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Juno and the Paycock

A Tragedy

Sean O'Casey

Samuel French – London
New York – Sydney – Toronto – Hollywood



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JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK

Produced at the Royalty Theatre, London, on the 16th November 1925, with the following cast of characters:

"Captain" Jack Boyle	Residents in the Tenement	*Arthur Sinclair*
Juno Boyle, his wife		*Sara Allgood*
Johnny Boyle, their children		*Harry Hutchinson*
Mary Boyle, their children		*Kathleen O'Regan*
"Joxer" Daly		*Sydney Morgan*
Mrs Maisie Madigan		*Marie O'Neill*
"Needle" Nugent, a tailor		*J. A. O'Rourke*
Mrs Tancred		*Kitty Kirwan*
Jerry Devine		*David Morris*
Charlie Bentham, a school teacher		*Eric Page*
An Irregular Mobilizer		*Barney Mulligan*
Two Irregulars		(one) *E. T. Kennedy*
A Coal-block Vendor		*Edmund O'Grady*
A Sewing Machine Man		*Christopher Steele*
Two Furniture-Removal Men		(one) *Edmund O'Grady*
Two Neighbours		*Joyce Chancellor*, *Mollie Mackay*

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

The living apartment of a two-roomed tenancy of the Boyle family, in a tenement house in Dublin

ACT II

The same

ACT III

The same

A few days elapse between Acts I and II, and two months between Acts II and III.

During Act III the curtain is lowered for a few minutes to denote the lapse of one hour.

Period of the play, 1922.

JUNO AND THE PAYCOCK

ACT I

SCENE—*The living apartment of a two-room tenancy occupied by the Boyle family, in a tenement house in Dublin.*

On the R *is a door leading to the street. Above the door* R *is a window looking into the street. On the* C *back wall is a window. To* R *of the window is a dresser with crockery; to* L *of the window a curtained alcove containing a bed. On the* L *wall up stage is a door leading to another room. Below this door is the fireplace. On the mantelpiece is an alarm clock, lying on its face. On the wall, over the mantelpiece, is a picture of the Blessed Virgin; beneath the picture on the mantelpiece is a small red bowl; the bowl is filled with oil, and in the oil a lighted wick floats. This votive light must be always plainly visible. In* C *of the room is a kitchen table, with chairs, one at the back, and one at each end of the table. On the table is a small mirror, a newspaper spread out at one end, and breakfast things at the other end. A well-worn armchair stands beside the fireplace. There is a pan in the fender and a teapot on the hob. A long-handled labourer's shovel is leaning against the side of the dresser.*

When the CURTAIN *rises,* JOHNNY BOYLE *is sitting crouched in the armchair beside the fire. He is a thin, delicate fellow, younger than Mary; his face is pale and drawn; there is a tremulous look of indefinite fear in his eyes. The left sleeve of his coat is empty. When he walks he has a slight halt.*

MARY *with her jumper off—it is lying on the back of a chair—is arranging her hair before a tiny mirror perched on the table. Beside the mirror is stretched out the morning paper which she looks at when she isn't gazing into the mirror. She is a well-made and good-looking girl of twenty-two. Two forces are working in her mind—one, through the circumstances of her life, pulling her back; the other, through the influence of books she has read, pushing her forward. The opposing forces are apparent in her speech and her manners, both of which are degraded by her environment, and improved by her acquaintance—slight though it be—with literature. The time is early forenoon.*

MARY (*looking at the paper*) On a little bye-road, out beyant Finglas, he was found.

(MRS BOYLE *enters by the door* R; *she has been shopping and carries a small parcel in her hand. She is forty-five years of age, and twenty years ago she must have been a pretty woman; but her face has now assumed that look which ultimately settles down upon the faces of the women of the working-class; a look of listless monotony and harassed*

anxiety, blending with an expression of mechanical resistance. Were circumstances favourable, she would probably be a handsome, active and clever woman)

MRS BOYLE. Isn't he come in yet?

MARY. No, mother.

MRS BOYLE (R) Oh, he'll come in when he likes; strutting about the town like a paycock with Joxer, I suppose. (*She puts the parcel on the table*) I hear all about Mrs Tancred's son is in this morning's paper. (*She crosses behind Mary, takes off her hat and black shawl, and flings them on the bed in the alcove*)

MARY. The full details are in it this mornin'; seven wounds he had—one entherin' the neck, with an exit wound beneath the left shoulder-blade; another in the left breast penethratin' the heart, an' . . .

JOHNNY (*springing up from the fire*) Oh, quit that readin', for God's sake! Are yous losin' all your feelin's? It'll soon be that none of yous'll read anythin' that's not about butcherin'!

(JOHNNY *goes quickly into the room* L)

MARY (*looking after Johnny*) He's getting very sensitive, all of a sudden.

(MRS BOYLE *comes down to the table* R)

MRS BOYLE. I'll read it myself, Mary, by an' by, when I come home. Everybody's sayin' that he was a Die-hard—thanks be to God that Johnny had nothin' to do with him this long time. . . . (*She opens the parcel and takes out some sausages, which she places on a plate*) Ah, then, if that father o' yours doesn't come in soon for his breakfast, he may go without any; I'll not wait much longer for him. (*She takes the plate of sausages from the table, goes over to the dresser, and puts them in the bottom cupboard*)

MARY. Can't you let him get it himself when he comes in?

