

James Joyce: THE DUBLINERS

Although all set in Dublin and focused upon the themes of death, disease and paralysis throughout, *Dubliners* is a collection of short stories only interconnected by symbols and moods. They are not as bleak as their themes suggest, at least not in all cases, and are often heartening in their subtle evocations of experience common to all. The collection was published after numerous hassles from publishers and almost a decade after they were written, in 1914. It is hard now to see the innovation in Joyce's construction of stories that are not based on the contrived set-ups familiar from nineteenth century short stories (Maupassant, Poe etc) and the way in which he avoids precise beginnings or ends to present instead an 'epiphany' or spiritual awakening. The Dublin portrayed in the short stories is usually grimy and full of cynical and indecent individuals. From this gleam a few thinking individuals who the author seems to side with. They are generally the sensitive or young ones, and the adult world is often seen as foolish, futile and unpleasant (see "The Boarding House" or "Ivy Day in the Committee Room"). These stories are easily Joyce's most accessible works, and their vision of a composite life created around a chronological sampling of Dublin lives from youth to age is still both amusing, moving and serious.

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THE SISTERS

The young nameless narrator speaks of his friend, a man who has had his third stroke. The young narrator passes by his friend's window every day, waiting for the day when he will see two candles in the dark: the sign that his friend has passed away, for two candles are put at the head of a corpse. For some time, the narrator's friend has been paralyzed. The word has a strange sound to the narrator. One night, the narrator, who lives with his aunt and uncle, comes down for supper. A family friend called old Cotter has stopped by for a visit; the narrator finds old Cotter tiresome, and hates his dull stories. Old Cotter is talking about a theory he has, about some event being "one of those . . . peculiar cases" (2). We learn soon what old Cotter is referring to: Father Flynn, the narrator's friend, is dead. The narrator's uncle mentions that Father Flynn was a great friend of the narrator; he'd taken the boy under his wing, and may have had some idea that the boy would become a priest one day. Old Cotter and the uncle discuss this friendship. Old Cotter seems to disapprove, as he thinks adults should "let a young lad run about and play with young lads of his own age" (2). The narrator is silent, but furious that old Cotter is referring to him as a child. That night, the narrator does not fall asleep until late. He's angry about Cotter calling him a child, but he also wonders about all of old Cotter's unfinished sentences. He was saying something about the priest. The narrator keeps seeing the old priest's paralyzed face. As he wanders between waking and sleep, the face follows him, lips moving as if he is confessing something. The next day, the boy goes to the building where the old priest spent his last days. He reads the card on the door announcing Father Flynn's death. He thinks of how he used to visit the priest, going to his small dark room, where the old man would sit by the fire. Often, the boy would bring him High Toast, a kind of snuff, as a present. The priest used to teach him about history and Catholic doctrine. The narrator finds he lacks the courage to knock on the door and go in to look at the body. The boy tries to mourn, but feels he can't. School is out, and the boy cannot help but feel a sense of freedom, even in the priest's death. He's annoyed at himself for this feeling: the priest taught him many things, about history and Latin and the ceremonies and vestments of the priesthood. That evening, he goes with his aunt to see the body. They are ushered in by Nannie, one of Father Flynn's two sisters, who took care of Father Flynn during his last days. The body is very solemn looking, dressed in vestments and holding a chalice. Eliza, the other sister, is seated in Father Flynn's armchair. Nannie serves the boy and his aunt refreshments. After some silence, they talk about the death. He went peacefully. The narrator's aunt asks if Father Flynn received his Extreme Unction, and Eliza says yes. Eliza speaks of caring for him in the last days: both she and Fanny worked very hard, and wouldn't have been able to manage without the help from Father O'Rourke. The care was difficult; they're poor, poor folk. Still, she'll miss him. Yet he'd begun to behave strangely. Often, she'd come in and find him lying back in his chair, with his prayer book fallen to the floor and his mouth open. She mentions that he'd had a difficult life, and that his career was not what he'd hoped. After a silence, she says that his strange behavior began when he broke the chalice used in the Sacrament of the Mass. It affected his mind. One night, when he was needed to go on a call, he couldn't be found. They found him in a confessional booth, laughing to himself. That's when they thought something might be wrong with him.

AN ENCOUNTER

The young narrator of the story explains that it was Joe Dillon who introduced the Wild West to their band of friends. This world came in the form of the stories appearing in popular magazines for boys, like *The Union Jack*, *Pluck*, and *The Halfpenny Marvel*. Every day after school, Joe and his younger brother Leo have a group of friends over so that the boys could play Indian together. In their mock battles, Joe Dillon's band always wins. The narrator describes himself as one of those boys less aggressive than the others, slightly fearful of Joe Dillon. Joe plays too rough for the younger boys.

For the narrator's part, he prefers the American detective stories. But the circulation of all of these stories is forbidden at school. Leo Dillon is caught one day by Father Butler, who angrily rebukes the boy and denounces the stories as the writings of a drunken scribbler. The embarrassing moment, and the image of Leo's dull and puffy face, makes the West seem less thrilling to the narrator than it once was. The evening Indian games also tire. The narrator wants real adventure. Eventually, he resolves with Leo Dillon and a boy named Mahony to play hooky and find a real adventure around the city. The boys pool together eighteen pence for their day.

The narrator is the first to arrive at Canal bridge, their appointed meeting point. Mahony shows up, but Leo does not. Mahony declares the money forfeit, so that he and the narrator will each have nine pence instead of six. As they wander about the city, Mahony carrying his "catapult" (sling shot), Mahony is by far the more unruly of the two boys. They chase a band of ragged looking girls, but then are pelted by stones by two raggedly dressed boys who are motivated by chivalry. Mahony wants to fight them but the narrator objects that the other boys are too small. The boys call Mahony a "Swaddler," a derogatory name for a Protestant, because he's wearing a cricket badge. Both the narrator and Mahony are in fact Catholic, but cricket is considered a very English game.

They buy some buns and eat their little lunch down by the river. They watch the barges and sailing vessels on the river, and talk about running away. The narrator imagines adventures at sea. They cross the Liffey, the river that divides Dublin, in a little ferry. On the other side they see the discharging of a large threemaster. The narrator studies the faces of the emerging sailors.

The boys wander through squalid neighborhoods, munching on more baked goods. Mahony chases a cat down a lane and into a field. Finally, they decide to abandon their original plan of going all the way to the Pigeon House because they have to be home by four to avoid getting caught. As they go into the fields on their way to catch a train, they come across a strange old man. He asks if they've read Thomas Moore, Sir Walter Scott, or Lord Lytton. The narrator pretends that he has read all of the mentioned books. They talk, and the old man asks if the boys have sweethearts. Mahony says he has three; the narrator says he has none. The old man talks about his youth, and the beauty of girls. He talks about all young boys having sweethearts, and the liberalism of the man's manner surprises the narrator. He walks away from them, excusing himself, and after a moment Mahony exclaims: "I say! Look what he's doing!" (18). The narrator never looks up, for an undisclosed reason, and so we never

learn what the old man is doing. Mahony calls the man a "queer old jossler," or simpleton, and the narrator suggests that they should go by the pseudonyms Murphy and Smith.

