I-1-1

ACT I

Scene 1

SETTING: The early 1940s; the kitchen of a lower- middle-class apartment in an

old industrial city of the Northeast.

AT RISE: Maggie Bailey Santorelli is wiping the

kitchen table, sobbing softly to herself as she does so.

(DESMOND SANTORELLI enters.)

DESMOND

Ma, the twins won't do their turn on the rosary.

MAGGIE

Tell them I said to.

DESMOND

I can't wake 'em up.

MAGGIE

You mean to tell me they're asleep? Then for Jesus God's sake let them sleep. It's little enough sleep I'll be getting tonight or any other if your brother dies.

DESMOND

Is he really gonna?

MAGGIE

He might.

DESMOND

Will he die if the twins don't do the rosary for him?

MAGGIE

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Desmond, are ya daft? What kind of God would punish a pair of four-year-olds for falling asleep?

DESMOND

Will the Lord take Jamie if I don't?

I-1-2

MAGGIE

It's not a risk worth taking. Now get back in there on your knees and pray. If for no other reason than your own good health. Thank the Lord it's not you in there dying of sepsis.

(She swats his rear end with the rag

and he runs off clutching the rosary.

A few seconds later we hear him from

offstage loudly reciting the Hail Mary.

MAGGIE goes to the doorway and

sticks her head in.)

Lower it, Desmond. You're not supposed to wake the dead, just try to keep your brother from joining them.

(She goes back to cleaning the kitchen.

There is a knock on the door and she

answers it. A priest enters.)

Ah Jesus, Johnny, not you.

FATHER TRACY

I prefer to be called Father Tracy these days Maggie.

MAGGIE

(extends her hand)

Fine, then I'm Mrs. Santorelli to you.

FATHER TRACY (laughs sheepishly)

You're right. It does sound foolish when you say it like that.

MAGGIE

Don't be forgetting I was there when you wet your pants in third grade.

FATHER TRACY

How could I? You've never let me forget. As I recall I had to carry your books home from school for the rest of the year for the price of keeping my secret.

MAGGIE

And wasn't it worth it? I'm certain they'd have never let you in the seminary with that in your permanent record.

FATHER TRACY (laughs)

You've still got your wit Maggie, in spite of everything.

MAGGIE

Everything being what?

I-1-3

FATHER TRACY

Oh, you know, your troubles.

MAGGIE

So I've got troubles have I? That's the parish gossip?

FATHER TRACY

Oh come on Maggie, you know what I mean.

MAGGIE

Sure I do. I’ve got the same problems as everyone else. It's just that mine started less than nine months before I got married.

FATHER TRACY

You know people are always looking for a reason to talk.

MAGGIE

For God's sake, it's been thirteen years. Haven't they come up with something new by now? Besides, I'd think there was some sort of dispensation or statute of limitation on shame? That's supposing I was ashamed to begin with.

FATHER TRACY

Speaking of your indiscretion, where is he?

MAGGIE (angry)

I will not have you talk like that about Bailey, or any of my boys. He's out working, if you must now. Working hard, trying to sell some of my knitting. He always does it this time of year so he can get enough money for a turkey for our Christmas dinner. He's a good boy.

FATHER TRACY

He is a good boy. But it's not Bailey I'm here about. I'm here for Jamie. I heard...

MAGGIE

What did you hear?

FATHER TRACY

Well... I heard he's... that he's dyin'. That's what people are saying so I came to see if I could help you and to... to...

I-1-4

MAGGIE (solemnly)

I know. The last rites. I'm not sure we're ready for that. Any of us.

FATHER TRACY

(pats her hand gently)

We'll just sit here and talk a bit then. We'll talk about

Jamie.

MAGGIE

Getting your eulogy ready?

FATHER TRACY

No Maggie, it's not that at all. I just think it'd be good for you to talk.

MAGGIE

I think you're probably right. For a change. But I... I just don't know what to say.

FATHER TRACY

Well, he's quite the boy, that's for sure.

MAGGIE

(suddenly animated)

He is, isn't he. Remember the time you came looking for him when he was truant?

FATHER TRACY

I'll never forget it. I saw you two in the window that day, you know, playing cards together.

MAGGIE

I figured you did.

FATHER TRACY

And there you were. Telling me how sick the poor boy was. Couldn't keep a thing in his stomach, raging fever, barely able to lift his head off the pillow. Then out he comes, cool as can be, wearing your pink bathrobe, smoking a cigarette. “Good morning Father Tracy,” he says. “How nice of you to drop by.”

MAGGIE

I told him to go into the bathroom and stay there 'til you'd gone. Wouldn't you think just once that boy could do what I

I-1-5

MAGGIE (Cont.)

told him?