MRS BOYLE. Yes, an' let him bring in Joxer Daly along with him? Ay, that's what he'd like, an' that's what he's waitin' for—till he thinks I'm gone to work, an' then sail in with the boul' Joxer, to burn all the coal an' dhrink all the tea in the place, to show them what a good Samaritan he is! But I'll stop here till he comes in, if I have to wait till tomorrow mornin'. (*She goes over and sits beside the fire*)

VOICE OF JOHNNY (*inside*) Mother!

MRS BOYLE. Yis?

VOICE OF JOHNNY. Bring us in a dhrink o' wather.

MRS BOYLE. Bring in that fella a dhrink o' wather, for God's sake, Mary.

MARY (*still before the mirror, arranging her hair*) Isn't he big an' able enough to come out an' get it himself?

MRS BOYLE (*getting up from the fire, going to the dresser and filling*

a glass with water) If you weren't well yourself, you'd like somebody to bring you in a glass of water.

(MRS BOYLE *goes in with water to the room* L, *and returns and sits down by the fire*)

Isn't it terrible to have to be waitin' this way! You'd think he was bringin' twenty poun's a week into the house the way he's going on. He wore out the Health Insurance long ago, he's afther wearin' out the unemployment dole, an', now, he's thryin' to wear out me! An' constantly singin', no less, when he ought always to be on his knees offerin' up a Novena for a job!

MARY (*tying a ribbon, fillet-wise, around her head*) I don't like this ribbon, ma; I think I'll wear the green—it looks betther than the blue.

MRS BOYLE (*poking the fire viciously*) Ah, wear whatever ribbon you like, girl, only don't be botherin' me. I don't know what a girl on strike wants to be wearin' a ribbon round her head for or silk stockin's on her legs either; it's wearin' them things that make the employers think they're givin' yous too much money.

MARY. The hour is past now when we'll ask the employers' permission to wear what we like.

MRS BOYLE. I don't know why you wanted to walk out for Jennie Claffey; up to this you never had a good word for her.

MARY. What's the use of belongin' to a Trades Union if you won't stand up for your principles? Why did they sack her? It was a clear case of victimization. We couldn't let her walk the streets, could we?

MRS BOYLE. No, of course yous couldn't—yous wanted to keep her company. Wan victim wasn't enough. When the employers sacrifice wan victim, the Trades Unions go wan betther be sacrificin' a hundred.

MARY. It doesn't matther what you say, ma—a principle's a principle.

MRS BOYLE. Yis; an' when I go into oul' Murphy's tomorrow, an' he gets to know that, instead o' payin' all, I'm goin' to borry more, what'll he say when I tell him a principle's a principle? What'll we do if he refuses to give us any more on tick?

MARY. He daren't refuse—if he does, can't you tell him he's paid?

MRS BOYLE. It's lookin' as if he was paid, whether he refuses or no.

(JOHNNY *appears at the door* L)

JOHNNY. I was lyin' down; I thought yous were gone. Oul' Simon Mackay is thrampin' about like a horse over me head, an' I can't sleep with him—they're like thunder-claps in me brain! The curse o'—God forgive me for goin' to curse!

MRS BOYLE. There, now; go back an' lie down agen, an' I'll bring you in a nice cup o' tay.

JOHNNY. Tay, tay, tay! You're always thinkin' o' tay. If a man was dyin', you'd thry to make him swally a cup o' tay!

(JOHNNY *goes back to the room* L)

MRS BOYLE. I don't know what's goin' to be done with him. The bullet he got in the hip in Easter Week was bad enough, but the bomb that shatthered his arm in the fight in O'Connell Street put the finishin' touch on him. I knew he was makin' a fool of himself. God knows I went down on me bended knees to him not to go agen the Free State.

MARY. He stuck to his principles, an', no matther how you may argue, ma', a principle's a principle.

VOICE OF JOHNNY (*in the room* L) Is Mary goin' to stay here?

MARY (*shouting*) No, I'm not going to stay here; you can't expect me to be always at your beck an' call, can you?

VOICE OF JOHNNY. I won't stop here be myself!

MRS BOYLE. Amn't I nicely handicapped with the whole o' yous! I don't know what any o' yous ud do without your ma. (*At the door* L, *to Johnny*) Your father'll be here in a minute, an' if you want anythin', he'll get it for you.

JOHNNY. I hate assin' him for anythin'. . . . He hates to be assed to stir. . . . Is the light lightin' before the picture o' the Virgin?

MRS BOYLE. Yis, yis! The wan inside to St Anthony isn't enough, but he must have another wan to the Virgin here!

(JERRY DEVINE *enters hastily by the door* R. *He is about twenty-five, well set, active and earnest. He is a type, becoming very common now in the Labour Movement, of a mind knowing enough to make the mass of his associates, who know less, a power, and too little to broaden that power for the benefit of all.*

MARY *seizes her jumper, and runs hastily into the room* L)

JERRY (R, *breathless from speed*) Where's the Captain, where's the Captain, Mrs Boyle?

