

ATONEMENT

ACT I

Scene I

The living room of MRS. FARRAHER'S house – a sunny comfortable room, new-swept and tidy. At the BACK, the door (LEFT) and a window (RIGHT), under the window a chest; against the LEFT wall a dresser and one chair; opposite, the fireplace, above it a door to the inner rooms. There is a high-backed settle beside the hearth. On the mantel-shelf, a tea-caddy, irons, a money-box, a photograph etc. In the middle of the room a table with two kitchen chairs; at the head of the table, next the fire, an old wooden arm-chair. There is a bright fire burning under the pot, and a kettle near the boil.

BRIDIE FARRAHER is busy at the table, mixing a soda-cake. She is a happy looking girl, not more than twenty-two, with a mingling of tenderness and humour in voice and expression.

DONAGH HUGGARD, who is about the same age but thin and strained looking, is behind her at the window. He is waiting anxiously for her to speak. She moves as if to speak but changes her mind and continues with a teasing smile, deliberately, to sift her flour.

DONAGH (dolefully)

That should be the wonderful cake, Bridie (*no answer*). I'm saying, Bridie, that should be a wonderful cake.

BRIDIE

Well? Isn't it for a wonderful man?

DONAGH

I wish I had been three years in America!

BRIDIE (with deep amusement) – you to be jealous of Shawn, DONAGH! You!

DONAGH (beside her, urgently) – You have me in torment, Bridie!

BRIDIE (refusing to look up) – Oh, you are in a hurry now, is it?

DONAGH

Half out of my senses I am, with the sunshine of Spring breaking over us, and the sweet laughing air you have about you this day. For the love of pity, Bridie, give me some sort of answer!

BRIDIE (leaning back to him suddenly, laughing and kind) – Ah, man dear, what sort of an answer do you want?

DONAGH

Bridie!

BRIDIE (tenderly, her hand on his shoulder) – Aren't you the great innocent? And what do you take me for at all? Is it let you be coming in with me and going out with me I would, and digging and drawing and

chopping and sawing and making and mending for me from dawn to dark, and I not to have my heart's love to give out to you for all? Sure, anyone with the sense of a child would have known the way it was with me – and you fretting for an answer!

DONAGH

Is it the truth, Bridie? Is it the truth?

BRIDIE (gravely)

It is God's truth. *(She gives him a kiss, then stands apart from him, smiling).*

Weren't you the soft lad? Streeling around you have been, as doleful in yourself as a stray dog. Faith, *(turning back to her work)* – you couldn't have been longer winding up your mind to it if I'd been an old crochety hag, with no feature in her face but a tongue!

DONAGH

Ah, now, you know well it wasn't that!

BRIDIE

Oh, indeed? I'd like well then, to know what it was!

DONAGH (gravely)

It was more things than one, Bridie.....*(looking up at her and brightening suddenly)* – and sure anyway, wouldn't it seem the wildest folly in the world, the likes of me to be craving for the likes of you? I couldn't help getting sense now and again and thinking of it... you coming home to us with the warmth of June all grand and travelled, and me here, like old Bogey or the farm dog, the same as when you went away.

BRIDIE

Well, DONAGH!

DONAGH

Dead certain I was, there'd be some brave, airy fellow in Galway or in Tralee... or else that you'd be for going away to the States when Shawn could come home. I thought Shawn..... I thought he would have some grand notion.

BRIDIE (shaping her cake) – Ah, you did a deal of thinking!

DONAGH (ruefully)

I did so

BRIDIE

Well, will you quit thinking now, like a good lad, and rake out the fire for me.

(BRIDIE puts her cake into the pot and wipes her hands. DONAGH on his knees is raking so vigorously that she has to take the poker from him. She stands looking down at him, smiling).

And me with my heart broke striving to let on that I had my senses with you!

DONAGH

Do you tell me that, Bridie? *(He rises and stands gazing at her)*

Do you tell me that? Sure, you'll have Saint Michael and the Archangels glowering down at me with the jealousy!

BRIDIE (musing) This'll be the wonderful news to tell Shawn?

DONAGH (rubbing the flour into his sleeve) – I hope to God he won't be vexed with me

BRIDIE Vexed is it? I'll go bail with my life, he'll tell us he had it all planned! Arrah, man, you're making it twice as bad! Give it here to me.

DONAGH (while she brushes him) – You to be my wife, Bridie...

BRIDIE Go on now, reach me down the coloured mug. At the back on the top shelf it is. There's a black pig on it and "A present from Killarney".

DONAGH (achieving it) Sure, I know it well. Don't I mind him buying it for you the time the two of us mitched Saturday school and went galavanting to Killarney.

BRIDIE Faith, he should have been ashamed, he top of the school, and you a good wee fellow that wouldn't say boo to a goose.

DONAGH Ay, and he got a double lashing, for leading me astray! (*PAUSING at the table*). Do you know, I forget which is his place.

BRIDIE (quietly, indicating the head of the table, next to the fire) – He'll sit there now.

DONAGH (gravely) To be sure (*PAUSE*). *'Twill be as well maybe to have a change over the house and he coming into it.*

BRIDIE Ay. (*She is upset a little*)

DONAGH Will it not seem lost and lonesome, I'm wondering, after the big farm beyond, with no christian the length of the Glen but ourselves and the priest, and the mountains shutting out the world?

BRIDIE He'll have no grudge again the mountains, I'm thinking DONAGH; he has an ache in his eyes, he says, for the sight of them. 'Twas in the letter from New York: "Windy clouds the ridge of the reeks" he is wanting, "and Bridie's soda cake, hot from the fire".

DONAGH (at the window) - The clouds is grand for him anyway, whatever about Bridie's soda-cake. To have Shawn in it again – 'twill be the different place surely!

BRIDIE (suddenly overcome with sorrow) – Och, DONAGH, doesn't it give a twist to your heart, my father not to be seeing this day.

DONAGH Ay, 'tis cruel...

BRIDIE Shawn will be half killed, wanting him... *the great things they were to be doing to this place, the two of them, when*

MRS. FARRAHER Did you get the bread made?

BRIDIE (not moving) I did.

MRS. FARRAHER Is it on the fire?

BRIDIE It is.

MRS. FARRAHER (casually) - Was DONAGH here long?

BRIDIE (coming to her) Mother, I'm marrying DONAGH. I'm marrying him before the Spring is out.

MRS. FARRAHER (with sudden, sharp intensity) – Is it fixed, Bridie? Is it asked and answered and the word given?

BRIDIE (puzzled) Ay, Mother...

MRS. FARRAHER (turning away, shaken) – Thanks be to God...

BRIDIE Are you not pleased, Mother?

MRS. FARRAHER Pleased is it?

(She embraces BRIDIE passionately and then, with an effort, becomes very calm).

Is Father MacCarthy up at Huggards?

BRIDIE He is. He should be passing down soon.

MRS. FARRAHER Ay... I'll see him and he passing down...

BRIDIE (gently) Isn't it what you were wishing for, Mother?

MRS. FARRAHER Ay... 'tis what I was wishing for.

(She keeps her back to BRIDIE).

BRIDIE (pausing – she has put on her shawl) – I do be sometimes wondering, Mother.

MRS. FARRAHER (nervous) – What do you be wondering?

BRIDIE Wasn't old Huggard wanting, one time, to marry you?

MRS. FARRAHER (relieved) – And what, now, would put that into your head and we not crossing one another's threshold these two years.

BRIDIE I used to be queer and puzzled to know what could be the cause of the black hatred he had for my poor father, and I thought maybe it was the like of that.

MRS. FARRAHER Well maybe it was... Go on, now, Daughter, you'll want to lose no time. You'll need to walk the length of the breen. 'Twill be deep and treacherous after the long rain, and the

Druid's hardly fit for it at all. Tell DONAGH I want to speak to him.

BRIDIE (at the door) DONAGH was asking to come down with me to the train.

MRS. FARRAHER No, now, 'tis best for you to meet Shawn by yourself and to tell him the news.

BRIDIE Well, if he'd be better pleased... *(She is going but turns back anxiously)*. For the love of God, Mother, don't... don't forget the soda-cake!

MRS FARRAHER Oh, I'll mind it

(BRIDIE goes. MRS. FARRAHER, alone, clasps her hands in fervent thankfulness).

Oh, thanks be to God! Thanks be to the Blessed Brigid and the Holy Mother of God!

(She takes down the money-box, eagerly and counts out seven pounds)

More than I promised I will give: more than I gave in prayers and masses for my own man's soul.

(She puts the money in a saucer and covers it with a cup. DONAGH is at the door calling to BRIDIE).

DONAGH Mind yourself, now, on the boggy roads.

(He comes in, looking eagerly and shyly at MRS. FARRAHER)
MRS. FARRAHER.

MRS. FARRAHER (greeting him affectionately) – So you spoke the word, DONAGH! You spoke the word at last! *(She sits in arm-chair)*

DONAGH (beside her) I did, and she said... oh, Mrs. Farraher, the shining, radiant words she said to me this day... 'tis as if the birds of the air of heaven were singing in my heart.

MRS. FARRAHER 'Tis a great joy to us all, DONAGH, ***a great joy to us all.***

DONAGH ***And confounded altogether I am at your goodness, Mrs. Farraher, you to be letting me come courting her at all.***

MRS. FARRAHER ***And why wouldn't I, DONAGH? Like a son you have been to me, and a good, careful son, since the day I lost my man.***

DONAGH But you to know all, Mrs. Farraher... you to know all, and to be letting me take Bridie in spite of it... 'tis miraculous surely.

MRS. FARRAHER (rising and standing by her chair) – Ah, well, I'm getting to be an old woman, DONAGH, and all the old do be asking is peace and quiet to be about them, and their children well content, and to have no soul's sorrow on your conscience at the end of all... You're to be wed soon is it?

DONAGH If you've no objection, Mrs.Farraher, before May is out.

(He sits at the foot of the table.

MRS. FARRAHER goes to the chest and takes out a fine fawn-coloured shawl. Afterwards she fixes an iron-board across the arms of the chair, puts a heater in the fire and stands waiting for it to be ready. She is concealing a great eagerness).

MRS. FARRAHER The month of May is unlucky for marriages, DONAGH.

DONAGH You wouldn't ask me to be waiting till June! Sure, there's thirty-one days on May. May is the longest month in the year!

MRS. FARRAHER I see no call to be waiting till May.

DONAGH D'you mean...?

MRS. FARRAHER It's what I always heard tell, the best time of the year for a wedding was Easter.

DONAGH Do you mean we could be wed this month?

MRS. FARRAHER What's to hinder you?

DONAGH (starting up, excited) – Will I go up for the priest?