FATHER TRACY

Not Jamie.

MAGGIE

I think you got two or three sermons out of that one, didn't you?

FATHER TRACY

At least. So tell me Maggie. What happened ? What happened to poor Jamie.

MAGGIE

He was sick for days. Really sick. Delirious sometimes and throwing up green bile.

FATHER TRACY

His appendix? Like Florence.

MAGGIE (after a pause)

Yes. Just like Florence. My poor cousin. She was the closest thing I ever had to a sister.

FATHER TRACY (sighs heavily)

Then why -

MAGGIE

Then why did we go to Quinlan? That's you're question, isn't it?

FATHER TRACY

You know it is.

MAGGIE

Because he's all we can afford. All the Irish. And all the poor people in this town. Irish or otherwise. Quinlan's all we can afford.

FATHER TRACY

For God's sake Maggie, the man's a butcher. You got a kid with a cold or a case of measles he's your man but he killed Florence and everybody knows it. I buried that girl and you eulogized her. Quinlan's not a surgeon to begin with and he's going on

I-1-6 FATHER TRACY (Cont.)

seventy. Why would you let him lay a hand on Jamie or any of your boys? You know the church would've helped you, don't you? Give me that much at least. We helped your father and your brother Jim didn't we.

MAGGIE

You did. And I'm grateful. It's Joe. He's proud and he wanted to pay himself.

FATHER TRACY

Pride goeth before a fall -

MAGGIE  
Shut up. Shut your goddamn mouth Johnny I mean it. This isn't the time for your nonsense.

FATHER TRACY

All right Maggie calm down. Tell me then, if you’re paying Quinlan why isn't Jamie at least in the hospital.

MAGGIE

He sent him home. Said we were wasting our money and we should take him home and let him die in his own bed. In peace.

(A long, pregnant pause ensues.)

FATHER TRACY

You've got to call him Maggie. You have to call Steven.

MAGGIE

No.

FATHER TRACY

I am serious now. When I talk now about not letting pride get in your way, I'm talking from my heart. You and Stevie were the best of friends. Since childhood. He's a fine man and the best doctor in town. I don't know what happened between the two of you and I don't want to know. It's none of my business. But Jamie is my business. He's the business I'm here to discuss right now.

(Pause)

MAGGIE

I love Jamie more than other four put together, you know.

I-1-7

FATHER TRACY

Now that's a sin Margaret Bailey.

MAGGIE

Then so be it. If I said any different I'd be lying. And that would be a sin.

(Her tone changes, softens.)

He's the only one that's like me John. The only one that's got my heart and my spirit inside him. That boy laying in there dying is the reason I get out of bed in the morning.

(She collapses into a chair; puts her

head in her hands, and sobs. FATHER

TRACY goes to her and puts his hand on

her shoulder.)

FATHER TRACY

There, there Maggie. Jamie might pull through this and be just fine. He's a tough one. We all know that. But if he doesn't... well… he doesn't and you'll just have to accept it as God's will.

MAGGIE

God's will be damned! How in hell did the Johnny Tracy I knew go off to seminary and come back spouting that kind of rubbish! What did they do John, give you a frontal lobotomy? They sure did rip the sense right out of your brain. Who in their right mind tells a grieving woman whose favorite son is dying that it's God's will to take him? What class of an addle-pated moron are you to be talking pious nonsense like that to me?

FATHER TRACY

You're right, Maggie, you're right. Talk like that is for ninety-year-old widows and I should know better than to resort to platitudes with an old friend like you.

MAGGIE (deflated)

I'm old all right. Old and ugly. And fat.

FATHER TRACY

You're not, Maggie. You're not any of those things. You're still young and more beautiful than ever. And not the least bit fat. You're just right now. You always were a bit too skinny for my taste.

I-1-8

MAGGIE

Not that you ever noticed, Reverend Tracy.

FATHER TRACY

Of course I noticed. I noticed plenty. We all did. None of us boys could take our eyes off you. You were the belle of St. Joseph's parish and you're still the prettiest woman in my congregation. And remember, I've got the best view in the house.

MAGGIE

Now you're really talking nonsense.

FATHER TRACY

Every word of it is true. All the boys were in love with Maggie Bailey.

MAGGIE

For all the good it did me.

FATHER TRACY

Now, Maggie, let's not go down that path You knew what you were getting into when you took up with Joe Santorelli.

MAGGIE

Stop. Right there. You're damn right we won't go down that path. Ever. You have no idea what you're talking about. So stop. Right now.