MRS BOYLE (*sitting at the fire; turning to look at Jerry*) You may well ass a body that: he's wherever Joxer Daly is—dhrinkin' in some snug or another.

JERRY. Father Farrell is just father stoppin' to tell me to run up an' get him to go to the new job that's goin' on in Rathmines; his cousin is foreman o' the job, an' Father Farrell was speakin' to him about poor Johnny an' his father bein' idle so long, an' the foreman told Father Farrell to send the Captain up an' he'd give him a start—I wondher where I'd find him?

MRS BOYLE (*getting up and crossing to Jerry*, R) You'll find he's avther in Ryan's or Foley's.

JERRY. I'll run round to Ryan's—I know it's a great house o' Joxer's.

(JERRY *rushes out of the door* R.

MRS BOYLE *crosses over to the fire again and sits in the chair, in an agitated state*)

MRS BOYLE (*piteously*) There now, he'll miss that job, or I know for what! If he gets win' o' the word, he'll not come back till evenin', so that it'll be too late. There'll never be any good got out o' him so long as he goes with that shouldher-shruggin' Joxer. I killin' meself workin', an' he sthruttin' about from mornin' till night like a paycock!

(*The footsteps of* "CAPTAIN" BOYLE *and* JOXER *are heard coming upstairs, outside the door* R. "CAPTAIN" BOYLE *is singing in a deep, sonorous voice,* "*Sweet Spirit, hear my Prayer*". MRS BOYLE *lifts her head and listens; she rises from her seat, goes and stands listening behind the table*)

BOYLE (*outside the door* R, *singing*) Sweet Spirit, hear me prayer! Hear . . . oh . . . hear . . . me prayer . . . hear, oh, hear . . . Oh, he . . . ar . . . oh, he . . . ar . . . me . . . pray . . . er!

JOXER (*outside*) Ah, that's a darlin' song, a daaarlin' song!

(MRS BOYLE *goes to the alcove, backstage* L, *and sits on the bed so that the curtains hide her from view.*

"CAPTAIN" BOYLE *comes slowly in,* R. *He is a man of about sixty; stout, grey-haired and stocky. His neck is short, and his head looks like a stone ball that one sometimes sees on top of a gate-post. His cheeks, reddish-purple, are puffed out, as if he were always repressing an almost irrepressible ejaculation. On his upper lip is a crisp, tightly cropped moustache; he carries himself with the upper part of his body slightly thrown back, and his stomach slightly thrust forward. His walk is a slow, consequential strut. His clothes are dingy, and he wears a faded seaman's cap with a glazed peak*)

BOYLE (*to Joxer, who is still outside*) Come on, come on in, Joxer; she's gone out long ago, man. If there's nothing else to be got, we'll furrage out a cup o' tay, anyway. It's the only bit I get in comfort when she's away. 'Tisn't Juno should be her pet name at all, but Deirdre of the Sorras, for she's always grousin'.

(JOXER *steps cautiously into the room by the door* R. *He may be younger than "Captain" Boyle, but he looks a lot older. His face is like a bundle of crinkled paper; his eyes have a cunning twinkle; he is spare and loosely built; he has a habit of constantly shrugging his shoulders with a peculiar twitching movement, meant to be ingratiating. His face is invariably ornamented with a grin*)

JOXER (R) It's a terrible thing to be tied to a woman that's always grousin'. I don't know how you stick it—it ud put vears

on me. It's a good job she has to be so ofen away, for (*with a shrug*) when the cat's away, the mice can play!

Boyle (*with a commanding and complacent gesture*) Pull over to the fire, Joxer, an' we'll have a cup o' tay in a minute.

Joxer. Ah, a cup o' tay's a darlin' thing, a daaarlin' thing—the cup that cheers but doesn't . . .

(Mrs Boyle *cuts Joxer's speech short by springing suddenly out of the alcove, and stands angrily between Boyle and Joxer, glaring from one to the other. Both are stupefied*)

Mrs Boyle (*with sweet irony—poking the fire, and turning her head to glare at Joxer*) Pull over to the fire, Joxer Daly, an' we'll have a cup o' tay in a minute! Are you sure, now, you wouldn't like an egg?

Joxer. I can't stop, Mrs Boyle; I'm in a desperate hurry, a desperate hurry.

Mrs Boyle. Pull over to the fire, Joxer Daly; people is always far more comfortabler here than they are in their own place.

(Joxer *makes hastily for the door.* Boyle *stirs to follow him; thinks of something to relieve the situation—stops, and says suddenly—*"Joxer!")

Joxer (*at the door, ready to bolt*) Yis?

(Boyle *crosses in front of Mrs Boyle to Joxer* r, *gets close to him and speaks meaningly*)

Boyle. You know the foreman o' that job that's going on down in Killesther, don't you, Joxer?

Joxer (*puzzled*) Foreman—Killesther?

(Mrs Boyle *is standing staring at them; she is* lc *and listens to them quietly, but with an ominous glare in her eyes. They are trying to deceive her, but she sees through them*)

Boyle (*with a meaning look*) He's a butty o' yours, isn't he?

