

Song of Joy—Or the Old Reliables: A Sequel to Sean O’Casey’s Juno and the Paycock—Sequel Conceived of, Written, & Revised by David Joseph Marcou. Copyright©2000-2012+, of David Joseph Marcou.

--For God, Two Very Special People (M&J), Our Extended Families and Friends Especially the Marcous, Muskats, Brunners, O’Caseys, and To Be Sure the Fitzgeralds of This World, All Our Alma Maters, Producers/Sponsors/Casts/Crews, Venues/Viewers, Publishers/Sellers, Publicists/Reviewers, Counselors, Medics, Administrators, and Archivists/Readers.

--‘I believe that in a great city, or even...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.

--‘Small talk is interesting, and can get Real interesting, at times.’--David Joseph Marcou, SOJ—OTOR Playwright.

--‘But then, ain’t all religions curious? If they weren’t, you wouldn’t get anyone to believe in them.’--Joxer Daly, in SOJ—OTOR.

--‘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,...he could see nothing except the difference between light and dark... But 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 murdherin’ hate...an’ give us Thine eternal love!’--Mrs. Tancred, in ‘Juno and the Paycock’.

--‘I have found life an enjoyable, enchanting, active, and sometimes 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 Sean O’Casey’s ‘Juno and the Paycock,’ with his 1922 Dublin moved ahead to 1940. This sequel views the possible rise in fortune of the Boyle Family – Captain and wife Juno plus now-married-daughter Mary, who’s given birth to and is raising her own daughter from an early affair, plus her young son. Also key is the remembrance in ‘Song of Joy’ of Johnny Boyle, killed in ‘Juno’ for betraying a comrade. ‘Juno’ was strong tragicomedy; ‘Song of Joy’ suggests comic redemption, though comedy often springs from ‘tragic irritation’. But a question lingers: Does human goodness motivate the ‘reformed’ characters, or the scent of money?

Dramatis Personae:

‘Captain’ Jack Daniel Boyle

Juno Rosemary Boyle, his wife

Joxer Daly, Captain’s pal

Johnny Boyle, the Boyles’ son-apparition, and apparitions he informed on and/or who killed him

Mary Boyle Fitzgerald, the Boyles’ daughter

Dr. John Dennis Fitzgerald, Mary’s husband

Shivaun Fitzgerald, John’s adoptive- and Mary’s daughter

John ‘Johnny’ Fitzgerald Jr., John Sr. and Mary’s son

Diane Fitzgerald, newly-arrived American businesswoman
Fr. Michael 'Rocky' Murphy, St. Bart's pastor
Agnes Ida Rogers, Joxer's lady-friend
Alan Matthews, Johnny's friend, a newsboy
Thomas Daniel 'Tommy' Malone, friend of the late Johnny Boyle
Claudine O'Malley, solicitor
Ray O'Reilly, barkeeper
Ray's family (incl. wife Polly), musicians, dancers, and/or singers
Lizzie O'Hara, bar-hopper who "used to know" Captain and Joxer
Bar-flies, male and female
Mrs. Tancred, murdered Commandant Tancred's mother.

Action:

Act I - Interior of St. Bart's Church, Dublin, day after Ash Wednesday.
Act II, Scene 1 - Living room and kitchen of Boyle apartment, Dublin, that night.
Act II, Scene 2 - Same apartment, next Tuesday.
Act III, Scene 1 - Pub, Holy Thursday afternoon.
Act III, Scene 2 - Boyle apartment, suppertime, Holy Thursday.
Act III, Scene 3 - Same apartment, two hours later.
Act III, Scene 4 - Boyle bedroom, late that night.
Act IV, Scene 1 - Interior, St. Bart's, Good Friday.
Act IV, Scene 2 - Front steps, St. Bart's, Good Friday.
Act IV, Scene 3 - Interior, St. Bart's, before Easter service.
Act IV, Scene 4 - Johnny Boyle's grave, Dublin outskirts, Easter afternoon.

Play's Period: Lent, 1940.

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

Intermission Music: 'The Minstrel Boy'; **Closing Music:** "Amazing Grace".

Music Between/Within Scenes:

<http://www.ireland-information.com/irishmusic/irishsongs-music-lyrics-midis.htm>

<http://www.hymnsite.com/http://midihymns.homestead.com/midiindex.html>

http://www.lyricsfreak.com/b/billie+holiday/pennies+from+heaven_20017901.html

<http://www.triskelle.eu/lyrics/belleofbelfastcity.php?index=080.010.020.020>

Act 1

Action: St. Bart's, day after Ash Wednesday, 1940. We see part of interior, with confessional at back-center; candles at right. Priest's area is lit with a red light. Pews. No penitents. Church-door, off-left, opens, shuts. Two voices argue.

FIRST MAN (*too loud, entering*): I'm tellin' you, Joxer, I'm not goin' to tell Father all me sins, just a couple of 'em.

SECOND MAN: (*half-whispers with his finger to his lips*) Shhhh, or the father will eat us for supper. But you said you're not goin' to tell him about the big one. Don't you think you should?

First Man is 'Captain' Jack Boyle, mid-size. In his 70s, with a semi-bald, shaggy-sided, gray head, he carries a sea captain's black hat, and wears lived-in clothes and spectacles. Though his language is semi-coarse, he has a kind of charm. Second Man is Joxer Daly, Boyle's age and his pal. Joxer is slightly taller than Boyle, slim, with spry good looks. He wears an ironic smile, lived-in clothes, and dark green beret.

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

JOXER (*views his cap in Boyle's hand, smiles*): Now, Captain, I was just about to remove me cap. I know how 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 (*returns cap*): Just keep it off a little while. I want me confession heard, and don't need you talkin' about how negligent I've been for 18 years. Tis true Johnny's funeral's long-past, but his dying still haunts Juno. Some folks say Johnny betrayed Commandant Tancred, but my missus thinks it was mistaken identifying.

JOXER: I hope ya know Joxer respects our being together a lot longer than 18 years. I doubt Johnny was a full traitor to the Republican cause, no matter what trots about as 'truth'.

BOYLE: 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. Now, Johnny could've used a priest when they did him in. Juno's been prayin' for his soul ever since, 'cause he died without one by his side.

JOXER: If I was the Lord Himself, I wouldn't want to see my creatures quarreling about such paratoxes. 'tis Himself would want us talkin' instead about the great emotions, the great looves and hates we all feel.

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

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

BOYLE: Not now about your reading. If Juno's ta forgive me and my sins, then I need to get behind curtain, NOW!

JOXER (*priest's curtain moves; Joxer points*): Jeez, did you see that? What's goin' on?

BOYLE: Joxer, the priest's in his element. That's how you know he is ready, willin', and able to take us on.

JOXER (*noise*): 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 with so many tempting habits around, it's a wonder more people don't smoke, to rest the emotions.

BOYLE: Know what you mean, Joxer. Still, I'm happy none of me own family smokes. Mind you, I been tempted. When you sit in pubs long enough, some things start looking awfully good.

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

BOYLE: Why I saw Mrs. Madigan smoking like a fiend t'other day, with her stogies and ciggies, in a pub besides.

JOXER: And wasn't it Joxer beside you when you saw herself sinning against the tobacco laws o' heaven, pretty as ya please? I've even heard she likes women better than men.

BOYLE: Yeah, she's a regular laesbian.

JOXER: Say, Captain, did you hear what the snail said to the police officer when he was asked to describe being robbed by a tortoise?

BOYLE: No, what did the snail say?

JOXER: I didn't see anything, officer. It all happened so fast.

BOYLE: Joxer, what are ya doing'? Tellin' jokes in church? (*Hits Joxer with his Captain's cap.*) Stop with it, will you? I need to prepare for confession. 'tis a church this is, so let's kneel down, and say us a prayer.

JOXER: So 'tis. (*They make a production of kneeling, at safe distance from confessional.*) What's first, Captain?

BOYLE: First, we need make a sign – of the cross (*gingerly*). Yes, that's how it goes. (*Completes it, Orthodox-style.*)

JOXER (*signs*): I remember it, too. (*Finishes Western-style.*)

BOYLE: I guess you've got it, Joxer.

JOXER: Now what, Captain?

BOYLE: Next,... let's us...say something like: Oh Lord, what brought us here is the sort of things only You know. Me and Joxer, we haven't been so good always, though we do our best. Help us – me – confess my sins...you know, venal 'er mortal. And once I confess, help Mrs. Boyle forgive me for not being a bigger man the last 18 – make it 20 -- years.

JOXER: Yes, Captain. And what are your sins?

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

JOXER: That's good, Captain. Next?

BOYLE: I could tell him I got drunk the night Johnny died, and ain't worked a day since or a while before that, either.

JOXER: Good. Now?

BOYLE: Well, I don't want to tell him about, you-know-what...

JOXER: (*Looks at him hard*) What about the ponies, AND the you-know-what?

BOYLE: I suppose I could tell him I've been lucky with the ponies lately, but not as lucky with them as with somethin' else – through no goodness of me own.

JOXER: Captain, that's a darlin' proposal. And what about Lizzie O'Hara?

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

JOXER (*sneezes twice*): Lord, the air in here is gettin' cool.

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

JOXER (*gently raises hand*): I don't think you mean editerrorizing -- editorializing's more like it. Also, if we start a brawl, Father'll know you've no reverence for the atmospheric in God's House. And innocent ol' Joxer'll be dragged into his upset, same as if the devil himself pitched in, like the British did when the famine struck a hundred years ago.

BOYLE: Maybe, but I still don't like people sneezin' when I'm talkin'.

JOXER (*distracts Boyle*): Look, Captain. (*Points.*) I just saw the curtain shift again, and the light blinked thrice.

BOYLE: I should go in and talk to the good Father.

JOXER: I expect so, Captain – no time to waste, either.

BOYLE: Aye, I'll go; let me clear me head first. (*Shakes it.*) I'm going, Joxer, let me go, while I've got me courage up.

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

BOYLE (*Pushes back*): Don't you be pushing at me, Joxer Daly, don't push...