FATHER TRACY

All right Maggie. Calm yourself. You made a mistake, that's all. Joe seems like he's settled right down. I see him in church with you and the boys almost every Sunday. He is good to you, right? I don't need to be worrying about you, do I?

MAGGIE

He's a good man. Better than you will ever know.

FATHER TRACY

Well, that's good then. Many girls who make a mistake like you did end up with a mean one or a drinker or-

MAGGIE

Joe's none of those things.

I-1-9

FATHER TRACY

And he stood by you. Married you. No one put a gun to his head, as I recall.

MAGGIE

(struggling for self-control)

No, they didn't.

FATHER TRACY

And he's given up his womanizing, right? I know how the Italian men can be but in all the years you've been married I've never heard a thing about -

MAGGIE

No. Never. Joe's been a good and faithful husband to me. And it wasn't a mistake either.

FATHER TRACY

Oh... yes... I see. You and Joe planned it then. Was it so his family would have to accept you? A girl who wasn't Italian? Well... I'm surprised. Though it's not as uncommon as you'd think. But that doesn't make it right. It's still-

MAGGIE

John Tracy, if you say it's a sin, I'll kill you. And that would be the biggest sin of all. A woman like me, with five young boys to raise, sitting on death row because a jackass like you didn't have enough sense to keep his mouth shut. So for everyone's sake, please just shut up. We don't need two deaths in this house tonight.

FATHER TRACY

I think this would be a good time for me to hear your confession.

MAGGIE

(dropping to her knees beside his chair)

Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been about one month since my last confession. These are my sins. I'm poor. I have too many children. I'm tired all the time. I leave dirty dishes in the sink on a regular basis. I'm jealous of my sister because her husband has a car and mine doesn't. And I hate John Tracy because he used to be a fat smelly little boy with snot running down his face and he grew up to be a fat pompous windbag who thinks he's God almighty and better than everyone else. I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to sin no more and to

I-1-10

MAGGIE (Cont.)

avoid the near occasions of sin.

FATHER TRACY

Well, Maggie, I do hope you're ashamed now. Because I'm certainly ashamed for you.

MAGGIE

I am indeed. Ashamed of myself for letting you through the door in the first place. So now in order to avoid a near occasion of sin such as killing you, I'll have to ask you to leave.

FATHER TRACY

Not without blessing Jamie. I can't let him die in a state of sin.

MAGGIE

Oh for God's sake. What kind of sin can a twelve-year-old be guilty of?

FATHER TRACY

Now Maggie you know the answer to that as well as I do. You've learned your Christian doctrine and had your sacraments and you know that-

MAGGIE

I know all about your precious doctrine and I don't care. All I know is that I've got a child laying in the other room dying of septic poisoning and if he dies, I die.

FATHER TRACY

Maggie, what are you saying. You wouldn't-

MAGGIE  
No, no, I'm not going to do away with myself. But without him I'll be dead inside. Walking around wishing I was dead. For the rest of my life. That's a lot worse than really being dead.

FATHER TRACY

Yes it is. The death of the spirit. I've seen it. Especially with people who have lost children. I saw it with Joe and Tressa when Florence died. The way they covered over that little red sports car she drove. Closed the door of her bedroom and never opened it again. Buried her in her white graduation dress. They were living dead after that girl passed. You can't let that

I-1-11

happen, even if-

MAGGIE

Even if nothing, John. He's not going to die. He can't. It's that simple. If there is a God, he won't let Jamie die.

FATHER TRACY

Don't go testing God, Maggie.

MAGGIE

Go John. Just go in the room and give your blessing. With any luck he'll sleep through it and never know you were here. He hates you even more than I do you know.

FATHER TRACY

You've got to stop you know. Allowing your children to hate like that, especially the clergy.

MAGGIE

Why?

FATHER TRACY

Well... because you do. You just do.

MAGGIE

If you ever think of a better reason than that let me know.

FATHER TRACY

Anyway, he needs the last rites. Just in case. Whether he lives or not. It can't hurt and in some cases it's even been known to help-

MAGGIE

Just get in there John and get it over with. I've listened to enough of your palavering for one day.

(FATHER TRACY gets up slowly and goes

offstage through the bedroom doorway.

His voice is heard from offstage.)

FATHER TRACY

Pax huic domei.

MAGGIE (with him)

Et omnibus habitantibus in ea.

I-1-12

FATHER TRACY

Asspugas me. Domine, hyssopo, et mundabar; lavabis me et super nivem dealdabor.

JAMIE

(heard yelling from offstage)

Get out!

FATHER TRACY

Miserere mei, Deus; secundium magnum.

JAMIE

I am not dying.