Joxer (*the meaning of Boyle dawning on him*) The foreman at Killesther—oh yis, yis. He's an oul' butty o' mine—oh, he's a darlin' man, a daarlin' man.

Boyle. Oh, then, it's a sure thing. It's a pity we didn't go down at breakfast first thing this mornin'—we might ha' been working now; but you didn't know it then.

Joxer (*with a shrug*) It's betther late than never.

Boyle. It's nearly time we got a start, anyhow; I'm fed up knockin' round, doin' nothin'. He promised you—gave you the straight tip?

Joxer. Yis. "Come down on the blow o' dinner," says he, "an' I'll start you, an' any friend you like to brin' with you." Ah, says I, you're a darlin' man, a daaarlin' man.

BOYLE. Well, it couldn't come at a betther time—we're a long time waitin' for it.

JOXER. Indeed we were; but it's a long lane that has no turnin'.

BOYLE. The blow up for dinner is at one—wait till I see what time 'tis. (*He goes over to the mantelpiece, and gingerly lifts the clock*)

(MRS BOYLE *is standing* LC *watching the movements of Boyle and Joxer*)

MRS BOYLE (*watching Boyle*) Mind now, how you go on fiddling with that clock; you know the least little thing sets it astray.

BOYLE (*with the clock in his hand, paying no attention to Mrs Boyle*) The job couldn't come at a betther time; I'm feelin' in great fettle, Joxer. I'd hardly believe I ever had a pain in me legs, an' last week I was nearly crippled with them.

JOXER. That's betther an' betther; ah, God never shut wan door but he opened another!

BOYLE (*looking at the clock*) It's only eleven o'clock—we've lashing of time. (*He puts the clock carefully back on the mantelpiece, crosses in front of Mrs Boyle, over to Joxer, and stands beside him,* L) I'll slip on me moleskins after breakfast, an' we can saunther down at our ayse. (*He goes over to the dresser, takes up the shovel, and returns to the side of Joxer, displaying the shovel*) I think, Joxer, we'd betther bring our shovels.

JOXER. Yis, Captain, yis; it's betther to go fully prepared an' ready for all eventualities. You bring your long-tailed shovel, an' I'll bring me navvy. We mighten want them, an', then agen, we might: for want of a nail the shoe was lost, for want of a shoe the horse was lost, an' for want of a horse the man was lost—aw, that's a darlin' proverb, a daarlin' . . .

(MRS BOYLE, *in an angry way, suddenly rushes towards Joxer.* JOXER *hurriedly runs out by the door* R. MRS BOYLE *shuts the door with a bang.* BOYLE, *pushed aside in the rush, goes back to the dresser, leaving the shovel back where he got it.* MRS BOYLE, *in a raging temper, crosses quickly to* L *and busies herself with the fire*)

BOYLE (*apologetically*) We won't be long pullin' ourselves together again, when I'm workin' for a few weeks.

(MRS BOYLE *takes no notice*)

The foreman on the job is an oul' butty o' Joxer's; I have an idea that I know him meself. (*Silence*) . . . There's a button off the back o' me moleskin trousers. . . . If you leave out a needle an' thread I'll sew it on meself. . . . Thanks be to God, the pains in me legs is gone, anyhow!

MRS BOYLE (*with a burst*) Look here, Mr Jacky Boyle, them yarns won't go down with Juno. I know you an' Joxer Daly of

an oul' date, an', if you think you're able to come it over me with them fairy tales, you're in the wrong shop.

BOYLE (*at front of the dresser, coughing subduedly to relieve the tenseness of the situation*) U-u-u-ugh!

MRS BOYLE. Butty o' Joxer's! Oh, you'll do a lot o' good as long as you continue to be a butty o' Joxer's!

BOYLE. U-u-u-ugh!

MRS BOYLE. Shovel! Ah, then, me boyo, you'd do far more work with a knife an' fork than ever you'll do with a shovel! If there was e'er a genuine job goin' you'd be dh'other way about —not able to lift your arms with the pains in your legs! Your poor wife slavin' to keep the bit in your mouth, an' you gallivantin' about all the day like a paycock!

BOYLE. It ud be betther for a man to be dead, betther for a man to be dead.

MRS BOYLE (*ignoring the interruption*) Everybody callin' you "Captain", an' you only wanst on the wather, in an oul' collier from here to Liverpool, when anybody, to listen or look at you, ud take you for a second Christo For Columbus!

BOYLE. Are you never goin' to give us a rest?

MRS BOYLE. Oh, you're never tired o' lookin' for a rest.

BOYLE. D'ye want to dhrive me out o' the house?

(MRS BOYLE *goes from the fireplace, crosses rapidly to dresser;* BOYLE, *fearfully getting out of her way, comes down stage* RC. MRS BOYLE *takes the breakfast things from the dresser—bread, sugar, etc.—and arranges them on the table. She does all in an angry way*)

MRS BOYLE. It ud be easier to dhrive you out o' the house than to dhrive you into a job. Here, sit down an' take your breakfast— it may be the last you'll get, for I don't know where the next is goin' to come from.