Priest – good-looking, only a bit portly, at 45 -- emerges. Seeing Captain stopped, and sensing the old man wants to confess, priest points at confessional. Boyle nods. Priest re-enters stall, and Boyle, after looking back at Joxer, enters penitent stall. Joxer sits, as green light above penitent stall turns red. Church-door opens. Juno enters. Instinctively, Joxer moves towards confessional, to warn Captain, but she enters too fast. She's dressed in a dark green dress, black shoes, and red sweater, small holes in elbows. She's her husband's age, hard-work-handsome, salt-and-pepper hair.

JUNO (*whispers loudly*): Joxer Daly, where's himself?

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

JUNO (*ironically*): You came in to pray, Joxer, a man who hasn't darkened a 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?

JOXER: But I'm in need of prayer, Mrs. Boyle. (*Works it*) And isn't it fair I be praying for those who've yet to make their first million? And couldn't you say one for me, heading home? (*Tries guiding her out. Juno's firm.*)

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

JOXER: Yes, himself is. (*Points.*)

JUNO: And why's he confessin', after all these years?

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

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

JOXER: It's the usual sort o' tings, Mrs. Boyle, cursin' 'n' drinkin' 'n' idleness.

JUNO: That may be part of it but that's not what brought him into church after 18 years away. Has he got a lady-friend?

JOXER: No, Mrs. Boyle – (*mumbling*) though that's not a bad idea -- if you can find one, do...

JUNO: What's that, Joxer? Speak up, you old fool!

JOXER (*louder*): I said, it's not that; it'd be a bad idea to find one, too.

JUNO: Whatever 'tis, I'll find out.. Now, are you going to confess, as well?

JOXER (*smile gone*): I-I-I suppose I am, Mrs. Boyle. I..

JUNO: Good, it's time you were makin' peace with God. Faith could turn even you 'round, Joxer, just like my Captain.

JOXER (*ponders that*): Yes, it's time I make peace with the Lord. I agree with you one hundred percent, Mrs. Boyle.

JUNO: I go every month, and I always feel better after I've made peace with God through the Father. Y'know, Father Murphy is a gem of a man, and it won't hurt you to get to know him.

JOXER: You're probably right, Mrs. Boyle. God never closed a door when he didn't open two or three windows.

JUNO: You need to close a door in confession to open up even one window the rest o' your life. Same with Captain.

JOXER: Yes, it goes for both of us.

JUNO: Good, now I've got to get home. But I'm going to find out soon why Captain's at confession. Mum's the word, Joxer, or I'll eat your heart for supper.

JOXER: Yes, Mrs. Boyle, it wouldn't be right.

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

JOXER: To the bottom o' this, Mrs. Boyle. (*Gestures for her exit.*)

JUNO: When himself emerges, pretend I wasn't here. Tell him he'd best head home to eat -- tell him a little bird told you it's a special meal. It'll be liver or Dublin Coddle, he hates both. My money's on liver, but don't tell him that.

JOXER: Yes, Mrs. Boyle.

JUNO (*exits*): God bless you, Joxer Daly, because I doubt anyone else will.

(*Penitent curtain opens; light goes green. Captain emerges, heads to Joxer, kneeling.*)

JOXER (*looks around*): Captain, how did it go?

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 told him about my skipping Mass Sundays, being drunk for Johnny's funeral, cursing, and idleness, Lizzie O'Hara, and even the big one. I didn't want to, but...

JOXER: You told him about Lizzie O'Hara -- Jeez, that's human of you -- PLUS the big one? What'd he say?

BOYLE: 'All's well that ends well.' 'tis a fine thing to say in confession.

JOXER: Did he give you any ideas about how to tell your wife and family, about the you-know-what?

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

JOXER (*Looks round*): You'll tell your wife a lot, soon-enough. 'tis your usual way.

BOYLE: Yes, I'll tell her I confessed, when time's right. It's me only chance. She'll understand, Joxer, won't she? She's a darlin' woman, and I should be thankin' me lucky stars she's still around.

JOXER (*looks round*): I'm not sure, Captain... but yes, Mrs. Boyle's a darlin' woman. Didn't she back Mary after Johnny died. Four-flusher Bentham left Mary high and dry? But whisper. 'tis a sleek animal, this church, with big ears.

BOYLE: Bentham was a jackass, while John Fitzgerald is next to St. Peter. I'm thankful for Charlie too, a darlin' man!

JOXER: Yes, a darlin' man.

Door opens. Woman about 28 enters, wearing red/green dress and blue shoes, with brown purse. She goes to them.

DIANE: Excuse me, Gentlemen.

BOYLE: G'day, Miss. Anything we can do for you?

DIANE: Is the priest hearing confessions Father Michael Murphy?

JOXER: That he is, Father Michael himself.

DIANE: No one answered the rectory door. I was worried he was out.

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

DIANE: Have you been here long?

JOXER: Seems so, but it's been only about 10 minutes, right Captain?

BOYLE: Aye, Joxer.

DIANE: My name's Diane Fitzgerald. I've flown in from America, to learn my family history, and to do business, too.

BOYLE: I'm Captain Jack Boyle and this is me pal, Joxer Daly. (*Shake.*) I've heard there's those new aeroplanes about, but didn't know you could fly in from America. A Fitzgerald? That's me son-in-law's name, John Fitzgerald.

DIANE: I made it roundabout, Chicago to New York to Paris to Liverpool to here. Where's John from?

BOYLE: His ancestors came from the interior. I don't know much more.

DIANE: My ancestors did, too, but I don't know all the details yet.

BOYLE: My son-in-law's a doctor and gentleman. He's relieved the pain in me legs for 18 years.

DIANE: My company asked me to start a branch office here. Jesse & Sons does export-import. I'd like to meet John.

BOYLE: It won't be any trouble. John's home every night by six, unless he makes a late house-call. He's in till six, next mornin'. You can phone him at: 1688.

DIANE: That's decent, Captain. I'm staying at the Green Coulee Hotel on O'Connell Road. Where do you live?

BOYLE: Wife and me stay at 148 Gallagher Road. We have a telly-phone, 1916. We can take you now to meet me missus. I'd invite you to supper, but missus might serve liver, and most people don't like it like she does, includin' me.

DIANE: I wouldn't want to inconvenience you, Captain. Another time. I've just arrived and have to get situated.

BOYLE: Yes, meantime we'll stock provisions for your visit. Now, I need to start home for supper. Mrs. Boyle'll have a flare-up if I'm not on-time. (*Winks to Joxer*)

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

DIANE: Then I look forward to seeing you again. Maybe I can visit your John and family, too. Nice meeting you both.

BOYLE: It was decent meetin' you, too.

Pair exit. Priest emerges from stall, sees Diane.

DIANE: Are you Father Michael 'Rocky' Murphy? I'm Diane Fitzgerald, from America.

FR. MICHAEL: 'tis me himself. (*Shakes.*) The Rocky comes from the rocks I knocked from guys' heads in the ring.

DIANE: I heard you're a boxer.

FR. MICHAEL: Make that *was* a boxer. Not now. Bad for me health.

DIANE: But I did hear you were a very good boxer.

FR. MICHAEL: I held me own, especially versus Billy Quinn for the championship in '22. Why it was a real tussle, I...

Musician plays Beethoven's 'Song of Joy'. As hymn, it's Van Dyke's 'Joyful, Joyful'.

FR. MICHAEL (*loudly*): Music's a bit loud. Let's go to the rectory.

DIANE (*loudly*): Yes, that's a good idea.

They exit -- music grows louder, stops.

Act II, Scene 1

Action: The living room and kitchen of Boyle flat, pre-supper, same day. The Boyles have moved up a bit in class since 1922, with aid from Mary and John. There's a radio, stage right, with phone on top. Back, off-right, is Juno and Captain's bedroom. Also at back is a cabinet with delFTWARE. Above is a picture of the Sacred Heart, with smaller picture of the Blessed Virgin below. On cabinet, too, is a red votive candle. Stage left, is hall-door. Juno cooks, stage left. Table has delFTWARE, utensils on it. A small ice-box and cupboard are nearby. Shared bathroom is in hall. Near fire, a rocker. Center right, a couch. Magazines are near it, 'Picture Post'. Juno hums "Immaculate Mary," as she works. Mary, her daughter, emerges from bedroom. She's auburn-haired, pretty, in her 30s, bright and empathetic.

MARY: Ma, where are the photos of my brother Johnny? In the old flat you kept them on bedroom shelf. Since you moved last year, everything's shifted.

JUNO: They're in the cabinet out here, bottom drawer. I thought, 'Gonna need them soon.' Now they're in an album.

MARY (*Sets down her photos, opens drawer, gets album*): I want to compare my Johnny's early pictures with Johnny Boyle's. (*Sits on couch.*) I'd like to make another family album and could use one or two pictures of Johnny Boyle, too.

JUNO: (*turning liver at fire, glances up*): What are you learnin', Mary?

MARY: There's a real resemblance, early. Now I'm comparing their teen photos. Yes, there's a similarity later, too.

JUNO (*places tray of bread on kitchen table*): Your brother was a good boy and would have been successful, if he'd steered clear of a couple bad Republicans, though we do have a republic today, 'cause enough good men put it through.

MARY: I hope my own Johnny appreciates all we have today, but I still wish your Johnny was here to enjoy them, too.

JUNO: My Johnny never had his own family, other than us.

MARY: When he was 6 or 7, he pulled home turf on his rickety, old wagon from them with plenty, to burn on our fire.

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

MARY: Who was to know they'd kill him. Some say he informed on the IRA, but something wasn't right about that.

JUNO: I was glad when your little Shivaun, then your own Johnny, came along. Thank goodness for John, the lifesaver.

MARY: Imagine meeting a doctor soon after Johnny died, 'cause Da wanted relief (*exaggerates accent*) 'for the pain in me legs', and John marryin' me with another man's child just-born and few prospects for Shivaun and me.

JUNO: He fell for you as fast as you for him. You couldn't have a church weddin', but got back with the Church later. It might be different, if you'd been divorced. Thank God you never married Bentham -- any man who loses our inheritance by mis-writing the Will, and makes you pregnant, leaving us high and dry, deserves Hell on Earth.

MARY: Yes, I'm glad we were allowed back in. I don't know why it's taking Da and Joxer so long to come round.

JUNO: Yes, they're not truly good yet. But your Da did have a revelation. He told me t'other day he woke up in a cold sweat. He'd seen himself stilled by a bullet, like my Johnny. It was too much; he went to confession today.