FATHER TRACY

Misererecordium tuam.

JAMIE

I told you I am not dying Tracy you fat stupid toad so get out now!

FATHER TRACY

Gloria Patri...

JAMIE

Gloria Patri my ass Father Tracy. Get outta my room. I'll let you know when I'm ready to die.

(There is a loud crash, the sound of glass

thrown against a wall and shattering.

FATHER TRACY comes running from the room,

still dressed in the vestments he put on

for the blessing.)

FATHER TRACY

...et filii, et Spiritus Sanctus. Amen.

(He grabs his hat and shoves it on

his head.)

For your sake and his I hope that boy lives through the night and for long enough after to repent. Because if he dies tonight we both know where he's going.

MAGGIE

They don’t take 12-year-olds in hell!

I-1-13

FATHER TRACY

The devil might make an exception in Jamie’s case!

(He rushes out the door and slams

it behind him. MAGGIE collapses into

a chair and laughs hysterically. The

door opens and BAILEY enters. Maggie

looks up when she hears the door open.)

BAILEY

Ma, I just seen Father Tracy in the hallway. Was he here-

MAGGIE

You saw him, Bailey.

BAILEY

I know. I just said that.

MAGGIE

No you didn't. You said you seen him.

BAILEY

Come on, ma, you know what I meant.

MAGGIE

We're poor Bailey. But we're not tinkers. I won't have you growing up speaking like your father.

BAILEY

Dad's a good guy and you know it.

MAGGIE

You father is a good man with bad grammar and poor diction. I'd like you boys to grow up getting the best of both of us if that's possible.

BAILEY

Anyway... about Father Tracy. Was he here for Jamie... because Jamie's... well... you know... so sick?

MAGGIE

He was.

I-1-14

BAILEY

Did he give him the last rites.

MAGGIE

Well, he tried. But you know Jamie. How did you do tonight?

BAILEY

Great. I sold five pairs of mittens, three scarves, and the pink baby layette.

MAGGIE

Who bought the layette?

BAILEY

Mrs. Phelan.

MAGGIE

She's too old to be expecting.

BAILEY

She bought it for her niece in New Jersey. She just had a baby girl.

MAGGIE

Did she now? I remember her. Maureen, her name was.

BAILEY

They all love your knittin’, ma, they really do. Tommy Ross's mother said you do the finest lace work she's ever seen. She said it's ten times nicer then the stuff in Frear's they want a fortune for. She thinks you should open your own store.

MAGGIE

Someday I will Bailey. Someday. That's my dream.

BAILEY

Why don't you just do it now?

MAGGIE  
Oh I couldn't. Maybe when the twins go to school,

BAILEY

I bet we'll have a lot of money then, huh?

I-1-15

MAGGIE

I doubt that. Hopefully a bit more than we've got now. But not a lot. How much did you bring in today?

BAILEY

Nineteen. A dollar each for the mittens, two each for the three scarves, and eight for the layette. Just like you told me. (He becomes sheepish.) I only got eighteen to give you though.

MAGGIE

How come?

BAILEY

I stopped at church to light a candle for Jamie. Is that OK?

MAGGIE

Of course, Bailey, that was a fine considerate thing for you to do.

BAILEY

I asked God to forgive him for what he done to you last summer, I wouldn't want him goin' to hell for it.

MAGGIE

Now what could poor Jamie have done to me that would earn him a place in hell?

BAILEY

You know. That night at the lake.

MAGGIE

You're going to have to refresh my memory.

BAILEY

You sent him to bed without dessert for sassin' ya at the dinner table, remember? In front of all the cousins?

MAGGIE

It's coming back to me.

BAILEY

So he snuck out after dark and stuck that broom upside down in the outhouse toilet and when you went out there later and sat down -

I-1-16

MAGGIE

I got the shock a my life!

BAILEY

We could hear ya yellin all the way up to the camp. We all thought a bear got ya.

MAGGIE

I can imagine.

BAILEY

That's why we came runnin' like we did.

MAGGIE

That's one for the books, that's for sure.

BAILEY

I got a question for ya ma.

MAGGIE

What's that?

BAILEY

How'd ya know it was Jamie put the broom there?

MAGGIE

You're kidding, right?

BAILEY

No.

MAGGIE

Now who else would have come up with an idea like that but your brother?

BAILEY

Yeah, that's true. He's somethin', ain't he ma?

MAGGIE

Don't say ain't. But Jamie is something all right. He's one of a kind, that boy.

BAILEY

Sometimes I think you love him more than the rest of us. Do ya?

I-1-17

MAGGIE

I love all of you. In different ways.

