying to kiss her.

JUNO (*suddenly*): No, I'll not let you kiss me, not at this moment, and not until you let me know what you've been holding back from me the whole of Lent, You Old Dissembler. You and your excuses. I let me guard down, and what happens? You 'forget' to tell me anything. Why, I ought to bite off your head and spit it back in your face!

BOYLE (*feigning ignorance*): What do you mean?

JUNO: I guess a little bird flew into me kitchen the day after Ash Wednesday, and told me to visit church when my husband came there for the first time in 18 years, and the same little bird told me Joxer Daly was around there, too, because you can't walk two feet without leaving him stuck to your footprints. That little bird was Maisie Madigan.

BOYLE: Lord above, Woman, I still don't know what you're talkin' about.

JUNO: Oh, you don't? Just ask Mrs. Madigan next time you see her. (*Pulling his hair.*)

BOYLE (*stunned*): Leave me hair alone, Woman. I can't tell you now, or I'll spoil any chance we have for peace.

JUNO (*still pulling on his hair*): How's that, Husband? Tell me now or the only person left to bless you will be a priest over your coffin! Why are you so keen for new furniture?

BOYLE (*soothing the sides of his scalp with his hands*): Oh, the furniture. I'll tell. But I don't have to enjoy it, do I?

JUNO: Talk now or you'll never set foot in my bedroom again.

BOYLE: Okay. Well, you see Joxer and me, we know this fellow, Mr. Fennerly, who works for Hanners, who have some nice furniture they're willin' to part with, as long as we sell some of their other furniture to people we know. It's almost brand new. They reclaimed it from a rich family gone bankrupt. I feel sorry for that family, but what can you do except pick up the pieces and make use of them, which is fine, as long as you work for the privilege, right?

JUNO: Yes, 'tis true, I guess. Where are you sellin' the other furniture?

BOYLE: At the pubs Joxer and I spend time in, and to other friends, too. Even Mary and John said they'll buy some.

JUNO: You know, Captain, that does make a bit of sense. (*She hugs him.*)

BOYLE (*hugging her in return*): Thank you, Mrs. Boyle. You'll not regret this.

JUNO: Something tells me I will before the night's up.

BOYLE (*He sits close, running his fingers through her hair*): Don't say that. Kiss me, Juno.

JUNO: Well, you do look better now than you have in a long time, though I can't guarantee the spell will last. Easter won't be easy, but tonight I hope won't be so bad, after all. Let the frog become my prince. (*They kiss. Lights out.*)

Act IV - Scene 1

Action: The interior of St. Bart's, Good Friday. Juno is in the pulpit, reading her letter.

JUNO: For Those Who Have Suffered in the Birth of Our Nation -- I am an everyday, humble, Irish mother. Like so many other Irish mothers, I lost a son to the cause of our nation's birth. My son's name was Johnny, Johnny Boyle. Now Johnny was a good boy. He liked to try new things, and he believed in God, the Holy Family, and the Body of Christ. He also believed in the righteousness of Ireland, though he made some mistakes, especially in the death of Commandant Tancred, and Johnny didn't die on the side of Ireland, the way he could have. Still, he was my son, the fruit of my womb. We cried mightily when Johnny died. We still do. So did Mrs. Tancred cry mightily for her son. Many people have had sons and daughters who have died for Ireland. Why have they died? No death was 'sensible.' Who can say when any death is sensible, when some people that ask others to suffer and die, have not themselves suffered for Ireland? The British, too, have suffered and died throughout our troubles. Their sons and daughters are members of good families, too. They've had dreams and hopes like us. The British should not rule us, but neither should we think ourselves better than them. They're human, like us, God's children all. My Dear Holy Father, please read and hear our petition and letter. Then, say to the world that Ireland is a place that needs peace, like All the World. The South of Ireland is a Republic now -- when will our entire island, our entire world, be free? You must let the whole world know that peace MUST be at hand, that we mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, do not want to die if the world isn't free. Yes, let us stop Hitler and Mussolini, if we must, but do not let the Irish or any people die simply to die. I know we everyday Irish mothers don't have all the answers for Britain, America, Poland, France, Germany, Japan, and Italy, but I do know that if you can see a way to save the world from war and death, we will back your ways of keeping the peace. All people have some goodness in their heart, and I know you will help find and bring it forth. Thank You, Your Holiness, for reading our petition and the poor pencil-scratchin's of this feeble Irish wife, mother, grandmother, and friend. You're in our prayers, and we hope we're in yours. May God bless us all. (*Lights out.*)

Act IV – Scene 2

Action: The front steps of St. Bart's, after Good Friday services, 3:15 p.m. Juno and the Captain and their family and friends are talking. The weather is sunny. Juno is recounting how the family helped compose the letter she read.