MARY: You're teasin', right?

JUNO: No. But 'tis a secret turned him round. If I'm any judge, he'll be tellin' me this Lent what his secret is. (*Door opens, Boyle enters.*) It's about time. Mary had to be in neighborhood, to visit Mrs. Murray, so she stopped here, too.

BOYLE: How are you, Mary?

MARY: Fine, Da, and you?

BOYLE: Fine.

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

BOYLE (*grimaces*): Do you now? (*thinks*) 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?

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

JUNO: What's up, Captain?

BOYLE: Well, Joxer and me were just praying, first time in years. It helped.

JUNO: Anything else you want to tell us, Captain -- about the kinds of sins you asked forgiveness for?

BOYLE (*hesitates*): What sins? I mean, what sins do you think -- other than missing Mass, cursin', idleness, and drinkin'. No, nothin' else. But I do feel a terrible weight's been lifted from me chest, all the same.

JUNO: Like it or not, you're goin' to have to unburden more of yourself soon-enough.

BOYLE (*warned*): What? I said a terrible weight's been lifted from me chest. It doesn't need to be lifted again, does it?

JUNO: We'll see. (*Changes subject.*) Mary, tell your Da about the photos?

MARY: Da, I just found some old photos of Johnny Boyle. (*She motions, they sit.*) First, a picture of my brother Johnny at two, and then one of my own Johnny at three. See anything?

BOYLE: Like twins. (*Shows Juno.*) It's amazin'. We're all family, no doubt about it.

JUNO: I wonder what my Johnny'd say today, if he could see his nephew.

MARY: He'd kick a football with my Johnny, and teach him about girls and shavin'.

BOYLE: Aye, too bad our Johnny wasn't more impressed by girls, at the end.

MARY: Should I turn on the new radio, Ma?

JUNO: That's fine, Dear. 'tis a beautiful device.

MARY (*turns radio on*): It's 6 o'clock, BBC News.

NEWS-READER: I'm Molly Zita-Robbins. Reports from Warsaw smuggled out by Polish resisters say German troops are arresting Jews, herding them onto trains. Britain's PM said: "We will not abide the despotic power of Hitler. Britain and her allies will restore democracy on the Continent, without unfairly sacrificing our sons and daughters."

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

JUNO: It's not Germany's people we need fear, but Hitler, who has people cowed. Don't know what we can do for now.

BOYLE: Great Wars are evil. I hope John doesn't volunteer.

MARY: He's not volunteering. He knows we've few doctors here. And he hopes the war doesn't come to Ireland.

JUNO: If it does, we may have to fight ourselves.

BOYLE: Aye, that's what we Irish would have to do.

MARY: But wars are such bloody businesses, at times you're stuck fighting and don't know why. Johnny Boyle fought here, and got killed by his mates. They may have called him traitor, but that doesn't mean he was. He was a scared kid.

JUNO: For all the fighting in Ireland, the North's still not free. Let's eat.

BOYLE: Right, Mrs. Boyle.

(Mary and Boyle sit at table. Silent grace. Mrs. Boyle serves.)

BOYLE: You know, this liver tastes better than I remember. What's in it – champeen?

JUNO: Not much, but the finest calf's liver from Butcher Bob's. Come from London last year, he carves Masterpieces!

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

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

Telephone rings. Juno answers.

JUNO: Hello, Mrs. Boyle. Yes John, Mary's here. (*Motions to Mary to come.*) John said he'll be late. House-call.

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

MARY (*takes phone from Juno, who sits*): Hello, John. Where are you? Oh, still at office. When will you be home? 9:30? I'll start in about an hour and be home before you. Ma and Da, John says he looks forward to seeing you soon.

JUNO (*Loudly*): Same here, Dear.

MARY: My supper's getting cold, John, so I'll see you at home at 9:30? I love you, too. (*Hangs up, sits.*)

BOYLE: It's too bad John's parents passed, Ambrose and Caroline. They'd have loved to know more about our family.

MARY: Yes, Da, it's sad they've passed, but they raised a good, strong son, and have grandchildren, like you and Ma. What about your family, and Ma's? Do ya know any more about them now?

JUNO: We know my Ma, along with my sister, raised a bit of you and Shivaun, before passing, but you know my Da died before he saw his grandkids. Captain?

BOYLE: I know me Ma and Da died before they saw their grandkids -- they went to a finer place than they knew here. You know about cousin Ellison, Mary. I didn't have brothers or sisters, really. The kids I was raised with were cousins, and it took me a while to talk about the nasty things we did to each other.

MARY: Like what, Da?

BOYLE: Like when cousin Larry and me got in trouble for stealin' candy from Ol' Kennedy's store. God Almighty, I thought the gard'd put us in jail for sure. He just kicked us each in the seat o' the pants and said fly right. Good ol' Larry told gard he hadn't swiped the sweet poison; I had. Never did I steal candy again. (*Looks.*) Well, almost never.

JUNO (*smiles at Mary, who smiles back*): Tell Mary about when you and Kenny O'Kelly went off the deep end of Liffey pier.

BOYLE: Well Kenny 'n' me went down to the Liffey to catch some fryin' fish. Soon, Kenny was pokin' me with his pole and I was pokin' him back. Next thing, we poked each other into the river! By God's grace, there was a fisherman saw us and pulled us up. We couldn't swim. Later, at sea, I learned to stay close to the innermost, knew me limits.

MARY: And your other cousins, did they go fishing with you, too?

BOYLE: Just Sheila, runt o' me Aunt Susie's litter. She may have been tiny, but fished with the best. And she was cute.

JUNO: She was your only cousin still single when I married you, Captain. Tis a pity she married that Australian gentleman, and moved there with him. She was fun.

BOYLE (*sips milk*): I'll bet she grew to be six foot, a real Amazon! (*Giggles.*) Stranger things have happened, Ladies.

(*Telephone again. Juno clears table.*)

MARY (*answers phone*): Hello. Yes, this is Mary, Mrs. Murray. What is it? Your heart? Well, the pills are on top of your dresser. I told you that when I was there this noon. I'll wait while you get them. Ma, I'll help you with those.

JUNO: That's okay, Mary. You take care of Mrs. Murray.

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

BOYLE: Aye. (*Boyle enters bedroom; Juno hums 'Danny Boy', works. Boyle emerges with coat, sweater.*) Here, Mary. It may be getting colder tonight; you'd best take this sweater, too. (*He gives them to her, sits, views magazine.*)

MARY: Thanks, Da. Yes, Mrs. Murray, I knew they'd be there. Remember: One now, one at bedtime. I know it's scary when your chest hurts, but the pills help. After you've taken each, lie down. I'll stop in when I leave here. Good-bye.

(*Mary hangs up, goes to kitchen, dries dishes.*)

JUNO: Is Mrs. Murray okay, Mary?

MARY: Yes, she found her pills. They're part crutch, but they also stimulate her heart, if the blood's not flowing right.

JUNO: I could use one myself, at times. I've plenty stress on my heart. Thank the Lord, things are improving.

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

JUNO: We need to be thankful -- our situation used to be much worse.

MARY: True, Ma. When John arrived, Johnny Boyle had just passed. The Lord closed one door, and opened a window.

JUNO: I can get the dishes, Mary. You check on Mrs. Murray.

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

JUNO: Go. It'll be dark soon, so get home by sunset.

MARY: Right. *(She puts on sweater and coat, kisses Boyle.)* Bye, Da, I have to go.

BOYLE: Aye. 'Twas good seein' ya again, Darlin'.

MARY: Thanks for looking at the photos with me. *(She picks up photos)* Ma, can I borrow these two of Johnny Boyle?

JUNO: Of course, Dear. Just make sure you return them, after you make copies. Paul's Camera can do them reasonably.

MARY: I'll bring them back to you soon. Or maybe Teddy or Rudy Nelson, Paul's assistants, can drop them off.

JUNO *(dries hands)*: Either way's fine, Dear. 'Twas good to see you, Mary. See you again soon. *(Hugs her.)*

BOYLE *(rises and kisses her on cheek)*: Yes, Mary. Oh, me and Joxer met an American lady today, Diane Fitzgerald; said her ancestors are from Limerick. I said we'd have her over for supper, to meet you and John. She'll phone us soon.

MARY: We'll look forward to that. Thanks for supper.

JUNO: Say hi to Mrs. Murray. Tell her to eat right, take her pills, and sleep tight. After Mr. Murray's death, she was a too shy, but thankfully she allows you and John to visit more now.

MARY: She's got more faith now than right after her husband died, 10 years ago. She's holding her own at 82.

JUNO: It helps Father Michael hears her confession and brings communion weekly. He may have been a boxer once, but he takes off his gloves for the Lord's work.

MARY: He's a fine man. Thanks again. *(Parents smile.)* Take care, you two.

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

MARY: Yes, see you soon. *(She exits.)*

BOYLE *(waves)*: Don't talk to any strangers, Mary, especially if his name's Kenny O'Kelly.

MARY *(distant)*: I won't, Da. Thanks!

BOYLE *(closes door)*: That girl is magic, Mrs. Boyle.

JUNO: Oh, I just remembered -- Mrs. McCarthy is baking a cake for her grandson's birthday tomorrow, and asked for some flour. *(In kitchen, pours flour into bowl.)* I need to talk with you about today, but it'll have to wait. You behave, don't go out nippin' brew with Joxer. You two have been better lately, but Joxer still likes mischief. Did you hear me?

BOYLE *(nods as Juno exits)*: You can count on me, Mrs. Boyle. I'm never going to drink again -- Never! *(Door closes, Boyle goes to phone, dials.)* C'mon, Katie Lynn McShane, answer the bloody telly-phone! Katie -- it's Captain Boyle. Is Joxer there? *(He drums his fingers on radio, pulls something from pocket.)* Joxer, the missus just left. I don't feel right about me confession. Juno might find out about the big one, too soon. And I've got to contact you-know-who, but 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. *(Slams receiver down.)* Damn that Joxer -- he's a smart one now, and forever will be one! *(Gets coat, exits. Lights out.)*

Act II, Scene 2

Action: Boyle apartment, next Tuesday. Extra chairs. Guests haven't arrived. Juno stirs stew, replenishes fire with turf. She goes to cupboard, gets two bread-loaves, then butter from icebox, humming "If You Ever Go Across the Sea to Ireland" Knock at door. Juno opens it. It's Joxer, holding beret.