BAILEY

But Jamie's so bad ma. How come ya love him like that?

MAGGIE

Oh he's not bad, Bailey. He's just high spirited and full of life. I was a lot like him, you know, way back when I was a girl.

BAILEY

Really? You? But ma, you're so good.

MAGGIE

Do you see me that way, Bailey? Do you really see me as a good person?

BAILEY

Sure. Not just me either. A lot of people say it.

MAGGIE (truly incredulous)

Really.

BAILEY

C'mon ma, you're the best.

MAGGIE

I am honestly amazed to hear you say that. All I ever do is yell at you and Jamie and Des and the twins.

BAILEY

Ya gotta. We're bad. How can ya not yell? Besides, all the mothers yell. You just got more kids to yell at, that's all. And you're better than all of them anyway.

MAGGIE

Really? How?

BAILEY

I don't know. You're just… different.

MAGGIE

In what way?

I-1-18

BAILEY

I don't know. You're young for one thing. And my friends all say you're pretty but you're my mother so I can't see that. Sorry.

MAGGIE

That's all right Bailey, I forgive you.

BAILEY

Thanks ma. But what I mean to say is you're.. well... you're … you're famous.

MAGGIE

Famous!

BAILEY

Yeah. Well... almost. I mean around here you're famous. In the neighborhood. The parish anyway. You're smart and you're good at a lot of things like singin' and playin' the organ in church and knitting and... well... lottsa stuff. You're... I don't know... different. In a good way. Anyway... I know I'm not sayin' this good but you're better than the other mothers and I'm just glad me and the boys got you and not some other one. Is that ok?

MAGGIE

It's just fine. It's more than that. It's great Bailey. All that... what you said... it makes me very happy.

(She stands up and goes to him; puts her

arms around his neck and leans down to

rest her head on his.)

BAILEY

(let's her hug him a moment,

then gently removes her arms

and stands)

I'm going back out to sell more stuff, ma. We're gonna have a real good Christmas dinner this year. I promise. And Jamie's gonna be sittin' right here at this table eatin' it with us. I know he will.

(He puts on his coat and leaves. MAGGIE

sits a moment is silence, clearly

deep in thought. Then she stands up

and proceeds to set the table, setting

I-1-19

MAGGIE (Cont.)

out soups bowls, spoons, and napkins.

The door opens and JOE SANTORELLI

enters.)

JOE

Hi, Mag. Soup smells good.

(He kisses her cheek, removes his

jacket, and hangs it over the back

of a chair.)

How's he doin?

MAGGIE

Not good.

JOE (pauses)

I hate to say this but... maybe ya better call the priest.

MAGGIE

I didn't have to. He came on his own.

JOE

Father Tracy?

MAGGIE

Who else?

JOE  
I bet Jamie loved that.

MAGGIE

He threw him out.

JOE

What?

MAGGIE

You heard me. He told him to get out. Said he'd let him know when he was ready to die.

JOE (laughs heartily)

That's my boy! Can't say as I blame him. I never liked Tracy myself.

MAGGIE

You and half the parish.

I-1-20

JOE

What makes a guy like that decide to become a priest.

MAGGIE

Well, no sane woman would have him and he's too dumb to do anything else. There's two good reasons right there.

JOE

(laughs again and shakes his head)

My boy kicked a Catholic priest outta his room. He's got balls, that's for sure.

MAGGIE

Don't talk like that Joe, you've got the boys sounding just like you.

JOE

I know, I know. You're right Maggie, we don't want 'em growin' up to be a bum like me.

MAGGIE

You're not a bum Joe, You're a good father. But everybody wants better for their kids right?

JOE

Sure.

MAGGIE

They're smart boys, Joe. All of them. Well, except Desmond, maybe. Anyway, I want them to have the chance to go to college if they want.

JOE

Don't get your hopes up like that, Mag. Putting five boys through college? We ain't got that kinda money.

MAGGIE

I'll find a way.

JOE

(puts his hand on her arm)

I know you will. You can do anything. You're an amazing woman and we're all lucky we got ya.

(MAGGIE starts to cry.)

I-1-21

JOE

Come on, honey, he'll be okay. Come on. Talk about somethin' happy.

MAGGIE

Like what?

JOE

I don't know. Somethin' funny. How bout the time Jamie and Des got in that big fight out in the street.

MAGGIE

Oh, God, don't remind me. The most humiliating moment of my life.

JOE

You really thought they were gonna kill each other didn't ya?

MAGGIE

I most certainly did. I wouldn't have come running in to get you out of the bathtub otherwise. And I sure would've made you put on something more than a towel to come out and break it up.