The old man returns, and Mahony runs off to chase the cat that previously escaped him, leaving the narrator alone with the old man. The old man tells the narrator that Mahony is a wicked little boy, and he asks if he gets whipped. The old man talks at great length about whipping boys, and how boys should get whipped if they speak to girls, and how much he would like to do the whipping himself. His voice seems toward the end nearly to plead for understanding. The narrator waits until the man finishes to leave him, but as he goes away up the slope he fears that the old man will run after him and seize him. At the top of the slope, he turns around and calls out for "Murphy," and the anonymity seems weak protection. It takes a second call for Mahony to finally come, but when he comes running the narrator is full of gratitude. Mahony arrives as if to bring the narrator help, and the narrator closes: "And I was penitent; for in my heart I had always despised him a little" (20).

ARABY

The nameless narrator of the story talks about life on North Richmond Street. The former tenant of their apartment was a priest who died. Some books have been left behind, and the young boy narrator sometimes looks at them. He is raised by his aunt and uncle. One of his playmates is a boy named Mangan, and the narrator develops a crush on his friend Mangan's sister. Mangan and his sister live in a building across the street. The narrator watches her stealthily, waiting for her to leave in the mornings so that he can follow her on part of his way to school.

One day, the girl finally speaks to him, to ask if he will go to Araby. Araby is the name of an upcoming bazaar with an Arabian theme. She can't go, because she is going on a religious retreat that weekend. The narrator, full of romantic notions, says that he will go and find some kind of gift for her.

The boy can think of little but the girl, the Orientalist bazaar, and the gift he will get for her. He gets permission to go, and for days he cannot concentrate. The day finally arrives, and the boy reminds his uncle that he wishes to go to the bazaar that night. His uncle will have to get home on time to give him the money for a ride to the bazaar, as well as a bit of spending money.

That night, his uncle is late. The boy despairs of being able to go at all, but finally his uncle comes home. His uncle has forgotten about the bazaar, and by now it is quite late. But the boy still wants to go, and he takes the small sum of money for the train and heads off.

He arrives at the bazaar just as it is closing. Only a few stalls are open. He examines the goods, but they are far too expensive for him. The lights are being shut off, and the narrator despairs: "Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger."

EVELINE

Eveline sits at the window, watching the avenue. She thinks of her family, and the neighbors. Years ago, the children on the avenue used to play on a field where now stand many houses. She and her siblings are now grown up, and her mother is dead. Eveline is nineteen years old, and she is planning to leave Ireland forever. She works very hard, at a store and also at home, where she cares for her old father. She won't miss her job in the store. She has mixed feelings about her father. He can be cruel, and though he doesn't beat her, as he did her brothers, he often threatens her with violence. With her brothers gone (Ernest is dead and Harry is often away on business) there is no one to protect her. She takes care of two young siblings and gives over her whole salary for the family, but her father is always accusing her of being a spendthrift.

She is going to leave Ireland for good with a sailor named Frank. He has a home in Buenos Ayres. Frank treats her respectfully and with great tenderness, and he entertains her with stories about his travels around the world. Her father dislikes him.

Still, she loves her father and regrets the idea of leaving him in his old age. At times he can be kind. She remembers her mother's death, when she promised her mother to keep the home together as long as she could. Her mother lived a life "of commonplace sacrifices closing in final craziness" (33). She finished babbling the enigmatic phrase "Derevaun Seraun!" again and again. The fear of that memory strengthens the resolve in Eveline to leave.

But at the station, with the boat ready to leave, she is paralyzed. She cannot go; the world is too frightening. "All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He [Frank] was drawing her into them: he would drown her" (34). Frank calls to her, trying to get her to board with the rush of people. She merely stares at him as if he is a stranger.

AFTER THE RACE

The story opens with the end of a race in Dublin. The Irish onlookers have no Irish cars to cheer for, but they pour their enthusiasm into supporting the French, their fellow Catholics and (usually unreliable) allies.

In one of the French cars, four young men are in particularly high spirits: Charles Ségouin, the owner of the car; André Rivere, a French-Canadian electrician; Villona, a Hungarian; and Jimmy Doyle, a "neatly groomed" young Irishman.

Jimmy Doyle's father, we learn, was once an advanced Nationalist (a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party, in its heyday led by Charles Parnell, which favored legislative independence for Ireland). Very quickly, he modified his views. He became rich in the butchering business, winning a police contract and becoming sufficiently wealthy to be called a "merchant prince" in local papers. He sent Jimmy to a Catholic college in England, to Dublin University to study law, and to Cambridge for a term "to see a little life." At Cambridge he met Ségouin, whose father is rumored to be one of the wealthiest men in France. Villona is another Cambridge friend, charming enough, but unfortunately he is very poor.

Villona and Jimmy go to Jimmy's house to dress before going to dine at Ségouin's hotel. At Jimmy's house his parents are full of both pride and trepidation, eager to impress their continental guest. At dinner that night, the four young men are joined by Routh, an English acquaintance of Ségouin's from Cambridge. Ségouin is an excellent host. At one point, an argument between Jimmy and the English Routh threatens to spoil the evening, but Ségouin aptly defuses the situation.

That night on their walk, the young men run into Farley, a wealthy young American. All six men go out in a car, take a train, and then head out to the American's yacht. They sing and dance, and then take a light supper. They drink endlessly. They play cards, while Villona goes to the piano and plays for them. Jimmy is so drunk he's not sure what's happening, but he knows he's losing. At the end of the game, he and Farley are the heaviest losers; Jimmy has no idea how much he's lost. He knows he will regret it the next morning, but for now he is grateful for the fog of his drunkenness. As he leans his elbows on the table and rests his head in his hands, the cabin door opens and Villona stands in the early morning light, telling the men that daybreak has come.

TWO GALLANTS

On a mild August evening, two young men are on a walk. The listener is squat, ruddy, dressed like a young man, but his body and face are prematurely aged. He seems to enjoy tremendously the other man's story. The listener's name is Lenehan. The teller's name is Corley. Corley is telling Lenehan about a girl who works as a housekeeper. She's his new amusement. In crude terms, he talks about how they met and the fun they've had. He thinks she's up to the task of avoiding pregnancy. He's told her that he has no job with the aim of stifling any desire she might have had to marry him.

Corley is the son of an inspector of police, who is probably dead (although Joyce is unclear about this). He's inherited something of his father's walk and manner. He's a large, oily man, always sweaty, who speaks without listening to others. When he's talking, he's usually discussing himself.

The two men continue to discuss women. A good "slavey" (servant girl), they agree, is the best kind of girl to have. Corley used to go for girls off the South Circular, a once-elegant road where the girls would accept his gifts but refuse his sexual advances.

His girl is now engaged in prostitution, Corley believes. Lenehan keeps asking if Corley can "bring it off" all right. Corley keeps replying that he can.

The time for Corley's meeting with the girl approaches. Lenehan keeps asking if he can have a look at the girl, which makes Corley nervous. The two men have planned for Corley to go with the girl and meet later with Lenehan. While Lenehan walks around, he regrets having to wait so long alone; he's not sure how to amuse himself. The loneliness makes him moody, and he reflects on his age (31) and the fatigue he already feels. He's horribly poor, and has few prospects for improving this condition. He thinks about the friendships and loves of his life, and how in the end these intimates proved unreliable. He eats a miserable supper of peas and ginger beer, but he finds this meal satisfying.