JUNO: Joxer! What a surprise. *(He's suddenly scared to enter, slams beret on head, turns to go.)* Oh no you don't, Mr. Joxer Daly! *(She grabs his belt, pulls him in, walks him to couch, and forces him to sit.)* Now, what brings you here?

JOXER *(No choice)*: 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, faster)* but I don't know why she said that.

JUNO: Okay, you're here, so tell me more about t'other day – Captain's confession and all. You don't have to stutter, just say what it means, good and bad.

JOXER *(Nervously moves beret in hands)*: Well, I'm not used to easin' my mind like this. No disrespect, Mrs. Boyle, but it's been a very long time since I've been in your home when you've been present and accounted for. But, it's like this – the Captain has been bettin', not often, but betting nonetheless,...on the ponies.

JUNO: I KNOW you both bet on the ponies. I'd like to choke the Captain, every time he pinches my bread and egg money for ponies' sake. You two should belong to that group in America, the Old Farts Club. They never pass resolutions, only gas. No, the ponies are bad, but the Captain must have confessed some other things, too. What?

JOXER: Well, he's settin' on somethin', like a good deal. You see, we're aiming to get some furniture. But the Captain thinks if he tells you now, he won't get the deal that's cookin' It's part superstition, yet strong superstition all the same.

JUNO: When is this good deal going to happen?

JOXER: Around Easter.

JUNO: Doesn't seem superstition, but guilt. Mixing business and Easter comin's-and-goin's. When'll he spill the beans?

JOXER *(Semi-guarded)*: Well, the Captain will know. When he tells you, it'll be when he's left sin behind.

JUNO: He has a funny way, but I think that's a fair summin' up, Joxer. Truth will win out. I'll know what to do when time's right, too. Do you want to tell me anything else, like about his social life?

JOXER *(Lies, hurries.)*: No, Mrs. Boyle. I've got to go.

JUNO: Well, you'd best find Captain and bring him home. We'll be eating when Mary and John's family and Diane get here, so hurry. One other thing, Joxer, why'd you tell me this? For 18 years we haven't spoken a civil word together.

JOXER: I've met a lady meself. And she likes me just for being me! I don't want to jinx me chances by seeing me pal foul it up any more with you. It sounds strange, but stranger things have happened. Mum's the word, Mrs. Boyle?

JUNO *(smiles)*: Mum it 'tis. That's a good-enough confession for now, out you go. Tell Captain to bring you along for supper. Tell him you saved my life, that is made me smile, on the street today, and I asked you to join us in thanks.

Having pushed Joxer out door, Juno stirs, tastes stew, turns on radio. Billie Holiday sings 'Pennies from Heaven'. She dances, then slices bread to the beat, plates slices. Knock at door -- she turns radio off and answers it. It's Mary, John, and children. John Sr. is tall, handsome, about 45, with brown beard, full head of hair, wire-rims. He wears brown suit, black shoes and tie. His overcoat is dark blue; he has two bottles of wine. Shivaun is 18, pretty and feisty, with red hair. She wears bright red dress, dark blue shoes, and coat. Her freckles stun. John Jr. is 14, medium build, brown hair. He's less presumptuous than his quick-wit half-sister, but can be feisty, too. He wears black pants, shoes, and tie, white shirt, brown overcoat. He's handsome, intelligent.

JUNO: Hello, All. Good to see you.

MARY and JOHN: Hello, Ma.

KIDS: Hi, Gran'.

JUNO (*motions to couch*): Sit. The Captain and Joxer should be here soon. I asked Joxer to come. What's become of Diane Fitzgerald?

MARY: She had to go to hotel to change clothes. Won't be long, Ma.

JUNO: I'm looking forward to meeting her.

JUNO (*Grabs coats, goes into bedroom, emerges, hands teens magazines.*): Children, I know these magazines once were your parents, but you can read more in them now. (*Points.*) There's a nifty photo-story on animals at London Zoo. It's tells about the funny things they do for people, and how kids love them. Look at the penguin reading a newspaper!

SHIVAUN: He looks like my English teacher, Mr. Engen. 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: Mr. Engen'll kill you, if he learns you're callin' him a readin' penguin.

JOHN SR.: Mr. Engen taught you literacy, Shivaun, not berating teachers. (*To Juno*) He's at Patrick Pearse School.

(Knock at door. Mary answers it. Juno goes to fire, stirs stew.)

MARY (*opens door*): Hello, Diane. Mother, it's Diane Fitzgerald.

Diane enters in dark green coat, which Mary takes. Under it, she wears a blue dress with bright red scarf and shoes.

JUNO (*shakes hands*): Welcome to this humble home, Miss Fitzgerald. Pleasure to meet you.

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

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

DIANE: Yes, I've looked forward to meeting you and seeing Captain and Joxer again, too.

JUNO: They'll be along soon. Mary, get some chairs. (*She does.*) I've got photos for you to look at. (*Looks for album.*)

JOHN SR.: Children, you sit on chairs and let Diane and your Gran' have the couch. (*The teens move.*) Now, what would you like to drink? I've brought two bottles of good French wine. It's a bit dry, but it will still wet your whistle.

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

JOHN SR.: Right. Do you know it?

DIANE: I used to drink it by the gallon with customers. It went well with beef; there's a lot of that eaten in Chicago.

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

DIANE: Heart and Soul.

MARY: You must have been happy in Chicago.

DIANE: Reasonably, but adventures there began wearing thin, which is why I was transferred here, that and I couldn't drink with the big-shots anymore. Too much makes me sick. One glass now hits the spot. This morning, I signed a deal with a customer for 100,000 pounds. Before, I'd drink all night over that, but no more early death for me.

MARY: Your business was very good today. Have you learned anything so far about the Irish?

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

JOHN SR.: Men mowed down by the thousands by machine-gun fire, charging across “No Man’s Land” -- all to move the line a few inches. My da used to say he’d never fight in anyone’s Army again, even if they asked him to fight Hitler. He said the best action in that war was the Christmas Truce of 1914, when the fighting men spontaneously put down their guns and mingled in No Man’s Land, exchanging gifts and cigarettes, playing soccer, singing hymns, and burying the dead. Da said the fighting men should never have gone back to fighting then; that on both sides, they’d have been better off to have thrown their leaders into lines of fire instead. One leader made only half-sense, because he kept the war going; Britain’s David Lloyd George said that if the people knew the truth about that war, they’d have stopped it immediately.

MARY: Yes, the Christmas Truce of 1914. But Hitler is more evil than the Kaiser was, and our men may have to fight him, 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 say Hitler wouldn’t have come to power, if the Great War hadn’t been fought. Had to do with war-reparations – made Germany poor, made Hitler powerful. That, and America’s Army left Europe. The Emergency now is shaping up to be a Second Great War.

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

JOHNNY: Oh Shivaun, rest up. 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: Funny thing: I learned that from Mr. Engen.

JOHN SR.: Mr. Engen knows more than you 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: The children were looking at a photo of a penguin seeming to read. Shivaun said it resembled her teacher.

JOHN SR.: It’s a bad habit of hers, comparing teachers to animals. I’ve tried breaking it, but she’s as tenacious as ever.

JUNO (*returns with album*): I got lost in me own bedroom. The family album was in closet, not where I put it. Have a look. (*Hands it to Diane, stirs pot.*)

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 is slipping.

MARY: Look, Children. That’s your Uncle Johnny Boyle. You know a bit 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: When he was 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. He’d look so proud and tell Gran’ he’d saved the fire again. Grand theater, if a bit sad.

JUNO: I was so proud of him. I’d give my own life to see Johnny live still.

JOHNNY FITZGERALD: And why did he die?

JUNO: IRA said he betrayed them; they killed him. I think it was mistaken identity. Ireland can be a cruel mistress.

(*Hall-door opens, Captain and Joxer enter.*)

BOYLE: Hello, how's everyone?

JUNO: Where have you been, Captain?

BOYLE: Joxer and me have just been transacting a deal. I’ll explain later.

JUNO: Okay, as long as you explain soon-enough. I'm glad you brought Joxer for supper. He made me smile today.

BOYLE: Aye, Mrs. Boyle. As for everyone 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: Hush. Don't speak about the Holy Father that way. Speaking of eating, supper's ready. Come and sit, Everyone. (*Group sits.*) Captain, since you're the expert on grace, you say it.
BOYLE: I'm only an expert on eatin' and drinkin', but: Lord, thank you for bringin' us together, to share this food and drink. Let us all be together at Easter and happy on Earth a long time before You lead us to Heaven, when time comes.
EVERYONE: Amen! (*Lights out.*)

Act III, Scene 1

Action: Pub, O'Casey Avenue, Holy Thursday afternoon.. Stage right is bar. Bartender is Ray O'Reilly, a friend of Captain and Joxer's. 'Belle of Belfast City,' also called 'I'll Tell Me Ma,' is played/ sung by Ray's family. Patrons are at bar and tables, worker-types. One woman wears a smart green dress, red coat, blue hat and beautiful red shoes. She sips gin and tonic; others drink stout. Father Murphy talks with a man at table. In back, Ray's wife, Polly, talks with their daughter, when music ends. An amply-endowed woman of 50 drifts about; keeps eye on Captain, after he enters. She's Lizzie O'Hara, flaunting her stuff to catch Captain's Eye, succeeding at times, as she mingles. A newsboy enters, 15-year-old Cockney Alan Matthews, moved in recent years to Dublin from London with his mom. His eye is slightly ulcerated.