MRS. FARRAHER Arrah, lad, have patience! He'll be looking in and he on his way down. We'll speak to him then... You had to get him up to your father again, is it?

DONAGH (sitting down again) – I did, God pity him.

MRS. FARRAHER (not looking at DONAGH) – Is he bad?

DONAGH Awful.

MRS. FARRAHER Threatening is it?

DONAGH Ah, not that at all. He hasn't been that way this month. I wish it was. 'Tis one of his scared, praying fits is on him this time. *(He grows worried and nervous talking of it).*

MRS. FARRAHER ***Ah, who does he think would be pursuing him to injure him at all? Would I have the strength, if I had the will itself?***

DONAGH Fixed in his mind, he has it, that you are smouldering some revenge... or I'm thinking he has got wind, maybe of Shawn

coming home... Twice he had me out of my bed in the cold dew, trying was the yard gate locked.

MRS. FARRAHER

God help the misfortunate old man! Isn't he properly punished? Well, 'tis a true word that God rewards all. A terrible state he must be in surely.

DONAGH

He is so. When he's swearing and daring 'tis fearsome, but 'tis worse when he gets religious. ***Cowering in his bed he is, since the dawn of day, jabbering prayers and rosaries, till you'd think he'd have the Hosts of Heaven driven daft listening to him...***I didn't get a wink of sleep.

MRS. FARRAHER

You poor lad! 'Tis a dark, unnatural way for you to be living. Any other lad would have quit out of it long ago.

DONAGH

There was many a time before Bridie came home, I was near doing. But sure what way could I be leaving him?

MRS. FARRAHER

Wouldn't one of your brothers come back to him for a spell, DONAGH?

DONAGH

Not for a mine of gold, they wouldn't, and small wonder. And, sure, anyway, there's not one he'd let into the place by myself (*bitterly*) – I'm his pet.

MRS. FARRAHER

'Tis hard on you, DONAGH.

DONAGH

Ah, 'tis not that bad. He does be queer and kind to me often... kind and grateful-like, the way a child would be. Your heart couldn't but warm to him.

MRS. FARRAHER (poking the fire) – Arrah, DONAGH, your heart would warm to the devil himself and he lonesome in hell! You'd be for going down into it, I'm thinking to keep him company.

DONAGH (earnestly)

It should be a hard thing to be left lonesome, and you growing old and helpless, with Death stretching for you.

MRS. FARRAHER (seeing his strained look) – Ah, well, DONAGH, you'll sleep quiet the night. Doesn't he be easy always after seeing the priest?

DONAGH

He does, he does. The priest has a holy, miraculous power over him, thanks be to God. But this news about me and Bridie will cure all. (*He rises and stands near the open door*).

MRS. FARRAHER (cautiously) – He was set on it, was he?

DONAGH

Set on it, is it? ***He had me half ashamed to be asking her at all.***

MRS. FARRAHER (softly) – Ay, he's the cunning one.

DONAGH (brightening) *But he has the grand promises made to me for the day we're wed.*

MRS. FARRAHER *Has he so?*

DONAGH (his thoughts running off at a tangent) – You don't think, Mrs. Farraher, that maybe Shawn...

MRS. FARRAHER *Maybe Shawn what?*

DONAGH (with difficulty, standing at the foot of the table) – That he'll think it too soon... Easter I mean... that he'll think it too soon after... after August?

MRS. FARRAHER (with quiet intensity) – Isn't nine months long enough and too long, for the quick to be creeping and whispering under the shadow of the dead?

DONAGH (soberly) *He thought the world and all of his father.*

MRS. FARRAHER *Do I need you to tell me that? **DONAGH, was Shawn ever one for putting things off?***

DONAGH *He was not indeed...*

MRS. FARRAHER *Done as soon as thought of was the way with his father, and 'tis the way with him – and 'tis the best way.*

DONAGH *Ay but...(impetuously) **I hope to God he won't think I did wrong!** I wouldn't put trouble on Shawn and he coming home to us for the wealth of the world.*

MRS. FARRAHER *Trouble is it? 'Twill be the wealth of the world to Shawn, you know well, you and Bridie to be marrying. **He is wonderful fond of you, DONAGH.***

DONAGH *Wonderful good to me he has been... there's many a time and I a wee lad, if it hadn't been for Shawn (*unhappily*) – 'Tis only what I was thinking...*

MRS. FARRAHER *And what is it now? **Aren't you the queer, uneasy lad? Can you not take your luck and be thankful?***

DONAGH (firmly, looking at her across the table) – I'm wondering, Mrs. Farraher, will Shawn be content Bridie to be marrying me at all when he... (*faltering*) – when he knows...

MRS. FARRAHER (startled) – knows what, in the name of God?

DONAGH *When he knows all.*

MRS. FARRAHER *lets fall her ironing board, stoops to pick it up and puts it away, giving herself time to recover from her agitation.*

MRS. FARRAHER (composedly, putting up the iron) – And what need in the earthly world is there for Shawn to know all?

DONAGH (amazed) Sure, Mrs. Farragher... when he comes home... he'll be asking!...'Twas his own father!

MRS. FARRAHER (turning) – And wasn't he my husband?

DONAGH But d'you mean... did you say nothing to him at all, in your letters, Mrs. Farragher, forby what was in the papers? Nothing to prepare him for the truth at all? Surely you said something?

MRS. FARRAHER (sitting at the head of the table) – I told him, DONAGH, that his father was found dead in the butt of the boreen, killed by some fall he had in the darknss or by some wild horse coming up from the fair. That's what he got from the papers and what he got from my letters, and 'tis all he'll get if he goes questioning the people in Killorglin or in the glens. (*Impressively*) – there is no need at all for him to get more.

DONAGH (indignant) Surely to God, Mrs. Farragher, he has a right to know the truth?

MRS. FARRAHER (with sudden sharpness) – And haven't I the right to keep what I know to myself? (*Rise*)

DONAGH I suppose you have but...

MRS. FARRAHER (with concentrated purpose) – Or is it the priest, maybe, would go calling the story out on the roads? Is it Father MacCarthy would be for letting the like of that scandal go the round of the world out of his parish?

DONAGH Surely the holy seal of the Confessional is over him?

MRS. FARRAHER (leaning across to him, quietly) – It is yourself, then, is it, DONAGH, that would be whispering it and rumouring it abroad? (*sharply, startling him*) – Devil and all as the old man is to you, I'd not have thought you'd go that way to get quit of him?

DONAGH For God's sake, Mrs. Farragher... Shawn would never... you don't think Shawn... he'd never inform on him!

MRS. FARRAHER You knew John Farragher, DONAGH. Did you ever know him to keep a quiet tongue in his head and he with his mistrust or his anger roused? And was Shawn a quieter man any time than his father?

DONAGH (sitting at the foot of the table bewildered) – I know well, the two of them would go fighting naked against the world. But sure... 'tis my own father, Mrs. Farragher! Shawn'd never be forgetting that.

MRS. FARRAHER Shawn'll not be forgetting, DONAGH, that John Farraher was his father, and you'll want not to forget it either. I know what I'm saying.

DONAGH (wretchedly) God help me. I don't know what to do at all. Day and night these long months I have been fretting and craving for the time I could be speaking all out to Shawn.

MRS. FARRAHER You are in a hurry, maybe, for the day you will step into your father's shoes?

DONAGH (rising, violently) – My God, Mrs. Farraher, don't be saying the like of that to me!

MRS. FARRAHER Let you be done, then speaking or thinking of saying one fool's word to Shawn!

DONAGH It'd be queer and hard for me to lie to him.

MRS. FARRAHER You'll need to learn.

DONAGH I will not. I will not lie to him! Bad enough it has been, cheating him and hiding the truth from him these eight months. Shawn'd not touch the old man. If I told him the whole truth he'd not make a mean use of it. I know he wouldn't.

MRS. FARRAHER Well, you can risk it, DONAGH

DONAGH I will risk it.

MRS. FARRAHER (intensely) – Have you the right to risk it? For your own ease of mind and because 'tis a trouble to you to hold your tongue, will you send your father's body to a fearful death, and his immortal soul to hell?

DONAGH (overcome) Don't... Don't... Mrs. Farraher... God to Heaven

(He sinks down on the chair again)

MRS. FARRAHER (softly) – There's no need at all for lies, DONAGH, 'tis only for you to say naught. If you do that you have no need to fear. Leave Shawn to me, DONAGH. He's a queer, hasty lad, but I know his queerness through. With two words I can have him as mild and quiet as a sorry child. Leave Shawn to me.

DONAGH I suppose you're right... It'd be awful anything to happen... I know well the wildness that does come over him (*yielding*). I suppose you're right.

MRS. FARRAHER I am right. And you'll want not to forget it.

(There is an exhausted PAUSE. DONAGH is miserable)

DONAGH Bad enough it has been, keeping all from Bridie. But that's done with anyway. I'll have to tell her now, whether or no.

MRS. FARRAHER (violently) – In the name of Heaven, DONAGH, what sort of a crazy lunatic is it I am giving up the girl to at all.

DONAGH *You're not asking me to go on concealing it from her, Mrs. Farraher? She maybe to hear of it afterwards and to be thinking... surely to goodness, Mrs. Farraher, you wouldn't want me to be treating her the likes of that?*

MRS. FARRAHER Tell her, then, DONAGH, tell her all. (*fiercely*) – and I wish you joy of the sweet, peaceful woman you'll get at the end of it!

DONAGH Bridie wouldn't be putting any blame on me... *'twould make no differ with her at all... Bridie'd never say a word.*

MRS. FARRAHER Oh, ay, she'd thank you kindly, DONAGH, for the wild, fearful thoughts you would start trampling in her mind, that would shrivel the soul in her body with the misery of the dead. She'll thank you kindly for the nights she will be groaning and choking in her sleep with the torment of her dreams, and the night she will be lying staring and quaking in her bed, seeing black murder in every corner of the room. That would be the good, loving gift for you to be giving Bridie on your wedding morn. (*sharply*) I'd leave the like of that work to some devil would be grudging her her freedom out of hell.

DONAGH My God! My God!

MRS. FARRAHER (gently) – 'Tis little you know, DONAGH, and little any man knows, of the tearing anguish two words can plant forever in a woman's heart. The light that is in a young girl's spirit is easy quenched, DONAGH, and oftenest it is the man would die for her that quenches it.

DONAGH (quite broken down) – I to come asking for her! I that have black sin and the curse of God hanging over me, to be seeking to draw her into the hell of it! May God forgive me for a scoundrelly brute!

MRS. FARRAHER (coming to him, carressingly) – You're no scoundrel, Son.

DONAGH I'll never cast shade or shadow across her path again.

MRS. FARRAHER (quietly) – Is that the way you'd mend it?

DONAGH There is no other, God help me, there is no other.