When he returns to meet Corley at the appointed hour, he sees Corley with the girl and judges their expressions to mean that Corley will fail to "bring it off." But when Corley finally arrives alone, and Lenehan asks eagerly if he succeeded, Lenehan grimly presents a beautiful golden coin.

THE BOARDING HOUSE

Mrs. Mooney, a butcher's daughter, married one of her father's foreman. Her husband descended into alcoholism, ruining the family business and becoming increasingly violent until Mrs. Mooney procured a separation.

She took the last of their money and set herself up in a boarding house. Her tenants there consist mainly of tourists and artistes from the music halls. She supervises things firmly and with great competence. Sunday nights, there is a little reunion with music and gaiety.

Her daughter Polly is nineteen and lively. She works in the boarding house, because Mrs. Mooney wants to give her a run of the young men. She flirts with them, but none of the men are serious about her. Eventually, she begins an affair with a man named Mr. Doran. Everyone seems to know about it, including Mrs. Mooney, who bides her time.

Finally, Mrs. Mooney intervenes. She first confronts Polly, who confesses all. And then she tells Polly what she intends to do: she will confront Mr. Doran and tell him that he must marry Polly.

Mr. Doran is a man of thirty-four or thirty-five. He has a respectable job in a great Catholic wine-merchant's business. In his youth, he was a womanizer who proudly announced his atheism. But he'd become a church-going man with a good job, and he could not risk it. We first see him shaving, and he is having great difficulty: last night when he went to confession, the priest dragged out the details of the affair in embarrassing detail. Doran knows now that he has no choice but to marry the girl or run away. He thinks about his job. But his family will not approve: her father was a scoundrel, and her mother's boarding house is getting a bad reputation. Her grammar is bad.

Polly comes in and tells him that her mother knows everything now. He comforts her as she cries. He remembers how their affair began, and how thoughtful she has been. Perhaps they can be happy. A servant named Mary enters and announces that Mrs. Mooney would like to see him.

Mr. Doran goes downstairs and passes Jack Mooney, Polly's brother. Jack is strong and belligerent, a drinker who likes getting into fights. He is very touchy on the subject of his sister's honor. Jack gives Mr. Doran a dirty look as Mr. Doran passes.

Back in the room, Polly cries and then rests and then refreshes her eyes with water. Resting on the bed, she looks at the pillows and dreams of happiness. At last, she

hears her mother's voice calling her: Mr. Doran has something important to say to her.

A LITTLE CLOUD

Eight years ago Little Chandler saw his friend Gallagher off at the North Wall. Gallagher went off to London, and since then has become a great journalist. Chandler is to meet him that night, and he's growing increasingly excited.

He's called "Little Chandler" despite his more or less average height because he gives the impression of being small and childlike. He waits at his desk in the King's Inns, where he works as either a scrivener or clerk, thinking of the people outside the office window and the melancholy of life. He thinks of the books of poetry on his shelves; sometimes he is seized by the desire to read something to his wife, but his timidity holds him back.

His workday ends and he sets off for Corless's, one of Dublin's most cosmopolitan bars and the appointed meeting place. He remembers Ignatius Gallagher as he was eight years ago. He had always been wild, mixing with rough fellows, borrowing money on all sides. Something in him suggested future greatness.

Little Chandler nurses vague dreams of being a poet. The dominant note of his poetry would be melancholy; perhaps some of the English critics would recognize him as one of the Celtic school.

At Corless's, Gallagher greets him enthusiastically. He has aged badly. They talk about their old gang of friends; most have either settled down for unremarkable careers or have gone to the dogs. They talk, Little Chandler shy in the company of his outspoken friend; among the topics is how Little Chandler has never traveled. The farthest he's been from Ireland is the Isle of Man. Gallagher has knocked about the great cities of Western Europe. Little Chandler finds something upsetting about Gallagher: "There was something vulgar in his friend which he had not observed before" (72). While Gallagher is on the subject of Paris, and the vivacity of its life, Little Chandler keeps asking if Paris is "an immoral city" (72). Gallagher laughs at Chandler's provincial attitudes and shocks him with stories of religious houses in Europe and the wild revelries of the aristocracy.

The conversation turns back to Chandler. He has been married for over a year, and they have a baby boy. Chandler invites Gallagher over to see the wife and child, but Gallagher time in Ireland is too short and busy to permit a visit. The next time Gallagher comes, the men say, and to clinch it, at Chandler's insistence, they have another drink. Little Chandler feels the difference between his life and Gallagher's. He can't help but be jealous; he's Gallagher's superior in birth and education, but Gallagher has been so much more successful.

The subject of marriage comes up. Gallagher says he may never get married, and that if he does it won't be for a while yet. He has no plans to "put my head in the sack"; Chandler says with a touch too much vehemence, "You'll put your head in the

sack . . . like everyone else if you can find the girl" (76). Gallagher says that if he does marry, it will be for money.

Later that night, Chandler is at home holding his baby. He came home late and forgot to get the coffee for his wife. His wife Annie went out herself to do some late shopping, putting the sleeping baby into his arms. Looking at his wife's picture, he resents her for not being a voluptuous exotic woman of the continent. All of the furniture, chosen by Annie, seems "prim and pretty." He feels as if he is imprisoned. He opens a volume of Byron's poems, and reads a rather trite poem with a melancholy tone. He wonders if he could express himself in such a way. As he tries to get through the poem, the child wakes up and starts to cry. He tries to soothe it, but when the child keeps crying he bends toward the child's face and screams "Stop!"

After that, there's no calming the child. Annie comes home, and the boy is still crying. She angrily asks Chandler what he's done to it. She tries to calm him. Chandler stands by, tears of remorse in his eyes.

COUNTERPARTS

Farrington, a scrivener in a legal office, is called to see his tyrannical boss, Mr. Alleyne. After a few solid minutes of abuse, he is allowed to return to work with a strict deadline for copying a contract. Farrington returns to work, but as soon as he sits down the tedium of his job gets to him. He goes out for a drink. He goes down the street into dark, comfy O'Neill's shop. He takes a glass of plain porter. The respite is short, however, because Farrington has to return to work. On his way in he notices the smell of the perfume of one of the clients, Miss Delacour. The chief clerk tells him sharply that Mr. Alleyne has been looking for him. The copy of the correspondence for the Delacour case is needed. Farrington gets the correspondence, hoping that Mr. Alleyne won't notice that the last two letters are missing. Miss Delacour is a wealthy middle-aged woman, and Mr. Alleyne is said to be sweet "on her or her money."

Farrington drops off the correspondence and returns to work. Glumly, he realizes that he will not be able to meet his deadline for the contract he's currently copying. He begins to think longingly of a night of drink. His pleasant dreams are interrupted by a furious Mr. Alleyne. With Miss Delacour standing by, Mr. Alleyne abuses Farrington about the missing letters. Farrington plays dumb. Mr. Alleyne asks rhetorically, "Do you think me an utter fool?", to which Farrington replies, "I don't think, sir . . . that that's a fair question to put to me" (87). Miss Delacour smiles. Mr. Alleyne goes bezerk, demanding an apology.