RAY: Hey, Alan, how you doin'?"
ALAN: Good.
RAY: You've been here about a year, right? How you liking Ireland so far?
ALAN: Well, Ray, I may not have been born here, but I got here as soon as I could. (*Hands Ray a paper*):
RAY: Are you almost ready for your surgery?
ALAN: Yep, I'm hoping my eye'll improve soon as doc operates. (*Ray nods.*) Traffic's picking up on O'Casey Avenue.
RAY (*gives Alan coin*): That's good, 'cause I like it busy in here.
ALAN: It should be busy tonight, even if it is Holy Thursday.
RAY: My family and me'd be paupers, if people didn't patronize this place, even round holy-days. Say hi to your ma.
ALAN: I will. See ya later, Ray. (*Exits.*)
CLAUDINE: Barkeeper, what time is it?
BARKEEPER: Quarter to five, Ma'am. Why?
CLAUDINE: I'm waitin' on a coupla fellows.
RAY: Which coupla fellas?
CLAUDINE: Jack Boyle and Joxer Daly.
RAY: Haven't seen 'em since Monday, but they come in sometimes. You got business?
CLAUDINE: Sort of. Did you know a man named Charlie O'Keeffe?
RAY: Matter o' fact, I did.
CLAUDINE: I'm his solicitor, Claudine O'Malley.

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

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

RAY (*watches his p's and q's*): Not ta speak of.

CLAUDINE: Good. I don't need them spreading rumors about Charlie.

Two men start fight.

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 me worst day, and today ain't me worst.

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

JERRY: I will, you loudmouthed hooligan.

PADDY: Loudmouth yourself.

Jerry throws drink in Paddy's face. Paddy punches Jerry's nose. Tussle. Ray comes out front. Fr. Murphy referees.

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

Ray can't pry the brawlers apart, goes back behind bar, gets handgun. He fires into ceiling; fight stops.

RAY: Now, you two shake hands or I'll put some lead into your bottoms and elsewhere, too. Anyone else want a piece o' me pistol? (*Quiet.*) They don't call me Old-Reliable Ray O'Reilly for nothin', like a great Army unit. (*Stashes gun.*)

The two brawlers shake hands.

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

PADDY (*drinks some*): Not anymore.

RAY: Make peace, not war! Bantry has shamrocks, and I have brew here for all of you, like at St. Patrick's Irishfest.

FR. MICHAEL: Right ya are, Ray.

PADDY: Yeah, right ya are. (*Smirks*) Let's drink to peace and love. 'tis as good as anything.

He drinks up. Ray fills others' glasses. Miss O'Malley gives Paddy and Jerry her card. Polly comes over.

POLLY: Ray, can we get some halves.

RAY (*fills glasses*): Yep, there ya go, Me Beautiful Wife. That'll keep family happy a while.

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

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

Captain and Joxer enter. Captain wears green shirt.

BOYLE: What happened here, Ray? A tiny typhoon? (*Eyeing Lizzie O'Hara briefly, who eyes him back.*)

RAY: A near-donnybrook. I ended it with me pistol. What'll you have, Gents? Still on a no-Guinness regime?

BOYLE (*feigning weariness*): Aye, Ray. Two 'fresh' orange juices.

RAY: I'll set 'em up.

BOYLE: Thanks. Miss O'Malley, 'tis a fine day. My pal Joxer and me have been noticin' the weather, inside and outside. (*Brawlers exit. Priest, pal move.*) Now, what about Charlie, before he died in that auto accident in America?

CLAUDINE: You know the deal, Captain: 60% for you, 40% for me, like I've said all along.

BOYLE: Well now, t'other day Joxer and me were talkin' with another solicitor, who said it's highway robbery, the deal you been cookin' up this Lent.

CLAUDINE: Take it or leave it, Gentlemen.

BOYLE: Slow, Miss O'Malley. Our friend says we can take you to court -- for more than 60%. That's in Charlie's Will.

CLAUDINE: Now you know I could hold this matter up in court a few months, or 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: Miss O'Malley, I need three-quarters of Charlie's 100,000 pounds -- 75,000. Our friend says no good solicitor takes more than 25%. We got Rights -- not like when my daughter's first man-friend fouled up our inheritance from cousin Ellison, 18 years ago.

CLAUDINE: You may have Rights, but I do, too. I deserve a decent share of Charlie's inheritance. His estate was in a big mess, until I worked on it. You're lucky he liked you two. To me, it seems you shared a drinkers' night out. Now, you'd best be taking my offer, 'cause no one will think you were longtime friends of Charlie's.

BOYLE: We respect that, Miss O'Malley, but maybe this'll do better. If you'll take a little less than 40,000, say 30,000, we've got a deal. If that ain't enough, we'll have to take you to court and draw this out, even if no one gets the money.

CLAUDINE: We might have a deal, Captain, if you'll sign the papers soon. But I want 35%, 35,000 pounds. You'll get 65,000. Should I draw up papers?

BOYLE (*looks at Joxer, then Claudine, then Joxer*): That you should, Miss O'Malley. Joxer, Me Boyo, let's head to my place for a tasty beef and potato supper?

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

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

CLAUDINE: Yes. I'll phone soon. (*Boyle nods.*) I'll be in touch. (*Starts to pay.*)

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

CLAUDINE: Thanks, Captain. (*They shake.*) I'll see you and Joxer again soon, then.

BOYLE: Aye, soon.

(*Miss O'Malley exits.*)

BOYLE: Joxer, I used ta think women like Miss O'Malley were a nice bit o' skirt, and her wearing some pretty gorgeous red shoes (*Joxer nods in the affirmative*) to boot, but sometimes it pays to go back to old-reliables: find out what's what, make your mind up, stick to your guns. We liked Charlie before we knew what money he had. He liked us, too. And we drank with him four or five nights, not only one.

JOXER: Aye, Captain, you're making sense. It reminds me of what Sr. Ellen Anita Bernard used ta say, "Find the truth, and act on it." Old-reliables is what's needed now, like Ray's nickname. Sr. Ellen was one of them, just like her sister-sisters. In Wisconsin, USA, those nuns pray non-stop, have been for more than 50 years. Sister also said, "Humans do what's possible; and FOR humans, God does what's impossible."

FR. MICHAEL: Did I hear you say 'Old-Reliables'. (*Comes over.*) I know Ray goes by that moniker, but it was also what they called Donny O'Toole, whom I fought in 1920 and '21. Now,

there was an ugly type of old-reliable. I bloodied him both fights, knocked him out, too. 'twasn't pretty, but those fights led to me championship bout with Billy Quinn in '22. 'course, Donny got his chance at the championship later, and won it.

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

FR. MICHAEL: Well, I was w-a-a-a-y ahead on points, mind ya, and I was bobbin' and weavin' like any good fighter. All of a sudden, Billy hits me with an uppercut, and BOOM, down I go! Couldn't get up by the 10 count. 'Twas a very sad day for the Murphy Family. I fought two more fights and won both, just didn't get another title-shot.

BOYLE: The ring's loss was our gain, Father. We just did a little business with solicitor, what you and me talked about, early Lent. Won't be long 'til that inheritance is mine and Joxer's. We'll make sure the Church gets its share, too.

FR. MICHAEL: Good, Captain. If more people spent more time in confessional *and* boxing ring, and less time pulverizin' pubs, the world would be a nicer place. (*Returns to table.*)

BOYLE (*inspects his hands*): Sayin' the rosary last night musta helped

(*Lizzie approaches, cleavage showing.*)

LIZZIE: Hello, Captain. You too, Joxer. What's cookin'?

BOYLE (*Nervous*): Not much, Lizzie. Me and Joxer were just havin' a drink. We've got to go.

LIZZIE: Is that so, big fella? It looked like you were talkin' business with that pretty bit o' skirt who just left.

BOYLE : No business. No pleasure. We know her, from family comings and goings.

LIZZIE: Seems I heard something about percentages. Sure sounded like business.

BOYLE (*Changes subject.*): Ray, where are the owners, Tyler and Joy?

RAY: They're doin' a play 'cross river. Family ting, OJ for the soul sort o' drama.

BOYLE: Seoul's in Koraea, Ray. A man said Koraea's the Ireland of Asia and Seoul's its center. It's a pun. I hope their play's a hit. (*Hands Ray a tip.*) Thanks for settin' 'em up.

LIZZIE: Stiffin' me, Captain? I can take a hint. New Year's, you were all over me, like glue on...

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

BOYLE: See you, Ray. See you, too, Father. I'm glad I donned me green shirt. Things seem ta have come round halfway (*looking awry at Lizzie*) decent today.

FR. MICHAEL (*Tips glass to duo.*): G'day, Gentlemen. See you in church. (*Boyle, Daly wave. Lizzie shakes her head.*)

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

(*Dynamic duo exit. 'Wearing of the Green' is played and sung. Ray's daughter dances reel, stops. Tableau. Lights out.*)

Ten-Minute Intermission.

Act III, Scene 2

Action: Boyle flat, Holy Thursday, pre-supper. Extra chairs. Juno hums 'Amazing Grace', checks meat and potatoes. Mary emerges from bedroom with album.

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

JUNO: Mr. Penney had a gift. Pity we didn't see him every day, but he'd his business to run.

MARY: (*Puts album by couch.*) He took pictures while delivering. Grocers don't deliver now; doctors do.

JUNO: 'tis different today... Oh, there's some unfinished business to address tonight.

MARY: What's that, Ma?

JUNO: Oh somethin' your Da needs to reveal. (*Knock*) At last. Who's knockin'?

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

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

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

JOHN SR. (*Sets down black bag*): Yes, sorry we're late.

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

JOHNNY: Diane is bringin' me a present. Right, Da?

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

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

JOHN SR.: Diane saw 'em on O'Casey Avenue. Don't know what they were doin'.

JUNO: 'Tis a mystery they've been settin' on, all-Lent.

Another knock.

MARY (*loudly*): Who is it?

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

JUNO: Better late than never, Diane.

DIANE: I ran into Father Michael. He said we should come to Easter services. He also gave me more information about my great-grandfather, Sean Fitzgerald.

MARY: What was that?

DIANE: It seems Great-Grandfather Sean kept garden. He raised roses and gladiolas for Limerick's church, St. Rose's, in-season. Father Michael knows the priest there now. We brought along a photo you'll want to keep, plus some good boots Sean wore once. He died day-after he bought them. He had his picture taken in them. These are yours, Johnny.

MARY: Sean Fitzgerald of Limerick was John's great-granddda, too, making him your great-great-granddda, Johnny.

JOHNNY (*accepts gifts*): Thanks. They're great. (*He looks at photo closely, then the leather boots.*) 'Tis a good picture of me great-great-granddda. And these boots'll fit me, I'll bet (*puts them on*). I love leather boots!