BOYLE. If I get this job we'll be all right.

MRS BOYLE. Did ye see Jerry Devine?

BOYLE (*testily*) No, I didn't see him.

MRS BOYLE. No, but you seen Joxer. Well, he was here lookin' for you.

BOYLE. Well, let him look!

MRS BOYLE. Oh, indeed, he may well look, for it ud be hard for him to see you, an' you stuck in Ryan's snug.

BOYLE. I wasn't in Ryan's snug—I don't go into Ryan's.

MRS BOYLE. Oh, is there a mad dog there? Well, if you weren't in Ryan's you were in Foley's.

BOYLE. I'm telling you for the last three weeks I haven't tasted a dhrop of intoxicatin' liquor. I wasn't in ayther wan snug or dh'other—I could swear that on a prayer-book—I'm as innocent as the child unborn!

(MRS BOYLE *goes to the dresser, takes out the sausages from the*

cupboard underneath, crosses to the fire, puts them on the pan, and starts to cook them. BOYLE *crosses to back of the table*)

MRS BOYLE. Well, if you'd been in for your breakfast you'd ha' seen him.

BOYLE (*suspiciously*) What does he want me for?

MRS BOYLE. He'll be back any minute an' then you'll soon know.

BOYLE (*starting to the door* R) I'll dhrop out an' see if I can meet him.

MRS BOYLE (*catching him by the shoulder*) You'll sit down an' take your breakfast, an' let me go to me work, for I'm an hour late already waitin' for you.

BOYLE. You needn't ha' waited, for I'll take no breakfast—I've a little spirit left in me still!

MRS BOYLE (*releasing him, and moving away* L) Are you goin' to have your breakfast—yes or no?

BOYLE (*too proud to yield*) I'll have no breakfast—yous can keep your breakfast. (*Plaintively*) I'll knock out a bit somewhere, never fear.

MRS BOYLE. Nobody's goin' to coax you—don't think that. (*She vigorously replaces the pan and the sausages in the press, and returns to the fire*)

BOYLE. I've a little spirit left in me still.

(JERRY DEVINE *enters hastily by the door* R, *looks around and sees Boyle*)

JERRY. Oh, here you are at last! I've been searchin' for you everywhere. The foreman in Foley's told me you hadn't left the snug with Joxer ten minutes before I went in.

MRS BOYLE. An' he swearin' on the holy prayer-book that he wasn't in no snug!

BOYLE (*to Jerry*) What business is it o' yours whether I was in a snug or no? What do you want to be gallopin' about afther me for? Is a man not to be allowed to leave his house for a minute without havin' a pack o' spies, pimps an' informers cantherin' at his heels?

JERRY (R) Oh, you're takin' a wrong view of it, Mr Boyle; I simply was anxious to do you a good turn. I have a message for you from Father Farrell: he says that if you go to the job that's on in Rathmines, an' ask for Foreman Mangan, you'll get a start.

BOYLE (*standing to* L *of Jerry*) That's all right, but I don't want the motions of me body to be watched the way an asthronomer ud watch a star. If you're folleyin' Mary aself, you've no pereeogative to be folleyin' me. (*Suddenly catching his thigh*) U-ugh, I'm afther gettin' a terrible twinge in me right leg!

MRS BOYLE (*near the fire*) Oh, it won't be very long now till it travels into your left wan. It's miraculous that whenever he scents

a job in front of him, his legs begin to fail him! Then, me bucko, if you lose this chance, you may go an' furrage for yourself!

JERRY. This job'll last for some time too, Captain, an' as soon as the foundations are in, it'll be cushy enough.

BOYLE (*dolefully*) Won't it be a climbin' job? How d'ye expect me to be able to go up a ladder with these legs? An', if I get up aself, how am I goin' to get down agen?

MRS BOYLE (*viciously*) Get wan o' the labourers to carry you down in a hod! You can't climb a laddher, but you can skip like a goat into a snug!

JERRY. I wouldn't let meself be let down that easy, Mr Boyle; a little exercise, now, might do you all the good in the world.

BOYLE. It's a docthor you should have been, Devine—maybe you know more about the pains in me legs than meself that has them?

JERRY (*irritated*) Oh, I know nothin' about the pains in your legs; I've brought the message that Father Farrell gave me, an' that's all I can do.

MRS BOYLE (*catching him by the shoulder and pulling him towards the table*) Here, sit down, an' take your breakfast, an' go an' get ready; an' don't be actin' as if you couldn't pull a wing out of a dead bee.

BOYLE. I want no breakfast, I tell you; it ud choke me afther all that's been said. I've a little spirit left in me still.

(MRS BOYLE *roughly pulls him past her to* L, *and pushes him towards the door* L)

MRS BOYLE. Well, let's see your spirit, then, an' go in at oncest an' put on your moleskin trousers.

BOYLE (*halting at the door* L) It ud be betther for a man to be dead. U-ugh! There's another twinge in me other leg! Nobody but meself knows the sufferin' I'm goin' through with the pains in these legs of mine.