MRS. FARRAHER She with her heart's love lost to you and told out before the world. To throw it back at her now, with no reason given, leaving her scorched and withered to her old age... that's the way you'll make up to her is it, for her father's death?

DONAGH If you talk to me like that, Mrs. Farraher, I'll go raving mad!... I to bring anguish to Bridie!

MRS. FARRAHER Do, Father, you are kindly welcome.

FATHER MacCARTHY – Shawn is not arrived yet?

MRS. FARRAHER He should be here any time now, Father, Bridie is gone with the car to meet him at the train.

FATHER MacCARTHY (sitting down at the table) – You have the place looking lovely. Who painted the fence?

MRS. FARRAHER Who but DONAGH?

FATHER MacCARTHY Isn't he the great lad?... Ah, there you are, is it? He is in a better way now, DONAGH, but I had great work to do anything with him at all. A terrible fit of remorse is on him, and the fear of God.

DONAGH He was counting out gold in the night. I hope he gave you some money for Saint Brigid's, Father?

FATHER MacCARTHY He did, DONAGH, ten pounds. I doubt should I take so much. It seems like robbing you.

DONAGH Ah, take it and welcome, Father. 'Tis a great ease to his conscience and he can well spare it.

MRS. FARRAHER Isn't he the amazing old man? He scheming and tricking and grabbing the length of a lifetime to grind money out of his neighbours, and to go pouring it out at the end of all, in prayers and masses for John Farraher's soul.

FATHER MacCARTHY Faith, his own soul is to get the bigger share!

MRS. FARRAHER Faith, it needs it.

DONAGH I should maybe be going up to him now.

FATHER MacCARTHY *Ay, he was looking out for you, DONAGH*

MRS. FARRAHER *Ay, go on, DONAGH. I'll fix all with Father MacCarthy.*

DONAGH *I'll be going so. I'll come down later on, if I may, Mrs. Farraher, and see Shawn.*

MRS. FARRAHER (going with him to the door) – *Do to be sure. He'll be asking for you. You'll not forget what I was saying to you?*

DONAGH (going) I will not.

FATHER MacCARTHY Goodbye, DONAGH!

DONAGH Goodbye to you, Father, and thank you kindly.

 (to MRS. FARRAHER) – There'll be no fear at all of me forgetting.

(He GOES. MRS. FARRAHER shuts the door)

MRS. FARRAHER The poor lad!

FATHER MacCARTHY (eagerly) – What is the news, Mrs. Farraher?

MRS. FARRAHER Will you wed them on Easter Monday, Father?

FATHER MacCARTHY So, 'tis come at last.

MRS. FARRAHER It is, Father. Praise be to God.

(She sits at the foot of the table)

FATHER MacCARTHY (devoutly) – 'Tis the answer to my long prayers.

MRS. FARRAHER I am half stupid with the joy, Father.

FATHER MacCARTHY Well, well, the ways of the Lord are wonderful indeed; putting the pure, good love between those two, for the redemption of all. You should be a happy woman this day, Mrs. Farraher, and its you have need of peace.

MRS. FARRAHER *The dream of my life it has been Father, since the year she and DONAGH were born. I worn to the soul with ten years of cold, griping poverty, and they above with the luck and the cunning would squeeze money from between the stones.*

FATHER MacCARTHY *Ah, well, you had an honest man for your husband, by all accounts, Mrs. Farraher, and that is better than worldly wealth.*

MRS. FARRAHER (bitterly) – Is it? Is it, Father? I could have spared some of John Farraher's honesty. Honesty that wouldn't scoop for a sovereign and it lying at his feet; honesty that made a mortal enemy of the one man that should have given us some help.

FATHER MacCARTHY *Ah, well, maybe he was over-scrupulous; but 'tis a good fault.*

MRS. FARRAHER *'Tis a bad fault, saving your Reverence, in a man is a husband and the father of two. It wore the youth out of my heart. I swore to Saint Brigid, Father, the day we christened Bridie, that I'd not let her be hardened and bittered with poverty the way I have been.*

FATHER MacCARTHY *There is little hardness or bitterness in you, Mrs. Farraher, there's few women would have forgiven the way you have forgiven.*

MRS. FARRAHER Ah, I have had my share of terrors and miseries, Father. I could bear no more.

FATHER MacCARTHY You have had your share, surely and Christian forgiveness you have shown.

MRS. FARRAHER ‘Tis what I do be thinking, Father, it wouldn’t bring my man to life again to be sending another to his death nor shorten his time in Purgatory to thrust another into Hell.

FATHER MacCARTHY Ay, that’s the awful thought – to send a black, sinful soul untimely out of the body, before, maybe, repentance would have come.

MRS. FARRAHER God help us, Father, it would drive me raving mad! *To be lying wakeful in your shivering old age, listening to the wind squealing in the quarries, and to be thinking ‘twas the curses howling at you from a soul roasting in Hell. That’d be a frightful thing to have on your conscience and you drawing into the shadow of death.*

FATHER MacCARTHY (soothingly) – Now, now, think no more of it, Mrs. Farraher, think of it no more.

****(this bit crossed out.....You have shown christian charity and forgiveness to a poor sinner, and God is rewarding you surely).*

***The bit written in in place of the above in italics is not easy to read but this is my attempt:-
(Can you not keep your thoughts on (God’s mercy)) to your.....(can’t read the rest).***

MRS. FARRAHER *(rising) – look, Father, I was near forgetting (she brings him the money) – there now is five pounds I had promised to Saint Brigid for the day Brigid and DONAGH would have troth given and there is two more I have added to it for the coming of Shawn. Take them now for the Church, Father, and God’s blessing on your work.*

FATHER MacCARTHY *That’s very generous, Mrs. Farraher. But now, can you afford all that?*

MRS. FARRAHER *I can afford all now, Father, with the good times that are at hand...* ‘Tis a queer thing, Father, to be thinking you are an old woman with your day wasted, and to catch yourself dreaming and planning at all hours, like a young girl in her Springtime with her share of the world to choose.

FATHER MacCARTHY *And why wouldn’t you be dreaming and planning, Mrs. Farraher, with a fine girl making a good marriage, and your son coming home to you?*

MRS. FARRAHER Indeed, Father, Shawn’s letters would put life into a stone. Listen here to the last. *(She brings it and reads)* – “Bursting I am” he says, “with plans and contriveances. I am bringing home a grand new-fangled engine, will do ploughing and all sort for us on the farm; and I want only Daniel Huggard to go shares with me, and we’ll get stuff from this side will pull the richness out of the ground like Druid’s magic. In a couple of years”, he says, “we’ll have the two farms a model for all

Ireland. I'll get you", he says, "to talk round the old miser for me; you were always a wonder of cleverness at perssuading people". There now.

FATHER MacCARTHY Well, it should be a great thing for Ireland, a man with that knowledge and that spirit in him to be coming home to work on the land... And I have news for you to add to that, Mrs. Farraher – though by rights I shouldn't mention it yet at all.

MRS. FARRAHER What is that, Father? Daniel Huggard is it?

FATHER MacCARTHY Ay, it is that he just said to me, that the day DONAGH and Bridie are wed he'll make over the whole place to the two of them, land and cattle, with letters of the law.

MRS. FARRAHER You don't tell me that, Father!

FATHER MacCARTHY I do indeed, and I'm to travel myself to Killorglin and the deed drawn out.

MRS. FARRAHER ***Well, God be praised for all! Isn't that the wonderful day? And isn't he the queer, changeable old man.***

FATHER MacCARTHY ***A man will do queer, changeable things, Mrs. Farraher, when 'tis to save his body from perdition and his soul from the pangs of Hell.*** But, whisper, Mrs. Farraher, let me see to everything. You'd best not be letting Shawn go up to him about it at all.

MRS. FARRAHER Lord save us, Father, to let Shawn go up questioning before they are wed and handselled would ruin all! But listen, could you give out the banns tomorrow, Father?

FATHER MacCARTHY I could surely.

MRS. FARRAHER And you'll wed them on Easter Monday?

FATHER MacCARTHY With a heart and a half. With a heart and a half. ***And look, I'll be going now, for Shawn would think badly to find a stranger on his floor and he coming to his own.***

MRS. FARRAHER ***Well, you'll not long be a stranger to Shawn, please God, for 'tis the strong comforting friend you have been to me this year and more.***

FATHER MacCARTHY My heart is warm, Mrs. Farraher, to see good growing out of evil to you in the end of all.

 (They are standing by the door)

MRS. FARRAHER Ay, 'twas a dark, fearful winter, but the Spring is coming to us now, surely, with all good and blessed things.

FATHER MacCARTHY Blessed are the peace-makers, Mrs. Farraher, 'tis often I do be thinking that. Blessed are the peace-makers. 'Tis a lovely text.

MRS. FARRAHER That blessing should be on you surely. Will you not wait now and see Shawn when he comes?

FATHER MacCARTHY Ah, no thanks. I'll not stay now. He would think bad to find a stranger on his threshold and he coming to his own. But I'll be climbing up again to see you all in two days or three.

MRS. FARRAHER You'll maybe meet them on the road.

FATHER MacCARTHY And I'll give out the banns to-morrow.

MRS. FARRAHER God bless you, Father.

FATHER MacCARTHY May God's blessing be on this house, Mrs. Farraher, and may His Holy Mother send you quiet sleep to-night. (*GOES*)

MRS. FARRAHER (alone) – I'll sleep quiet this night, surely.

(*DONAGH is at the door*)

DONAGH (excited) Mrs. Farraher... I was dodging till the priest would go... Is all fixed?

MRS. FARRAHER Ay, Son. All is fixed for Easter Monday. He is to give out the banns tomorrow.

DONAGH Glory be to God, Mrs. Farraher, doesn't it seem too good to be true?... in three weeks only Bridie to be my wife! Sure I couldn't be fretting this hour if all the old men and old women in the world were knifing one another under the hill!

MRS. FARRAHER You're young, thank God. You would have small right to fret.

DONAGH And the old man's in the grandest humour at all! The wild, shining promises he is after making to me! You'd think 'twas himself was to be wedded to the Queen of the world....They're late, surely?

MRS. FARRAHER God save us, don't say that! Run up the ditch and look, DONAGH, for dear's sake!

DONAGH Whist! I think I hear the car!

MRS. FARRAHER It is, it is! Mercy on us, and Bridie's soda-cake forgotten in the pot!

DONAGH (rushing back, tragically) – 'tis not burnt!

(*A moment of acute suspense while it is taken out and examined*).

MRS. FARRAHER No, no, 'tis just right, grand!

DONAGH (devoutly) Thanks be to all!

(SHAWN is heard outside calling)

SHAWN (without) Ahoy, Mother! Mother, where are you at all?