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

DIANE: Cousin Sammy Fitzgerald in Limerick. We'd been told by a man half-German and half-Irish in Chicago, a Mr. Brunner, to look up Father Murphy about these matters. Since Father knows the priest at St. Rose's, he put us up to this. Along the way, we learned more about the Fitzgeralds, including Sean.

JOHN SR.: 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. But your Da does his share as the leadin' physician in Dublin.

Boyle and Joxer enter with a friend of Johnny's, Alan Matthews, the newsboy. The three are dressed in new shirts, pants, and shoes. But Boyle and Joxer still wear their usual caps.

BOYLE: I hope it's okay. I found Alan Matthews walking about, and we asked his ma, Susan Patricia, if he could sup with us. I thought Johnny'd like seein' him.

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

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

BOYLE: Once Alan came along, we had to buy him some new clothes and shoes. Show everyone, Alan, like in store.

Alan turns slowly, to ooohs and aahs. The two boys go to couch to read magazines.

JUNO: We get use from the English magazines you brought, Mary. Alan, when you lived in London, did you see these?

ALAN: A bit -- we couldn't buy them, but I had a friend whose parents did.

MARY: The photos and stories are lively. I hope a similar magazine is made by the Irish soon.

JOHN SR.: It will be, Mary. The Irish aren't rich by English standards – though *Picture Post* caters to everyday people, too. But with shipping, it runs into some coin to purchase a subscription here.

JUNO (*looks round*): Supper's ready. Let's sit and eat our humble fare.

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

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

BOYLE: Bless us Oh Lord and these Thy gifts we're about to receive from Thy bounty through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

Juno and Mary begin handing dishes round.

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

JUNO: Just salt and pepper, and some wine. What do you think, Diane?

DIANE: It tastes just like my mom's. Where did you get the recipe?

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

DIANE: Thank you. What do you think, Boys?

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

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

JUNO (*looks*): Captain, don't you have something you want to say to everyone?

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 the Americans and to the Irish. (*All join in.*)

ALL: To the Americans and the Irish!

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

BOYLE (*deflects*): 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'll talk later.

JOHNNY: Yeah Gran', the food's too good to tell stories over. Let's eat. (*Scoops food.*)

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

Act III, Scene 3

Action: Two hours later. The group is on/around couch, chairs pulled up. Juno puts up her apron after cleaning kitchen. Mary puts bread away. Group discuss photo-story.

ALAN (*holds photo-story*): Hey, Johnny, look at this. Operatin' on a fish. They got at its insides. It's a gross sight!

JOHNNY (*Half-serious*): Just think, soon you'll be takin' that fish's place, with your eye surgery and all.

MARY: Boys, stop. Not everyone likes talkin' about such things. Alan will cope with his surgery fine, won't you, Alan?

ALAN: Yes, ma'am, I will.

BOYLE: Besides, Johnny, you'll embarrass your Da, who does surgery like a great musician plays strings

JOHN SR.: Ease up, Johnny.

JOXER: Photographers get paid to take those pictures? Seems easy to me. You can look up with cameras and have fun.

BOYLE: I say, be careful of photographers, 'cause they can record your posterior for history. (*Smiles.*)

MARY: Da!! They don't get paid much, Joxer, but this one's named Bert Hardy. We subscribe to *Picture Post*. John's cousin works there, and we get a discount. Mr. Hardy is a young still-cameraman, with natural skill and street savvy.

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

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

JOHN SR.: Then, that's what you'll be, after you recover from surgery.

JUNO (*pulls rocker over*): We've picked up some photos by Irish photographers. I'd like to hang them on the walls.

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

DIANE: Mr. Daly, where do you live?

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

BOYLE: Joxer, tell them about your new friend.

JOXER: Oh, there's a lady taken a shine to me. Last Sunday, St. Patrick's Day, we got engaged.

MARY: Congratulations, Joxer!

JOHN SR AND OTHERS.: Yes, congratulations!

MARY: What's her name?

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

MARY: Why didn't you bring her tonight?

JOXER: She's tending a friend, who wasn't well, but is getting better now.

MARY: That's decent, Joxer.

JOXER: Aggie wants to hear her favorite hymn on Easter. Congregation sang it the day her parents met. They've passed, but the hymn still tugs at Aggie's heartstrings.

SHIVAUN: Where does Aggie live?

JOXER: Near Johnny Boyle's cemetery. Captain and me see her regularly.

BOYLE: I like the walk, too. (*Views magazine.*) What else's in *Picture Post*?

JOHN SR.: Hitler, Mussolini, and Japan's Emperor, who colonized Korea. Some people are saying the war in Europe isn't going well. Britain's PM says Hitler's opposes Britain and even America. Ireland could be drawn in, too.

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

JUNO: You're a wife and mother, Mary, but a daughter, too. Captain and me want you and John to live long, too.

ALAN: Hey, look! (*Holds up photo-story showing lady's upper legs on a roller-coaster.*)

JOHNNY: Yeah, wow!

MARY: 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: I hope you boys don't have giant ideas about women. They're very nice creatures, but not giants, right Joxer?

JOXER: Still Captain, women are too unusual to be small.

JUNO: Same to you, Joxer. Captain, I used to think you and Joxer thought me the giant chasin' Jack of the Beanstalk. I'd 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 did scare me, but we're reborn, and don't see you as a giant anymore, and you surely are good, like Jack. (*Winks at John Sr. A knock .*)

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

MALE VOICE: Father Murphy.

JUNO (*opens door*): Hello, Father. What brings you here tonight?

FR. MICHAEL: Mrs. Boyle, I'm here to ask if you and your family will be at Good Friday service tomorrow.

JUNO: I think so, why?

FR. MICHAEL: Because there'll be a petition sent to Rome with names of the Irish who died from St. Bart's making our nation. Johnny Boyle's included. Do you want to send a letter, too? And can you write it before Noon service.

JUNO: I'm not much of a writer (*looks round*), but with help, maybe I can manage one.

FR. MICHAEL: Good. I'm also wondering if you can read your letter to congregation.

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

FR. MICHAEL: Mrs. Boyle, I'm asking you to read it, for a profound effect. Can you?

JUNO (*braces self*): Yes. 'tis the least I can do for the many who have died for Ireland.

FR. MICHAEL: Good. You'll read to start. Can you be there by 11:15?

JUNO: Yes, I can.

FR. MICHAEL: Thank you, Mrs. Boyle, and all of you. I'll see you tomorrow?

JUNO: Yes, see you then.

FR. MICHAEL (*waves, looks back*): Good night to you all.

JUNO AND GROUP: Good night, Father.

JUNO: Mary, bring me paper and pencil. We've got writing to do.

(*She sits in rocker, lights dim.*)

Act III – Scene 4

Action: Boyle bedroom, lights low. Juno and Captain, asleep. Captain snores, Juno stirs and speaks, groggy.

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

The vision of Johnny Boyle appears, with Irish Irregulars. Johnny is forced to kneel. He fingers 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, picks them up and surveys the men's faces, desperate to see a saving glimpse. 'Why?' is spoken, over all. The men prod Johnny with guns, and tell him to get back to his beads. Just after he utters, '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...' Shots ring out. Another figure is seen at stage-edge (Commandant Tancred) – he is shot the instant before Johnny. Juno, who has sat up in her bed to watch, in a hazy light, shouts upward, arms imploring, as the silhouette of another mother is also seen. The two women exclaim together, '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 awakens.

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

JUNO (*Wakes fully from her vision*): Oh, Captain, hold me. (*He does.*) I don't know how, but I saw Johnny's dyin', and Commandant Tancred's, too. They came and went so quickly, but it was them. I saw their dying so clearly tonight. Twas terrible. Hold me, Husband. (*She clings to him; he kisses and strokes her hair.*)

BOYLE: Why don't you lay back down. Twas a bad dream. It doesn't have ta spoil Easter. Maybe it's somethin'll make us feel stronger about what we can only touch in dreams.

JUNO (*calming down*): Thanks, Captain. It's been many years since we've known much happiness. But this Lent has been a relief, even if tonight's dream makes me sure this Easter will be Johnny's and Commandant Tancred's – the reasons we still believe in Resurrection, which God's forgiveness offers, no matter how terrible our sins. I never admitted it before, but Johnny sinned against the Commandant and God. But without us knowing there's a place where we can find all sons and daughters happy and at peace forever, there'd be no reason to hope in this world.

BOYLE: But we can hope. For somewhere's God and all children will be with Him, in the end.

JUNO (*smiles*) Yes, Captain. I hope you still remember Johnny as I do – the times he'd come in from playing, asking for somethin' 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 of the Church Itself. That was before Ireland's troubles got in his way, and he fell. He'd already lost an arm for Ireland, but he turned on his Republican comrade, and was shot.

BOYLE (*Kisses her hair again*): I feel terrible about our Johnny, like you. I knew what he'd done long ago, and didn't have the courage to tell you. I've been thinking of you all day. Somehow, Johnny knows we're all made for each other.

JUNO (*only half-mollified*): But Johnny was shot again tonight, like Mrs. Tancred's son.

Captain nods affirmatively, tries to kiss her.

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

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

JUNO: A little bird flew into me kitchen, day after Ash Wednesday, telling me to visit church, where you were, first time in 18 years you'd been there. She said Joxer was there, too -- you can't walk two feet without leaving him stuck to your footprints. That little bird was Maisie Madigan.

BOYLE: Lord, 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. (*Pulls his hair.*)

BOYLE: Leave me hair alone. I can't tell you now, or I'll spoil any chance for our peace.

JUNO (*still pulls*): How's that, Husband? Tell me now or the only one left to bless you will be a priest, over-coffin! Why are you keen for furniture? And who have you been seein' lately?

BOYLE: Yes, furniture. I'll tell you, but I don't have to enjoy it.

JUNO (*lets go*): Talk now, or you'll never come into my bed again.

BOYLE: Well, Joxer and me, we know this fellow, Mr. Fennerly, at Hanners, who has some nice furniture they're willin' to part with, if we sell other furniture for them. They reclaimed the nice stuff from a rich family gone bankrupt. I feel sorry for that family, but what can you do but pick up the pieces, which is fine, if you work for the privilege, right?

