

OUR JANE

by

Michael Skelly

Author's address
Fitzroy Court
Flat A
139 Whitfield Street
London W1T 5EN

Tel: 07879 883637
Email: skellig@blueyonder.co.uk

© Michael Skelly

THE TIME AND PLACE:

The play takes place in London and in Dublin. There are two definite times sequences, the past and the present, with the past taking place in the Dublin and London of the early sixties and the present in the London of the late seventies.

The principal characters should be on stage during the performance. There should be no interval.

THE SET:

The stage should be bare except for the minimum amount of necessary furniture though there are three definite locations: Jane's parents' tenement home in Dublin, her and her husband Peter's apartment in London and Beryl's bedsitter. The alley-way is up front.

A lot of attention must be given to the scene change sequences where the most subtle of lighting definitions will be demanded so as not to jar too much the attention of the audience as they glide from one scene to the next.

CHARACTERS:

JANE REILLY: as an adolescent and in her late twenties.

JANE WAINWRIGHT: in her early thirties.

PETER WAINWRIGHT: a ship's officer, in his late thirties.

MOTHER: of Jane.

FATHER: of Jane.

CHRISTY BRANNIGAN: about eighteen.

BERYL: a hostess-prostitute in her late thirties.

(Various roles of Jane to be played by the same actress. Christy to double up as policeman.)

PROLOGUE

The prologue is a dumb-show which sets the mode of the play. Actors enter up-stage centre in the following order: Beryl, Peter, Jane, Christy, Mother, Father. They take up the following positions at the edge of the acting-area. Beryl down-stage-left. Peter mid-stage-left. Jane up-stage-left. Christy down-stage-right. Mother mid-stage-centre. Father up-stage-right. Jane crosses down-stage-right to meet Christy.

They embrace. Christy looks at Mother and Father then breaks to down-stage-left where Beryl has already gone to Peter's position who has already gone to Jane's. As Jane and Christy embrace Father and Mother will have moved to up-stage-centre, Father carrying pre-set suitcase. Jane goes up-stage between Father and Mother. She takes up suitcase. Father and Mother look at her. She looks down-stage-left into the distance. Mother and Father move to table and chairs already set stage-right. Jane goes to Beryl stage-left. Beryl drapes her with silken gown and takes suitcase going off up-stage. Christy sets T.V. and table.

London Flat

(Jane on her knees cleans an ashtray by the television-table which is mid-stage-left. Peter enters up-stage and crosses to sofa up-stage-right. He sits down and looks at her. She doesn't notice him.)

PETER

Still cleaning.

JANE

It's filthy.

PETER

It's spotless.

JANE

If you had to do it you'd realise.

PETER

(He looks on sofa for newspaper.)
Did you see the paper?

JANE

I put it away.

PETER

You've a mania for hiding things Jane.

JANE

It's there.

(She points to beneath the table. He gets up and moves across to fetch the paper. He looks at her and moves back to the sofa. He sits down and begins flicking through the paper. She stands up and moves to the sofa. She sits on the left arm.)

When are you off?

PETER

Still no definite word. That vessel is still tied up in Taiwan.

JANE

Your life is so unpredictable.

PETER

Isn't every seaman's? You knew well when we were marrying.

JANE

You insisted.

PETER

I gave you plenty of warning.

Anything good on the box?

JANE

You know I don't watch it.

PETER

Doctor's orders?

JANE

Don't be like that Peter.

PETER

I wouldn't pay much heed to that charlatan.

JANE

Doctor Gannon? He's a nice old man.

PETER

If you'd a malignant tumour sticking out of your eyeball he'd tell you not to worry.

JANE

At least he takes the trouble to talk to you.

PETER

(He puts down the paper, stands up and moves down-stage directly from sitting position.)

Any news?

JANE

What kind of news?

PETER

The only news.

JANE

You mean?

PETER

Yes, that's what I mean. Are you ... away?

JANE

No.

PETER

(He moves up-stage-right, down-stage of sofa edge.)
Not yet? What's the matter with us? We never stop trying. What did he say?

JANE

Just to keep trying.

PETER

Trying!

JANE

(Jane rises from edge of sofa stage-left and breaks across stage-left. She stops and looks across at Peter.)
I'm going to have a bath.

PETER

Again! That'll be the third to-day.

(She turns stage-left and takes off gown. Father lights cigarette. Peter goes stage-left bringing with him T.V. on table. Christy waits down-stage-left.)

SCENE 2

Alleyway

(Jane moves to meet and embrace Christy down-stage-left.)

CHRISTY

Come on Jane. Nobody'll see us.

JANE

They will.

CHRISTY

It's pitch-dark down there.

JANE

But I'm afraid.

CHRISTY

Come on. There's no need to.

JANE

But if I get caught.

CHRISTY

You won't.

JANE

My father will beat me up.

CHRISTY

He won't know.

JANE

He's seen us together.

CHRISTY

He won't know. Come on.

JANE

No.

CHRISTY

(Both move a step stage-left.)
Come on. Before somebody comes.

JANE

You promise only to?

CHRISTY

I promise.

JANE

Are you sure?

CHRISTY

Of course I'm sure. Come on. Let's go. Before it gets too late.
(Both look towards down-stage-right and exit down-stage-left.)

SCENE 3

Tenement

(Father and Mother move on table and chairs. Christy moves T.V. table stage-left out of acting-area. Father reads newspaper. Mother waiting for her daughter anxiously rises and looks stage-right. She sits again. Jane runs in from stage-right and stands up-stage of table.)

MOTHER

(Looking at Jane.)
Look at the time it is. Where have you been to?

FATHER

Where do you think she's been?

MOTHER

How would I know?

FATHER

Down the alley-way. Where else?

JANE

(Frightened.)
I wasn't. I swear.

MOTHER

Ever since you've gone to work you've gone to blazes.

FATHER

(He folds his newspaper.)
Who were you with?

JANE

A couple of girls.

FATHER

Don't lie. You can never keep away from that chipper.

MOTHER

It's that Christy Brannigan.

FATHER

I'll give you Christy Brannigan if I see you there again.

JANE

There's nothing wrong with him.

MOTHER

Do you want to end up like Mary Byrne?

FATHER

(He stubs out cigarette in saucer.)

You'd better not my dear girl.

(He goes back to reading his newspaper. Mother and Father move table and chairs stage-right out of acting-area. Christy moves on T.V. and table. Peter hands Jane her dressing-gown. He goes to stretch out on sofa.)

SCENE 4

London Flat

PETER

(Jane enters up-stage-left and stands up-stage between T.V. and sofa.)

You'll have no skin left.

JANE

What's that you're watching?

PETER

A nature programme.

JANE

(She turns up-stage from T.V..)

Turn it off.

PETER

Why?

JANE

Please. Please. Do what I say.

PETER

It's interesting.

JANE

Turn it off. Please. Please.

(Peter rises and goes across to T.V., turns it off and goes up-stage to stand up-stage-right of Jane.)

PETER

What's the matter?

JANE

I don't want to see them.

PETER

They're just ...

JANE

I can't stand them.

PETER

What's wrong?

JANE

I can't. I can't. I loathe them. They give me nightmares. They make my skin creep. Oh I feel sick. I feel sick.

PETER

Sick?

JANE

Yes. Yes. I'm going to be sick. I'm going to be sick.

(Peter looks at her. She moves stage-left as though going to bathroom. She takes off her gown. She moves down-stage-left to meet Christy in alley-way. Peter before exiting moves T.V. on table stage-left.

He strikes T.V..)

SCENE 5

Alleyway

(Christy and Jane are wrapped around each other.)

JANE

Please. Please Christy. Don't put it in.

CHRISTY

You'll be all right. Don't worry. I'll pull out.

JANE

No Christy. No. Please. No. I'm afraid.

CHRISTY

Relax. Relax. You'll be safe.

JANE

How do you know I'll be?

CHRISTY

You will. You will. Just believe me. Let me put it in.

JANE

But Christy. But Christy. No. No. Have you not got one of those things?

CHRISTY

What things?

JANE

Those rubber things.

CHRISTY

Are you kidding me? You can't get them in this bleeding country.

JANE

But I'll get pregnant.

CHRISTY

You won't. Honestly. Honestly. I'll be careful. I'll pull out.