JUNO: The only reason I could write the letter was because I had a dream last night that woke me up. I finally saw that my son, Johnny, wasn't perfect -- that he committed a sin against Ireland and the Church. I used some of what you'd given me, and then I changed a line here and there, because of the dream I had.

MARY: Surely, God inspired you to do what you did. We only helped a little.

JOHNNY: You did the real writin'.

SHIVAUN: And you had to stand in front of the whole congregation and read it. I'd have been scared out o' me mind of that.

The doors open and Fr. Michael enters. He now wears everyday priestly garb, a black cassock with white collar.

BOYLE: Father Michael, what's been keepin' you? We've been out here twenty minutes.

JUNO: Hush, Captain. The good Father has his work to do.

FR. MICHAEL (*holding his hand up*): Well, Mrs. Boyle, you're right about my work. I had to open the windows in the sacristy to air the dampness out, and I had to talk to Jim Larkin, the roofer, about the rains we've been havin' this Lent. It's only been decent weather the last two days, but if we get rain before Sunday Noon, it could be a dim Easter, indeed. He's going to fix the roof over the Communion Railing tomorrow morning.

JUNO: Easter Saturday?

FR. MICHAEL: We don't have a choice. He's got three men to help him and they'll be done by supper.

JOHN SR.: That'll require good weather, Father.

FR. MICHAEL: Yes. I'll be sayin' a rosary for their success. Some of you can, too.

MARY: Yes, Fr. Michael. Oh, and thank you, Father, for telling the Georges to visit the priest at St. Rose's. A lot of puzzle-pieces soon fell into place when you did. (*He nods, accepting her thanks.*)

BOYLE: Father, we were talking about Juno's reading the letter. What did you think?

FR. MICHAEL: I thought it was a moving tribute to those who've sacrificed much in the struggle for Irish independence. You referred to your son's mistakes, which we all make, to different degrees, and to the British who've died, too, because we often forget that British troops and innocents have died as often as Irish Republicans and innocents.

JUNO: That was Alan's idea. Everyone helped compose the letter's first draft, last night after supper, and Alan piped up, "What about the British?" – so we had to say something about them, too. The Brits suffer and die like us Irish and the rest of the world. Even the Germans and Japanese are human. That's why they're in the letter, too.

JOHN SR.: Speaking of good writing, where'd you get the poem you read today, Father?

FR. MICHAEL: Oh, the one by A.E. Housman, the British poet. He translated an ancient Latin poem by Horace. It's called, "To Torquatus, Diffugere Nives," meaning, "To Torquatus, the Snows Are Fled Away." (*Digging in his pockets.*) Does anyone want to hear it again?

JOHN SR.: I would, Father.

SHIVAUN: So would I.

FR. MICHAEL: Well, I'll read the excerpt from church: "The snows are fled away, leaves on the shaws./ And grasses in the mead renew their birth,/The river to the river-bed withdraws,/And altered is the fashion of the earth.."

ALAN: That's beautiful, Father. Who was this Horace?

FR. MICHAEL: Horace was a great Roman writer.

ALAN: What do you think of his poetry, Father?

FR. MICHAEL: Well, Alan, Horace doesn't see all life as eternal, as Catholics do. But he does see a time when life is at its fullest, and should be enjoyed while it can be. As Catholics, we believe that even after the prime of life, we don't simply die and are no more. We can be reborn, even then. Other Christians believe similarly about rebirth. A kind of death is the destiny for all life, but if we live right, we can be reborn. Let's hope we all live right.

BOYLE: We know you like the poet Horace, but who would your favorite playwright be?

FR. MICHAEL: He's an Irishman many have heard of here, but not so, abroad. He's a man the Church does not praise as highly as some, but he's a powerful reader and writer of the human condition: Tony Dooley.