Later, Farrington waits around a corner hoping to get the cashier alone, so that he can ask to borrow some money. But when the cashier exits the office, he's with the chief clerk. Now, there's no hope in getting a bit of cash. The situation is grim: he had to apologize abjectly in private to Mr. Alleyne, and now the office will be a treacherous place for him.

It dawns on Farrington that he can pawn his watch. He gets six shillings and goes out drinking with his friends. He tells them the story of his triumph over Mr. Alleyne, leaving

out his abject apology. He repeats the story to various friends as they come in. First Nosey Flynn, sitting in his usual corner of Davy Byrne's, and then O' Halloran and Paddy Leonard come in. The men are buying each other drink after drink. Higgins, one of Farrington's colleagues at work, comes in, and does his own rendition of the tale, making Farrington's feat seem even greater. The men leave the bar to go to another establishment called the Scotch House. Leonard introduces them to a young fellow named Weathers, who's an acrobat and an artiste. More drinks are shared. When the Scotch House closes, they go to Mulligan's. One of the women catches Farrington's eye, but when she leaves she does not look back. He curses his poverty and all the drinks he's bought. He particularly thinks that Weathers has been drinking more than he's been buying.

The men are talking about strength; Weathers is showing off his biceps. Farrington shows off his, and then the two men arm wrestle. Weathers beats Farrington. Farrington is angry, and accuses Weathers of having put the weight of his body behind it. They decide to go two out of three, and Weathers, after a struggle of respectable duration, beats him again. The curate, who was watching, expresses his admiration and Farrington snaps out of him. O'Halloran notices the anger in Farrington's face and wisely intercedes. He changes the subject and calls for another drink.

Waiting for his tram home, Farrington is full of fury. He's not even drunk, and he's spent almost all of the money from his pawned watch. He's lost his reputation as a strong man, having been beaten in arm wrestling by young Weathers. As he goes home, his anger mounts.

He comes home to find the kitchen empty with the fire nearly out. His small son Tom, one of five children, comes to greet him. His wife is out at church. Farrington orders the boy around, telling him to cook up the dinner his wife left for him. The boy obediently gets to work. Then Farrington sees that the fire has gone out. He chases the boy with a walking stick and begins to beat him brutally, despite the child's pleas for mercy.

CLAY

Maria works at the *Dublin by Lamplight* laundry, a charitable institution run by protestants. The laundry is for fallen women and alcoholics, and busies them with useful work; Maria is not one of its charity cases, but is a regular worker who helps keep things together. She is known as a peacemaker and a thoroughly competent woman. She boards there, and she enjoys her work; she has even come to like the Protestants who work there. She got the work through the help of her friends, Joe and Alphy, two brothers whom she helped to raise.

Tonight is All Hallow's Eve, or Hallowe'en. She is going over to Joe's to enjoy an evening of fun and singing with Joe and his family. When work is finished, she's happy to go and get ready for the celebration. In her little bedroom, she gets dressed. She also remembers that tomorrow is a holy day of obligation, so she sets her alarm for six instead of seven. She notes to herself that her body is still trim and in shape despite her age, and sets off.

She looks forward to the evening, and reflects on the simple joy of her independence. She also reflects sadly on Joe and Alphy: though they are brothers and were once the best of friends, they are no longer speaking to each other. For the children, she buys some penny cakes at Downe's. Then she goes to a shop in Henry Street, where she fusses over getting a perfect slice of plum cake as a special treat. It costs two shillings and four pence, a princely sum for Maria. On the tram, she fears she is going to have to stand; the young men simply stare at her. But finally an older gentleman lets her have his seat. They chat about Hallow Eve and the treats.

At Joe's house she is greeted warmly, and she gives the children their cakes. But in a panic she realizes she cannot find the plum cake. She asks the children if they have taken it and eaten it by mistake, and the children resentfully reply that they haven't. Finally, she accepts that she must have left it on the tram. When she thinks of the expense and the surprise she wanted to give them, she nearly cries.

Joe and Maria sit by the fire. He is exceedingly nice to her, playing host and pressing her to drink. She tries to bring up the matter of Alphy, but Joe becomes very angry. Mrs. Donnelly also tries to put in a word in favor of reconciliation, but this nearly starts a fight until Joe calms himself and insists on dropping the subject.

They start to play the traditional Irish divination games of Hallowe'en, where one is led blindfolded to a table and made to pick out an object. The girls from next-door put out the objects. The chosen object predicts the future. When Maria takes her turn, she feels something wet and slippery. She hears some muffled words, and Mrs. Donnelly says crossly that the object is not appropriate. She insists that it be thrown out. Maria chooses again, and gets a prayer book.

After that, the children move on to another game. Joe presses Maria to drink, and Mrs. Donnelly says lightly that Maria will enter a convent because she chose the prayer book. Soon, Joe and Mrs. Donnelly pressure Maria to sing. Maria shyly sings / *Dreamt that I Dwelt*. She sings the first verse twice, but no one corrects her. The song moves Joe to tears.

A PAINFUL CASE

Middle-aged and solitary, Mr. James Duffy lives in a house in Chapelizod, a suburb of Dublin. His home is small and orderly. The narrator describes the place in some detail. There are books ordered on the shelves according to bulk, simple and completely functional pieces of furniture, and a well-ordered desk.

His days are run by a schedule, and the schedule is always the same. He has a well-paying job at a bank. He comes in the morning by tram; eats lunch at Dan Burke's; leaves work at four; takes dinner at an eating-house on George's street, where fashionable young people will not bother him; and spends his evenings either in front of his landlady's piano or out to enjoy a Mozart opera or concert. He is not a churchgoer, and he has no friends. He sees his family only at Christmas and funerals.

One evening in the rotunda, he is at a thinly attended concert when the woman next to him makes a casual comment about the unfortunately small audience. She

has an intelligent, attractive face, with eyes revealing a sensible nature. He takes her comment as an invitation to talk, and they do. She is with her daughter. A few weeks later, he sees her again. He tries to strike up a more intimate conversation while the daughter is distracted. The woman, whose name is Mrs. Emily Sinico, has mentioned her husband. Mr. Duffy and Mrs. Sinico meet a third time by accident, and this time Mr. Duffy is bold enough to invite her to meet with him again sometime. They begin to see each other regularly, always in the evening and in rather obscure neighborhoods. Mr. Duffy, who doesn't like the secrecy of these meetings, insists on seeing her at her own home. Captain Sinico is always traveling on business, but he encourages the visits because he thinks Mr. Duffy is interested in his daughter. The idea of his wife being attractive or desirable never occurs to him.

Mr. Duffy shares his ideas with her, and she opens up to him. He loans her books and music. They become very close. He tells her of his former experiences with the Irish Socialist party; the meetings did not appeal to him, as the other men were all workers with very practical concerns. When the party divided, he stopped going to meetings. No revolution in thinking would come of these men; their concerns were too pragmatic to change the world. She asks Mr. Duffy why he doesn't write out his thoughts, and he scorns the idea; recognition from the unrigorous and conventional-minded masses means nothing to him.