JANE

You won't.

CHRISTY

I will. I will.

JANE

Oh Christy. Oh Christy. Be careful.

(After the love-making Christy exits stage-left. Jane puts her gown back on.)

SCENE 6

London Flat

(Peter enters up-stage-right. Jane enters up-stage-left.)

PETER

Are you all right?

JANE

(She moves to sit in sofa, stage-left.)

They terrify me. The mere thought of seeing one drives me to distraction. I had to lock myself in the bathroom for over an hour yesterday. I saw one crawling along the living-room floor.

PETER

A cockroach! Here?

JANE

I saw one.

PETER

You must be imagining things. How long has this been going on?

JANE

Of late it's become worse.

PETER

(He sits next to her, stage-right.)
Have you told the doctor?

JANE

Yes.

PETER

What did he say?

JANE

He said it's a phobia.

PETER

A phobia. Why didn't you tell me?

JANE

You've enough to worry about.

PETER

I want to know. What's been happening?

JANE

I don't want to tell you.

PETER

I want to know.

JANE

You'll only laugh.

PETER

Tell me.

JANE

It was while you were away. At sea. I was sitting over there designing new outfits for the Spring collection. I turned on the television, more for the sake of company and .. and one of those nature programmes came on. I was least expecting it, and then, and then they came swarming out of the screen.

PETER

Jane.

JANE

They came swarming all over me.

PETER

Jane.

JANE

They did. They came at me. They started running over my breast and face, running up my clothes. They tried to get into my mouth.

PETER

Jane. For the love of god.

JANE

They wanted to go down my throat.

PETER

Jane. That's enough.

JANE

They wanted to eat my insides out. Oh god. Oh god. I'm so frightened. So frightened of them. Oh Peter. Oh Peter.

(She throws her arms around him)

PETER

(He comforts her.)

That's enough now. Take it easy. Take it easy. You're only up-setting yourself. That's it now. You mustn't think of things like that.

(Jane rises and takes off gown. Peter exits stage-left taking coffee-table.)

SCENE 7

Tenement

(Jane moves to centre of stage and kneels. Father enters mid-stage-right. Mother enters mid-stage-left. They stand on either side of Jane.)

FATHER

She's what?

MOTHER

I don't believe it.

FATHER

Pregnant!

MOTHER

What's come over us?

FATHER

(Takes off his brass-buckled belt.)
I'll teach you a lesson you little brasser.

JANE

(Cowering.)
Oh don't daddy. Don't. Please.

FATHER

Shame me would yeh? Yeh dirty bitch.
(He straps her; three belts behind her.)
Take that. And that. Yeh dirty little whore.
(He moves stage-left a little turning his back then moves centre-stage again.)
Enough to fucking feed without bringing a bastard in here.

MOTHER

(She moves to stage-right of Jane to protect her.)
Be careful. Be careful. You'll hurt her.

FATHER

(He turns on his wife.)

Be careful. Yeh tell me to be careful. You're the one that should 'a been careful. Lettin' her do what she likes. You're as bad yourself.

MOTHER

You're a liar.

(Father pushes mother and she goes on her knees, he keeps a hold of her arm.)

FATHER

Don't call me a liar. You tramp.

MOTHER

I'm not.

FATHER

It wasn't off the ground she licked it. They couldn't keep yeh away from the soldiers.

MOTHER

They were officers.

FATHER

Get the hell out of here.

(He lets her go and she throws her arms around Jane.)

Yeh pair of whores. Get out. Get out before yeh drive me mad.

(Both mother and daughter hold each other tightly.)

Yeh pair of brassers. Yeh pair of bleeding' brassers.

(Father goes stage-right and exits. Mother goes stage-left. Jane goes to sofa. As mother moves up-stage-left Christy enters stage-left and crosses the back of acting-area to position himself up-stage-right in the shadows behind the sofa.)

SCENE 8

London Flat

(Peter enters from up-stage-left and sits beside Jane. They embrace. He comforts her. They disengage.)

PETER

It's just loneliness.

JANE

You think so?

PETER

What else? Me at sea for long stretches at a time. You've got nothing to occupy yourself.

JANE

I've my job haven't I?

PETER

It's not enough. You need, we need a child.

JANE

(Jane rises and goes mid-stage-left.)
But we never stop trying.

PETER

We must keep on.

JANE

(She turns to him.)
Do you think we'll ever have one?

PETER

Eventually. It's just that we're older. Things slow down a bit. It'll happen.

JANE

I wonder.

PETER

(He rises and goes stage-left to Jane.)
You shouldn't be so depressed.

JANE

Would you blame me?

PETER

Don't worry. I'll say right here.

JANE

But your job?

PETER

I've plenty of leave coming.

JANE

You're very good Peter. I don't deserve you.

PETER

What do you mean? I'm the lucky one. The first time I saw you I fell for you.

JANE

Are you sure you've no regrets?

PETER

I'm sure.

JANE

Will you always stay by me?

PETER

Of course.

JANE

Even if I never make you a baby?

PETER

(He moves closer to Jane.)

Of course you will. I can see it in you. We'll both see the gynaecologist together.

(They break. Peter goes stage-right to table. Jane moves down-stage-left.)

SCENE 9

Tenement

(Both Peter and Father bring on the table and a chair each. Peter goes back for props: two bottles of stout, a glass, an opener; these he sets stage-left on table. Mother sits on chair stage-left. Father sits on chair stage-right drinking stout; half a glass has been poured. Peter exits. Jane stands down-stage-left of Mother.)

FATHER

(He rises and moves down-stage-right.)

Come over here.

(She hesitates.)

Come over here. There's no need to be frightened. I'm not going to belt you.

MOTHER

Do as he says.

FATHER

(To Jane.)

Come here when I tell yeh.

MOTHER

Do what he says.

FATHER

Let bye-gones be bye-gones.

JANE

(She moves stage-right to centre of front of table.)

Don't hit me please. It wasn't my fault.

FATHER

(Father moves stage-left going up-stage behind table. Jane moves a little more stage-right.)

Don't hit me please. It wasn't my fault.

FATHER

(Father moves stage-left going up-stage behind table. Jane moves a little more stage-right.)

I know it wasn't. Don't worry I got that louser.

JANE

Christy?

FATHER

Yeah. Him and his father. Both jockeys. We gave them a goin' over. It'll be a long time before he'll be swishin' it around I'll tell you.

JANE

(Looks up-stage to Father.)

What did you do with him?

FATHER

What didn't I do with him? I battered him. That's what I did.

(He proudly shows his thick leather belt.)

With that brass-buckle.

JANE

It wasn't all his fault.

MOTHER

He's older than you. He should've known better.

FATHER

(He takes a swig of stout.)

He won't forget. Not for a long time. I got him in the lavatory of the Red Lion.

JANE

You didn't hurt him did you?

FATHER

(Comes down-stage-right of Jane.)

Of course I hurt him. He'll keep his hands off young ones for a long time to come I'll tell you. An' do you know what I did with him when I was finished bootin' him?

JANE

(Looks fearfully at him.)

No.

FATHER

(Moves to Jane stage-right.)

You don't. Do you not? Well I'll tell you. I shoved his head down the lavatory-bowl and flushed it.

(He laughs.)

MOTHER

There was no need for that.

FATHER

(He moves towards Mother stage-left, turns to her.)

Don't rile me. I know what I'm about. That's all they understand. Those bastards. Fear. Fear.

(Shakes his fist.)

This. This.

(Shows his boot.)

And this. The only language.

(He moves back towards Jane and sits up on table.)

Don't worry his ould fellah coughed up.

(He looks at Jane.)

Sit down there beside me.

(She sits.)

You're me eldest daughter. You're aware of that aren't you?

(She bows her head.)

And see what you've done? Just as you're about to bring in some money. What are your young brothers and sisters up there in bed going to do? They need to eat. Do you realise that?

MOTHER

Leave her be Larry. Leave her be.

FATHER

Be quiet. I'm talking.

(To Jane.)

I warned you to keep away from that Brannigan fellah. Don't hold your head down. Look at me.

(She does.)

That's better. Give me a little smile now. Go on.

(She looks afraid.)

Go on. I'm not going to belt you. That's better. Now look.