JOE

That was somethin! I grabbed Des with one hand and Jamie with the other -

MAGGIE

And Jamie grabbed the towel right off you and there you were naked as a jaybird in front of the entire neighborhood.

(They both laugh and shake their heads.)

JOE

So... was it true what you told me after.

MAGGIE

What?

JOE

That all the women in the neighborhood called you after to offer their condolences.

MAGGIE

Of course not. But you know I had to say it don't you?

I-1-22

JOE

Of course Maggie, you're you. You're what the guys at work call a ball-buster.

MAGGIE

Well, I grew up with four brothers. It's to be expected.

JOE

True.

(A silence ensues.)

Mag, I think you should call Steven.

MAGGIE

No.

JOE

Why? Our son's in there dyin'.

MAGGIE

We can't afford to pay.

JOE

Listen, the boss knows about Jamie and he's gonna give me overtime. Look, I'm gonna go sit with Jamie for a little bit and then I'm goin' back to work. So call Steve and don't worry about the money, OK?

MAGGIE

I just -

JOE

Don't think about it Maggie, just do it.

(He gets up and walks offstage

through the bedroom door. MAGGIE

gets up and goes to the phone.

She picks up the receiver and puts

it to her ear. She dials two or

three numbers and hesitates. She

dials one more. Hesitates again.

Then she hangs up.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

I-2-23

ACT I

Scene 2

SETTING: The same room a few hours later.

AT RISE: MAGGIE is asleep with her her head on the table.

(There is a quiet knock on the

door. MAGGIE wakes up and looks

around groggily. The knock is

repeated. She gets up and

goes to the door. DR. STEVEN

HALLORAN enters. MAGGIE

backs away, almost as though

she was frightened.)

MAGGIE

Steven!

STEVEN

Yes Maggie, it's me. Surprised?

MAAGIE (coldly)

Why wouldn't I be?

STEVEN

Yes, how could you be anything but surprised. Given that you didn't have the decency or the sense to call me yourself.

MAGGIE

Who did? Joe?

STEVEN

No. John Tracy, I'm ashamed to say.

MAGGIE

Why would you be ashamed.

STEVEN

Not for me. For you. Ashamed that a priest would call and ask me something that you should have called and asked me yourself hours ago. Or days ago, from what I'm told.

I-2-24

MAGGIE

Steven, I... it's just-

STEVEN

This isn't the time or place for us to have this conversation. That should have happened years ago and sometime I hope it will. Right now I need to hear about your son.

MAGGIE

He's got sepsis. Like Florence. From a ruptured appendix.

STEVEN

When did this happen?

MAGGIE

Dr. Quinlan removed the appendix five days ago. Jamie was in the hospital until this morning. They had tubes in him, trying to drain out the infection but Quinlan said it was no good. Jamie was dying and we were wasting our time and money.

STEVEN

Right, after he almost killed him. Well, what's done is done. Take me to him.

(MAGGIE gets up without another word.

STEVEN follows her through the doorway.

When she comes out DESMOND is with her.)

DESMOND

Ma who is that guy? He ain't Dr. Quinlan.

MAGGIE

No. That's Dr. Halloran.

DESMOND

Is he gonna fix Jamie.

MAGGIE

He's going to try. Why aren't you asleep?

DESMOND

I can't. I'm feelin' too bad.

MAGGIE

About Jamie?

I-2-25

DESMOND

Yeah. I done a bad thing to him.

MAGGIE

You did a bad thing to him.

DESMOND

That's what I said.

MAGGIE (frustrated)

Repeat after me. I did a bad thing to Jamie.

DESMOND

You did a bad thing to Jamie?

MAGGIE

Forget it, Desmond. Just tell your story.

DESMOND

I wanted to confess to Father Tracy but then he run outta here like that and I missed my chance.

MAGGIE

Well confess it to me then. It can't be that bad.

DESMOND

(takes a deep breath)

OK, here goes. Remember, it's pretty bad.

MAGGIE

Spit it out Desmond, just spit it out.

DESMOND

OK, OK. Remember when you were havin that card party with your lady friends and Jamie shit in my ear?

MAGGIE

Thank you so much for reminding me of that at this moment.

DESMOND

Well I got mad cuz you spanked both of us and put us to bed. Remember that?

MAGGIE

I do.

I-2-26

DESMOND

Well, after you walked out of the room, I told Jamie I hated him and I wished he'd die.

MAGGIE

Most boys your age would have said the same thing, or something like it.

DESMOND

Really?

MAGGIE

Of course, Desmond, you're just a kid. I'm sure God forgives you. Now go in to bed and try to sleep.

DESMOND

I will ma. Thanks.