JOXER: Tony Dooley. He wrote *The Paycock Rises Again*.

BOYLE: Aye. 'Tis a small world, after all, Father.

FR. MICHAEL: He knew the man you told me about once, didn't he?

BOYLE: Indeed he did, Father – the very one.

FR. MICHAEL (*looking at the Captain and Joxer*): You owe a lot to him, don't you?.

BOYLE and JOXER: Yes we do, Father, yes we do.

FR. MICHAEL: Then I recommend you all pray for a good friend's soul, now. (*He clasps his hands and leads the group in prayer.*) "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with Thee, Blessed art Thou among women and blessed is the

fruit of Thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death, Amen.” Now, think about Christ’s life and death, and life after death. You won’t feel low about Ireland’s state or the world’s.

THE GROUP: Yes, Father. Thank you.

FR. MICHAEL: Then, I’ll see you all on Sunday?

THE GROUP: See you Sunday, Father. (*Lights out.*)

Act IV - Scene 3

Action: The interior of St. Bart’s, Easter Sunday, 9 a.m. The church is spruced up with flowers and banner. The organist is playing the prelude ‘Joyful, Joyful’. The Boyle family and friends are half-gathered round a pew, dressed well, though Boyle and Joxer still carry their old caps. The pair speaks with another man, stage left. Some stand. Juno, Mary, and John Sr. sit in pew.

MARY: John, where are the flowers?

JOHN SR. (*slapping his forehead*): How could I have forgotten? They’re in the motorcar. I was so excited about us all being here on Easter, I forgot why we arrived early. I’ll be right back. (*He exits, stage left.*)

JUNO: Doesn’t the church look lovely, Mary? I think it’s beautiful the way the last few days have gone. It’s been a decent Lent all the way round.

MARY: Yes, Ma. Father Michael and the Ladies’ Prayer Circle look after everything so wonderfully. And other parishioners help, too. We’ve a lovely parish now that Da and Joxer attend. I never thought I’d see them darken this church’s doorstep again, but now that they’re back, they lighten up this place. I guess it’s true what the Lord said about the prodigal son and the lost sheep.

JUNO: Yes. But if the Captain and Joxer wouldn’t have reformed, I would’ve killed them both before long. What scoundrels they used to be. Nippin’ out for a drink more often than a pious monk says, “Glory be.” And when I found out they came home drunk the night poor Johnny met his maker, I nearly died of anger and sadness. Thank the Lord, they at least came home when it counted. What a strange and wonderful place Ireland is these days.

John Sr. enters with roses and gladiolas in Art Deco vase. Boyle and Joxer show admiration with their eyes and grins.

JOHN SR.: Do they still look as glorious and victorious as when we picked them?

MARY: Better – they look absolutely wonderful, John Dennis Fitzgerald.

JUNO: Now place them where Father left room – right by the altar, front and center.

JOHN SR.: Sure as I will.

John Sr. goes off, stage right.

MARY: Ma, isn’t it grand everyone we know is a great human family again? I mean, you, Da, and Joxer, John and the children, Father Michael, and the Georges. It just goes to show the power o’ prayer.

JUNO: Yes, I thought I’d wear out my beads before I’d see any improvement in your da and Joxer. But they’ve turned the corner. By the way, I think it’s wonderful that Johnny’s servin’ Mass. Makes an old gran’ proud of her offspring.

MARY: Thanks, Ma. I hope John and I are raisin’ Johnny and Shivaun to grow up straight and tall. The children and John are bringing me as much pleasure as a mother and wife wants. I hope things only get better from here to eternity.

JUNO: Oh, they’ll be fine the rest o’ their lives. They’ve got good heads on their shoulders, and have good family and friends around them. As old Rolly Coughlin, the newsman, used to say, “What more could be fairer?”

John Sr. returns.

JOHN SR.: How do they look? I’m asking the two most important women in the world.

JUNO and MARY: Gorgeous!

JUNO: They couldn't look any better if God Himself placed them atop the Pearly Gates.

JOHN SR.: Good. Now, where's Johnny? He was to meet us here at nine o'clock.

MARY: Don't be worryin'. He'll come round to see us soon.

JUNO: What time do you have now, John?