(He reaches into his pocket.)

I've got a little something here for you.

(He takes out an envelope.)

Thanks to the Brannigan family.

(He opens the envelope.)

In this envelope there's a ticket. A return-ticket. London and back. I want you to get your things together.

(He turns to wife.)

You can do that.

(She nods her head in agreement.)

An' I want you to be on that mail-boat tomorrow night. Do you hear?

(Jane acquiesces.)

An' the morning after you'll be in London. I'll explain it all again to you till you know it all by heart. Do you hear? And when you arrive in London you'll go out to your Aunt Rosie's in Cricklewood.

JANE

Me Aunt Rosie's?

FATHER

Yes. She'll get you to the clinic.

JANE

What clinic?

MOTHER

(Father looks to Mother for reassurance.)

You'll know when you get there. We can't have you walking the streets around here with that.

FATHER

Exactly. You're going to get rid of that thing and come back here again. I want you back in that factory within a week. Do you hear?

JANE

Yes.

FATHER

That's enough.

(He gets off table and crosses stage-left towards Mother. She stands up and moves down-stage-left a little.)

MOTHER

Will god forgive us?

FATHER

Open me another bottle of stout there.

(Mother moves up-stage behind table and opens bottle, Father takes a step up-stage. Mother looks at Jane.)

SCENE 10

London
Beryl's Bedsitter

(Beryl enters bringing on and setting suitcase stage-right. She then takes away glass, bottles and opener. Father and Mother take off table and chairs and exit. Peter moves sofa stage-left and helps. Beryl unfolds it into bed before exiting mid-stage-right. Jane brings on fireside chair. Jane stands in front of chair crying. Beryl sitting on edge of bed stage-right files her nails.)

BERYL

No need for tears ducky.

JANE

You keep saying that.

BERYL

Worried about your money are you?

JANE

I want to go home. I want to get it over and done with.

BERYL

You will ducky. In good time.

JANE

Where's my aunt Rosie. She said she's come and see me.

BERYL

Your aunt Rosie doesn't have a minute to spare. What with all those lodgers passing through her hands. Haven't you been to see the doctor yet?

JANE

No.

BERYL

You haven't!

JANE

Why?

BERYL

You haven't an idea in your perishing head have you? Must be your first bump ducky.

JANE

Stop saying that.

BERYL

Feeling all sentimental are you? A bump is a bump. If you don't do anything about it you'll have a bigger bump. Then the bigger bump turns into a nipper. How about that?

(Shows Jane her finger-nails.)

What do you think of them ducky?

(Reaches for a towel and throws it to Jane.)

Take that towel and wipe your eyes. You look just awful.

JANE

(Wipe her eyes.)

Why has she left me here like that?

BERYL

I told you. All those lodgers. Why? Don't you like it here? There's no need to feel depressed. She gave me a couple of week's rent for your stay.

JANE

A couple of weeks!

BERYL

Sure. It takes that long.

JANE

My father said I'd be home in a week.

BERYL

Your father is a paddy. A catholic. What would he know about these things?

JANE

He said I'd go to the clinic.

BERYL

(Laughing.)

Clinic! This is Cricklewood not Switzerland. Part of London town 1960. We've got to arrange things for you.

JANE

What things?

BERYL

Don't ask so many questions. We'll arrange everything.

JANE

I want to know. Tell me.

BERYL

It's all illegal you know.

JANE

What do you mean?

BERYL

They put you in gaol if you're caught.

JANE

Gaol!

BERYL

Yes. Gaol. As far as the law is concerned it's murder. You know nothing. Do you Irish? Leave it to those who know.

JANE

No. I won't. I want to know. It's my life. It's my ... child.

BERYL

Bump.

JANE

It's a child. It's mine.

BERYL

There's plenty of fire in you Irish all the same. Despite all that crying.

JANE

What am I waiting here for?

BERYL

Don't pester me with all these questions. I'm only getting a few measly bob out of this.

JANE

Please. Tell me.

BERYL

Okay. We're waiting on the contact. The gentleman if you like. He's a doctor you see. You know? An undercover doctor. Well you see, he comes and examines you and determines whether you're ready or not.

JANE

(She sits down.)

What do you mean?

BERYL

My god. You're really ignorant aren't you Irish? You're a real dummy. Don't they teach you things like that over there? Where do you think you came from? From under a cabbage?

JANE

All right. Tell me.

BERYL

This gentleman has to know how long you're gone. How long are you by the way?

JANE

How do I know?

BERYL

What are you doing here if you don't know? When was the last time you saw your periods?

JANE

My friends?

BERYL

No friends of mine I can tell you. Well tell me. When did you last see them?

JANE

Months ago.

BERYL

(She stands up.)

Months!

JANE

Yes.

BERYL

But he won't be able. Have you not got your dates?

JANE

No.

BERYL

Do they come every month?

JANE

I never know when they're to come.

BERYL

You're crazy Irish. You're absolutely crazy. The gentleman mightn't be able to do it for you.

JANE

What do you mean?

BERYL

I mean. I think your bump is here to stay.

(Jane moves chair out of acting-area stage-right. Beryl and Peter turn bed back into sofa and Peter moves it stage-right. Beryl exits.)

SCENE 11

London Flat

(Peter and Jane sit in sofa, he stage-right and she stage-left.)

JANE

Peter.

PETER

Yes.

JANE

(She rises and goes stage-left.)
I'd rather go alone.

PETER

Why?

JANE

I'd feel better on my own.

PETER

It's just a clinic.

JANE

Don't press me. You know how shy I'm about these things.

PETER

(Getting up.)
We can't go on any longer like this.

JANE

(Moving down-stage from him.)
Please Peter. Give me time.

PETER

(Moving down-stage after her.)
You should be there by now.

JANE

All you're doing is making me nervous. How can I expect to relax with you?

PETER

(Moving close to her.)

But why are you terrified of me coming near you?

JANE

I can't help it. You're too impatient.

PETER

That's not true. If anything I'm the opposite.

JANE

I'm sorry Peter. I'm sorry. It's just that ...

PETER

Just that what?

JANE

Just that I'm afraid.

PETER

(He takes a step closer.)

Afraid of what?

JANE

Oh I can't explain.

PETER

(He takes another step closer to her.)

You must. I want to know. What's the matter?

JANE

Nothing.

PETER

Come on. Blurt it out. Tell me.

JANE

I can't.

PETER

Why can't you?

JANE

I don't want to hurt you.

PETER

Hurt me!

JANE

(She moves stage-right to Peter.)

I'm scared.

PETER

Scared? What are you scared of?

JANE

(She moves stage-left away from Peter.)

I'm just afraid.

PETER

Of what?

JANE

Of getting something from you.

PETER

(A nervous laugh.)

I don't believe it.

JANE

I'm sorry.

PETER

Jane. You're not serious.

JANE

I can't help it. It's not my fault.

PETER

I'm. I'm .. astounded.

JANE

When you're away? At sea?

PETER

For god's sake.

JANE

I'm sorry. But I can't help thinking ...

(They break. Peter moves sofa stage-right. Beryl enters up-stage-centre and helps him turn it into bed. Peter exits up-stage-left.)

SCENE 12

London
Beryl's Bedsitter

(Beryl sits on the edge of the bed stage-right. Jane agitated and crying paces up and down.)

BERYL

Now stop crying Irish. It wasn't the gentleman's fault if you were too late.

JANE

What am I going to do now?

BERYL

What else can you do now? Have it.

JANE

I'm only sixteen.

BERYL

I know. I know. If only that man of yours heard of french-letters. Thank the Lord you got them in every lavatory in this country.

JANE

Why couldn't the doctor do it?

BERYL

It's not possible. If you're gone past three months you have to go into hospital. It's an operation then. Can't do it here in the sitting-room.

JANE

Is that where he was going to do it?

BERYL

Where else? Right on the dining-room table.

JANE

It's awful.

BERYL

Bloody awful, though he's quite an expert that gentleman. Some said he was a professor. Got struck off though. But let me tell you he's a real professional. Never any problems with the girls who pass through his hands. Not like some of those other backroom butchers around. Worth keeping his name in case of other emergencies.

JANE

What am I going to do? I can't go home like this.