(BOYLE *goes into the room* L)

MRS BOYLE (*putting on her hat and coat which she takes from the bed in the alcove*) I'll have to push off, now, for I'm terribly late already; but I was determined to stay an' hunt that Joxer, this time.

(MRS BOYLE *hurries out by the door* R.

JERRY *is standing at the* R *end of the table as* MARY *comes in by the door* L. *She is evidently going out, for she wears her coat, and is putting on her hat*)

JERRY. Are you going out, Mary?

MARY. It looks like it when I'm putting on my hat, doesn't it?

JERRY. The bitther word agen, Mary.

MARY. You won't allow me to be friendly with you; if I thry, you deliberately misundherstand it.

JERRY. I didn't always misundherstand it; you were ofen delighted to have the arms of Jerry around you.

MARY. If you go on talkin' like this, Jerry Devine, you'll make me hate you!

JERRY. Well, let it be either a weddin' or a wake! Listen, Mary, I'm standin' for the Secretaryship of our Union. There's only one opposin' me; I'm popular with all the men, an' a good speaker —all are sayin' that I'll get elected.

MARY. Well?

JERRY. The job's worth three hundred an' fifty pounds a year, Mary. You an' I could live nice an' cosily on that; it would lift you out o' this place an' . . .

MARY. I haven't time to listen to you now—I have to go.

(MARY *crosses towards the door* R, *in front of the table;* JERRY *meets her half-way* C)

JERRY (*appealingly*) Mary, what's come over you with me for the last few weeks? You hardly speak to me, an' then only a word with a face o' bittherness on it. Have you forgotten, Mary, all the happy evenin's that were as sweet as the scented hawthorn that sheltered the sides o' the road as we saunthered through the country?

MARY. That's all over now. When you get your new job, Jerry, you won't be long findin' a girl far betther than I am for your sweetheart.

JERRY. Never, never, Mary! No matther what happens, you'll always be the same to me.

MARY. I must be off; please let me go, Jerry.

JERRY. I'll go a bit o' the way with you.

MARY. You needn't, thanks; I want to be by meself. (*She tries to pass*)

JERRY (*catching her arm*) You're goin' to meet another fella; you've clicked with someone else, me lady!

MARY. That's no concern o' yours, Jerry Devine; let me go!

JERRY. I saw yous comin' out o' the Cornflower Dance Class, an' you hangin' on his arm—a thin lanky strip of a Micky Dazzler, with a walkin'-stick an' gloves!

MARY (*protestingly*) You're hurtin' me arm! Let me go, or I'll scream, an' then you'll have the oul' fella out on top of us!

JERRY. Don't be so hard on a fella, Mary, don't be so hard.

BOYLE (*appearing at the door* L *in wide moleskin trousers*) What's the meanin' of all this hillabaloo?

MARY. Let me go, let me go!

BOYLE. D'ye hear me—what's all this hillabaloo about?

JERRY (*plaintively*) Will you not give us one kind word, one kind word, Mary?

BOYLE (*loudly*) D'ye hear me talkin' to yous? What's all this hillabaloo for?

JERRY. Let me kiss your hand, your little, tiny, white hand!

BOYLE. Your little, tiny, white hand—are you takin' leave o' your senses, man?

(MARY *breaks away and rushes out of the door* R)

(*To Jerry*) This is nice goin's on in front of her father!

JERRY (*turning and speaking viciously to Boyle*) Ah, dhry up, for God's sake!

(JERRY *follows Mary out of the door* R)

BOYLE (L *of the table, standing speechless for a moment*) Chiselurs don't care a damn now about their parents. They're bringin' their fathers' grey hairs with sorra to the grave, an' laffin' at it, laffin' at it! (*He turns to* L *and sits down in the chair by the fire*) Ah, I suppose the same everywhere—the whole worl's in a state of chassis! Breakfast. Well, they can keep their breakfast for me. (*Emphatically*) Not if they went down on their bended knees, would I take it! I'll show them I've a little spirit left in me still. (*He sits still for a few moments; then gets up very slowly, crosses the stage behind the table, and goes to the dresser. He opens the bottom cupboard, takes out a plate and looks at it. Scornfully*) Sassige! Well, let her keep her sassige. (*He puts the plate of sausages back in the cupboard; returns slowly to the chair by the fire; sits down, and remains still for a few seconds; then he takes the teapot from the hob, and shakes it*) Uh, the tea's wet, right enough. (*He replaces the teapot on the hob, and again sits still for a few moments. Then he rises, crosses the stage slowly, behind the table, to the dresser, takes out the plate of sausages, returns to the fire, puts the sausages on the pan, puts both on the fire, sits down in the chair, and attends to the sausages with a fork*)

(*Singing as he cooks*) When the robins nest agen,
And the flowers are in bloom,
When the Springtime's sunny smile seems to banish all sorrow an' gloom;
Then me bonny blue-ey'd lad, if me heart be true till then—
He's promised he'll come back to me,
When the robins nest agen!
(*He lifts his head at the high note, and then drops his eyes to the pan*)
(*Singing*) When the . . .

(*Steps are heard approaching; he whips the pan off the fire and puts it under the bed, then sits down at the fire. The door opens and a bearded man looking in, says:* "You don't happen to want a sewin' machine?")