MRS. FARRAHER Shawn! Shawn!

(SHAWN stands with BRIDIE in the doorway. He is a clean-shaven, boyish-looking man of nine-and-twenty. He is not at all American in speech or manner).

 Is it yourself at last? My boy... my man!

SHAWN Mother... Whist, Mother!

DONAGH (aside to BRIDIE) – Did you tell him?

BRIDIE I did. He's terrible pleased.

DONAGH Is he? Is he, Bridie?

SHAWN Well, Mother, Mother! But 'tis good to look at your pretty face again. D'you know I was terrible afeared you'd have got middle-aged! Whisper – d'you know, the girls out there are wonderful ugly after you. And the Sunday shawl! Well, aren't you the real old flirt!

(He turns and gives both hands to DONAGH)

DONAGH You're pleased, Shawn?

SHAWN 'Tis the best welcome of all, laddie, the best of all.

(He turns to the table)

 And Bridie's soda-cake! Well, 'tis at home I am surely!

(He glances involuntarily at his father's place and is silent for a moment).

DONAGH (moving to him in swift compassion) – SHAWN!

BRIDIE Hot too!

(He hugs her and sitting on the table, takes a huge bite of the soda-cake).

SHAWN Aren't you the good wee girl?

BRIDIE 'Tis the great day for us all, Shawn.

MRS. FARRAHER

It is, indeed, the great and sacred day.

(DONAGH is silent. SHAWN is still devouring soda-bread).

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT II

SCENE 1

22

Killarney's the beautiful place, Bridie! A dull, gloomy day it has been, but all the same the mountains looked gorgeous. I was wishing I could stop till the morning.

BRIDIE Och, Shawn, that wouldn't do at all! Mother would be thinking you had met your death. She does be queer and uneasy these times.

SHAWN Ah, and no wonder. That's why I came back, but I'll be going again soon and taking herself.

BRIDIE Anyway, Father MacCarthy is coming down to-night with papers about the settlement.

SHAWN Faith 'tis high time. The wedding in two days and it not signed yet. That's Kerry.

(He leans over the back of the settle speaking in "American")

I guess, you're real busy, Bridie!

BRIDIE I am indeed, but I'll make your cup of tea now.

SHAWN Whist now, don't stir, I'll make it myself.

(He comes round to the fire)

BRIDIE (smiling to herself) – You had a good day, then, in Killarney? Sure, I don't know what business it was took you at all.

SHAWN Ah. I went to see a man about a dog.

BRIDIE Well, did you get the dog?

SHAWN I did. A beauty.

(He takes the tea-caddy down from the mantel-piece, at the same time slipping his parcel behind a photograph; in doing so he discovers a letter in an envelope. He puts the caddy down on the table and stands with the letter in his hand. The seal is unbroken).

So he never got that letter.

BRIDIE What letter, Shawn?

(SHAWN opens the letter, looks at it and walks away a little. He sits, grief-stricken, in the chair at the foot of the table).

SHAWN I wanted him to get that letter.

BRIDIE (rising, compassionately) – Shawn!

SHAWN Year in, year out to have been striving to say it to him, and to get it written at last, and black death to come between.

BRIDIE Your last letter to my father, is it, Shawn?

SHAWN Ay. I thought he had it. 'Twas the one thing only made it bearable at all. I thought he had it.

BRIDIE 'Twas the day before it came, Shawn, he was killed.

SHAWN There isn't a man in the two worlds, Bridie, but is mean and twisted towards the man he was. I wanted to say out to him once that I knew it. I wish he had got that letter.

BRIDIE Ah, don't fret, Shawn. Sure, he knew well you thought the world and all of him.

SHAWN There's no way I can say anything at all to him now...
Death's wicked, Bridie, Wicked!

(He is breaking down).

Oh, Father, you had a right to be here and me coming home...
You had a right to be here!

BRIDIE Don't, Shawn, don't! You have my heart broke.

SHAWN Someway, Bridie, I didn't understand he wouldn't be coming back to us *(recovering control)*. Stupid, I was. And I am a brute altogether to be distressing you.

BRIDIE I do be feeling sometimes it is hard and heartless we are to be happy at all.

SHAWN *(rising)* Now that's not true, Bridie. You'd do no good by fretting, and you'd make DONAGH miserable. You're getting the only man ever I met was fit to stand up beside my father, and 'tis well contented you should be. Come here now till I show you the dog!

BRIDIE The dog?

SHAWN *(taking down the parcel)* – Ay, the dog I went to Killarney to see a man about.

BRIDIE *(laughing)* Oh, the Killarney dog!

(She is making the tea and watching while he unties the parcel)

You should be hungry.

SHAWN I would eat the dog. Here now, give me your left hand and shut your eyes.

(He slips a bracelet watch over her hand)

Now!

BRIDIE (looking) Och, Shawn

SHAWN That is what the elegant Boston ladies do be wearing. Do you like it, Bridie?

BRIDIE (beside him, against the table) – Ah, Shawn, ‘tis too good for the likes of me altogether.

SHAWN Do you know, now, Bridie, I don’t agree with you. I’m a travelled man, and the conclusion I’ve come to is, that your like is the best of all. Are you happy, wee girl?

BRIDIE There is not the like of my happiness, Shawn, within the four winds of the world.

SHAWN DONAGH’ll want to look out that he treats you well, or there’ll be rows. And DONAGH knows who gets the best of it when him and me fight. There’s not another I’d give you to, Bridie. He is a wonderful, good, lad.

BRIDIE He’s a saint.

SHAWN (indignant) He is not (*he sits down to his tea, pondering*). What has him so shy of me, I wonder, since I came home?

BRIDIE Shy of you, Shawn! And the great walks you have been taking him!

SHAWN Ay, and me talking all the time fit to dry up Niagara, and he as dumb as a fish. Would you hand me that butter, Bridie? (*smiling*) – I’d bet any money he has something on his conscience.

BRIDIE What on earth would DONAGH have on his conscience?

SHAWN The Lord knows. There’s one thing you’ll have to cure DONAGH of, Bridie, and that’s a conscience – a conscience that would fit a convent girlie on her First Communion morn. (*Enjoying his tea and his reminiscences*). Never will I forget the one attempt he made to lie to me!

BRIDIE (interested) Did it not come off?

SHAWN Oh, it came off fine – but it didn’t last. Down through the two fields comes my brave DONAGH with his father’s lantern, at one in the morning or so, and starts chucking pebbles at my window.

BRIDIE To make his confession was it?

SHAWN Ay – couldn’t sleep with the misery. He’d do fine for a priest. Where’s herself?

BRIDIE Above, helping to ready the place. The state 'tis in, she says, would frighten a self-respecting pig.

SHAWN Why at all did DONAGH let it get that way?

BRIDIE Och, some notion the old man took last autumn, he'd have no one sleeping in it only themselves. They haven't a creature to do for them since but an odd time the priest's old woman. Two lonesome men, what way could they have the place decent at all?

SHAWN I don't half like it, Bridie, you to be going up to a place the like of that.

BRIDIE Sure, it'll be grand once I'm in it.

SHAWN I know well it will. But the old man will be queer company, all the same, for the likes of you.

BRIDIE Oh, he does be fine and civil to me.

SHAWN Well, isn't he the crusty old curmudgeon, forbidding me to cross his doorstep? Afeard, belike, that if I saw the state 'twas in I'd not let you be going up to it at all! If it isn't that 'twould maybe look like distrusting DONAGH, I'd just march in. *(He lights his pipe).*

BRIDIE You'll march in the day I'm wed, Shawn. As far as I can make out, 'tis no grudge he has against you at all, only your likeness to my father.

SHAWN Isn't that a queer reason?

BRIDIE Ah, he was ever and always scowling and muttering at my father. I never could understand it at all.

SHAWN I understood it, Bridie, and 'twas not hard to understand, if you knew the two of them. Daniel Huggard's a man couldn't let a chance pass him to do a mean, thieving trick; and my father was a man with a brain could know what was going on behind a stone wall, and a spirit would challenge the devil himself and he giving out a slander or a lie. 'Tis small wonder they couldn't agree. I remember well, the first time my father brought me to the Puck Fair... Oh, here's herself!

(MRS. FARRAHER comes in laden with brushes and pans. She has changed much in the three weeks and looks younger. SHAWN rises and takes her things).

MRS. FARRAHER Well, Son, did you get all done?

SHAWN I did, Mother, and I fell in love with Killarney. And, whisper – as soon as Bridie's settled you and me are going off there

MRS. FARRAHER Saints alive, Son, how could I leave the place?

SHAWN You can leave it fine.

BRIDIE To be sure you can.

MRS. FARRAHER ‘Twould be a rare treat.

SHAWN Wait till you see.

BRIDIE Look what he brought me from the shops, Mother.

SHAWN In place of a dog. Come on now and take some tea; you should be tired out. Where now are those mocassins I brought you? (*She is sitting in the arm-chair*).

BRIDIE (bringing a cup) I had them warming.

SHAWN (putting them on for her) – The way women do be toiling and moiling in this country would drive a Yank to drink. I’ll want to mend those for you. I’m a grand cobbler, did you know that?

MRS. FARRAHER That’s great comfort, Shawn

BRIDIE They’ll be down with the papers soon, will they, Mother?

MRS. FARRAHER They will, any minute. I met the Priest going up.

BRIDIE I’ll go and tidy myself so.

 (*She goes to the inner door and turns back, looking at her watch to say, with an air*)

 ‘Tis after eight.

 (*She goes in*)

SHAWN (sitting in the settle behind Mrs. Farraher) – I wonder now, will old Huggard do half he said?

MRS. FARRAHER Why wouldn’t he?

SHAWN It’d be queer if he would. Him to be wanting nothing with Bridie is the unlikeliest tale ever I was asked to believe. Daniel Huggard was never known to forge the chance of a bargain. Bridie was telling me he tried last Fair again to sell the old Bogey!

MRS. FARRAHER (startled) – Did... did she say that? What made her say that?

SHAWN How much did my father get that time for the Banshee?

MRS. FARRAHER I... I don't know, Shawn.

SHAWN You don't know.

MRS. FARRAHER No... it... it was not known.

SHAWN Not known? But wasn't it coming up from the Puck he was when the accident happened?

MRS. FARRAHER Ay.

SHAWN Well then... wouldn't whatever money he got be found on him?

MRS. FARRAHER (rising suddenly) – I think I hear them coming. (*Calling*) – Are you ready, Bridie?

BRIDIE (alarmed, within) – I am not.

SHAWN What money was found on him, Mother?

MRS. FARRAHER None at all, none at all. Come now, will you give me a hand to clear away? They'll be here in a minute.

(*She comes feverishly busy.*
SHAWN rises but stands still. His brain is working.)