JUNO: 'tis true. Where are you sellin' the other furniture?

BOYLE: In pubs mainly. But even Mary and John are buying some.

JUNO: Captain, that makes some sense. (*She touches him as if to hug him, but holds back yet.*) But what about your social life? (*Sternly.*) Have you been seein' Lizzie O'Hara again? (*He's shocked.*) Oh, I know all about you and Lizzie. Last New Year's, whooping it up and callin' each other lovey! You probably backed up your words with bed action, too.

BOYLE: But Juno, I haven't been with her since then, and especially not this Lent.

JUNO: I know she's been in the vicinity of you and Joxer, this Lent. I'm tellin' you to stay away from her, and any other woman who wants to spend time with you that way. I know the sorts of things that fraternizing can lead to.

BOYLE: Juno – til death do us part. Lizzie and me haven't talked in a long time, not that way, and I don't have eyes for any other women, only you.

JUNO: If you're tellin' me even half the truth, that's a good day for us, compared to what you and Joxer used ta be up to. By the way, stay away from the track. It'll eat up every penny you come by. *(He nods affirmatively. She hugs him.)*

BOYLE *(He hugs back.)*: Thank you, Mrs. Boyle. You'll not regret this.

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

BOYLE *(He strokes her hair)*: Don't say that. Kiss me, Juno Rosemary Boyle.

JUNO: Easter helps, and tonight is tonight. Lord, let the frog become my prince. *(They kiss. Lights out.)*

Act IV - Scene 1

Action: St. Bart's interior, Good Friday. Juno, in pulpit, reads.

JUNO: Dear Holy Father: I'm an everyday Irish mother. My son was Johnny Boyle. My Johnny once tried new things, and believed in God and the Body of Christ. He also believed in Ireland, though he made mistakes, especially in Commandant Tancred's death. We cried mightily for Johnny, after he died. Mrs. Tancred cried mightily for her son, too. Many have had sons and daughters die for Ireland. They still die in the North. Why? Who can say when any death is sensible, when some ask others to suffer, and have not themselves suffered for Ireland? The British have suffered and died during our troubles, too, even during the famine, when Queen Victoria ruled. They have dreams and hopes like us. The British should not rule us, but neither should we think we're better than them. All are God's children. The South is a Republic now. When will the whole world be free? Holy Father, please answer our petition and letters. Please tell the world, we mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, do not want to die for a world not-free. Yes, let's stop Hitler and Mussolini, but do not let any people die only to die. No person has every answer for Ireland, Britain, America, Poland, France, Germany, Japan, Korea, and Italy, but if you help save the world from war and death, we'll back your peace. An English preacher once said: 'He who conquers his own soul is greater than he who conquers a city.' We cherish equal rights, but equal responsibilities, too, men and women, adults and children, from all nationalities and faiths. All people have some goodness inside; we know you can help bring it forth. Thank You, Your Holiness, for reading the pencil-scratchin's of this feeble Irish wife, mother, grandmother, and friend. You're in our prayers; we hope we're in yours too.

(Lights out.)

Act IV – Scene 2

Action: Front steps, St. Bart's, post-Good Friday service. Juno, Captain, their family and friends, talk. Juno recounts how the family helped compose her letter.

JUNO: I finished the letter after a dream last night. I finally saw Johnny Boyle wasn't perfect. He sinned against God, Ireland, and a good man. I used most of what you'd given me, and then changed a line or two, after my dream.

MARY: Surely, God inspired you. We only helped a little.

JOHNNY: You did the real writin'.

SHIVAUN: And you stood before congregation to read it. I'd have been scared out o' me mind.

Father Michael enters, in 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 work to do.

FR. MICHAEL (*hand up*): I was opening the sacristy windows to air the dampness out and talk to roofer Jim Larkin and his son Stephen, about the rains. It's only been decent weather the last two days, but if we get rain before Sunday, it'll be a damp Easter-congregation. They'll start fixing the roof tomorrow.

JUNO: Easter Saturday?

FR. MICHAEL: No choice. He's got three men to help; they'll be done by supper.

JOHN SR.: They'll need good weather, Father.

FR. MICHAEL: I'll be sayin' a rosary for it. You can, too.

MARY: Yes, Father Michael. And thank you for telling Diane Fitzgerald to visit the priest at St. Rose. (*He nods.*)

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

FR. MICHAEL: It was a moving tribute to those who've sacrificed much for Irish independence. You referred to your son's mistakes, and to the British who've also died. We often forget British troops and innocents have died like Irish Republicans and innocents.

JUNO: That was Alan's idea. Everyone helped compose the letter, and Alan piped up, "What about the British?" So we had to say something about them, too. Even the Germans and Japanese are human. That's why they're also in the letter.

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

FR. MICHAEL: By A.E. Housman, the British poet? He translated an ancient Latin poem by Horace, called "To Torquatus, the Snows Are Fled Away." (*Digs in pocket.*) 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 Horace?

FR. MICHAEL: A great Roman writer.

ALAN: What do you think of his poetry?

FR. MICHAEL: Well, Alan, Horace didn't see life exactly as Catholics do. But he did see a time when life is at its fullest, and should be enjoyed. As Catholics, we believe that after life's prime, we don't simply die and vanish. We can be reborn. Other Christians believe similarly. A kind of death is all life's destiny, but if we live right, we can be reborn.

BOYLE: We know you like the poet Horace, but who's your favorite playwright, Father?

FR. MICHAEL: An Irishman many know of here, but not so, abroad. The Church doesn't praise him as highly as some, but he's a real student and teacher of human life: Tony Dooley.

JOXER: Tony Dooley wrote *The Paycock Rises Again*. Our friend Charlie O'Keefe was his agent.

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

FR. MICHAEL: Charlie was the man you told me about, wasn't he?

BOYLE: Yes, Father – the very one.

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

BOYLE and JOXER: Yes, Father.

FR. MICHAEL: Then we should all pray for a good friend's immortal soul. (*He clasps his hands, leads.*) "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 of Christ’s life, and His life after death. You won’t feel low about Ireland’s state or the world’s.

THE GROUP: Yes, Father.

JOXER: Father, is it true you once fought for the boxing championship?

FR. MICHAEL: Yes, Joxer. What a fight 'twas. I was way ahead on points, settling in for a win, when....

MARY: Father, no offense, but if we've heard that story once, we've heard it a thousand times. (*Groans.*)

FR. MICHAEL (*Sadly, lets go*): And so you have, Mary. So you have.

MARY: Then we'll see you Sunday, Father, on Easter?

FR. MICHAEL: Yes, Easter Sunday. God bless us all, until then. (*All wave; lights out.*)

Act IV - Scene 3

Action: St. Bart's interior, Easter, 9 a.m. Church is spruced with flowers and banner. Musician plays 'Joyful, Joyful'. Boyle extended family half-gather by pew, dressed up, Boyle and Joxer with same caps. Juno, Mary, and John Sr. sit.

MARY: John, where are the flowers?

JOHN SR. (*slaps forehead*): How could I? They're in the motorcar. I was so excited about us all being here, Easter, I forgot why we arrived early. Back soon. (*Exits.*)

JUNO: Doesn't the church look lovely, Mary? The last few days have gone very well. A decent Lent, all the way round.

MARY: Yes, Ma. Father Michael and the Ladies' Prayer Circle look after things well. Other parishioners help, too. We've a nice parish, now that Da and Joxer attend. I never thought I'd see them darken the Church's doorstep again, but now they're back, they lighten up this place. Tis true what the Lord said about the lost-sheep.

JUNO: But if Captain and Joxer hadn't reformed, I'd have killed them both. Nippin' out for brew more often than a pious monk says, "Glory be." When I learned they came home drunk the night Johnny met his maker, I trembled with anger and sadness. Thank the Lord, they're better now. What a strange, wonderful place Ireland is, these days.

John Sr. enters with roses and gladiolas in vase. Boyle and Joxer grin.

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

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

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

JOHN SR.: Sure as I will.

John Sr. goes off, right.

MARY: Ma, isn't it grand everyone we know is a real human family again? I mean, you, Da, and Joxer, John and the children, Father Michael, Diane, and me. It shows the power o' prayer.

JUNO: And it's decent your Johnny's servin' Mass. Johnny and Shivaun will be fine their whole lives. They've good heads on their shoulders, good family, friends. As Rolly Coughlin writes in the paper, "What more could be fairer?"

John Sr. returns from altar.

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

JUNO and MARY: Gorgeous!

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

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

JUNO: What time do you have, John?

JOHN SR. (*looks at watch*): 9:05.

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

SHIVAUN (*comes over*): Mother, Johnny said he'd be here, as soon as he hears instructions on incense and things. He said it'd be a few extra minutes..

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

JUNO: He'll be here soon.

Johnny emerges, right, and moves to his dad.

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

JOHN SR.: Yes, what about the Offerings?

JOHNNY: Father says you and Ma should bring up wine, water, and hosts, right after Creed. But instead of waiting at the altar, he'll come down to the Communion Rail, take the gifts, and an usher'll bring up the collection plate with you.

JOHN SR.: We'll be ready, Son.

Boyle and Joxer come over.

BOYLE: When are we visiting Johnny's grave? You have every Easter. I'm finally doin' what's 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. The sun's been shinin' four straight days, and the Church's roof is put right. Jim and Stephen Larkin know their business.

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

JUNO: Isn't it like a man to want to know how his stomach will feast, before he sits at table?

JOXER: It's all those years of Dublin Coddle and liver; Captain doesn't trust every family meal.

JOHN SR.: I promise all, what Mother's cooked up'll ring up tons on the scales. Get ready to add a hole in your belts.

JOXER: Sounds like a darlin' meal. (*Smiles.*)

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

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

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

JUNO: And how is their mother, Teresa?

MARY: Still fair. She says she wishes she could return to the old neighborhood. She sends her best wishes to you, Ma.

JUNO: And I to her.

Diane Fitzgerald enters. Boyle and Joxer chat. Musician plays 'Holy God.'. Lights out.

Act IV - Scene 4

Action: Johnny Boyle's grave, Dublin outskirts, 12:15 p.m. A little rise, right. Other graves are down from it, near back. Distant hedges. Flowers have been placed round some graves. A violet adorns Johnny's. A stone marker shows his name, dates, and 'Johnny, we'll always love you. Your family and friends.' A motorcar is heard pulling up, off left.