BOYLE (*furiously*) No, I don't want e'er a sewin' machine! (*He returns the pan to the fire, and commences to sing again*)

(*Singing*) When the robins nest agen,
And the flowers are in bloom,
He's . . .

(*A thundering knock is heard at the street door*)

There's a terrible tatheraraa—that's a stranger—that's nobody belongin' to the house.

(*Another loud knock*)

JOXER (*sticking his head in at the door*) Did ye hear them tatherarahs?

BOYLE. Well, Joxer, I'm not deaf.

JOHNNY (*appearing in his shirt and trousers at the door on* L; *his face is anxious and his voice is tremulous*) Who's that at the door; who's that at the door? Who gave that knock—d'ye yous hear me—are yous deaf or dhrunk or what?

BOYLE (*to Johnny*) How the hell do I know who 'tis? Joxer, stick your head out o' the window an' see.

JOXER. An' mebbe get a bullet in the kisser? Ah, none o' them thricks for Joxer! It's betther to be a coward than a corpse!

(BOYLE *gets up from the chair, goes cautiously across the stage, behind the table to the window above the door* R. *He carefully shoves the curtains aside, and cautiously peeps out into the street*)

BOYLE. It's a fella in a thrench coat.

JOHNNY (*terrified*) Holy Mary, Mother of God! I——

BOYLE. He's goin' away—he must ha' got tired knockin'.

(JOHNNY *goes back to the room* L.

BOYLE *comes back to the fire, and attends to the sausages.* JOXER *remains standing beside the door* R. BOYLE *turns with a fork the sausage in the pan; turns round and gives an invitatory gesture to Joxer*)

Sit down an' have a cup o' tay, Joxer.

JOXER. I'm afraid the missus ud pop in on us agen before we'd know where we are. Somethin's tellin' me to go at wanst.

BOYLE. Don't be superstitious, man; we're Dublin men, an' not boyos that's only afther comin' up from the bog o' Allen —though if she did come in, right enough, we'd be caught like rats in a thrap.

JOXER. An' you know the sort she is—she wouldn't listen to reason—an' wanse bitten twice shy.

(BOYLE *thinks for a moment, leaves the pan on the hob, goes over to the window* C *back, lifts up and down the bottom part*)

BOYLE (*to Joxer*) If the worst came to the worst, you could dart out here, Joxer.

(JOXER *comes over to the window* C *back, and stands beside Boyle*)

It's only a dhrop of a few feet to the roof of the return room, an' the first minute she goes into the other room I'll give you the bend, an' you can slip in an' away.

JOXER (*yielding to temptation*) Ah, I won't stop very long, anyhow.

(JOXER *goes to the table, takes a chair, and sits down at the* R *end of the table.* BOYLE *goes back to the fire, and takes the pan in his hand again*)

(*Picking a book from the table*) Who's is the buk?

BOYLE. Aw, one o' Mary's; she's always readin' lately—nothin' but thrash, too. There's one I was lookin' at dh'other day: three stories, The Doll's House, Ghosts, an' The Wild Duck—buks only fit for chiselurs! (*He puts sausage on his own plate, and the gravy on Joxer's*)

JOXER. Didja ever rade *Elizabeth, or Th' Exile o' Sibayria* . . . ah, it's a darlin' story, a daarlin' story!

BOYLE. You eat your sassige, an' never min' *Th' Exile o' Sibayria.* (*He fills out tea, and sits down at the* L *end of the table*)

JOXER. What are you wearin' your moleskin trousers for?

BOYLE. I have to go to a job, Joxer. Just afther you'd gone, Devine kem runnin' in to tell us that Father Farrell said if I went down to the job that's goin' on in Rathmines I'd get a start.

JOXER (*congratulating Boyle*) Be the holy, that's good news!

BOYLE. How is it good news? I wondher if you were in my condition, would you call it good news?

JOXER (*dipping his bread in gravy*) I thought . . .

BOYLE. You thought! You think too sudden sometimes, Joxer. D'ye know, I'm hardly able to crawl with the pains in me legs!

JOXER. Yis, yis; I forgot the pains in your legs. I know you can do nothin' while they're at you.

BOYLE. You forgot; I don't think any of yous realize the state I'm in with the pains in me legs. What ud happen if I had to carry a bag o' cement?

JOXER. Ah, any man havin' the like of them pains id be down an' out, down an' out.

BOYLE. I wouldn't mind if he had said it to meself; but, no, oh no, he rushes in an' shouts it out in front o' Juno, an' you know what Juno is, Joxer. We all know Devine knows a little more than the rest of us, but he doesn't act as if he did; he's a good boy, sober, able to talk an' all that, but still . . .

JOXER. Oh ay; able to argufy, but still . . .

BOYLE. If he's runnin' afther Mary, aself, he's not goin' to be runnin' afther me. Captain Boyle's able to take care of himself. Afther all, I'm not gettin' brought up on Virol. I never heard him usin' a curse; I don't believe he was ever dhrunk in his life—sure he's not like a Christian at all!

JOXER. You're afther takin' the word out o' me mouth—afther all, a Christian's natural, but he's unnatural.