SHAWN There was no money found on him?

MRS. FARRAHER Ah, why would there be?

SHAWN He sold a horse, Mother and he bought none.

MRS. FARRAHER Shawn, Shawn... don't talk of it like a good boy. I... I can't sleep at night when there does be any talk of it at all.

SHAWN ***But a fall... or a riderless horse... don't you see, Mother? It might mow* him down, but it wouldn't... it wouldn't rob him, Mother!*** Were there no questions asked?

MRS. FARRAHER Ah, Shawn, why would there be? Don't you mind what these roads do be like after the Puck Fair? Slippery and broken with the multitude of horses, and everywhere sinking into holes; and the throngs that do be streaming back of drunken men, and wild riderless horses, careering in the dark.

SHAWN (excited) ***But a riderless horse wouldn't rob him, Mother!***

MRS. FARRAHER Well, there's many a reckless tramp or tinker would, Shawn, and he lying dead in the ditch.

SHAWN My God, Mother, that's an awful thought! Father lying dead in the ditch and some ghoul picking his pockets!

MRS. FARRAHER (in agitation) – For pity’s sake, Shawn, will you spare me! The black terror of that night... when it does be surging over me... I can’t stand it at all.

SHAWN I’m sorry, Mother... I didn’t mean to upset you. But, listen... ‘twas at the butt of the boreen, wasn’t it, he was lying?

MRS. FARRAHER Ay

SHAWN But, sure, no tramps do be coming that way at all. It leads no place, except to here and Huggards!

MRS. FARRAHER For pity’s sake, Shawn, let it alone!

SHAWN (excited) I can’t let it alone, Mother! ‘Twas some one followed him up... God in Heaven... Mother...

MRS. FARRAHER (violently) – Shawn, Shawn, will you have pity on the mother that bore you! Have pity on Bridie if you can’t on me! Whatever wild thing is in your mind can’t you quiet it, Shawn... till after the wedding... if only till after the wedding! Oh, you have my heart strangled with your fearful talk! *(She is sobbing).*

SHAWN God forgive me! Whist, Mother! I’ll say no more. I’ll say no more to you the night. I’m real sorry for upsetting you. Whist now. Amn’t I the clumsy brute?

MRS. FARRAHER You’ll not talk of it, Shawn? You’ll not think of it?

SHAWN I’ll ask you no more of it to-night.

MRS. FARRAHER I’ll not be fit to face them at all...
(She turns to go in)

SHAWN There now, you’ll be all right... you’ll want only to bathe your eyes. *(at the inner door)* – I to have made you cry, Mother! *(He opens the door for her).*

MRS. FARRAHER ‘Tis the first time, Son. You’ll let it be the last?

SHAWN God helping me, Mother, I will.
(She goes in. He closes the door).
My God, Father! If the fiend that did it’s **living... There’ll be atonement for this, if I break open the heart of the world!

(DONAGH lifts the latch of the outer door)

DONAGH Can I come in, Shawn?

SHAWN DONAGH!

DONAGH Is Bridie in?

(He is eager with good news).

SHAWN DONAGH.... are you alone?

DONAGH Ay, Father MacCarthy's coming – I wanted Bridie... Is... is anything wrong, Shawn?

SHAWN Shut the door.

(DONAGH shuts the door).

I'm in terrible trouble, DONAGH.

DONAGH You, Shawn! If there's aught I can do, you know well...

SHAWN Ay, lad, I know right well; that's why I'm asking you, though 'tis a cruel shame, on the eve of your wedding, but I want to spare my Mother and Bridie.

DONAGH What is it, Shawn?

SHAWN A question I want to ask you.

DONAGH Ay?

SHAWN Have you any knowledge at all, or any suspicion, DONAGH, more than the others of the way my father got his death?

DONAGH (eager, almost gladly) – Shawn!

(The inner door is opened softly and MRS. FARRAHER comes in)

MRS. FARRAHER Is that yourself, DONAGH? Where's Father MacCarthy?

DONAGH He's coming after me, Mrs. Farraher. My father kept him.

SHAWN (gently) Would you leave us alone just one minute, Mother? I have business to talk with DONAGH.

MRS. FARRAHER I will, to be sure. The Settlement, I suppose? Well, DONAGH, isn't it wonderful to think Bridie'll be your own wife in two days? Queer and happy, she is, the wee girl, queer and happy - *(at the door)* – you're not forgetting what I asked you to do for me, DONAGH?

DONAGH I'm forgetting nothing.

(She GOES shutting the door)

SHAWN Well, DONAGH?

DONAGH Why are you asking me, Shawn?

SHAWN I'm asking you, DONAGH, because a fearful, torturing thought has come into my mind, and I haven't the strength to keep it to myself. Have you no suspicion, DONAGH.

No. No, Shawn. I have no suspicion at all.

But, DONAGH, he was robbed! That's what makes me sure of it. Followed home from the fair... clubbed down, or ridden down in the dark... and robbed, DONAGH... his pockets picked while he was gasping out his life on the road. My God, DONAGH, isn't it enough to drive you mad?

Let him be forgotten we have – slip out of the world and out of our thoughts as if he had been nothing that mattered at all! Not even asked the story of his end. But, by Heaven, I'll ask it now! Listen, DONAGH! You'll help me to get the truth? You'll help me to track it down? And, by God, if 'tis the meanest tramp in Ireland has done this thing, he'll get a death will make him famous through the world!

Shawn! (You're awful! You're awful) Shawn!

You'll help me, DONAGH? You have always helped me.

Don't ask me, Shawn, for mercy's sake!

MRS. FARRAHER (softly) – Is the priest come yet? I thought I heard him.

It is FATHER MacCARTHY)

There you are, Father! (*calling*) – you may come down now, Bridie.

God save all here!

(BRIDIE comes in, carrying a lamp lighted but turned low, which she puts on the table).

Good evening, Father.

SHAWN (still standing near the fire) – Good evening, Father.

FATHER MacCARTHY is talking against a sense of emotional strain that is in the room).

FATHER MacCARTHY ‘Tis a chilly evening, isn’t it, Mrs. Farraher? And there’s ugly big clouds rolling up out of the west. I’m afraid we’re going to have a dark Easter after all.

(A PAUSE, while no one speaks)

MRS. FARRAHER Will you sit here, Father? There’s pen and ink all ready. Sit down, DONAGH, like a good boy.

FATHER MacCARTHY There is the Deed, Mr. Farraher, and I think it will be a surprise to you.

SHAWN Thanks

(SHAWN takes the paper and sits in the far corner of the settle. He is facing DONAGH who sits at the foot of the table, with a chair for BRIDIE on his RIGHT. The PRIEST sits between. MRS. FARRAHER is standing at his RIGHT; the arm-chair is beside her.)

MRS. FARRAHER Draw the curtains, Bridie. ‘Tis queer and dark.

(BRIDIE draws the curtains and for a moment the room is very dark).

DONAGH (with a nervous laugh) – This is terrible solemn! I feel as if I was making my will.

(BRIDIE moves to him quickly)

BRIDIE DONAGH! Oh, what made you say the likes of that?

(MRS. FARRAHER turns up the lamp)

DONAGH Sure, I was only joking, Bridie!

MRS. FARRAHER Will you not come under the lamp, Shawn?

SHAWN No, thanks, I can see well. Sit you there.

*(MRS. FARRAHER sits beside the PRIEST
SHAWN is studying the paper
BRIDIE and DONAGH are whispering about the Settlement.)*

FATHER MacCARTHY I can explain it to you in one word, Mrs. Farraher. Mr. Huggard is asking nothing at all with Bridie, and he is making over to her and DONAGH in joint possession, his house, farm and property appertaining. The whole place is to be their own only, from the hour they’re wed.

MRS. FARRAHER All that priomised, Father?

FATHER MacCARTHY	Written down in black and white, Mrs. Farraher, and waiting only to be signed.
MRS. FARRAHER	Well, Shawn, isn't it wonderful entirely?
SHAWN (slowly)	It is.
BRIDIE	Isn't he a trusting old man?
SHAWN	He was never that.
FATHER MacCARTHY	He is greatly changed, Mr. Farraher. I may say, incredibly changed.
DONAGH	Sure it will make no real difference at all, only that we'll be able to call the place our own.
BRIDIE	It'll mean, won't it, DONAGH, that we can go shares with Shawn now, in all the new things he is waiting to put in? It'll mean we can join up the two places the way he and my father wanted always and make a big model farm?
DONAGH	Ay, it'll mean that. It'll mean that, Shawn.
SHAWN (without looking up) –	Will it?
FATHER MacCARTHY	Is there anything you don't understand, Mr. Farraher?
SHAWN (tensely)	There is a deal that I don't understand.
MRS. FARRAHER	What ails you, Shawn?
BRIDIE	Is anything wrong?
SHAWN	I don't understand Daniel Huggard at all, and his sudden and strange conversion.
FATHER MacCARTHY	Well, human nature, Mr. Farraher, human nature...
SHAWN	It is <u>not</u> human nature! I beg your pardon, Father MacCarthy, but it is not human nature as I have ever known it, for a man that has a black, murderous grudge against another, the like of what Daniel Huggard had against John Farraher, and all belonging to him – and that he isn't over yet, mind you, for he will not let me inside his fields nor his fence – 'tis not human nature for a man in that state of mind to be giving all and asking nothing to those he hated.
MRS. FARRAHER	Shawn dear, won't you remember you are speaking to the priest?
SHAWN	What beats me is to know what object he can have in it at all.
	<i>(He is plunged in thought again. DONAGH is watching him).</i>

MRS. FARRAHER Now, Shawn, Son, isn't God Almighty able to do all, and would you put it past His power to bring a change of heart in Daniel Huggard? Take now what is sent you with a thankful spirit, and let Father MacCarthy go, for he'll have a tiring day to-morrow.

DONAGH There's... there's no trick in it, Shawn.

SHAWN I'm sorry, DONAGH. I ought not to have said all that before you. But I don't understand... I don't understand it at all. *(He is thinking)*

DONAGH (suddenly) Shawn!

MRS. FARRAHER Be quiet, DONAGH

BRIDIE What is it? Oh, what is it, DONAGH? I'm feeling terrible uneasy.

DONAGH It'll be all right, Bridie.

FATHER MacCARTHY I can say no more, Mrs. Farraher

MRS. FARRAHER His father was the same.

(SHAWN catches the words)

BRIDIE What ails him, Mother?

DONAGH Mrs. Farraher

MRS. FARRAHER Whist, now, DONAGH...

SHAWN My God!

*(He crushes the paper in his hand and lifting his head slowly stares at DONAGH.
DONAGH springs to his feet, answer the look. ** About to speak).*

BRIDIE (crying out) Shawn, Shawn! Don't look at DONAGH like that!