JOHN SR. (*looking at his watch*): 9:05.

MARY: Maybe Johnny got held up listening to Father explain preparations.

Shivaun, who's been talking with a girlfriend, comes over.

SHIVAUN: Mother, Johnny told me he'd be here as soon as he listens to the instructions on incense and things. I forgot to tell you. He said it'd be a few extra minutes.

MARY: Your father was wonderin' where he was.

SHIVAUN: Well, Father Michael is particular about incense especially.

JOHN SR.: Johnny needs to let us know about the Offerings.

JUNO: He'll be here soon.

JOHN SR.: Yes, Mother.

Shivaun returns to her friend. Johnny emerges, stage right, and moves to his dad.

JOHNNY: Sorry I'm late, Da. I had to listen to Father about incense and things.

JOHN SR.: That's okay. What about the Offerings?

JOHNNY: Father says you and Ma should bring up the wine, water, and hosts when the Creed's over. But instead of waiting at the altar, he'll come down to the Communion Railing. He'll take the gifts from you and an usher'll bring up the collection plate with you. Any questions?

JOHN SR.: No Son, we'll be ready.

Boyle and Joxer come over.

BOYLE: When are we going to visit Johnny's grave? You have every Easter since he died, and now I'm finally goin' to do what's truly right by him this day.

JUNO: We'll go as soon as we've talked with Fr. Michael after Mass.

JOXER: 'Tis a glorious day for it. The sun's been shinin' four straight days, and the church's roof is put right. Jim Larkin and his boys knew their business.

BOYLE: What have you planned for lunch afterward, Mrs. Boyle?

JUNO: Isn't it like a man to want to know what his stomach will be feastin' on before he sits at table?

JOXER: I think it's from all those years of Dublin Coddle and liver – the Captain doesn't trust every family meal yet.

JOHN SR.: I can promise you all, what Mother has cooked up will ring up tons on the scales. Be prepared to put another hole in your belts.

JOXER: Sounds like it'll be a darlin' meal, a darlin' meal. (*Laughter*).

MARY: Ma, it'll be fine and nice to hear Father Michael leadin' us in prayer at Johnny's grave.

JUNO: He's a special prayer he wrote for the occasion. It should be fitting.

MARY: And Tommy Malone'll be there, too, the oldest Malone son, who popped up around us whenever Johnny Boyle was around. The three Malone brothers have volunteered for the British Army, because Ireland's neutral.

JUNO: And how is their mother, Teresa?

MARY: Still doing fair, but she says she wishes she could return to the old neighborhood. She sends her best wishes to you, Ma. *(She moves stage right, and off.)*

JUNO: And I to her, too.

David and Diane enter. Boyle and Joxer talk. Organist plays 'Holy God,' and throng stands in pews. Lights out.

Act IV - Scene 4

Action: Johnny Boyle's grave, Dublin outskirts, 12:15 p.m. His grave is on a little rise, stage right. Other graves are located down from it, near the back. In the distance, left and right, are hedges. Flowers have been placed around a few graves. A flowering violet adorns Johnny's grave. A stone marker shows his name, dates, and "Johnny, we'll always love you. Your family and friends." A motorcar is heard pulling up, then one more, off stage left. Voices draw near.

BOYLE *(from offstage)*: That's okay, Mary. Joxer and me'll take these over. John and the boys can get the rest.

MARY *(from offstage)*: Good. We'll be over in a minute.

Boyle and Joxer enter, stage left. They size things up. Boyle puts the roses-and-gladiolas bouquet by Johnny's marker. Both men make the sign of the cross. A woman carrying a small satchel emerges, stage right. It's Claudine O'Malley.

BOYLE: We need ta be quick. Johnny knows why. You've got the papers, Miss O'Malley?

CLAUDINE: Here, take a look. *(Handing the Captain a pen.)*

CAPTAIN *(deferring to Joxer)*: What do they say?

JOXER *(reading to himself)*: They seem in order. Yes, same deal as we talked about at the Sporting Pub. The Captain gets 65% of the 100,000 pounds, or 65,000, and Miss O'Malley gets 35,000. Looks straightforward to me.

CLAUDINE: Then sign here, Captain. *(The Captain signs the original and a copy.)*

CAPTAIN *(Taking his copy.)*: Now for the money.