BOYLE. His oul' fella was just the same—a Wicklow man.

JOXER. A Wicklow man! That explains the whole thing. I've

met many a Wicklow man in me time, but I never met wan that was any good.

BOYLE. "Father Farrell," says he, "sent me down to tell you." Father Farrell! . . . D'ye know, Joxer, I never like to be beholden to any o' the clergy.

JOXER. It's dangerous, right enough.

BOYLE. If they do anything for you, they'd want you to be livin' in the Chapel. . . . (*With great solemnity*) I'm goin' to tell you somethin', Joxer, that I wouldn't tell to anybody else—the clergy always had too much power over the people in this unfortunate country.

JOXER. You could sing that if you had an air to it!

BOYLE (*becoming enthusiastic*) Didn't they prevent the people in "'forty-seven" from seizin' the corn, an' they starvin'; didn't they down Parnell; didn't they say that hell wasn't hot enough nor eternity long enough to punish the Fenians? We don't forget, we don't forget them things, Joxer. If they've taken everything else from us, Joxer, they've left us our memory.

JOXER (*lilting emotionally*) For mem'ry's the only friend that grief can call its own, that grief . . . can . . . call . . . its own!

BOYLE. Father Farrell's beginnin' to take a great intherest in Captain Boyle; because of what Johnny did for his country, says he to me wan day. It's a curious way to reward Johnny be makin' his poor oul' father work. But, that's what the clergy want, Joxer —work, work, work for me an' you; havin' us mulin' from mornin' till night, so that they may be in betther fettle when they come hoppin' round for their dues! Job! Well, let him give his job to wan of his hymn-singin', prayer-spoutin', craw-thumpin' Confraternity men!

(*The voice of a* COAL-BLOCK VENDOR *is heard chanting in the street*)

VOICE OF COAL VENDOR. Blocks . . . coal-blocks! Blocks . . . coal-blocks!

JOXER. God be with the young days when you were steppin' the deck of a manly ship, with the win' blowin' a hurricane through the masts, an' the only sound you'd hear was, "Port your helm!" an' the only answer, "Port it is, sir!"

BOYLE. Them was days, Joxer, them was days. Nothin' was too hot or too heavy for me then. Sailin' from the Gulf o' Mexico to the Antanartic Ocean. I seen things, I seen things, Joxer, that no mortal man should speak about that knows his Catechism. Ofen, an' ofen, when I was fixed to the wheel with a marlinspike, an' the win's blowin' fierce an' the waves lashin' an' lashin', till you'd think every minute was goin' to be your last, an' it blowed, an' blowed—blew is the right word, Joxer, but blowed is what the sailors use. . . .

JOXER. Aw, it's a darlin' word, a daarlin' word.

BOYLE. An', as it blowed an' blowed, I ofen looked up at the sky (*looks up at the ceiling*) an' assed meself the question—what is the stars, what is the stars?

VOICE OF COAL VENDOR. Any blocks, coal-blocks; blocks, coal-blocks!

JOXER. Ah, that's the question, that's the question—what is the stars?

BOYLE. An' then, I'd have another look, an' I'd ass meself (*looking at the ceiling*) what is the moon?

JOXER. Ah, that's the question (*looking at the ceiling*) what is the moon, what is the moon?

(*Rapid steps are heard coming towards the door* R. BOYLE *hastily starts to gather the breakfast things together.* JOXER *flies to the window, back* C. *The door* R *opens, and the black face of the* COAL-BLOCK VENDOR *peeps into the room*)

COAL-BLOCK VENDOR. D'ye yous want any blocks?

BOYLE (*with a roar of anger*) No, we don't want any blocks!

(BOYLE *has got a fright, and stands limply beside the fireplace.* JOXER *has got a fright, too, comes from the window, and stands* R *of Boyle*)

JOXER (*coming back with a sigh of relief*) That's afther puttin' the heart across me—I could ha' sworn it was Juno. I'd betther be goin', Captain; you couldn't tell the minute Juno'd hop in on us.

BOYLE. Let her hop in; we may as well have it out first as at last. I've made up me mind—I'm not goin' to do only what she damn well likes.

JOXER. Them sentiments does you credit, Captain; I don't like to say anything as between man an' wife, but I say as a butty, as a butty, Captain, that you've stuck it too long, an' that it's about time you showed a little spunk. How can a man die betther than facin' fearful odds, "For th' ashes of his fathers an' the temples of his gods."

BOYLE. She has her rights—there's no one denyin' it, but haven't I me rights too?

JOXER. Of course you have—the sacred rights o' man! (*He puts a hand on Boyle's shoulder*)

BOYLE. Today, Joxer, there's goin' to be issued a proclamation be me, establishin' an independent Republic, an' Juno'll have to take an oath of allegiance.

JOXER. Be firm, be firm, Captain; the first few minutes'll be the worst:—if you gently touch a nettle it'll sting you for your pains; grasp it like a lad of mettle, an' as soft as silk remains!

VOICE OF MRS BOYLE (*outside*) Can't stop, Mrs Madigan—I haven't a minute!

JOXER (*almost paralysed*) Holy God, here she is!

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