FATHER MacCARTHY Mr. Farraher, be calm...

MRS. FARRAHER You're frightening Bridie, Shawn! You're frightening Bridie!

SHAWN (half consciously) – Am I? I didn't mean to frighten Bridie... I don't want to frighten Bridie...

BRIDIE 'Tis some wild thought he has. You have me ashamed, Shawn! You to speak like that! You to make quarrels over the money – and with DONAGH - with DONAGH! I wouldn't have believed you'd treat me such a way!

DONAGH Bridie, don't! Don't, Bridie!

SHAWN There's nothing against DONAGH is there? There isn't anything against DONAGH.....

DONAGH God help me, God help me, what am I to do!

SHAWN I want Bridie to go away.

BRIDIE I'll not go, Shawn!

MRS. FARRAHER Go on, Bridie. Go out in the air for a few minutes with DONAGH. There now. She's upset, DONAGH, take her a turn outside.

BRIDIE Will you come, DONAGH?

MRS. FARRAHER Go on now, DONAGH; go on I am asking you!

DONAGH No! Ay, come on, Bridie. I want to think.

MRS. FARRAHER Go now, the two of you!

DONAGH (at the door) I'll be back presently, Shawn.

SHAWN Ay, DONAGH, come back. No, don't you go please, Father MacCarthy. I'd like to ask you a question.

(DONAGH and BRIDIE go. MRS. FARRAHER shuts the door)

FATHER MacCARTHY Certainly, certainly

MRS. FARRAHER Sure Father MacCarthy's busy, Shawn.

SHAWN I'll not keep him. But if you don't mind, Mother, I'd sooner speak to him alone.

MRS. FARRAHER Shawn, Shawn, I can tell you all! Don't go questioning strangers, Shawn! It isn't right. I'll tell you all!

SHAWN I'm wanting only to spare you, Mother. I'll not be long. I'll call you in a few minutes.

MRS. FARRAHER I'll not go, Shawn!

SHAWN I'll have to trouble you to step outside with me, Father MacCarthy.

FATHER MacCARTHY Really, Mr. Farraher... I'd sooner not... there can be no question...

SHAWN I'm asking you as a priest of God, Father MacCarthy, to give me a few minutes alone. 'Tis maybe to root out a black injustice from my thoughts and to save me from a mortal sin.

FATHER MacCARTHY Well, if you put it that way, certainly. I can't refuse.

MRS. FARRAHER Shawn!

SHAWN (gently) There'll be no harm to Bridie, Mother, nor to DONAGH, that I can help. Don't be afeared. Are you going in?

(He holds the door open and she goes in)

MRS. FARRAHER (going in) – Pray for us, Oh, Holy Mother of God!

(SHAWN shuts the door and turns to face the priest)

SHAWN This is the question, Father MacCarthy. How, in your private opinion, did my father meet his death?

FATHER MacCARTHY (after a PAUSE) – it is a question that I can't answer, Mr. Farragher.

SHAWN Why, Heaven, you shall answer!

FATHER MacCARTHY (quietly) – Mr. Farragher!

SHAWN I beg your pardon.

FATHER MacCARTHY You will do no good by threatening me, Mr. Farragher. You are a dangerous man to-night, but there are times when a priest has to be silent, even in the face of death.

SHAWN You mean – the Confessional.

(The Priest bows his head)

Thanks, I'm answered. I'm answered. Please go.

FATHER MacCARTHY I implore you in the name of religion, Mr. Farragher...

SHAWN Please go.

FATHER MacCARTHY (at the door) – May God guide you and restrain you from evil thoughts,

SHAWN Amen

*(The rain is pouring down outside.
SHAWN shuts the door after FATHER MacCARTHY, and leans blindly against it)*

Mother! Mother!

(MRS. FARRAHER rushes in).

MRS. FARRAHER Shawn! Son! What is it?

SHAWN He needn't have died... he needn't have died at all!... And that brute... that devil murdered him!

(He stumbles to the table and sinks on a chair)

 He was murdered, Mother! Murdered!

MRS. FARRAHER Shawn, Shawn! Be quiet in God's name!

SHAWN My father! My father! O, God in Heaven!

MRS. FARRAHER Hush, Boy, for love of pity! It'll do no good; it'll not bring him back to us.

SHAWN That he should have had the power to do it! And I out there... and to stay... nothing done... nothing asked. That black-hearted fiend to be let go free as if it was a cat or a cur-dog he had killed! And the Priest knew. The Priest knew all the time!

MRS. FARRAHER And if he did, what could he do?

SHAWN Isn't it awful, Mother? Isn't it unspeakable?

MRS. FARRAHER Pull yourself together now, Shawn, for pity's sake! There's the rain down and Bridie will be coming in. Sure a man must die, and if some old tramp or tinker killed him, wasn't it the Will of God all the same?

SHAWN (rising) It was no tramp or tinker killed him. And it was not the Will of Goid.

MRS. FARRAHER Heaven pity us, what are you saying now?

SHAWN (quietly) Nothing, Mother, I'll say no names. I'll say no names yet a while. I'll wait. I'll wait till I see DONAGH.

MRS. FARRAHER Mother of Mercy, spare us! I'll... I'll take a cloak out to her... they'll be up the lane... I'll find them... I'll find them *(she rushes out into the rain)*

SHAWN Ay... It'll be best to wait... I'll wait for DONAGH

(He sinks wearily upon the settle).

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ATONEMENT

ACT II

SCENE II

SCENE:

The same room, ten minutes later.
The rain is still pouring down outside.

SHAWN is still sitting on the settle.

He rises, crosses to the door, opens it, peers into the darkness and shuts the door again.

He moves restlessly about and is standing by the table when the door is opened and MRS. FARRAHER comes in with BRIDIE

MRS. FARRAHER takes BRIDIE'S shawl and hangs it with her own before the fire.

BRIDIE stays to bolt the door

MRS. FARRAHER

'Tis the wildest night...

SHAWN

Where's Donagh?

MRS. FARRAHER

The rain is hurling down out of the heavens... drenched to the skin he was... and coughing... I had to make him run home for fear he'd be destroyed...

SHAWN (breaking in incredulously) – Run home out of the rain!

BRIDIE (astonished)

Mother!

MRS. FARRAHER

Go straight in now, Bridie, and take off your wet things. You'd best go to your bed and I'll bring you a sup of hot milk. Go on now, like a good girl.

(She is putting on a saucepan)

SHAWN

By heaven, Mother, you're lying to me!

MRS. FARRAHER

I am not, Shawn!... Or if I am 'tis that you have me half out of my senses with the wild way you have been going on...

SHAWN

Where's Donagh?

MRS. FARRAHER

For pity's sake... You gave me your promise, Shawn, you'd ask no more to-night...

SHAWN

Why didn't Donagh come back to speak to me?

MRS. FARRAHER

I sent him home, I'm telling you...

BRIDIE (behind, by the window) – I'll not have it, Mother! I'll have no twisted words put between Shawn and Donagh. 'Twas some other thing you said to him.

MRS. FARRAHER (fiercely, aside to Bridie) – For your life’s sake, be quiet!

SHAWN (standing at the table still) – How long, I wonder, have you been lying to me?

MRS. FARRAHER In the name of pity, Shawn, don’t look at me like that!

BRIDIE (coming down between them) – What ails you, Shawn? What is it at all! What is it ails the whole world?

SHAWN God pity you, Bridie...

(to MRS. FARRAHER, slowly)

You have known the whole time... you and the priest.

BRIDIE Known what, Shawn? You have my heart dead with terror. Something about Donagh it is, and he couldn’t tell me. Wild and speechless with misery he was out in the storm. Is it something about the money Shawn?

SHAWN Are you lying to me too, I wonder?

MRS. FARRAHER She is not, she is not, she never lied to you!

BRIDIE For the love of pity, Shawn... Shawn, would you torture me? Tell me what is in your mind!

MRS. FARRAHER For the love of pity don’t ask! Don’t ask him that question, Bridie!... Shawn, Shawn, can you not let it alone? These long months I have kept it to myself and it burning up my heart with the lonesome dread... And would you cry it out to destroy her now? Can you not let it be?

SHAWN I can not let it be.

BRIDIE My God, Shawn, if you don’t tell me, I’ll go screaming mad through the glen!

SHAWN My father was murdered, Bridie.

BRIDIE Father!... Father... murdered! Shawn! My God, Shawn... murdered!

(She clings to him trembling)

MRS. FARRAHER (bitterly) – A kind day’s work you have done.

BRIDIE Who did it, Shawn? Who under the sky of Heaven would do it?

SHAWN Do you not know?

BRIDIE Know? not... not...

SHAWN (touching the Deed lying on the table) – That's the price of it, Bridie.

(She is slowly understanding)

Poor girl! Poor wee girl

MRS. FARRAHER A good day's work.

BRIDIE (in the chair by the table) – It was for that... the old man... wanted me...

SHAWN To tie my hands. To tie my hands. But they're not tied yet.

MRS. FARRAHER Have you now done enough? ... Hush, Daughter... Hush!
You'll kill yourself! There, there now... Sure 'tis all past and
done! Whist, now, Bridie... You'll be destroyed for your
wedding!

BRIDIE My wedding! Oh, Mother Mary, my wedding...

SHAWN Don't Bridie.

BRIDIE (rising and facing him) – I'll wed Donagh on Monday, Shawn, it'll not separate me
and Donagh. 'Tis no more to do with him, than if some wild
beast out of the hills had killed my father. You can no more
put blame on Donagh...

SHAWN Donagh lied to me. He had a right to trust me Bridie. If I'd
had the whole story out from him I couldn't have stirred a
hand. But he lied to me.

BRIDIE What else could he do, Shawn? What else could any man
do? Would you ask him to inform against his own father?

SHAWN His father!

BRIDIE Ay, Shawn! Dan Huggard's Donagh's father, the same as
John Farraher was yours.

SHAWN It is not the same! A murderous, thieving black-guard that
hanging would be too good for...

MRS. FARRAHER My God, Shawn, any man would have lied to you to-night!
You with red vengeance in your eyes...

SHAWN 'Tis not to-night only. These long months he has been lying
to me and betraying me. What right has he coming here after
Bridie? With his cursed money...

BRIDIE He had the best right, Shawn! I wanted him. Draining my
heart with wanting him I was. I am wanting him now!... I
am wanting him!

(She sinks upon the chair crying helplessly)

SHAWN For pity's sake, Bridie, don't cry.

MRS. FARRAHER Will you listen to me, Shawn! I'm the mother that bore you. You have a right to listen to me.

SHAWN What is the earthly world have you to say?