(He hugs her and goes back through

the doorway. A few seconds later,

Steven comes back out.)

MAGGIE

Well?

STEVEN

He's pretty sick, that's for sure. But he's awake and his spirits seem good. How is his health generally?

MAGGIE

Good... considering that he's been smoking since kindergarten.

STEVE

You are kidding, right.

MAGGIE

No.

STEVEN

All right, I'll ignore that for now. I gave him some medication. It's called penicillin. It's new.

MAGGIE

Is it safe?

I-2-27

STEVEN

Seems to be.

MAGGIE

Does it work?

STEVEN

I've had luck with it on some strep cases. Nothing this serious so far but it's worth trying.

MAGGIE

It sounds like you think he's going to live.

STEVEN

I think he will.

MAGGIE

Is this some kind of miracle drug?

STEVEN

It almost seems like it. They say it's going to revolutionize medicine.

MAGGIE

I'm almost afraid to hope.

STEVEN

Don't be Maggie. Don't ever be afraid to hope.

MAGGIE  
What do you hope for Stevie?

STEVEN

Actually I've hoped for this. For a very long time. I've hoped for a chance to sit and talk to you. Like this. I want you to tell me what happened Maggie.

MAGGIE

I think it's pretty obvious isn't it?

I-2-28

STEVEN

Fourteen years ago when I went away to college I gave you this. (He pulls a diamond ring from

his pocket.)

Six months letter you sent it back to me in the mail. Then I hear you married Joe Santorelli. And five months later you had a baby.

MAGGIE

That's what I would call obvious.

STEVEN

OK, so I understand. You fell In love with someone else. Joe's a big handsome guy. Any girl would have fallen for him. But why do you hate me so much?

MAGGIE

Hate you? Why would you think that?

STEVEN

You want nothing to do with me. In church you cross the aisle just to get away from me. You won't even look me in the eye. You were my best friend Maggie. Since grammar school.

MAGGIE

It hurts too much.

STEVEN

Well why did you do it then?

MAGGIE

(after a long hesitation)

I guess I do owe you an explanation.

STEVEN

Yes, Maggie, I think you do.

MAGGIE  
It's not what you think. And this won't be easy for me.

STEVEN

Try.

I-2-29

MAGGIE

OK. Do you remember when my father and my brother Jimmy got hurt down at the Ironworks?

STEVEN

Yes.

MAGGIE

They were out of work a long time.

STEVEN

I knew that.

MAGGIE

Remember how I went to work for that rich family up on Oakwood Avenue?

STEVEN  
The Harrisons?

MAGGIE

Yes. I was taking care of their children. One night after I put them to bed, the father, William Harrison... he... he... forced himself on me.

STEVEN

My God Maggie. Did you go to the police?

MAGGIE

No.

STEVEN

Why?

MAGGIE

I thought they wouldn't believe me over him. He’s a politician. I was humiliated and ashamed. I never went back. I just wanted to forget about it but then I found out I was... that I was going to have Bailey.

STEVEN

So your oldest son… Bailey… is William Harrison's child?

MAGGIE (softly)

Yes.

1-2-30

STEVEN

Go on.

MAGGIE

Well, Joe was Jimmy's best friend.

STEVEN

I remember that. And I remember that he always liked you.

MAGGIE

Well, one night I was out on the fire escape, crying. Joe was over visiting Jimmy and my father. They were still laid up. He came out to smoke a cigarette and found me out there. He asked me what was wrong and his voice was so gentle and kind. I don't know what made me tell him. I guess I'd just held it inside for so long that I just blurted out the whole thing. First he wanted to go up and kill Harrison. He said if Jimmy wasn't laid up he'd have done it.

STEVEN

I'm sure he would have.

MAGGIE

Anyway, Joe started coming around then. Almost every day. He'd just stop by and ask how I was doing. I think he knew I was desperate and he was afraid I might do something crazy. He'd take me out to a movie or over to Manory's or the South End for supper. After a couple of weeks he asked me to marry him… and I said yes.

STEVEN

But I would have done the same thing.

MAGGIE

I know that.

STEVEN

Then why?

MAGGIE

I didn't want to ruin your life.

STEVEN (angrily)

Doing what you did ruined my life. How can you say that?

I-2-31

MAGGIE

I didn't want you to drop out of school. I knew how much you wanted to be a doctor. And I didn't want you to have to spend the rest of your life with someone you'd be ashamed of. You were the best of us, Stevie, the one who was going to go out and make something of himself. I didn't want to ruin that.

STEVEN

But Maggie, you can't go on living this lie.

MAGGIE

What lie?