CLAUDINE: Here it is. *(She opens two envelopes from satchel to show them.)* Count it. It's all there. *(Joxer does.)*

JOXER *(counting)*: It's all here, Captain.

CAPTAIN *(extending his hand)*: Then, thanks for everything, Miss O'Malley. That'll be it for our business this Easter. I hope the Lord doesn't hold it against us.

CLAUDINE: I doubt He will. And thank you, too, Both of You.

CAPTAIN: There may be more work for you from us. We can always use a top solicitor.

CLAUDINE: Thanks, Captain. Let me know when you need my services again.

CAPTAIN: That we will. *(Claudine exits opposite her entryway.)* We both get a good cut, Joxer. And 500 from each of us will go to a sensible bet on 'Golden Paycock,' a one-time-can't-miss prospect at the track. *(Giving him an envelope.)*

JOXER *(kissing his share of the money)*: Thank you, Captain. And the Good Lord be praised for it! I'm glad our bookmaker knows a peachy deal when he sees one.

CAPTAIN: Yes, he does, Joxer. Yes, he does.

The pair quickly put the envelopes into their pockets. Then the rest of the church group arrives. Some bring flowers and others bring pictures of Johnny. A woman about 60, in a wheelchair, and a woman about 40 pushing her appear, as does Ray O'Reilly. So, too, does the reporter Stephen Fitzgerald, walking alongside Alan Matthews, who has his bike and no papers, this time. Joxer stands by the wheelchair.

BOYLE (*half-whispering*): Mrs. Boyle, this looks ta be as right a time as any to tell you that, well, there's no other way to say it: we've come into a little inheritance from a friend of Joxer and me, Charlie O'Keeffe. Charlie produced Tony Dooley's greatest play at the Abbey. He died in a motorcar accident in America, and left us some money.

JUNO (*half-whispering, half-angry*): Captain, what do ya mean, money? That's what you've been holding back from me all this Lent? Why, you *are* an Old Dissembler. (*Thinking better of berating him.*) How much money?

BOYLE: 65,000 pounds, minus our tithe and Joxer's share.

JUNO (*gasping*): 65,000 pounds?!! Show me that money! (*He does, and she takes it and puts it in her bag.*) Good Lord, that's enough to build an orphanage or a church. Is it all above-board?

BOYLE: Aye, that it is, Mrs. Boyle.

JUNO: Well then, keep quiet and we'll discuss this later. 'Tis Easter Sunday, but I'd guess you've been thinking about it all of Lent. Confession it was, and confession it is, thank God for confession.

CAPTAIN: Right you are, Mrs. Boyle. (*He kisses her.*)

JOXER (*as if on cue*): Isn't it Romeo and Juliet the two of you be imitatin' -- though a little farther along in years?

BOYLE (*Almost too loudly*): Right you are, Joxer.

(Ray O'Reilly steps forward.)

RAY: Mrs. Boyle, 'tis not often you see me on nice occasions, but here's a photo I had at the pub, of your Johnny. 'Tis a glorious day (*tearing up a bit*), yes a glorious day, to have your Johnny looking down favorably on us from Heaven.

JUNO (*tearing up a little herself*): Thanks, Ray. Yes, it is.

David and Diane step forward.

DIANE: David, don't you think 'tis delightful John and I are cousins, with the same great-grandfather?

DAVID (*Doing an Irish accent*): Yes I do, Me Sweet. 'Tis a grand family ta be part of.

JOHN SR.: Thank goodness Father Michael knew the priest at St. Rose's.

DAVID and DIANE: Yes, thank goodness for that.

Fr. Michael arrives, as does Tommy Malone, and the group gather up.

JUNO: Well, Father, 'tis summer-like today, after all. Our rosaries must have helped.

FR. MICHAEL: Yes, they did. (*He approaches woman in wheelchair. Stephen Fitzgerald follows and takes notes.*) Aren't you Mrs. Objong? And this must be your daughter, Aggie, the future Mrs. Daly. 'Tis nice to meet you both.

LIZZIE: 'Tis nice meetin' you, too, Father Michael "Rocky" Murphy. We've heard a lot about you -- former boxing contender and all. It will be an honor to pray and sing with you today. My late husband, Jomotto, who was born in Kenya and raised poor but rising in Dublin, would have loved to be here today, to meet you and sing the hymn that first brought him and me together more than 30 years ago.