BOYLE (*offstage*): Okay, Mary. Joxer and me'll take these. John and Johnny get the rest.

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

Boyle and Joxer enter, left. Boyle puts the roses-and-gladiolas bouquet by Johnny's marker. The two make sign of cross. Claudine O'Malley, carrying satchel and wearing red shoes, enters opposite.

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

CLAUDINE: Take a look. (*Hands Captain papers and pen.*)

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

JOXER (*silent-read*): They're in order. Yes, same deal as we talked about at the Yeatses' Sporting Pub. You, Captain, and me get 65% of 100,000, or 65,000. Miss O'Malley gets 35,000.

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

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

CLAUDINE (*She pulls out two envelopes*): Count it. It's all there. (*Joxer counts it.*)

JOXER: It's all here, Captain. (*The trio get their takes.*)

CAPTAIN (*extends hand*): Thanks, Miss O'Malley. Done with business on Easter. I hope the Lord doesn't roast us. Oh, me and Joxer like those red shoes of yours. Where d'ya get them?

CLAUDINE: Thank you. I doubt He will. As for my little old red shoes? After I graduated law school, I visited Paris, and picked these up from a singer I know at the Paris Opera. She used them once, and decided to give them to me. Nice of her, don't ya think? They remind me of Dorothy's shoes in the "Wizard of Oz", that big American film from last year.

CAPTAIN: Very nice. Wizard? Of Oz? What's that about?

CLAUDINE: It's a long story, about a girl in a storm in Kansas, and an incredible dream she has, but it has a happy ending.

CAPTAIN: Good, I like happy endings. Now, there may be more work for you from us in future. We can always use a top solicitor.

CLAUDINE: Thanks, Captain. Let me know when you need me again. Now, let's see, I need to tap my shoes together, and disappear. (*She taps them together.*)

CAPTAIN: That we will. (*A puff of smoke and Claudine is gone.*) Now, this seems like a dream, too. We both have a good cut, Joxer. And 250 from each of us will go to a very sensible bet on 'Golden Paycock,' a one-time-can't-miss prospect at the track.

JOXER (*kisses share*): Yes! The Good Lord be praised! I'm glad our bookmaker knows a peachy deal when he sees it.

CAPTAIN: Yes, he does.

The pair put the money into their pockets. Then the rest of the group enter. Some bring flowers; others bring photos of Johnny Boyle. A woman about 70 and another woman about 60, appear too. So does Diane Fitzgerald.

BOYLE (*half-whispers*): Mrs. Boyle, this looks ta be as right a time as any to tell you. 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'Keefe. Charlie helped Tony Dooley produce his greatest play at the Abbey. Charlie died in an auto accident in America, and left us, well, some money.

JUNO (*half-whispers*): Captain, what do ya mean, some money? That's what you've been keeping from me all-Lent? Why, you *are* an Old Dissembler... How much money?

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

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

BOYLE: Aye, tis, Mrs. Boyle.

JUNO: Well then, quiet, we'll discuss it later. 'Tis Easter, but I'd guess you've been thinking on it all-Lent. Confession 'twas, confession 'tis, thank God for confession!

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

JOXER (*on cue*): Isn't it Romeo and Juliet the two of you be imitatin', but a bit further along in years?

BOYLE (*louder*): Right you are, Joxer.

Diane steps forward.

DIANE: Isn't it delightful John and I are cousins, with the same great-grandfather?

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

JUNO: Yes, it's God's serendipity, for sure.

Father Michael arrives, as does Tommy Malone; group gathers up.

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

FR. MICHAEL: Yes, they did. Aren't you Miss Rogers, the future Mrs. Daly? Nice to meet you.

AGGIE: Nice meetin' you, too, Father Michael "Rocky" Murphy. I've heard a lot about you -- former boxing contender and all. It'll be an honor to pray and sing with you today. My parents would've loved to be here, to meet you and sing the hymn that first brought them together 60-some years ago.

FR. MICHAEL: It would be nice to have them here, too, but maybe they are here, in a way (*looks at Aggie*). As for the boxin, twas nothin' a-tall. (*Punches air, then holds his knee.*) 'Tis the prayin' on me knees that's hard. (*Laughter.*)

AGGIE: Father Michael, I been prayin' n' singin' a lot over the years, but this day is very special to Joxer and me, too.

JOXER: Yes, Father, Aggie's been prayin' 'n singin' forever, haven't you, Me Sweet Apple Blossom?

AGGIE: 'tis grand to praise the Lord, when so much of the world seems content praisin' the sins of worldly leaders.

JOHNNY: Miss Rogers, I've a friend, Alan Matthews, who works for the *Irish Times*. He said I could write a story they might publish in the paper. Can I quote you? It'll give my story more zing.

AGGIE: Fine with me. More good sense means more good things for Ireland. There's a young Sister Teresa I know who taught me, 'Do small acts with great love.' That still makes sense to me, because small acts of love can amount to large acts of redemption.

JUNO: Yes, Aggie, I've heard of Sister Teresa. She's a great woman. And Alan Matthews at the paper has clout. He's a young man who uses initiative, just like Johnny.

Tommy Malone comes over.

TOMMY MALONE: Hello, Everyone. (*Gives Juno photo of her Johnny, and Tommy.*) 'Tis grand ta see you -- especially you, Captain and Mrs. Boyle, and Mary. It brings back good memories of Johnny Boyle. Your son would've become somethin' fine, if he'd got past the troubles.

JUNO: Yes, he loved you, Thomas Daniel Malone, as much as family, til the end. Thanks for the lovely photo of the two of you; it brings back memories to us, too

TOMMY: (*Reads watch.*) I wish I could stay longer, but have ta hurry. The train leaves soon, and me brothers are waiting ta go with me to the Army. Our fiancés'll see us off.

FR. MICHAEL: Yes, when you volunteer for Army, the Generals can't be kept waitin'. Be like the Green Bay Packers. My cousin is their chaplain in America. The Packers are a strong football team, and we all love our courageous troops.

Juno goes over to the woman in her seventies; they tear up and hug. It's Mrs. Tancred, the Commandant's mother. Mrs. Tancred holds a photo of her son. Juno leads her 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 for her son's memory, too.

MRS. TANCRED: Yes, father, would you?

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

FR. MICHAEL: Captain, please hold the bouquet. (*He does. Priest to crowd.*): Lord, we honor You today by honoring two young men long loved by family and friends, both who died for Ireland – Johnny Boyle and Commandant Tancred. My predecessor, now-Bishop William Ted Jerome Burke, knew both men, and sends his blessings. He'll pass our petition and Mrs. Boyle's letter on to His Holiness soon, with our photos and other letters. Now, 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. Great crowds came to him, having with them the lame, the blind, the deformed, the mute, and many others. They were placed at his feet, and he cured them.' (15:29-30.) Yes, Friends, 'Those who are humbled will be exalted, and those who are exalted will be humbled.' Love and be loved. Also, worry doesn't bring peace, unless we act wisely upon our worries. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

EVERYONE (*sign of cross*): Amen!

FR. MICHAEL: Tommy, please sing the lead verse of an old reliable: 'Joyful, Joyful'.

TOMMY (*Nods, 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.' (*Crowd repeats verse.*)

FR. MICHAEL (*smiles*): A great hymn's your favorite, Miss Rogers, thanks to artists like Schiller, Beethoven, Van Dyke, and others. It reminds me of a boy who used to play 'Song of Joy' on his recorder-flute – who's become a great-good son, man, soldier, husband, father, and leader, making his family and many others, very proud of him. We're glad we'd the talent to perform 'Song of Joy'. The Aborigines of Australia say, every person must follow their central song-line, to be decent. We too must abide by our song-line. Thus does the Lord melt the clouds of sin and sadness, and fill us with the light of day.

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

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

FR. MICHAEL: Yes, 'tis glorious (*hands to sun*) to find the Lord here. Now, I hope you all agree, 'tis time we all go to proper dwellings to enjoy the Easter meal of our choosing.

BOYLE (*winks*): Sounds like paradise to me, Rocky. What do all of you think?

EVERYONE: Paradise it is!

JUNO (*hugs Boyle*): 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 (*eggs him on*)... dessert! Will you join us, 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?

People with photos of Johnny Boyle share with his parents. Johnny Fitzgerald takes a posed photo-portrait of group, with a box brownie. Boyle speaks to Joxer, still keeping his arm round Juno, as she keeps her arm round Mrs. Tancred.

BOYLE (*low, to Joxer*): We go to the track, very soon, Joxer, for a very safe bet on 'Golden Paycock'. 3-to-1 Dorie Banner ain't wrong. A better bookmaker there isn't, this side o' Churchill Downs, and today we ain't goin' to be down, not by a long shot. (*Louder*) Now, let's enjoy this day to the best of our abilities.

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

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

JUNO: Don't know, Mary, but 'tis a special 'Song of Joy'. For our blessings, we're grateful. For the Shamrocks from Bantry (*winks at Joxer*) and the brew from St. Patrick's Irishfest (*winks at John*). Now, let's move on, Captain Jack? Didn't I used to say, 'God bless you, Captain Boyle, "cause nobody else will?' Well, some of us and God will now, too.

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

JOXER (*looks at Captain, musicians, crowd*): Anyone for another Old-Reliable?

JOHN SR.: (*Winks*): Why not, Joxer? We're all Old-Reliables now.

JOXER: Yes, John, you never know when you're entertaining Old-Reliables, or Angels, either.

STAGE-CROWD: Amen to that!

JOXER: But then, ain't all religions curious? If they weren't, you wouldn't get anyone to believe in them. Rocky, I can believe you fought for championship. You look like you could go 20 rounds today. Like they say, look up and have fun.

FR. MICHAEL (*fakes a punch at Joxer, who raises hands to defend himself*): Roger-Joxer, You Boxer -- And fightin' evil's just like me championship fight in 1922 versus 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...(hits himself; they exit -- Father Michael is hurting, but semi-triumphant, in silhouette. As hymn begins, Tommy still is talking, but has to hustle off at last.)

ALL: 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... (*Melody plays on alone, after lyrics and lights fade...our play's end.*)