BERYL

(Standing up.)

Well you can't stay here. I carry on a business here you know.

JANE

What'll I do? They'll kill me if I come home like this.

BERYL

(Standing stage-centre.)

What sort of a bleeding country is that anyway. I suppose it's all that religion. Makes you soft in the head.

JANE

Where's my aunt Rosie?

BERYL

Your aunt Rosie! I'm more of an aunt to you than your Rosie. All she was interested in was the lolly.

JANE

She took it all?

BERYL

There wasn't much left after everyone got his rake.

JANE

All I've got is my ticket.

BERYL

Then you'd better use it.

JANE

I can't. I can't. My father will kill me. They'll all be looking at me.

BERYL

What do you suppose I'm supposed to do? This isn't a home for wayward children. I just rent the services of this flat.

JANE

What'll I do?

BERYL

(She grows friendly.)

You're a good looking girl. Yeah. Quite a looker. Yeah. As soon as you have that kid everything'll be all right.

JANE

What do you mean?

BERYL

I might just have a few friends who'd be interested in you.

JANE

Who?

BERYL

Never mind. Leave it to Beryl. Okay. I've made up my mind. You can stay here.

JANE

What'll I do for money?

BERYL

(Approaching Jane sexually.)

I'll see you through it. In exchange for a few favours. And a little cooperation.

(Touches Jane's hair.)

Won't you ducky?

JANE

(Pulls away.)

Where'll I sleep?

BERYL

(Goes back to bed.)

Right here. In against the wall.

JANE

And you?

BERYL

On the outside. Here.

JANE

But I can sleep on the couch.

BERYL

No ducky. You don't have to. There's plenty of room.

JANE

The couch'll do.

BERYL

There's no need to ducky. I told you. That old couch will collapse. It's only hanging together ever since that spade from Brixton thought it was a trampoline.

JANE

But I prefer to sleep on my own.

BERYL

You are awkward aren't you Irish?

JANE

I'm not. I just want to sleep on my own.

BERYL

You're lucky you've got a roof over your head don't mind the bed.

JANE

I don't mind sleeping on the floor.

BERYL

The only place you're going to sleep in is in that bed. Else I'll send you packing to aunt Rosie's and she can fix you up between two of her drunken navvies.

JANE

I don't want to.

BERYL

Make up your mind. Back to Aunt Rosie's or in against the wall.

(Jane acquiesces and starts to strip though modestly. Beryl strips brazenly and sensually and gets into bed first, looks at Jane undressing on the floor.)

My. You are well made. Can well understand why that Christ fellah was all eager to get his hands on you.

JANE

I don't want you to talk about him.

BERYL

Sexy I bet.

JANE

I said I don't want to hear.

BERYL

Stroked you up eh? And you couldn't resist.

JANE

Stop it.

BERYL

(Jane is now in bed beside Beryl.)

I know the feeling. Once they get their hands on your prize you're lost. Don't be shy. Come closer. Keep better warm that way. Gone all quiet have you? Come closer ducky. Don't be shy. I'm not going to harm you. It's nice and warm there. You're lovely here. I won't do you any harm. You've got beautiful skin.

JANE

Please. Please. Don't. Oh don't. Oh don't.

SCENE 13

London Flat

(Beryl stays in bed. Peter enters and sands up-stage mid-stage-right. Jane moves up-stage and stands mid-stage-left.)

PETER

Now are you satisfied? The blood tests were negative.

JANE

You didn't have to go that far.

PETER

You've got nothing to fear.

JANE

I hope so.

BERYL

Oh Jane. Come to me. Come. You've got nothing to fear.

JANE

Have I not?

BERYL

You should know that. You must get those silly notions out of your head.

JANE

I'm trying.

PETER

But you must try harder.

JANE

I will.

PETER

For me?

JANE

Yes. For you.

PETER

I love you. You know that?

JANE

Yes.

PETER

I'll always love you.

JANE

Will you?

PETER

Yes. Yes. Always. Always. Come closer to me. Closer. Closer. Forever closer. Oh I love you. I love you. I love you.

JANE

Peter. Peter. Are you? Are you?

PETER

Yes. Yes.

JANE

Now. Now.

PETER

Yes. Now. Now.

JANE

Oh Peter. Oh Peter. Don't hurt me will you?

PETER

No. No. I'll be ever gentle. So gentle.

JANE

Peter. Peter. Are you going to?

PETER

Yes. Yes.

JANE

Oh don't Peter. Don't. I'm all sore. You'll hurt me. You'll hurt me.

PETER

Relax. Relax. You're all tense.

JANE

I can't help it Peter. I can't.

PETER

You're shaking.

JANE

I can't help it.

PETER

What's happening to you?

JANE

I don't know Peter. I don't know.

PETER

What's wrong? What's wrong?

JANE

They're coming. They're coming.

PETER

For god's sake. For god's sake.

JANE

They are. They are. They're coming. They're coming. They're getting bigger. They're getting bigger. They're swarming out of you Peter. They're swarming out of you. Peter. Peter. Keep away from me. Keep away from me. Keep away from me. Keep away from me.

(She becomes hysterical and falls into a fit.)

SCENE 14

London
Beryl's Bedsitter.

(Beryl sits on the edge of bed stage-right. Jane stands mid-stage-centre.)

BERYL

So they let you home without the baby.

JANE

It was premature.

BERYL

I'm aware. You nearly had it in the kitchen.

JANE

I'm sorry.

BERYL

Good job that fireman lives in the bedsitter beneath.

JANE

He was very nice.

BERYL

I'd say he was.

JANE

I owe my little son to him.

BERYL

(She gets up from bed and moves towards Jane.)
Then why not call him after him. What are you going to do now? Get him adopted.

JANE

No. I don't want to do that.

BERYL

Then what are you going to do?

JANE

Keep him.

(She smiles to herself.)

That's what I want to do. I want to keep him.

BERYL

You won't be keeping him here. That's bloody likely.

JANE

I know that.

BERYL

(She moves down-stage-left.)

I just want to make it clear. I don't want my business; what little there is, ruined by a little brat screaming all over the place, men are temperamental enough without scaring them off before they get in the door.

JANE

I know your feelings.

BERYL

Good. Nothing like a little emphasis. So you'll be leaving?

JANE

Yes.

BERYL

And where'll you be going?

JANE

I'm not sure yet. First I'll get a job.

BERYL

(Moves up-stage to Jane and stands stage-left of her.)

There's one on your doorstep if you'll take it.

JANE

No thanks.

BERYL

Don't be so haughty. Might find yourself having to.

(She goes back to bed and sits on it.)

Who's going to look after the baby while you're working?

JANE

I'll pay someone.

BERYL

On the wages you'll be getting! You're daft.

JANE

Why?

BERYL

You've no training. You'll barely be able to support yourself.

JANE

I'm good at sewing. They said so in the factory in Dublin.

BERYL

There's no money in it. Working for a pittance for some Greek or Jew. You must be kidding. Anyway if you want to make some quick money you know where Beryl is. I can always fix you up.

(Beryl stays sitting on the bed. Jane moves down-stage-centre-right.)

SCENE 15

London Flat

(Peter enters and moves down-stage-centre-right to stand stage-right of Jane.)

PETER

You scared the life out of me.

JANE

What happened?

PETER

You went into a fit.

JANE

A fit?

PETER

Yes. Yes. I had to call the doctor.

JANE

What doctor?

PETER

Dr. Gannon.

JANE

Dr. Gannon?

PETER

Yes. Dr. Gannon. He gave you an injection.

JANE

An injection?

PETER

Yes. Yes. And said you must see a specialist.

JANE

A specialist?

PETER

Yes. A specialist. He said you must see one.

JANE

No. No. I don't want to see one.

PETER

You must. You need help..

JANE

Help?

PETER

Yes Jane. Help. Help.

(Peter leaves acting-area and sits in chair up-stage-left. Jane moves to mid-stage-centre.)

SCENE 16

London
Beryl's Bedsitter.

(Jane kneels and sits on the floor before Beryl.)

BERYL

So what did I tell you Irish. It's just impossible. You can't look after a little baby like that, sweet and all as it is and earn a decent living at the same time. Have it adopted.

JANE

No. I want to keep him.