They spend more and more time alone together, including evenings at her college. They speak of personal matters. One night, when speaking of the individual's insurmountable loneliness, she takes his hand passionately and presses it to her cheek. Mr. Duffy is surprised; she has misunderstood. He does not see her for a week, and then sends word asking to meet her. They meet in a cakeshop near the Parkgate, and then walk in Phoenix Park for three hours. They agree that they cannot meet again.

His life continues in its orderly fashion. He reads some Nietzsche and avoids concerts, for fear of seeing her. Life goes on. Finally, one night when he is out dining he is reading the paper when he sees something that stops him. He reads the same piece again and again, unable to eat; he tries to finish his meal, but must stop after a few mouthfuls. When he goes home that night, he reads the paper again. It is an article about the death of Mrs. Sinico. She was struck accidentally by a train; evidence suggests that she was drunk. Her daughter Mary reveals that lately Mrs. Sinico often drank at night.

Mr. Duffy is at first disgusted by the story; she seems to him crude and degraded for having fallen into drink and having died in such an undignified manner. Then the memory of her hand touching his hits him, and he goes out to the pub at Chapelizod Bridge. He drinks there for a while, becoming more ill at ease. He struggles with the two images he now has of her: the lonely drunkard and the charming woman he became close to. He wonders if he could have done more for her. He goes out on a walk, even though it is biting cold.

He thinks of her lonely life, and his, which will simply continue in the same routine until he dies. As he walks, he almost believes that she is there with him; it seems as if his memory is so strong that he can hear her voice, or feel her hand. From a hill, he looks down at the wall of the park, where he sees lovers lying. He feels outcast from human

life. He knows the lovers are aware of his presence and want him to leave; so they, too, reject him. He hears a train. The engine seems to be repeating her name.

He stops to rest under a tree until the rhythm fades. But then he can no longer hear her voice or feel her presence. All is silent: he is completely alone.

IVY DAY IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM

Old Jack and Mr. O'Connor warm themselves by the fire in the committee room. Jack is old, hairy, and gaunt; Mr. O'Connor, though young, is gray-haired. His face is marred by acne. He's rolling cigarettes. Mr. O'Connor was supposed to canvass one part of the ward with flyers for Mr. Richard J. Tierney's election campaign, but due to the rain he's spent most of the day in the Committee Room with Jack. Jack is complaining about his son, who's taken to boozing in a serious way.

Mr. Hynes, a young man not working for the campaign, comes in. The three men talk; it becomes clear that Jack and Mr. O'Connor are working for pay and not for political reasons. The talk turns to politics, and Hynes speaks passionately about the working man. He does not like Richard J. Tierney; he claims that Tierney is going to greet King Edward when the British monarch next visits Ireland. Mr. O'Connor at first denies it (Tierney is on the nationalist ticket), but when Hynes says to wait and see, O'Connor concedes that it's possible. But what concerns him most remains the same: "Anyway, I wish he'd turn up with the spondulics [the money]" (119). Mr. Hynes displays the ivy leaf on his coat collar, a symbol commemorating Charles Stewart Parnell. He praises Parnell, and the other men agree that he was a great man.

Mr. Henchy comes in, saying that there's no money for them yet. They discuss the voters they've been talking to, trying to convince them to vote for their man. Mr. Henchy complains about Mr. Tierney's trickiness, and doubts that his hard work will be remembered. Mr. Hynes leaves. Mr. Henchy asks what Hynes wanted; O'Connor thinks kindly of him, but Henchy thinks Hynes is a spy for Colgan, the other candidate. Old Jack thinks so too, but O'Connor is more inclined to think of Hynes kindly. Hynes is a good writer, with a political bent. Mr. Henchy thinks that some of these hillsiders and fenians (the enthusiasts for the Nationalist cause) are in fact informers for the British ("in the pay of the Castle").

Father Keon enters, searching for Mr. Fanning, the sub-sheriff. They direct him to the Black Eagle. The men chat about him: the priest has gotten into some sort of trouble with Church authorities, either because of his politics or his alcoholism.

Mr. Henchy is mainly disappointed because he wasn't the promised beer Tierney is supposed to send to them. Tierney was in a meeting with an alderman, but Mr. Henchy kept discreetly reminding him about the promised drinks. Mr. Henchy complains bitterly about the corruption he sees in city government. He jokes that he'd like to be a city father himself, so that he could grow fat off the bribes of candidates. They enjoy spinning out a scenario with Mr. Henchy becoming mayor, with O'Connor as private secretary, Jack in a powdered wig, and drunken old Father Keon as the private chaplain. Old Jack tells Henchy that he'd be more stylish than the current mayor. A boy arrives with their bottles of beer. They send the boy back to

fetch a corkscrew, and when he comes back they let him have a bottle himself. They make small talk, asking the boy his age (17), and then the boy quickly drinks and leaves.

Henchy complains about Crofton, one of his coworkers, saying he's not very much help as a canvasser. Crofton, a very fat man, then comes in accompanied by Lyons, a young man. Crofton and Lyons insult Henchy's canvassing methods lightly, and Henchy criticizes them in turn. The boy took the corkscrew back with him, but they open beers for the newcomers by putting the bottles onto the fire until the corks pop out.

Mr. Crofton sits silently once his bottle has popped; he considers his companions beneath him. He was with the Conservative party, but when the Conservatives withdrew their man he decided to work for Tierney, as Tierney seeming to him like the lesser of two evils. Lyons' bottle pops, and now everyone is drinking. Henchy talks about trying to get votes from people who normally vote Conservative; he aimed at selling Tierney's character, and his fiscal conservatism despite his Nationalist affiliation. Mr. Lyons asks about the impending royal visit. Henchy says that a royal visit will stimulate the economy.

Mr. O'Connor is against a royal visit. He begins to invoke Parnell, but Mr. Henchy says that Parnell is dead. Mr. Crofton nods. Mr. Lyons begins to harp on King Edward's womanizing, but Mr. Henchy defends the King as being just a normal man like everyone, fond of drink and the ladies. Lyons points out that the country turned its back on Parnell for an adulterous affair. What becomes of their ideals if they now welcome a womanizing King just because his visit stimulates the economy? The issue is evaded. O'Connor doesn't want to stir up the issue on the solemn occasion of Parnell's death. Crofton says that the Conservatives respect him now, after his death, because at least he was a gentleman.

Mr. Hynes comes in. They welcome him, offering him booze, and then Mr. Henchy points out that Hynes never abandoned Parnell, even when the Catholic Church and every other Irishman did. Mr. O'Connor entreats him to recite the poem he wrote on the occasion of Parnell's death.

Hynes solemnly recites a short, earnest poem mourning the death of the great Irish Nationalist leader. The poem is very critical of those who betrayed him, including the church. It claims a place for Parnell among the great ancient heroes of Ireland.

There is brief silence and then applause. Hynes' bottle pops open. Mr. O'Connor is deeply moved, and rolls cigarettes to hide his emotion. Mr. Henchy asks Crofton what he thinks of it. Mr. Crofton says that it's a "fine piece of writing" (133).