*(She is standing at the foot of the table looking over BRIDIE at his mother.
MRS. FARRAHER sits down and leans across to him)*

MRS. FARRAHER I have this to say, Shawn. What way could any of us know was it murder at all? Your father walking without lamp or lantern, in the black night, and he riding up behind him on his horse. Why wouldn't it be an accident?

SHAWN Would a man that rode him down by accident leave him there? Would he rob him? Roll him into the ditch and leave him there?

BRIDIE (sobbing) My poor father! My poor father!

SHAWN You'll want to find something cleverer than that to say. In the name of all that's holy, Mother, what earthly cause have you to be cheating and concealing it? You...

MRS. FARRAHER Ah, listen to me, Son!

SHAWN I'm listening, Mother. But I'm not pretending to be understanding you.

MRS. FARRAHER What I did, Shawn – hiding it – letting on I didn't know – 'twas for your sake and Bridie's sake only – what else would it be? She hadn't been home with us a week before I could see the way it was with them, and by August they were that proud and happy with one another – what way would I have the heart to be telling her?

SHAWN Donagh should have told her.

MRS. FARRAHER I wouldn't let him, Shawn... God knows he wanted to.

BRIDIE Why didn't you let him, Mother? Oh, why didn't you let him?

MRS. FARRAHER To save you from misery and the terror of death, and a swift old age.

BRIDIE You haven't saved me in the end.

MRS. FARRAHER I will save you... I'll save you yet.

SHAWN (with bitter patience) – Have you more to say, Mother?

MRS. FARRAHER I have, Shawn! Oh, you are terrible hard – you don't understand... a man couldn't. Listen! The dream of my life

this marriage has been. Bridie to be up there with riches to spend, making the place what it might be... I do have her near me always in the last of my old age... Donagh to be like another son to us, in place of the boy that died. And your father's wish it was, no less than mine... Toiling and pinching the long years we were to have what would be fit to give them with her. And when the great love sprung up in June between the two of them, 'twas like God's Blessed Mother herself, gifting us for our prayers. And now when all is fair before them – you to be coming at the latter end and putting frost and ruin on their lives!

SHAWN ‘Tis not I doing anything at all but what I must do. What joy
would I have to be hurting Bridie?

MRS. FARRAHER Then you'll let it alone, Son? You'll let it alone.

SHAWN Mother, I'll not let it alone.

MRS. FARRAHER Can't you see that it will be blasting of the whole world,
Shawn, if you go asking any question now at all? Can't you
see? Will you think what'll happen...

SHAWN I can think only one thought this night, Mother, and see one sight only. My father walking alone on the dark road, and that devil of Hell riding him down; riding him down and robbing him... not repenting... not seeking help... but picking his pockets in cold blood... leaving him in the side of the ditch to be found by the first tramp... My God, Mother, you're unnatural!

BRIDIE Oh, 'tis awful... awful... not even the priest!

MRS. FARRAHER ‘Tis past and done, Shawn – past and done. You can’t mend it; you can’t mend it by making new misery. Would your father himself be wishing it? For his sake – if it would bring him back to life itself, Shawn – would he bid you to be hurting Bridie?

SHAWN He would not, that's true, he would not.

BRIDIE (sobbing, to herself only) – It'll do nothing now for my father us to be broken...

MRS. FARRAHER (eager to pursue an advantage) – And, listen, Shawn, hasn't good come of it in the end? The priest himself was saying it – Good to Bridie and Donagh, with the great things he is doing for them to make atonement. Good to yourself, Shawn...

SHAWN Good? Good to me!

MRS. FARRAHER Ay, Shawn, all your great plans... the wonderful schemes you had that wanted only his place and this to be joined... He'd not have given his consent in the old days if you'd gone down to him on your bended knees; but now look, pouring

out favours on us he is, till their place will soon be as good as your own...

SHAWN

Mother!

MRS. FARRAHER

God rewarding us, the priest said it was... God rewarding them that kept His peace. You'll not throw away his gift, Shawn – the holy gift of God!

SHAWN

The holy gift of God! May you be forgiven for a blasphemous word. The filthy gift of a damned murderer! His promises, his favours, his money. Money, paid to us for my father's death, the way you'd chuck a man the price of his cur-dog you'd run over on the road. Blood-money! Hush-money, to bribe us to forget my father and bide content. And you're for taking it; you're for consenting and accepting all – for letting it alone, My God, if he'd been the worst husband and the worst father in creation he'd have deserved better of us than that.

(He tears the Settlement paper)

MRS. FARRAHER

I can't talk to you, Shawn. You're not my son at all. You're hard and fearful.

SHAWN

I'm my father's son.

BRIDIE

Will you listen to me, Shawn?

SHAWN

I'm tired of listening, Bridie. I have things to do.

BRIDIE

We'll not touch a penny of his money, Shawn, Donagh'll not want to... if he saw it that way he wouldn't want to touch it. We'll go out of this place and work, the two of us. We'll go out to America.

SHAWN

Would Donagh do that?

MRS. FARRAHER (to Shawn fiercely) – Would you ask him to?

SHAWN

'Tis the only way he'll get Bridie.

BRIDIE (standing still before him) – I'm marrying him, Shawn

MRS. FARRAHER

It'll be ruin and beggary to us all.

BRIDIE

I don't care. I care nothing at all. I'd be satisfied and I breaking stones on the roads of the West, if Donagh would be with me and not sorrowful. He is the only thing I am asking of my God.

SHAWN

God make him worth you, Bridie... I'll send him down to you now.

MRS. FARRAHER

Where are you going, Shawn, in the name of all?

SHAWN Is it asking me not to go you are, Bridie?

BRIDIE I'm afeared for Donagh.

SHAWN I have to go. If I swear not to hurt Donagh will that do?

BRIDIE How could I trust you? You with savagery in your heart and a loaded gun to your hand?

SHAWN But 'tis not Donagh

(He PAUSES, then draws the revolver slowly from his pocket)

You're maybe right. 'Tis not Donagh I'd harm, but 'tis as well maybe not to have it at all.

MRS. FARRAHER You'll not go up without it?

BRIDIE For God's sake, leave it, Shawn!

(He lays it on the table)

SHAWN There you are, Bridie. I'll go up the way I am. Won't you trust me now, Bridie?

BRIDIE (crying out) I wish to Heaven, Shawn, you wouldn't go.

(She stands between him and the door)

SHAWN (holding her gently) – I'm going, Bridie. Listen. Donagh'll not be hurt. I give you my living word of honour. Will that do?

BRIDIE (wearily) I'd trust your word, Shawn.

SHAWN Don't you know, Bridie, that I wouldn't hurt you for the world if I could help it? Not to save my life. Don't you know I wouldn't?

(She makes no answer)

Let me go now.

(She moves aside. He unbolts the door.)

MRS. FARRAHER Ay, let him go. He is a fool, and a strong man's folly must get its way.

SHAWN Mother

MRS. FARRAHER (hard) – You have made your choice, Shawn, between the living and the dead. May it bring you joy.

(Shawn opens the door. He turns to Bridie)

SHAWN

I'll send Donagh down to you now, Bridie.

(He waits but she does not answer or look at him)

He won't be long.

(He GOES, closing the door).

*(MRS. FARRAHER is sitting by the hearth, the fire is out.
BRIDIE sits down wearily at the table.
There is a PAUSE)*

MRS. FARRAHER

'Tis raining still.

BRIDIE

Ay. *(A PAUSE)*

MRS. FARRAHER

What time is it now?

(BRIDIE looks at her wrist-watch)

BRIDIE

After ten.

(She laughs unsteadily and holds out her left hand)

The Killarney dog, Mother... the Killarney dog!

(She is crying helplessly)

THE CURTAIN FALLS

TIME The same night

SCENE The living-room at HUGGARD'S; a comfortable room, but at its best.
At the BACK a window, already shuttered and barred, and a door with heavy bolts.
At the RIGHT a staircase to rooms above.
At the LEFT the hearth with the smouldering ashes of a fire; before it DONAGH'S coat hanging up to dry.
Under the window, in the corner made by the projection of the staircase, is a table, on it a candle, a lantern and a small lamp.
Only the lamp is lighted and the room is full of shadows.

DANIEL HUGGARD is sitting by the fire; he is a stringy little man with small, blinking eyes and twitching hands. In repose, he has a wizened look of age. There is a pipe between his teeth, but he is not smoking.
DONAGH is sitting at the table with his back to the room. There is a newspaper before him, but he is not reading.
There is SILENCE but for the loud ticking of a clock in the corner.
HUGGARD is thinking.

DONAGH (restless under the pressure of the silence) – Are you not going to bed, Da?

HUGGARD (taking the pipe out of his mouth) – Wanted to be thinking it over, did he?

DONAGH Ay.

HUGGARD Well let him think it over. I can think, too. Get you to bed.

DONAGH Will I leave the lamp in your room for you?

(There is no answer so he takes it leaving the candle lit. He goes to the stairs).

You'd best be coming up. The fire's nearly out and you'll get your death with the cold.

HUGGARD Go you to bed.

(DONAGH goes up stairs
HUGGARD listens for the shutting of his door, then lays down his pipe and rises. He is as agile as a monkey).

So he is thinking it over, is he?

(He bolts the door with great care)

Well, I'm ready for him.

(He goes to the wall beside the fireplace where there is a small cupboard sunk in the brick. He opens it with a key which is attached to a cord under his coat, peers in, is satisfied and closes the cupboard door, leaving it on the latch.)

We're ready for him.

(He goes nimbly and quietly upstairs and his door is heard to shut.

After a moment DONAGH comes cautiously down, shading his lamp. He goes quickly for his coat, puts it on, unbolts the door without a sound and, leaving it ajar, goes to the table. He is lighting the lantern when the door is pushed open from without and SHAWN comes in).

DONAGH (turning and seeing him with relief) – Shawn

SHAWN (throwing down his cap) – You made a mistake, not to come back to me, Donagh.

DONAGH But sure... she told me you said I was to wait till the morning, on account of Bridie! She wasn't lying to me!

SHAWN She was lying to you. And you lied to me to-night Donagh. 'Tis a mistake to lie to me,

DONAGH Shawn – God knows – I was on my way to you this minute.

SHAWN (smiling a little) – I thought you would be.

DONAGH (in passionate distress) – I to lie to you in the end of all! Like one smothering in a bog, I have been, craving and struggling to tell you all. And when you asked me the question out – to tell you a lie!

SHAWN (sternly) Telling lies and writing lies and living lies you have been these long months. This place is rotten and stinking with the fume of lies!

DONAGH (passionately) – God knows all I wanted was to get quit of it!

SHAWN You had your chance.

DONAGH (violently) I had no chance! I never had a chance.

SHAWN You had your chance this night, Donagh, when I asked you a straight question and you gave me a dark, twisted answer. I went to you in my heavy trouble and you lied to me.