BERYL

I told you this a few months ago and now look at you. Back to square one. You're not the only bleeding one who comes over here from the Emerald Isle, has a bump and deflates it. There are thousands like you. And it's the same story all over again.

(She stands up and moves stage-left of Jane.)

Why don't you lot just wake up to decent living. Right? What are you going to do? You're a proud little bugger and you don't want to live off assistance. Besides you couldn't. At the same time you don't want to go on the streets. That's the easiest money of all. A few hours on a Friday and Saturday and you've enough to do you all week. Instead of slaving away there, sewing all week.

(She crosses behind Jane stage-left.)

JANE

I don't want to hear anymore.

BERYL

(She turns and steps up-stage.)
Okay. Be headstrong. So? What are you going to do?

JANE

Go home.

BERYL

But I thought you said your old man will belt you?

JANE

It's a chance I'll have to take.

BERYL

(She comes back and sits on bed.)
So you're going home?

JANE

Yes.

BERYL

You're plain foolish.

JANE

Maybe.

BERYL

(Sympathetic.)
But you're not a bad girl.
(Reaches into her bra.)
Here's a little something.
(Hands Jane a roll of notes.)

JANE

No.

BERYL

Go on. Take it.

JANE

But I can't.

BERYL

(Pushing the money on her.)

Go on. Take it. It'll tide you over. You can pay my back some day.

(Moves closer to her, affectionately.)

And listen ducky. If you ever decide to return you know where old Beryl is. She'll fix you up.

(Beryl removes bedclothes. Peter assembles sofa. Jane goes down-stage-left and gets bag which has money, gloves and missal in it.)

SCENE 17

London Flat

(Jane enters down-stage-left and stands. Peter enters up-stage-right to confront her. Christy takes up a position up-stage-right behind sofa, out of the acting-area in semi-obscurity.)

PETER

It's only ten o'clock.

JANE

I'm going to be late.

PETER

For what?

JANE

For mass.

PETER

Mass! What's come over you? You've never said a prayer as long as I've known you.

JANE

Things are different now.

PETER

How are they different?

JANE

They just are. I need to.

PETER

Why do you need to?

JANE

I just do.

PETER

(He moves down-stage-left towards her.)
You were never like that. It's not you.

JANE

People have a right to their beliefs.

PETER

But why so suddenly?

JANE

(She moves up-stage-left beyond him.)
Look Peter. I want to. I must.

PETER

But why so suddenly?

JANE

(She moves up-stage-left beyond him.)
Look Peter. I want to. I must.

PETER

Did you see that specialist?

JANE

No.

PETER

Why not?

JANE

I don't want to see any doctor.

PETER

You must. You must see someone.

JANE

I am.

PETER

Who?

JANE

God.

(She exits up-stage.)

SCENE 18

Tenement

(Peter and Christy set table and chair. Peter goes to sit on sofa up-stage-left out of acting-area. Christy sits in lone chair stage-right. Bottle of stout and carving knife have been set on table. Mother enters mid-stage-right. Jane enters pushing pram up-stage-left and moves down in front of table down-stage-left.)

MOTHER

Whose it that?

JANE

He's mine.

MOTHER

You told us in the letter you got rid of it.

JANE

I couldn't.

MOTHER

What did your aunt Rosie do?

JANE

She didn't help me. All she did was take the money.

MOTHER

(Turns towards centre and moves away from Jane.)
She's his sister all right.

JANE

Where's dad?

MOTHER

Oh don't mention him. He's been a walking devil these past few weeks. Jesus he'll go out of his mind if he sees another. Jesus Christ daughter why did you come back? I've enough to bear. Why didn't you have it adopted?

JANE

I couldn't.

MOTHER

You should've. There's plenty of rich oldones without children who'd give anything for one.

JANE

I don't want to.

MOTHER

(She moves stage-right.)
Who's going to look after it?
(After a moment.)
Is it a boy or a girl?

JANE

A boy.

MOTHER

Worse trouble.
(Turns and moves towards centre again.)
Holy god he'll go demented when he sees it.

JANE

Where's he now?

MOTHER

Where do you think? In the pub. They sacked him. We've only got the labour. Jesus will trouble never end. One after the other. He'll go raving mad if he sees it.

JANE

What else can I do?

MOTHER

(She turns and moves up-stage-right.)

I don't know. I don't know.

(She crosses over, down-stage of pram.)

Let me see him. The poor thing. As if it was his fault. Oh Jesus. Oh Jesus. I hear him coming up the stairs. What'll we do? He'll belt the both of us.

JANE

He won't.

(She picks up carving-knife.)

MOTHER

What's come into you? Put that knife down. Are you crazy? He'll smash you.

JANE

I won't let him harm my child. I'll kill him if he lays a finger on him.

FATHER

(He enters mid-stage-right blind drunk and singing the verse; the pale moon was rising ..from the popular song The Rose of Tralee. He stops when he sees both women. He sways backwards and forwards. He is bleary eyed. Jane stands her ground. She has put the knife behind her back. Her mother looks terrified.)

What have we got here? Am I seeing things? Who's that? The one from England.

(He weaves his way to Jane who is stage-left of table.)

What are you doing here? It's Jane is it? You should be in England. England. England. Wish I was there meself.

(He staggers stage-right of table.)

Not in this bleeding suffering country where you can't get a job.

(He goes back to Jane.)

Jane. Jane. Is that you? You've come home have yeh? You've come home to help your father. You're going to get a job is that right? Work for him?

(He sits in chair stage-right of table.)

That's good. That's good. Is there a bottle of stout in the house missus? Is there?

(Mother goes up-stage-centre behind table and opens bottle of stout. She's terrified.)

Then get it for me. Get it immediately.

(To Jane.)

So you've come back. Good. Good. For your father. He was always fond of you. The best looking girl in the area. Isn't that right missus? You were away a long time. I only said a week. But that's what happens. A week turns into a year. Anyway. You did what I told you. It doesn't matter. You got rid of that thing and now you're here to help your father out.

(He drinks. He shouts.)

He's on the dole. Do you know that? He hasn't a tosser. He needs you. You have to get back sewing. The family needs feeding. We all do. We need every penny. Every single penny. The dole is nothing. It's nothing. God bless. God bless. God bless Ireland.

(He drinks. He sees pram.)

What? What's that? Am I seeing things? Am I seeing things?

(He gets up and staggers over to pram. Jane moves slightly stage-left still holding the knife behind her back. He looks into pram.)

A baby. A baby.

(He looks up at Mother and staggers across to her. She is stage-right of table.)

Where did that come from?

(He dismisses the probability of it being hers with a shrug and breaks down-stage-left to pram. He looks in at the baby.)

It's nice whoever owns it. All the babies are nice. As long as they're quiet.

(He moves away from the pram to the table.)

As long as they're quiet. Anyway. Let's drink to its health. To your health baby. To your health. To your future and whoever owns it; the proud parents whoever they may be.

(He drinks. Both women look terrified at each other. Jane nervously holds carving-knife behind her back. He moves stage-right towards Mother.)

Doing the good Samaritan again? Is that it? I hope you're getting something for this baby-sitting. Whose is it this time? The Callaghans? The newlyweds next door? Them? They were fast weren't they? Not like the old days. They're pregnant now before they're married. Not like in our day. Not like in ours. We had to hold on to it. Now they're just like mongrels. Do it anywhere. Anywhere. Up against a railing. The dirty bitches.

(Goes over to Jane. Looks at her.)

Even me own daughter. She let me down. But at least you got rid of it. At least you flushed it down the lavatory. I'm off to bed.

(He staggers off mid-stage-left. Mother sits slowly into chair stage-right of table.

Jane puts carving-knife back on table. Both look at each other. Mother moves bottle, glass and chair stage-right. She sits on chair. Christy and Peter move to table stage-right and up-stage of Mother. Christy then brings on sofa and positions it up-stage-right. Beryl brings on T.V. table. Jane wheels pram up-stage out of acting area. On the way she takes her hand-bag from pram and puts it on the sofa. An ash-tray and cloth has been set on the T.V. table.)

SCENE 19

London Flat

(Jane kneels at T.V. table obsessively cleaning the ash-tray. Peter stands mid-stage-right looking at her.)

