

Scene 5

Mrs Mooney is in the large chair. Her hair is damp and roughly dried. She is wearing a large, tightly bound dressing gown. Her feet are in a foot spa which is steaming. Her eyes are closed.

Thomas enters. He has a white apron on and is carrying folded towels and a low stool.

Thomas Are you finished yet, Mrs Mooney?

Mrs Mooney No, thank you. Not yet. A few minutes more.

He sits at her feet on the stool and looks into the distance. After few moments she opens her eyes, sees him close and smiles.

Mrs Mooney Thank you.

Thomas It's the least I can do. It's nothing.

Mrs Mooney There's not many men I know'd go near chicken feet like those Thomas
I can suppress my aversion once a week.

Mrs Mooney You must be a saint.

Thomas You do so much.

She takes her feet out. He is ready to receive them into towels in his lap. He dries them slowly. Quiet.

Mrs Mooney How are you feeling now ?

Thomas (Quietly) I'm fine.

Mrs Mooney And the pain's gone.

Thomas Aye. And you ?

Mrs Mooney (Quietly) Aye.

Quiet.

Mrs Mooney I've a few spaces on the rota for the next month. Do you know any arms I could twist?

Thomas you'd be snapping them off before they agreed.

Mrs Mooney I don't know what you mean.

Thomas The ladies of the Perpetual Prayer Group. They're like sirens to fallen men with too much time on their hands.

Mrs Mooney It wouldn't hurt you to put your name on the rota.

Thomas I make my contribution to the prayerfulness of the parish.

Mrs Mooney You do. You're big on penance in the confessional I believe.

Thomas And how would you know ?

Mrs Mooney That lovely curate at St Anthony's... a goos "Sorry"'s good enough for him.

Thomas The new ways'll never catch on.

Mrs Mooney That's what they said about Jesus.

Thomas Hold on to your horses now, Mrs Mooney.

Gently laughter. Quiet.

Mrs Mooney I don't mind if you put some of that peppermint oil on again.

Thomas I hope you'll not be up all night again sucking your toes.

Mrs Mooney It was a present from our Sarah. It seems a shame not to use it.

He takes it from a table beside the chair. Wets his hands with it and massages it into her feet. Quiet.

Mrs Mooney It's Joseph's birthday. Today I think. We were only married three years. I'd only known him four. Four years out of all th years I've got. It's not many. Is it ?

Thomas No.

Mrs Mooney But I remember. I think i probably loved him That's what i said. It's hard to know now. I carried his child. You know this don't you ? He never knew I lost her. I wonder whether his last thought, as he fell, was "At least I'll go on in my child." Do you think father ? That's the regret that keeps hima live in me. He'll never know that.

He stops massaging her feet. She opens her eyes and looks down at him. He continues.

Mrs Mooney You rubbing my feet is hypnotic. It's making my mouth run free.

Thomas I know you well enough.

Mrs Mooney Things become loose. don't they ? The bolts unscrew. So slow you don't see. Nothing holds together forever. (Quiet) I've an appointment on Wednesday. (Quiet) I'm not scared.

He puts her slippers on her feet.

Thomas I'm sure the sisters of the Perpetual Prayewr Group are putting your name top of the list.

Mrs Mooney There's more in need of prayer than me.

Quiet.

Thomas we're a couple of barren old maids.

Mrs Mooney I was never barren.

Thomas I know... what I meant was.... I'm sorry.

Mrs Mooney Childless, you meant.

Thomas I did. I'm sorry.

Mrs Mooney Thank you.

She stands and exits.

Thomas is lost in thought. The lights change...

Elden enters. Scene 6.....