FR. MICHAEL: Yes, it would be nice to have him here, but maybe he is, in a way (*looking at Aggie*). As for the boxin,' twas nothin' a-tall. (*Punching air -- then holding a knee.*) 'Tis the prayin' on me knees that's hard. (*Laughter.*)

AGGIE: Father Michael, my mother and I can't get to Mass at St. Bart's anymore, but since we live so close to the cemetery, we knew this'd be a good time to meet you. I hope you know how much we've been praying' n' singin' over the years, and this Easter is very special to us, too.

JOXER: Yes, Father, they've been prayin' 'n singin' a long time, haven't you, Me Sweet Apple Blossoms.

LIZZIE: 'Tis a grand thing to spend time praisin' the Lord, when so much of the world seems content praisin' the sins of their worldly leaders.

STEPHEN FITZGERALD: Mrs. Objong, I'm with the *Irish Times* -- Stephen Fitzgerald. Do you mind if I quote you? It'll give my story more zing. (*Stephen motions to Alan, who's assisting with coverage.*)

LIZZIE: Fine with me. More good sense should mean more good things for Ireland.

Tommy Malone comes over.

TOMMY MALONE: Hello, Everyone. 'Tis grand ta see you -- especially you, Captain and Mrs. Boyle, and Mary. It brings back memories to see your family, and ta think fondly of Johnny, before the troubles. Your son would have amounted ta somethin' fine, if he would have gotten past the troubles.

JUNO: Yes, he loved you as much as family, until near the end, when everything seemed to go wrong for him.

TOMMY: I grew up well, because of me big buddy Johnny. I wish we could have stayed closer when his troubles started.

JUNO: Well, he had a great friend in you, Tommy Malone.

TOMMY: (*Looks at his watch.*) Oh no, I wish I could stay longer, but Father, we've got ta hurry. The train leaves soon, and me two brothers are waiting ta go off with me to the Army. Our fiancés are goin' ta see us off.

FR. MICHAEL: Yes, when you volunteer for the Army, you can't keep the Generals waitin'.

An elderly woman appears. Juno immediately goes over to her, and they tear up and hug. It's Mrs. Tancred, the Commandant's mother. Mrs. Tancred holds a photo of her son. Juno leads her over to Fr. Michael.

JUNO: Father Michael, this is Mrs. Tancred, the Commandant's mother. We've talked recently, after not talking to one another in many years. I hope you'll give her a blessing, and her son's memory, too. We all need forgiveness and your blessing.

Fr. Michael makes the sign of the cross over Mrs. Tancred, then over Juno, then over the group. He then moves to the foot of Johnny's grave, and blesses it, too. The others gather closer.

FR. MICHAEL: Captain, will you hold the bouquet? (*Boyle picks it up. The priest addresses the crowd.*): Lord, we honor You today by honoring two young men long loved by family and friends, both of whom, in their way, died for Ireland. My predecessor, Father Richard Burke, knew Johnny Boyle well, and sends his regards; he'll pass our petition and Mrs. Boyle's letter on to His Holiness soon, along with our photos. Remember: Today means rebirth -- Easter Sunday. St. Matthew wrote, inspired by God's Angel: "Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, went up on the mountain, and sat down there. Great crowds came to him, having with them the lame, the blind, the deformed, the mute, and many others. They placed them at his feet, and he cured them." (15:29-30.) In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit...

EVERYONE (*making the sign of the cross*): Amen!

FR. MICHAEL: Now, Tommy, if you'll lead us by singing the first verse of a great standard -- 'Joyful, Joyful'.

TOMMY (*Nods yes, then sings*): Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee,/God of glory, Lord of love;/Hearts unfold like flowers before Thee,/Praising Thee, their Son above./Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,/Drive the dark of doubt away,/Giver of immortal gladness,/Fill us with the light of day. (*The entire crowd then repeats the same verse.*)

FR. MICHAEL (*smiling at Lizzie and Aggie, who smile back*): Amen. 'Tis a great hymn that's your favorite, Mrs. Objong. We're glad we had the talent to perform it. You know, the Aborigines of Australia say, every person must follow their songline, to remain decent. They believe one songline runs through the center of Australia. We, too, must abide by our songlines. With them, the Lord melts the clouds of sin and sadness and fills us with the light of day.