PETER

Jane. This cleanliness. It's excessive. You never stop.

JANE

Stop what?

PETER

This washing. You're in and out of that bathroom all day long.

JANE

I have to.

PETER

Why?

JANE

I need to.

PETER

Keep washing like that? You're spotless.

JANE

I don't feel it.

PETER

But I tell you. It's getting out of hand.

JANE

What is?

PETER

This washing of yours.

JANE

I have to do it.

PETER

Why?

JANE

I told you. I need to. I must. I feel filthy.

PETER

You're not.

JANE

I am.

PETER

(He moves to stage-left of Jane, stoops, takes cloth and ash-tray and places them on table. He looks at her.)

Believe me. You're not. You must stop yourself from doing this. You don't realise just how many times you're at it. You're not only driving yourself mad you're driving me.

(She looks at him. They break. Peter then strikes the T.V table stage-left and goes to sit in fireside chair up-stage-left out of acting-area. Jane goes to sofa where she gets handbag and moves down-stage to centre.)

SCENE 20

Tenement

(Mother crosses to stand stage-right of Jane. She's terrified.)

MOTHER

What are you going to do when he finds out?

JANE

He'll hardly kill him will he?

MOTHER

God help us. He'll throw you out.

JANE

I won't mind as long as he leaves the baby alone.

MOTHER

What'll we do with him?

JANE

Please mam. You can look after him just for a few months. Can't you? Just to give me enough time to get on my feet.

MOTHER

But what'll you do?

JANE

I'll get a job and give you enough to keep him.

MOTHER

Oh why did you come back? What am I going to do? Could you not have him adopted?

JANE

No. I want to keep him.

MOTHER

But you can't afford to.

JANE

Give me a little time mam. I'll pay you for his keep.

MOTHER

Oh Jesus. How am I going to face him?

JANE

It may be better if I go away now.

MOTHER

But you've only come back.

JANE

I can go to one of the hostels for a couple of weeks. It'll give me enough time to get a job.

MOTHER

But what'll I do when he wakes up?

JANE

You could get the priest couldn't you? He'll listen to him.

MOTHER

I don't know about that.

JANE

Please. It might make him afraid. If you get the priest in he won't harm the baby.

MOTHER

It's not the baby I'm worried about. It's me. He'll take it out on me.

JANE

Tell him. Tell him I'm gone back to England to get a job. Tell him I'll send you both money. That'll convince him. I've a little something here.

(She takes a wad of money from her handbag.)

MOTHER

Where did you get all that money from?

JANE

From a friend in England. She loan it to me. Look, take it. Show it to him. That'll convince him.

MOTHER

But how am I going to explain whose baby it is?

JANE

Tell him the truth. Tell him I couldn't go through with the abortion. The priest will back you up.

MOTHER

Oh Jane. You're bringing an awful cross on me to bear.
(Mother exits stage-right.)

SCENE 21

London Flat

(Jane up-stage-right hangs holy-pictures; one of the Sacred Heart and the other of the Blessed Virgin. Peter enters mid-stage-left and moves up-stage-centre-left.)

PETER

Where have they come from? I'm not going to have them on the wall.

JANE

Why?

PETER

They're obscene.

JANE

How can you say that?

PETER

Open chests. Bleeding hearts. Mediaeval barbarism.

JANE

What you say is dreadful.

PETER

You're going too far.

JANE

You should respect my beliefs.

PETER

And you mine.

JANE

You don't have any. You're an atheist.

PETER

(Peter moves stage-left of Jane.)
It's harder.

JANE

All you believe in is sex.

PETER

Yes. I believe most strongly in life. How else do you make children?

JANE

Not the way you do it.

PETER

Do you think this abstention of yours is going to help?

JANE

I pray.

PETER

You pray!

JANE

Yes. I pray to God the Creator of All Life.

PETER

Do you think he'll make you pregnant?

JANE

He did Our Blessed Mother.

PETER

Jane, for Christ's sake this is ridiculous.

JANE

I don't want to hear you using His Name in vain.

PETER

But how are we going to have a child if you won't let me near you?

JANE

God and the Blessed Virgin will tell me.

PETER

And how will you know?

JANE

I'll know.

PETER

Jane.

(Steps back from her.)

This is madness.

(He looks at her searchingly.)

What's happening to you?

JANE

There is nothing happening to me Peter.

PETER

You're not the same person you used to be.

JANE

(She goes stage-left to him.)

I know. I'm a better one. I'm praying for Our Lord's help. You don't pay enough heed to him.

PETER

(Exasperated.)

Jane.

(He turns away from her.)

Jane.

JANE

(She moves closer to Peter.)

You should Peter. You've lived a sinful life. You'll have to cleanse yourself. Just like I'm doing. Then we'll be ready. And when we have a child he will be born in the Light of Our Saviour.

(They break. He to set sofa with Beryl, then exiting up-stage out of acting-area. Jane brings on chair.)

SCENE 22

London
Beryl's Bedsitter

(Sofa is stage-left. Chair is stage-right. Beryl stands up-stage-right of sofa, back to the auditorium. Jane sits in chair.)

BERYL

What did I tell you ducky? I knew you'd be back. They've no time for your type over there have they?

JANE

I suppose you're right.

BERYL

No supposing. And they call this a hedon country. What a life!

JANE

How do you know? You've never been over there.

BERYL

Listen ducky. I've got ears. There are three million of you over here. Three bleeding million paddys milling around the kip and most of them pig-ignorant.

JANE

They're not.

BERYL

That's just pride answering. We're always proud of our own backyard even if it stinks to high heaven.

(She turns to face Jane.)

Well what are you going to do now?

JANE

Find a job.

BERYL

Sewing?

JANE

No.

BERYL

What then?

JANE

I want to work in a shop.

BERYL

What kind of a shop?

JANE

A clothes-shop.

BERYL

(She sits on sofa stage-right.)
Somewhere where you can look nice and proper.

JANE

Yes.

BERYL

Good. Now your eyes are beginning to open. You want to do something decent is that it?

JANE

Yes.

BERYL

Well, well. Always thought you were the model-type. But there's only one problem.

JANE

What?

BERYL

I told you about those Jews and Greeks. They run the rag-trade over here. Well, they're all swindlers. They'll take you on all right but they'll swindle you. You won't get enough money out of them.

JANE

I don't need much. Just enough to support myself.

BERYL

That's about all you'll get. Are your parents supporting the child then?

JANE

No.

BERYL

Who is?

JANE

I am.

BERYL

You'll need a bit more than you get in the shop-line. Unless of course you do a bit of part-time modelling.

JANE

What do you mean by modelling?

BERYL

Well. There are different kinds of modelling. There's the kind that models clothes and walks up and down showing them off. Hard work. Little money in the beginning. And of course, lots of favours for the gentlemen who run the modelling agencies.

JANE

I don't want it.

BERYL

Who said you'd get it? Lots of posh birds go after those jobs. Really ambitious types. After blokes with lots of lolly. Big houses. Flashy cars. You know the story. They'd tear your eyes out. And they've got something you haven't got.

JANE

What?

BERYL

Contacts. You're a poor girl from the Dublin slums with one nipper to your credit. The bottom of the ladder. The very bottom.

JANE

I know that.

BERYL

But don't worry you've got something else.

JANE

Have I?

BERYL

Yeah. Looks. Real beauty. Nobody doubts your obvious attraction. And something else.

JANE

Tell me.

BERYL

You're hungry.

JANE

You can say that again.

BERYL

And your baby's hungry isn't he? Crying his blood-shot little eyes out for you.

JANE

(She breaks down.)
Stop it.

BERYL

(She comforts her.)
Now. Now. You'll soon harden up. 'Till you're like me. Just like hard, sharpened nails.

JANE

What other kinds of modelling is there?

BERYL

(She stands up and steps down-stage-right angling herself towards right proscenium.)
You're interested? Okay I'll tell you. Though I don't think you'll be too interested in this sort.

JANE

What sort?

BERYL

The girls who sit in little rooms in Soho with discreet notices in the shop-windows outside.

JANE

I don't understand.

BERYL

Notices that read: MODEL AVAILABLE - french lessons by experience teacher from Pigalle. MODEL AVAILABLE - experimental. MODEL AVAILABLE - full dress rehearsal, leather, M & S.