STEVEN

Your marriage. Your life. It's a lie. You're just staying with Joe out of gratitude and a sense of obligation. You still love me, don't you? Just like I still love you. That's why you can't even look at me.

MAGGIE

I've got five children.

STEVEN

And I live in an empty house with seven bedrooms.

MAGGIE

Don't Steven. Don't do this. Don't say those things. Not after all these years. I never let myself think about us. About what we had and could have had. Things turned out different from what we planned. That's all. That's how it is. I don’t believe in romance anymore. I believe in surviving. Day after day. This is my life Steven. It just is.

(silence)

STEVEN

Listen, I'm going in to check on Jamie. While I'm in there I want you to think about what you just said. Really think, Maggie. Really think. Hard.

(He gets up and walks through

the bedroom doorway. MAGGIE sits

alone in silence. After a moment he

returns.)

I-2-32

STEVEN

Well, he’s sleeping, anyway. And his fever seems to be down a bit.

MAGGIE

Thank God. And you Steven. Thank you so very, very much for helping my boy.

STEVEN

Please don't thank me Maggie. Please. Now you need to listen to me. As a doctor. And a friend. As someone who loves you. Thirteen years ago you had a traumatic experience. You made a decision out of desperation and fear. Was it a bad decision? Maybe. Maybe not. It was a stopgap measure and it served your purpose. But it’s outlived its purpose. And you can't force yourself to live with a decision that you made under extreme distress if it means destroying the rest of your life. I'm going to tell you what I would tell a patient in the same position. I think it would be best for you to be alone for awhile. You need time to think things through.

MAGGIE

Steven, I-

STEVEN

I can find a place for you and the boys to stay, for now.

MAGGIE

No Steven. That's not going to happen. I'm not leaving. Ever.

STEVEN

You haven't given this enough thought. I'm not going to rush you. You just need time.

MAGGIE

I don't. I'm staying. For one very simple reason.

STEVEN

Please don't say the Church.

MAGGIE

You know better than that.

STEVEN

What then?

I-2-33

MAGGIE  
I love Joe. It's that simple really. I never even knew how much until now. Until I thought about living without him. And you know what else? I love my life. I know you find that hard to believe.

(She gestures to indicate her humble

living quarters.)

But I do. Up until tonight I've been guilty of a horrible sin. The sin of ingratitude. It didn't even make it into the Commandments. But it's a horrible sin nonetheless. It took Jamie almost dying for me to see how much I have to be thankful for. All these years I've been so consumed with resentment and anger that I couldn't even see how blessed I really was.

STEVEN

Joe's the one who's blessed.

MAGGIE

We all are.

STEVEN

Well at least promise me this Maggie. If there's anything I can do for you, even if it's not as critical as saving you son's life, could you at least call me yourself and ask? I think we can at least be friends.

MAGGIE

As a matter of fact, there is something.

STEVEN

Name it.

MAGGIE

It's a little business venture. You can be my silent partner.

STEVEN

Go on.

MAGGIE

I've decided to open a store.

STEVEN

What kind of store?

I-2-34

MAGGIE

A yarn shop. It's always been a little dream of mine. The twins will be in school next fall and I'd like to be ready to open by then.

STEVEN

I think that's a great idea. That argyle sweater you made me was the envy of my entire fraternity. Sure. I'll be happy to give you the money.

MAGGIE

No, no. A loan. And I'll pay it back, with interest.

STEVEN

How about a compromise. You can pay it back. But no interest.

MAGGIE

It's a deal.

(They shake on it. STEVEN puts on

his coat.)

MAGGIE

One more thing.

STEVEN

Yes?

MAGGIE

Find a nice girl and get married.

STEVEN

That'll never happen.

MAGGIE  
Make it happen.

STEVEN

It'll never be what we had.

MAGGIE

Don't even look for that. Look for someone kind and good to love you and take care of you and give you a family. That's the best thing there is in the world, Steven, I want you to trust me on that.

I-2-35

STEVEN

I'll think about it.

MAGGIE

Promise?

STEVEN

I promise.

(They hug for a long moment. STEVEN

goes out the door and MAGGIE sits down

and rests her arms and head on the table.

The lights go down for fifteen seconds

and then come back up. JAMIE

walks slowly on stage, wearing a night

shirt. He goes over to MAGGIE and shakes

her shoulder gently.)

JAMIE(urgently)

Ma. Ma. Wake up. Please.

(MAGGIE lifts her head.)

MAGGIE

(puts her hands on his shoulders)

Jamie, Jamie what is it? What do you want?

JAMIE

Can I please, please have a cigarette?

(BLACKOUT)

(THE END)