JUNO (*Touching his hand*): Father, this is our most blessed Easter in 18 years. (*Speaking to all.*) And I hope you know that if it weren't for all of you, this day would never have been a happy one. Isn't that right, Father Michael? Will you join us for a memorial meal, Mrs. Tancred?

MRS. TANCRED: Thank you, Mrs. Boyle. I will.

FR. MICHAEL: Yes, and thank goodness, 'tis a glorious day (raising his hands to the sun) to find the Lord again. Now, I hope you'll all agree, 'tis time each of us go to a proper dwelling to enjoy the Easter meal of their choosin'.

BOYLE (*winking*): Sounds like paradise to me, Rocky. What do the rest of you think?

EVERYONE: Paradise it is!

JUNO (*hugging her husband*): Oh, I love you, Jack Daniel Boyle, with your different, special speeches. Now, kindly assist your lovin' wife home, so we can enjoy a fine Easter meal of lamb, potatoes, peas, wine, milk, and (*egging him on*)... dessert! Will you join us, too, Father?

FR. MICHAEL: I'll be happy to, Mrs. Boyle.

BOYLE: Me favorite, Mrs. Boyle, lamb and dessert. God be praised, from Whom all blessings flow!

JUNO: And isn't it a man's stomach that be the quickest way to his heart?

Laughter. People with photos of Johnny share them with his parents, and move off. Stephen takes a photo before they do, of the Boyles and Fitzgeralds with Mrs. Tancred and Father Michael. Boyle speaks to Joxer, while still keeping his arm around Juno, as she keeps her arm around Mrs. Tancred. Stephen has enough pictures, takes out his film and gives it to Alan, who jumps on his bike and heads offstage.

BOYLE (*low voice*): We'll have to be getting to the track, soon Joxer, for a very safe bet on 'Golden Paycock'. Three-to-one, Dorie Banner ain't wrong. A better bookmaker there isn't, this side o' Churchill Downs – and today we ain't goin' to be downed, not by a long shot. (*In louder voice.*) Meantime, let's enjoy this day to the best of our abilities.

JOXER (*arm around Aggie*): You can count on us.

MARY: What in God's green earth are the two of you talking about?

JUNO: I don't know, Mary, but 'tis a special 'Song of Joy'. For that and all our blessings, we should be grateful. Including for the Shamrocks from Bantry (*winking at Joxer*) and the brew from St. Patrick's Irishfest (*winking at Ray O'Reilly*). Now, let's move on, My Dear Captain Jack? Didn't I used to say, "God bless you, Captain Boyle, 'cause nobody else will?" Well, at least a couple of us, and God, will now, too.

CAPTAIN JACK: Yes, the Lord surely works in mysterious, but satisfying ways, so let's be headin' home to a darlin' meal and dessert, me beauteous Juno Rosemary!

JOXER (*looking at Captain, then musicians, then crowd*): Well then, anyone for another Old-Reliable?

RAY (*Winking at him*): Why not, Joxer? We've all passed for a bit reliable before. We're all Old-Reliables now.

STAGE-CROWD: Amen to that!

JOXER (*to audience*): But then, ain't all religions curious? If they weren't, you wouldn't get anyone to believe in them.

JOXER (to FR. MICHAEL): Now, Father, not to change the subject, but tisen't hard ta believe you fought for the championship a few years ago. You still look like you could go 20 rounds today.

FR. MICHAEL: Yes I could, Joxer Daly, and fightin' evil is just like me championship fight in 1922 against Billy Quinn. I was wa-a-a-y ahead on points. I was giving him the old left-and-right, left-and-right, left-and-right, when ALL of a sudden... (*swinging up, hitting his own chin; the pair exit, with FR. MICHAEL gesturing in pain in silhouette.*)

As the hymn plays, Tommy Malone has been talking with others and really has to hustle off now, which he does.

EVERYONE (*exiting*): Amazing grace, how sweet the sound/That saved a wretch like me;/I once was lost but now am found/Was blind but now I see... (*The melody plays on small bagpipe as lights fade and final curtain falls. **The End.***)

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