JANE

What do you mean?

BERYL

Kinky. Maso-Sadism.

JANE

What's that?

BERYL

(She turns to address Jane.)

You know. Demoralisation. Whipping. All that kind of stuff. No. We'll skip that. That's only for the more mature type. Really experienced, qualified people.

(She goes up-stage-left of Jane.)

The last sort is the one I think you'll be interested in.

JANE

I don't think I'd be interested in any of them.

BERYL

Don't be too hasty. It's not a bad number. You can do it in the evenings after work and have a good time in the process.

JANE

What's it?

BERYL

A night-club-hostess. No sex involved.

JANE

Is there never?

BERYL

Well, not the obvious kind of sex. Bashing and banging or anything like that.

(She sits down-stage-left of sofa.)

You see: all you do is look nice and sexy. You'll have to invest in a couple of evening-gowns. I can fix you up. There's a cheap dressmaker round the corner. All you do is sit in one of those sleazy bars in Soho and wait for the customers to roll in.

JANE

Is that all I do?

BERYL

Not all dummy. You're what's called an entertainer. Fancy that for a title.

JANE

I can't entertain.

BERYL

Oh yes you can. Especially this kind. All you do is look like you. Just remain real sexy, desirable and sort of aloof. Men love that. You know? What they can't get? What they can't have?

JANE

What do I do?

BERYL

You just sit there sipping your Martini or Dubonnet and one of these fellows sidles up to you. Usually a businessman from the Midlands. All you do is let him chat you up.

JANE

Is that what I get paid for?

BERYL

Not exactly. Your job is to make him drink. The more drinks he knocks back the more profit the club makes, the more commission you get. Understand?

JANE

Sort of.

BERYL

Isn't it simple? You see. He wants you.

JANE

Wants me?

BERYL

Yeah. He wants to sleep with you. That's all that's in his head or in his trousers I should say.

JANE

But I won't.

BERYL

I know you won't. And you don't have to.

JANE

What do I have to do then?

BERYL

Give him the impression. Let him think that you fancy him. He'll get excited. He'll start forcing you to drink hoping for you know what. The more drinks he gets you the better his chance, so he thinks.

JANE

And what then?

BERYL

You wait till he gets nice and drunk and then you do a disappearing act.

JANE

You mean I run out?

BERYL

Not exactly. The management will organise that.

JANE

But I'd be drunk myself.

BERYL

Night after night you'll learn to hold it. There are tricks. You'll learn fast.

JANE

And what if one of them should turn vicious?

BERYL

Don't worry. There are plenty of bouncers to handle roughies.

JANE

Is that all I do?

BERYL

Yes.

JANE

Is it well paid?

BERYL

Depends on yourself.

JANE

(She stands up.)

Are these jobs hard to get?

BERYL

Not if you're in the know.

JANE

Are you?

BERYL

Yes.

JANE

Will you get me one?

BERYL

I could make enquiries.

(Beryl goes stage-right and sits on chair out of acting-area. Peter moves sofa up-stage-right. He sits in it, stage-right. Jane sits in it stage-left.)

SCENE 23

London Flat

JANE

Peter. Peter. I see one. I see one.

PETER

Stop it Jane. Stop it.

JANE

It's there. It's there. By the wainscotting. Kill it. Kill it.

PETER

There's nothing there.

JANE

There is. It's gone beneath the floor. There must be a nest of them in there.

PETER

For heaven's sake.

JANE

They're breeding. They lay hundreds of eggs. They'll be swarming out of there. They'll be running through the walls.

PETER

For god's sake. It's all in your head.

JANE

They're real.

PETER

They're not.

JANE

(Starts to shake.)
They're tormenting me.

PETER

Stop it. Stop it.

JANE

I can't help it. I can't help it.

PETER

Get a hold of yourself.

JANE

I can't.

PETER

You can. Stop it. Stop it.

JANE

I can't. I can't. They're there. They're there.

PETER

They're not. There couldn't be.

JANE

I see them.

PETER

Oh Jane. Oh Jane. For pity's sake.

(He moves sofa stage-left. Beryl comes on from stage-right, gets glass from prop-table and goes to sofa.)

SCENE 24

London
Beryl's Bedsitter

(Beryl drinks as she sits in sofa. Jane enters stage-right and stands centre.)

BERYL

Ah. Look who's here. Didn't know where you'd disappeared to.

JANE

Can I come in?

BERYL

Silly. You don't have to ask. I'm always delighted to see you. What do you think of the new decor?

JANE

It's very nice. Did you do it yourself?

BERYL

Me! You're hilarious. My last fellah was a painter-decorator. Strung him along till the job was completed. He was such a dear.

JANE

You've got ways.

BERYL

Haven't I? Well, tell me, how's the big, bad, exciting world treating you?

JANE

All right.

BERYL

Making plenty of lolly?

JANE

Some.

BERYL

That's good to hear. Still working at Pierrot's?

JANE

No.

BERYL

Where then?

JANE

At Jacque's.

BERYL

My, oh my, you are coming up in the world. No wonder you haven't seen Beryl for ages.

JANE

That wasn't the reason.

BERYL

What was then?

JANE

Working days and working nights.

BERYL

You must intend sending that kid of yours to Eton the way you're carrying on.

JANE

Just the pressure from home.

BERYL

Are they still sending for money?

JANE

All the time.

BERYL

What about your dad then?

JANE

Still has no job.

BERYL

The lazy sod. He's gotten used to your postal-orders that's all. You should just cut the bleeder off.

JANE

What would I do then? Put Christopher into an orphanage?

BERYL

What a geezer. And what you doing beside Chez Jacques?

JANE

Designing clothes.

BERYL

Designing! Fancy that. You are ambitious aren't you? Any success?

JANE

Getting plenty of work.

BERYL

You see what I told you dear. Night-club-hostess is not too bad after all. Puts you in contact with the right kind of people. People in business. People with influence. People who are only too eager to help a good looking girl.

JANE

I know.

BERYL

All you be careful of is the price-tag. Never. Never undersell yourself. Else you demean yourself. Would you like a drink?

JANE

No thanks.

BERYL

Well I'm having one.

JANE

And how are things with you?

BERYL

(She rises and moves down-stage.)

Still the same old Beryl. Struggling. Don't worry ducky if I had the experience I have now and the looks you have now I'd be a different Beryl. I'd be installed in some luxury flat in Park Lane. I was too impulsive you see. Too hot. Too pushy. I blew it all. I should've been more cagey. However it's no good crying over spilt milk.

(She crosses up-stage-right to move behind Jane and stands stage-right of her.)

Well, ducky, it's good to see you. You're looking well.

JANE

I'm not exactly feeling well.

BERYL

What's the matter? You haven't one in the pressure-cooker have you?

JANE

I doubt it. But there's something wrong.

BERYL

Sit down.

(Jane goes to sofa and sits.)

Tell me all about it.

(Beryl moves stage-left.)

I'm an expert on womanly matters.

JANE

I'm getting pains down here all the time.

BERYL

It's probably your appendix.

JANE

I've had it out.

BERYL

Did you go to the doctor then?

JANE

He didn't know. Said I was to come back if it got worse.

BERYL

(She takes a few steps stage-right and turns away.)

Typical doctor.

(She moves stage-right a little.)

Been more than just a drinks-hostess?

(Jane is embarrassed. She looks away.)

Come on ducky. Tell the truth. I know the temptation.

JANE

Yes.

BERYL

So you're on the game?

JANE

Sort of.

BERYL

(She crosses to stand in front of Jane.)

Rich geezers or poor geezers it's still the game. Occupational hazard. Have you been having any discharge or anything like that?

JANE

A couple of months back, yes.

BERYL

Is it really sore down there?

JANE

Yes.

BERYL

How about your periods? Having them regular?

JANE

Haven't seen them in months.

BERYL

And you've done nothing about it!

JANE

I was afraid.

BERYL

(She helps Jane up.)
You'll never learn will you? Come on ducky? Let's go down to the Middlesex. Me and you together.

JANE

I don't want to.

BERYL

Come on. Do what I tell you. I'll call a taxi.
(Beryl moves sofa up-stage-right off acting-area. Jane goes mid-stage-right.)