DONAGH God knows, Shawn, if I lied 'twas not for want of pitying you, and you with the devils of rage and sorrow tearing you! ***I'd have split the soul out of my body, you know well, Shawn, to have eased you.*** 'Twas the desperate fearful look you had, scared all thoughts out of me but the one. If I lied, 'twas to save my father's life, and you'd have done the same yourself.

and the brute beast that did it to be living and thriving, and bribing us – bribing us, Donagh, with his land and his beasts and his filthy money, to let it alone!

DONAGH My God, Shawn – I never thought of it that way at all!

SHAWN Well, 'tis time you thought of it that way, for 'tis that way I am thinking of it and no other. Where is he now?

DONAGH Cowering in his bed, I daresay, or under it, for the terror of your voice, or maybe... for God's sake get out of this, Shawn! You could never know what way he'll be. The queer, unholy look, he does get on his face when your name's spoken... Get out of this now, Shawn for the love of God!

SHAWN Is it for that I came, do you think? I'm staying Donagh. Let you get down to Bridie, for she is tearing her heart with dread for you. That is, if you are going.

DONAGH And is it leave you here?

SHAWN Ay. Leave me here.

DONAGH Not for my life, I wouldn't.

SHAWN (remorselessly) – 'Tis your last chance, Donagh. You can have your choice. Friends with the man that killed my father you can be, or friends with me. You can't be both.

DONAGH (distracted) I can't leave him, Shawn! You know well I can't leave him.

SHAWN So you're wanting his money after all.

DONAGH You to say that! You to say the thing you no more think is true...

SHAWN Well, if 'tis not that. Willie, in the name of goodness what is it?

DONAGH 'Tis that he's an old, miserable sinner, with the curse of the world on him, and the curse of God.

SHAWN He's all that. And that is why you're wishful to stay with him?

DONAGH (desperately) – There's no one else to stay.

SHAWN (ominously) He'll need no one.

DONAGH I tell you, Shawn, if he thinks he is alone for two minutes he does be crying out and wailing like a frightened child. The black terror of death is on him, Shawn, and the red terror of hell, and he reeling to his grave.

SHAWN What's that to you?

DONAGH He's my father, Shawn! He is my father – the same as John Farraher was yours!

SHAWN It is not the same! (*quietly*) – Well, 'tis between him and Bridie, Donagh – you have your choice.

DONAGH (distracted) I can't leave him! I can't, Shawn! 'Tis not fair, the choice you are offering me. 'Tis no choice at all.

SHAWN Not fair? (*He is growing tired*)

DONAGH Is it, Shawn? Is it? How could I leave him to go alone to his death? Could any living son do that on his own father? Aren't you asking what no man could do, Shawn? Aren't you asking what you couldn't do yourself?

SHAWN (wearily) Maybe I am... I don't know. I don't know, Donagh... Maybe I am.

DONAGH He'll not be long in it, Shawn. He is a sick man. Couldn't you let me wait till he's gone?

SHAWN Maybe; maybe. I can think no more now. I'll not be unfair to you, Donagh; I'll not be hard. I have work to think of now. Go on you to Bridie. (*He sinks on chair*)

DONAGH There's not another man... Och, Shawn!

(*He goes to the door, inarticulate in his relief*)

You're going yourself?

SHAWN When I'm done here, I'm coming.

DONAGH (turning) What are you going to do? (*Moving to him quickly*) In the name of Heaven, Shawn – what are you wanting to do?

SHAWN (slowly, motionless) – I don't know

DONAGH You'll not... You'd not lay hands on him, Shawn?

SHAWN Would I not?

WILLIE **You couldn't do it, Shawn! He's an old man.**

SHAWN (rising, violently) – He is not an old man!

DONAGH **You daren't! He's half crazy now. You'd scare him silly!**

SHAWN (fiercely) **I'll get the truth out of him this night if I have to pull the black lying tongue of him out by the roots!**

DONAGH You'll not lay a finger on him!

(Old HUGGARD appears on the stairs, crouching where he cannot be seen from the room. He is without his coat. He listens.)

SHAWN Who'll stop me?

DONAGH I will!

SHAWN (contemptuously) – You!

DONAGH Shawn, Shawn, don't force me to go against you now!

SHAWN I'm forcing you to do nothing, but to leave me alone.

DONAGH You are, Shawn, and you know it. I'm not a child. You know well that if you go threatening my father, whatever he is, I'll have to fight you. For God's sake have pity on me, Shawn!

SHAWN I'm past pitying.

DONAGH Leave him alone, Shawn and I'll do anything! I'd die, Shawn, to make it up to you. I've done what I could – God knows I've done what I could. I've had no other thought since the black night he told me – blubbing it out in his terror like a daft child and withering the heart in my body with the words of it. I've done all I could, Shawn. All but giving up Bridie!

SHAWN (bitterly) Ay, all but giving up Bridie.

DONAGH Could a soul parching in Hell refuse the cup was offered him by an angel of God...

(He breaks down completely. Sits down)

SHAWN (looking down at him, gently) – Poor Donagh! You had a bad time.

DONAGH It was Hell... Hell...

SHAWN God forgive me... I know well you did your best.

DONAGH I'll give her up now if you ask me to.

SHAWN (exhausted) I'll ask nothing. I'll ask no more. I'm not fit this night to speak or to think or anything at all.

DONAGH (rising) I wish to pity I'd been your brother, Shawn!

SHAWN Well, please God, you will be. Call down the old man now, Donagh. I'll not kill him.

DONAGH You couldn't trust yourself, Shawn!

SHAWN I can well. I'm queer and tired. I couldn't kill a sheep to-night. (*smiling*) Sure, if I had wanted to make an end of him, Donagh, wouldn't I have brought my gun.

(*HUGGARD, hearing, begins to come down*)

DONAGH (crossing to stairs) – He'll maybe be dangerous, Shawn, if 'tis not scared and whimpering he is... you could never know which way it'll take him...

SHAWN I'm ready for him.

DONAGH God spare us, here he is!

(*DONAGH is at the foot of the stairs. SHAWN behind, against the table. HUGGARD drags past as if without seeing them and crosses, shivering, to the fire. He is groping stupidly and has a look of broken old age*)

DONAGH (following him, wondering) – Are you sick, Da?

HUGGARD (moaning) Sick and cold... sick and cold.

DONAGH Put on a coat... (*taking off his own*) – put this over you, Da.

(*HUGGARD drags his chair close to the fire and sits shivering*)

SHAWN (watching) He is an old man, right enough.

DONAGH I don't know at all what ails him.

SHAWN Is it a stroke, I wonder? (*HUGGARD laughs softly*). Or do you think is he shaming?

DONAGH I wouldn't put it past him.

HUGGARD (feebly) Sleep at the fire... I'll maybe sleep at the fire, Donagh... put out the light.

(*DONAGH is turning down the lamp*)

SHAWN Do not put it out!

(*DONAGH leaves it turned low*)
(*Crosses down to HUGGARD*)

Look here, Daniel Huggard. You know me and I guess you know my business.

HUGGARD (laughing foolishly) – Ha, ha! Poor old Farraher... poor old John.

DONAGH John?

HUGGARD Riz out of your grave did you? Thinking to scare me maybe. But, sure who minds a ghost?

DONAGH He is raving, Shawn! The wits are astray on him with the fright of your voice...

HUGGARD Ghosts tell no tales...

DONAGH Da!

SHAWN Whist, Willie!

HUGGARD Ghosts spoil no bargains! (*loud*) – Ghosts thief no money that another man should have had... (*relapsing into his chair*). Who minds a ghost.

DONAGH Ay, Shawn. I could have had you all. At the Puck Fair it was. Our old Bogey – he had him tinkered up to sell, and Widow Keenan of Killorglin was for buying him.

SHAWN The dirty blackguard! I guess John Farraher came in there!

DONAGH Ay... and she bought your BanShee instead, Shawn – that's what made him real mad.

HUGGARD (*muttering*) Ay, that's what made me real mad... real mad... real mad!

SHAWN The miserable old hound!

DONAGH Shawn... Will you not go down now and leave us. I'm thinking he has some sickness...

SHAWN He'll have a worse sickness before I'm done with him. (*standing over HUGGARD and speaking clearly*) – I'll not leave him to the hangman!

HUGGARD (*shrinking and crying out*) – Donagh! Donagh!

DONAGH (*imploring*) Let him alone, Shawn!

SHAWN (*violently*) By God, if he's shaming... Get up out of that! Get up and face me! Come on!

(*HUGGARD springs from his chair and cowers against the brick wall*)

HUGGARD Don't let him hurt me, DONAGH! Don't let him touch me!

DONAGH You wouldn't harm a sick man, Shawn!

SHAWN He is not sick! Don't you try tricking with me! (*to HUGGARD*) – come on! Out here, or I'll pull you out! You'll go down on your knees...

(*He makes to seize HUGGARD. DONAGH springs between*)

DONAGH I can't let you do it, Shawn!

SHAWN I'm not asking leave! (*struggling to pass Donagh*). I'll make his body as black as his filthy soul!

DONAGH You'll not touch him!

SHAWN Get out of the light, Donagh!

HUGGARD DONAGH!

DONAGH I'll not get out of the light!

(He flings himself against Shawn, who, unprepared, is thrown half across the room. DONAGH reels and leans against the table, facing Shawn, who rises and stands dizzily against the staircase. Meanwhile HUGGARD, swift and powerful, has seized his gun from the cupboard in the wall and is covering SHAWN).

DONAGH Shawn! You're not hurt! I didn't mean to throw you... (*he turns and sees HUGGARD*). My God! Shawn!

HUGGARD (gleefully) He didn't bring his gun! He didn't bring his gun!

DONAGH Father! For God's sake...

HUGGARD (violently) Stand still! The two of you! (*slowly*) – or by Heaven, I'll shoot.

DONAGH Shawn! Shawn!

SHAWN My own fault, Donagh. (*to HUGGARD*) – What do you want?

HUGGARD (slowly) What I've wanted these long months, Shawn Farraher.

DONAGH He'll not hurt you, Da! He swore to me he wouldn't.

HUGGARD Will he swear again?

SHAWN You'll hang in earnest if you shoot me!

HUGGARD As good swing for two as for one.

DONAGH (starting forward) – He'll not give you up! He swore to me he wouldn't. Put it down!

SHAWN (sharply) **** handwritten bit is not clear but says: Get out of the way, Donagh..... but then is unreadable.
Below it is this bit:*****
Mind yourself, Donagh! (*quietly*). For God's sake remember Bridie.

(She sees SHAWN'S face and throws her arms about him in an agony of compassion).

Shawn! Shawn!!

THE CURTAIN FALLS