A MOTHER

For a month, Mr. Holohan has trudged up and down Dublin making the arrangements necessary for a series of concerts. But in the end, it was the insistent Mrs. Kearney who arranged everything.

Mrs. Kearney had once been Miss Devlin, educated in a high-class convent. She was a difficult, stubborn woman with few friends. When she was being courted, she was so icy and picky that no boy seemed to please her, but when people began to talk she married Mr. Kearney, an older man and a bootmaker. Mrs. Kearney felt that he would make a good enough husband, but she never completely put aside her romantic ideas. He's pious, as is she, and both are faithful and competent spouses. Mr. Kearney is a good provider, and their daughter Kathleen gets an excellent education and learns to play music. When a renewed interest in indigenous Irish arts and artists kicks in (the "Irish Revival") Mrs. Kearney tries to promote her daughter's musical career. Mr. Holohan, secretary of the Eire Abu Society, came to ask if Kathleen would be the piano accompanist for four concerts. A contract was drawn up, in which it was agreed that Kathleen would be paid four guineas for playing.

Mrs. Kearney took an active role in the planning, putting together the program and playing a charming hostess to Mr. Holohan when he visited for their planning sessions. Mrs. Kearney buys some expensive clothes for Kathleen.

The concerts were planned for Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Mrs. Kearney and Kathleen arrive on Wednesday night twenty minutes before showtime, and the place is nearly empty. Backstage, they meet Mr. Fitzpatrick, secretary of the Society. He seems to take the bad news lightly. Everyone waits until 830, hoping for more people to come, but then the few people there begin to ask for the show to start.

At the first opportunity, Mrs. Kearney calls aside Mr. Holohan to ask what will happen. He says that planning four concerts was apparently a bad choice. Mrs. Kearney criticizes the artistes, saying that they're no good. Mr. Holohan says that the real talent will come on Saturday.

Mrs. Kearney is angry for having gone to so much trouble, plus the expense for Kathleen's clothes. Mr. Fitzpatrick's pleasantly vacant manner angers her. Thursday night is better attended, but the Society decides to abandon Friday night and push heavily for Saturday. Mrs. Kearney tracks down Mr. Holohan and begins to nag him about the contract: she insists that Kathleen be paid for four nights, even though one of the nights is now cancelled. Mr. Holohan sends her to see Mr. Fitzpatrick. Mr. Fitzpatrick says he'll bring the matter before the committee. Mrs. Kearney is upset about the whole thing, and Mr. Kearney suggests going with her to the concert on Saturday.

Unfortunately, it rains on Saturday night. When the Kearney's arrive, Mrs. Kearney searches for Mr. Holohan and Mr. Fitzpatrick. An old committee member named Miss Beirne comes out, offering her assistance, but Mrs. Kearney insists on seeing a secretary and does not discuss the issue with the old woman.

The bass and the second tenor have arrived. Mr. Duggan, the bass, is a young man with a good voice. He was an understudy at a big opera, but when he given his chance to perform his stage presence had been marred by the way he absent-mindedly wiped his nose. The second tenor, Mr. Bell, is jealous of other tenors and covers it all with excessive friendliness.

Mr. and Mrs. Kearney chat about Kathleen. Kathleen talks to Miss Healy, her friend and the evening's contralto. Madam Glynn, the pale and frail-looking soprano, arrives without fanfare. Not many people seem to know her; she's from London. The first tenor and baritone arrive. Mrs. Kearney brings Kathleen over to meet them; she'd like her daughter to be on good terms with them.

Mrs. Kearney spies Mr. Holohan and tracks him down. Once again, Mr. Holohan says that the matter of payment should be brought up with Mr. Fitzpatrick. Mrs. Kearney grows shrill, demanding a guarantee and invoking their contract.

When she returns to the dressing room a journalist from the *Freeman* and a fellow named Mr. O'Madden Burke are there. The journalist, whose name is Mr. Hendrick, will be unable to stay for the concert, but he'll make sure that a write-up is done anyway. Mr. O'Madden Burke is to write it. Mr. Hendrick is being flirted with by Miss Healy, and he's enjoying every moment of it. He assures Mr. Holohan that the write-up will be done. The two men go off to a secluded room where stewards are opening up bottles of booze for some gentlemen, including Mr. O'Madden Burke, who has found the room by instinct. He is a respected man, with a good family name.

Meanwhile Mrs. Kearney is speaking so vehemently with her husband that he is asking her to lower her voice. The artistes grow nervous, some hiding it better than others; the audience is expecting the show to begin. Mr. Holohan comes out, and Mrs. Kearney informs him that her daughter will not play without the money. Mr. Holohan tries to appeal to Mr. Kearney and Kathleen, but Mr. Kearney strokes his beard and Kathleen looks down. Mr. Holohan goes off in a rush. The artistes look at Mrs. Kearney.

Mr. Fitzpatrick comes in with Mr. Holohan, and they give half of the money, promising the other half later. Mrs. Kearney is about to fight back, but Kathleen goes out with the first performer, Mr. Bell, who by now is shaking because he fears everyone will think he was late.

The first part of the concert goes very well. Madam Glynn's song is awful, but the other performances seem to please the audience greatly. Meanwhile, backstage everyone has divided into two camps. Mr. Holohan, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Miss Beirne, Mr. O'Madden Burke, two stewards, the baritone, and the bass are all talking in one corner. Mr. O'Madden Burke is scandalized, and says that Kathleen will not play music in Dublin again. The baritone, when pressed for his opinion, says he doesn't wish to speak ill of anyone, but he does wish Mrs. Kearney had been more considerate of the other artistes. In the other corner are Mrs. Kearney, Mr. Kearney, Mr. Bell, Miss Healy, and a young lady who recited a patriotic piece. Mrs. Kearney is railing against the unfair treatment she's received, after all of her trouble and expense. Miss Healy wants to join the other group, but she cannot because Kathleen is her good friend.

After the first part of the concert has ended, Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Holohan come over and tell her the rest of the money will be paid the following Tuesday. If Kathleen does not play, the contract will be considered broken and Kathleen will receive no money. Mrs. Kearney does not budge. She wants the money immediately or her daughter will not play. Harsh words are exchanged. Mrs. Kearney is so irritating that

everyone sides with the committee. Miss Healy consents to play a few accompaniments. The second part starts. Mrs. Kearney takes her husband and daughter and leads the march out. She glares at Mr. Holohan, promising she's not done with him yet. Mr. Holohan says coldly, "But I'm done with you." She leaves, and Mr. Holohan fumes, while Mr. O'Madden Burke assures him that he did the right thing.

GRACE

In the lavatory, a man lies at the foot of the stairs down which he fell. The floor is filthy, and the man has injured his head. Three men carry him upstairs and lay him on the floor of the bar. The manager asks if the unconscious man had friends with him; there were two, but they are gone now. Blood is trickling from the man's head, and a policeman is sent for. A constable arrives and asks questions.

A young man in a cycling suit comes through the crowd. He washes the blood away and tends to the injury. Finally, the injured man comes to. He tries to make light of his accident. A friend of the injured man comes forward and asks what has happened. We learn that the fallen man is named Tom Kernan. Once again, Tom makes light of his fall. The friend, one Mr. Power, offers to take Tom home. With Mr. Power supporting him on one side and the young man in the cycling suit supporting him on the other, Tom makes his way out of the bar. The young man goes off and Tom and Mr. Power take a cab home. On the way back, Mr. Kernan shows Mr. Power the inside of his mouth. It's bloody, and part of his tongue has been bitten off.