SCENE 25

London Flat

(Beryl sits in sofa. Jane stands mid-stage-right. Peter stands down-stage-left.)

JANE

Peter.

PETER

What?

JANE

You're not mad at me are you? I tried to stop you from marrying me.

PETER

It doesn't matter now.

JANE

Do you still love me?

PETER

(Grows more tense through the scene.)
Yes. Yes.

JANE

I'm sorry.

(After a moment.)

Peter.

PETER

What?

JANE

I hope you won't mind.

PETER

Won't mind what?

JANE

Please Peter. I don't want us to sleep in the same bed.

PETER

Yes. Jane. Yes. If that's what you want.

JANE

I'm sorry Peter. I'm sorry. But I must. We mustn't touch each other.

PETER

Yes.

JANE

You're so understanding.

PETER

It's not your fault.

JANE

Peter.

(After a moment.)

I want to do something else.

PETER

What?

JANE

I hope you won't mind.

(He looks at her not knowing what to expect.)

I want to go away.

PETER

Away?

JANE

Yes. I want to visit Our Lady of Lourdes.

(Jane kneels stage-centre. Beryl comes on stage-right with sheet and Peter helps her drape it around Jane. He exits.)

SCENE 26

Hospital

(Beryl stands stage-right of Jane.)

BERYL

Stop crying now baby. Stop crying. You'll be all right.

JANE

I won't. I won't.

BERYL

You will. You will. Take it easy now. You're just alarming yourself.

JANE

I'm not. I'm not. I'm no use anymore. I'm no use.

BERYL

Stop saying that.

JANE

It's true. It's true. I'm good for nothing.

BERYL

Don't be silly. You're still good for lots of things.

JANE

How am I? How am I?

BERYL

You are.

JANE

They took them from me. They took them from me.

BERYL

But they had to love. They had to to make you better.

JANE

I'll never be. I'll never be.

BERYL

Yes you will. Calm yourself.

JANE

I can't. I can't. I'm no longer a woman.

BERYL

You are.

JANE

I'm not. I'm not.

BERYL

Of course you are.

JANE

They took them from me. They did. They did.

BERYL

Calm yourself lovey. Calm yourself.

JANE

I'm no good. I'm no good for anybody.

BERYL

Yes you are.

JANE

They took them away. They took them all away.
(She breaks down. Beryl comforts her.)

BERYL

Oh lovey. Oh lovey. Please. Please. Be calm. For my sake. Please. For my sake. For Beryl's sake.

(Beryl removes sheet from Jane. Peter helps her to move on table. They then cover it with sheet. Peter sets two wine glasses, one with red wine the other with water. The red is set in front of Jane's place stage-left. The water in front of Peter's place stage-right. Mother and father bring on their respective chairs. She to place hers stage-right. He to place his stage-left in front of table. Peter and Jane stand up-stage of table he directly behind Mother she directly behind Father.)

SCENE 27

Tenement

(Both Mother and Father sit by the fire. They are both much older now. He drags on a butt.)

FATHER

Aren't they a disgrace? Aren't they?

MOTHER

Who are?

FATHER

Children. Look at them. You raise them up and then they abandon you.

MOTHER

Something must have happened to her.

FATHER

Devil a bit happened her. She's a selfish, ungrateful hussy that's all.

MOTHER

What did she do wrong?

FATHER

What did she do wrong? Abandoned us. Abandoned her kid.

MOTHER

He's your grandson.

FATHER

Grandson! I'm supposed to be his father. I was fifty six when he was born. We're the laughing-stock of the neighbourhood. You had him after you had the change. They call you the Immaculate Conception.

MOTHER

I don't want to hear anymore.

FATHER

You will. Off she goes and leaves us with it. Forgets all about us. Abandons us. And never a word since.

MOTHER

It's not true. She only stopped writing and sending money a few years ago. Not a week went by that a postal-order didn't come in that door. She kept us all the time.

FATHER

Where are the postal-orders now?

MOTHER

That's what I keep telling you. Something is wrong. Why don't you go over and look for her. I've asked you a thousand times. Something must have happened her.

FATHER

I don't believe a word of it. She's off enjoying herself. She left us with her burden and skedaddled. That's what she did. She's nothing but a tramp. An ungrateful tramp. Look at me. Nothing to live on and not a bottle of stout or a fag between me and my neighbour.

(Beryl knocks on the arm of the sofa with her glass.)

MOTHER

(Alarmed.)

Who can it be? At this hour!

FATHER

Open it will you?

(Mother gets up and crosses down-stage-left to door. A civic-guard appears stage-left at edge of acting-area.)

MOTHER

Holy god. What's the matter?

(Father rises, takes a few steps down-stage-left and stands just behind her.)

CIVIC-GUARD

Are you Mrs. Reilly?

MOTHER

Yes. Yes. What's happened? What's the matter?

(They both move down-stage of the guard and stand by his side.)

SCENE 28

London Flat

(Jane places the Father's chair at the head of the table, stage-left. Peter places the Mother's chair at the head of the table, stage-right. They both sit. Jane makes the Sign of the Cross, having said grace silently to herself.)

PETER

(He looks at her.)

Nothing is helping you. Not these prayers. Not these incantations. Not these novenas as you call them. You'll have to go away for special treatment.

JANE

But I'm getting better.

PETER

No you're not. These constant ablutions, this continuous hand-washing, this repetitiousness, and all these little mutterings, these little phrases and prayers, over and over again.

JANE

Peter. Peter.

PETER

Look at the house. It's a chapel. Look at the bedroom. It's a shrine. Holy pictures everywhere. Sprinkling the place with holy water. Candles flickering. Incense burning.

(He rises.)

I've put up with enough. You need proper looking after. And if you won't go voluntarily you'll go forcefully. I'll sign you in. There are two doctors prepared to sign the form. Even your beloved Dr. Gannon.

JANE

He wouldn't. I'm all right as I am.

PETER

You're not. Any idiot can see.

JANE

Don't speak to me like that.

PETER

I must. Plain talk is what you need. You need somebody to unravel what's in your head.

JANE

I don't want to hear you say things like that.

PETER

Did you ever ask yourself what my life has come to? I've married a bloody nun. A bride of Christ who hopes to miraculously conceive.

(He moves stage-left a little.)

I know what I should do. I should take you in hand. I should give you what you really need. A good screwing with the handle of god.

JANE

(She rises taking a step towards Peter, knocking her chair backwards as shed rises.)
You blaspheme.

PETER

(He crosses to her.)
Blasphemy! I'll give you blasphemy.
(He puts his hands to the sides of her face.)
Do you know where the only blasphemy is? Between my legs.

JANE

(She moves away.)
Keep away from me. You sailor.

PETER

(He stops.)
Sailor? Sailor? Christ I don't often use sailor's language but I should learn from their actions. I know what you need. What you all need. And I regret I didn't give you enough of it instead of listening to those priestly eunuchs.

JANE

(Shouting.)
You disgust me.

PETER

(He comes to his senses, moves back as though in shock and moves up-stage of table to slowly move towards Jane.)
Jesus what have I said. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I got carried away. It's just been too much for me.
(Jane quickly grabs him by the hair, pulls him to the table and stabs him, three to eight stabbings.)

JANE

(While she is stabbing.)
You're foul. You're foul. You're filthy. You and your kind brought me to where I am. You. You. You horrible man. You've fucked me as if I was a hole. You've used me as something to release yourself in. You've made me what I am. You. You. You've made me what I am. I hate you. I hate you. I hate you. You befouled me. You befouled me. Befouled me. I want to die. I want to die.

(She puts the knife between her breasts.)
I just want to die and die and die for you Christ Jesus.

(She remains like this. Peter has fallen on the glass of red wine trapping it under his chest, the wine spilling represents transubstantiated blood. It should spill stage-front on the white linen.)

SCENE 29

Tenement

CIVIC GUARD

There'll be an inquest.

FATHER

Does that mean we'll have to go over?

CIVIC GUARD

More than likely.

FATHER

Where are we going to get the money for that?

MOTHER

(She breaks down.)

Oh Jane. Oh Jane. Poor Jane. What's happened to her? What's happened to her? My god. Oh my god what's happened to our lovely daughter?

End of Play