Mr. Kernan is a commercial traveler who strives to maintain dignity of dress while at work. His methods are old fashioned, and he has not been a success. Mr. Power is in the employ of the Royal Irish Constabulary Office. His social ascent has been in juxtaposition to Mr. Kernan's decline.

When they get back to the Kernan home, Mr. Kernan's wife puts him to bed. Mr. Power stays for a moment, chatting about the children with their mother and then playing with them. He is surprised by their accents. Mrs. Kernan is worried about her husband; lately, he's been a drunkard. Mr. Power suggests bringing over Martin Cunningham, a respected friend. Mr. Kernan's friends will get together and try to help him with his problem.

Although the Kernans have recently celebrated their silver anniversary, and Mrs. Kernan still remembers her wedding day with great joy, just a few weeks after her wedding she already found the role of wife tedious. Still, she has been a devoted and competent wife and mother. The next day, Mr. Kernan sends a note in to work and stays in bed. His wife is not pleased.

Two nights later his friends come to see him. He does not know that Mr. Cunningham, Mr. M'Coy, and Mr. Power have plotted with his wife to bring him along to a retreat. Mr. Kernan was a Protestant before his marriage, and he is not unknown to make little jabs at Catholicism. It has been more Mr. Cunningham's idea; Mrs. Kernan does not believe that her husband will change. She herself is moderate in her faith.

Martin Cunningham is to lead the assault. He is respected and liked. His wife is a drunkard. His legal experience and occasional bits of reading have won him the respect of his circle as the resident brain.

The men make small talk about the accident. We learn about M'Coy, who has had a colorful life working all manner of jobs. The subject of his two companions that night comes up: one was Harford, a man disapproved of because he works for Jews (and it is felt by his fellow Catholics that he acts like one). The men start complaining about the constables. Mrs. Kernan brings drink, and her husband tries to joke with her; she scolds him. Then Mr. Kernan's friends began to talk in front of him about a get-together they're planning. Naturally, Mr. Kernan's interest is piqued. He asks what's going on, and they tell him they're planning a little retreat. Then, as if it had just occurred to him, Mr. Cunningham asks if Mr. Kernan would like to come. Mr. Kernan remains silent while the men start to discuss the Jesuits. None of the men are particularly well-informed; they discuss Jesuit trivia without much accuracy. Mr. Kernan chimes in, saying he likes the Jesuits because they're learned and cater to the upper classes. But when he starts to criticize priests in general, the other three men defend the Irish priesthood.

Mr. Kernan admires Cunningham tremendously and is swayed. The retreat is being led by one Father Purdon, and it's for businessmen. The men slip back into a conversation about Church doctrine and history, getting the facts all nicely muddled.

Mr. Fogarty enters. He is a local grocer with a generous heart; despite debts Mr. Kernan owes him, Mr. Fogarty brings with him a pint of whisky. The amusing conversation continues, with the men muddling names, Latin phrases, and historical events in often humorous ways. The men get to discussing Papal infallibility. Despite the fact that some Popes were "up to the knocker" (bad), Mr. Cunningham says that not one ever spoke a word of false doctrine. "Isn't that remarkable?" he asks. The men keep talking, and they don't get any better a handle on facts or history. Mrs. Kernan returns, and she listens to part of their conversation. Mr. Kernan mentions John MacHale, a famous Irish clergyman whom he saw in real life. Mr. Power tells Mrs. Kernan that Mr. Kernan is coming on the retreat with them. She hides her satisfaction. The men talk about renewing their baptismal vows, and Mr. Kernan objects strenuously to the idea of holding a candle.

Later, at the church, Mr. Kernan initially feels ill at ease. It is full of businessmen. Mr. Kernan feels more and more comfortable as he sees some familiar faces (including Mr. Hendrick, who appeared in "A Mother"). Father Purdon gets up to speak. His sermon is rather undemanding. Nothing in it would make a businessman uncomfortable. He goes so far as to call Christ a "spiritual accountant". He asks the men to "verify accounts," and if something is not right, to set it right by God's grace.

Miss Kate Morkan and Miss Julian Morkan, spinster sisters, are throwing their annual Misses Morkan's dance. It is the holiday season. Lily, the caretaker's daughter, struggles to keep up with her many tasks, which include looking after the arriving guests. The dance is always huge: family, former music pupils, and the members of Julia's choir fill the house with gaiety and laughter.

After the death of their brother Pate, Kate and Julia have lived in the old house on Usher's Island. Mary Jane, their only niece, lived on with them. Mary Jane still lives with them, earning money through her music.

The three women are tense. It is past ten pm, and Gabriel Conroy and his wife have not yet arrived. Freddy Malins might come drunk. Finally, Gabriel and his wife arrive. As Lily helps Gabriel with his things, he notices her slim body and pretty looks. He mentions that soon she must be getting ready to get married. She retorts bitterly about the predatory nature of men, which rattles Gabriel. He tips her, and though she resists she eventually accepts. He is a stout, tall young man. He begins nervously to rehearse the speech he will give at dinner. He fears that everyone will think he is flaunting his education, and that he'll fail with them as he failed to make himself pleasant to Lily.

Aunts Julia and Kate approach him, and dote on him. He's their favorite nephew. Tonight, after the party, he and his wife Gretta will stay at a hotel rather than take a cab all the way home. Everyone makes light talk. The mood is festive and friendly.

Freddy arrives. Aunt Kate asks Gabriel to check up on him, and to look after him if he's drunk. Guests come out of the dancing room. Under Kate's direction, Julia sees to Mr. Browne, Miss Furlong, Miss Daly, and Miss Power. Mr. Browne is old. He goes with the three young ladies into the back room for some drinks. Everyone compliments Miss Daly and the waltz she played. Quadrilles (a square dance popular at the time) start, and Aunt Kate and Mary Jane try to conscript folks for the dancing.

Julia watches Freddy and Gabriel with some concern. Freddy looks quite sloshed. Freddy greets the old aunts, and then goes over to Mr. Browne to share an anecdote. Aunt Kate signals to Mr. Browne that Freddy is not to drink anymore. Mr. Browne gives Freddy some lemonade.

Later, Gabriel has trouble listening to Mary Jane's rather professional-sounding piece. He thinks about his mother, the only sister who'd had no musical talent. He remembers how his mother opposed his marriage to Gretta; but later, when his mother was dying, Gretta was the one who tended to her.

After Mary Jane's piece ends, Gabriel ends up dancing with Miss Ivors. Gabriel writes a literary column for *The Daily Express*, a conservative paper with Unionist leanings. The column is published under his initials. Miss Ivors figured out that Gabriel was the author, so now she teases him as they dance. The paper's politics are detestable, but Gabriel was well-paid and loved the new books he received. He does not take her teasing well. She tries to smooth things over, inviting Gabriel and his wife out to the Aran Isles for a group vacation she's putting together. Gabriel says he cannot. He has already planned a cycling trip on the continent with some friends of his. She asks why he vacations in foreign countries before he's seen more of his own land; he speaks of

keeping in touch with languages. She tells him he has his own language to keep up with: Irish (Gaelic, but called Irish by the Irish to emphasize its rightful place as the national tongue). He says it's not his language. Miss Ivors continues with her difficult questions, irritating him. He's nervous about how he answers; people are listening. They continue dancing, and Miss Ivors teasingly calls him a West Briton (an Anglo-Irishman who favors Ireland remaining a colony).

After the dance, Gabriel goes to chat with Mrs. Malins' mother. He tries to banish the incident with Miss Ivors from his mind. He feels she has tried to make him look like a fool.

His wife tells him that Aunt Kate has asked if he'll carve the goose. He confirms that he will. Mrs. Conroy asks what he was talking about with Miss Ivors, and he says that she invited them to vacation west of Ireland. Mrs. Conroy is delighted by the idea, but Gabriel tells her coldly that she can go alone if she likes. Mrs. Malins keeps talking to Gabriel, but he is busy thinking about his impending speech. The incident with Miss Ivors continues to nag at him.

Mr. Browne escorts Aunt Julia to the piano. Mary Jane plays and Aunt Julia sings *Arrayed for the Bridal*. Her voice is beautiful, surprisingly strong. Afterward, Freddy Malins accosts Aunt Julia to tell her that he has never heard her voice so beautiful. Mr. Browne comes forward too, praising the song lightly with jokes that no one laughs at as loudly as he himself.

Aunt Kate starts talking about how Julia's voice was wasted in the Church choir. Aunt Julia worked hard hours, rising early, to sing in the Church choir. Her work came to naught when Pope Pius X issued an order banning women from church choirs. Aunt Kate goes from saying that she doesn't question the pope, who must be right (since Aunt Kate is only a stupid old woman) to saying that there's such a thing as simple gratitude and decency (which, we can infer, the pope's order set aside). Mary Jane interrupts her diplomatically, saying that everyone is quarrelsome because they've had nothing to eat.

Outside the drawing room Gabriel comes across his wife and Mary Jane trying to convince Miss Ivors to stay for dinner. Gabriel also tries to convince her, but she insists that she must go. She departs in good spirits, though Gabriel cannot help but wonder if she has left because he was so unpleasant. Aunt Kate comes in out of the supper-room, asking Gabriel to carve the goose. Gabriel gets to work with great gusto; he is a skilled carver. Folks at the table talk about the current opera company at the Theatre Royal. Mr. Bartell D'Arcy, a tenor, is among those discussing the current singers. Freddy makes some rather strange conversation (still drunk). When some of the guests disparage the current singers in favor of the singers of yesteryear, Mr. Bartell D'Arcy says that the singers now are as good as ever. It's just that all talent goes to the continent, and there are foreign singers who at least equal the Irish singers from back in the day. Mr. Browne, somewhat ridiculously, says he doubts it. Aunt Kate mentions her favorite tenor of all time, whom no one has heard of. Her memory might be skewed, but one of the men confirms the name. Still, he may have done so to make Aunt Kate feel better. They also talk about a monastery on Mount Melleray where monks allow parishioners to stay. The monks sleep in coffins, assert the guests; Mary Jane explains that it is to remind them of their mortality.

After dessert and more drinks all around, it is at last time for Gabriel's speech. It is earnest and sentimental, and brings many tears to his aunts' eyes, even though poor Aunt Kate can barely hear a word. All sing "For they are jolly gay fellows" for their beloved hostesses.

Later, the last of the guests are trying to get home. As the front door opens and closes, frigid early morning winter air comes into the house. Somehow someone brings up an old family joke about Old Johnny, the horse of Gabriel's grandfather. He begins to tell a skillfully exaggerated version of the tale to Mr. Browne. One day Gabriel's grandfather was in the center of Dublin, with his carriage hitched up to Old Johnny, and the old horse kept circling the statue of King William II. The story is interrupted by Freddy Malins coming back in from the cold, announcing he only found one cab. Freddy Malins, Mrs. Malins, and Mr. Browne take it.

Gabriel sees his wife standing near the top of the first flight of stairs, in shadows. She seems to be the symbol of something, but he cannot tell what. When Gretta comes down, she asks Mr. D'Arcy the name of the song he was singing. The song is "The Lass of Aughrim." Gabriel and Gretta eventually get out the door, along with Mr. Bartell D'Arcy and a young woman named Miss O'Callaghan, saying their goodbyes to Mary Jane and Aunt Julia and Aunt Kate. As they walk to a place where they can find a cab, Gabriel looks at his wife, who is walking up ahead of him with Mr. Bartell D'Arcy. Gabriel remembers their many happy times together, and tender feelings flood through him. In the cab, he continues to look at his wife with great feeling. When they cross O'Donnell bridge, Miss O'Callaghan repeats the saying that one can never cross the bridge without seeing a white horse. Gabriel says that instead he sees a white man, referring to a statue covered in snow. At the hotel, Gabriel pays the whole fare and sees off Miss O'Callaghan and Mr. D'Arcy.

The porter brings them to their room. The electric lights are not working, so the porter leads them by candlelight. Gabriel says to take the candle away with him; they have enough light from the windows. Gabriel is still full of amorous feelings for her, but she seems upset about something. He tries to make conversation with her, but her mind is clearly elsewhere. Finally, she breaks down and weeps. She cannot stop thinking of the "The Lass of Aughrim." A boy she once knew used to sing that song.

Gabriel is angry, but tries to hide it. He asks if she was in love with him, and she admits that they courted. Gabriel asks if that's why she was keen on accepting Miss Ivors invitation to go to Galway, so that she might see him. Gretta says that the boy is dead. His name was Michael Furey, and he worked in the gasworks, though he was delicate.

Gabriel is quite upset. While he was remembering their life together, she was comparing him in her mind to a teenage boy. Gabriel sees himself as a "ludicrous figure, acting as a pennyboy for his aunts, a nervous well-meaning sentimentalist, orating to vulgarians, and idealizing his own clownish lusts, the pitiable fatuous fellow he had caught a glimpse of in the mirror". He asks how the boy died, and she tells the story after getting control of herself. It was winter; she was going to leave her grandmother's and go to the convent for schooling. The boy's health was bad, and he wasn't being let out or allowed to see visitors. She wrote him a letter saying that she would be back in the summer and hoped to see him then. The rainy night before she left, she heard gravel against her window. He was there, in her garden in the

cold, shivering. She told him to go home, fearful for his health, but the boy said he did not want to live. He did go back home, but a week after Gretta went to the convent the boy died. As Gretta finishes her story, she breaks down into uncontrollable sobs.

Later, Gabriel watches her sleep. He feels insignificant in her life; a man died for her love. He knows also that they have aged. The face she has now is not "the face for which Michael Furey had braved death". He thinks about mortality, and his two lovely old aunts. Soon, he'll return to that house for their funerals. He feels the power of Furey's passion; he has never felt something like that for a woman. He feels the shadow of mortality on all of them. Outside, it snows. As it blankets all things without discrimination, it reminds Gabriel of mortality: "His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead«.