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JOY AND MR. MULLIGAN.  
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broadcast at 2. P.M.  
Not suitable to amateurs as a play -  
Scene. Sitting room <sup>behind</sup> to grocer's shop. Submits.

Lark Hill  
Kilmorey

W.M. Letts,  
~~19 Fitzwilliam Square.~~  
Co. Dublin.

15 minutes play for broadcasting or acting.

JOY AND MR. MULLIGAN.

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C H A R A C T E R S.

Laurence Mulligan	...	...	A Grocer
Theresa Mulligan	...	...	His wife.
A Flower Seller	...	...	...

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Joy and Mr. Mulligan.

Scene: The sitting room of a small new bungalow in a new suburban street. Everything is new and unimaginative. The door opens into a tiny hall. Street door and room door stand open because of the hot evening. Mr. Mulligan is sitting on a plush covered easy chair. He has a cotton handkerchief over his bald head. Mrs. Mulligan, a large woman squeezed into summer finery is powdering her face and lipstick-painting her mouth before a plush framed mirror decorated with a water lily. When she speaks it is always with the sort of exasperated resignation common to many wives who are described as 'good wives.'

Theresa: . If you had a bit of sense you'd come out to the pictures and not sit moping in your own home like an owl in a bush!

LAURENCE: Why would I go to pictures? Can't I boast I never went to pictures in me life .. to be watching a lot of naturals tumbling and sliding to amuse other naturals! Is it the like of me that's a licensed victualler to be laughing at Micky Mouse?

THERESA: Don't be talking! A man that can't laugh at Micky Mouse has no nature in him. Indeed now, Laurence, I often wonder were you ever young at all?

LAURENCE: I was surely and it's thanks to old Hurley who had this shop when I was a young lad and an assistant that I learnt sinse.

THERESA: You've no natural feelings, Mulligan. The way you rate that poor Peter if he's a minute late in the morning one would think you were born with a whisker on your chin.

LAURENCE: Don't I do well to insense him while he's young? Where'll he get to if he gets no sinse now from a man who put nonsense aside and became a decent licensed grocer, rejecting the follies of youth. You should be ashamed talking to the lad of pictures and plays when the two of you should be thinking of bacon an' butter an' weighing the tea not to let a grain be overweight.

THERESA: Ah! he's a nice little fella an' well-educated. The Brothers beat great knowledge into him. Ha can talk about Bernard Shaw as good as the Evening Mail can.

LAURENCE: Bernard Shaw is it? I'll give him Shaw tomorrow. Where'd I have got to on Shaw? What is Shaw to do with a grocer? Can you ate him?

THERESA: Well now, I hold with all work makes dull boys an' I like Peter for having a bit of life and interest beyond a counter. He told me he'd adore to go to Hollywood, he felt it in him to be a Film star.

LAURENCE: He'll see film stars if I hear him talking the like o' that rubbish.

THERESA: Have it your own way then. It's no use arguin'. I've left your supper on a tray there. I'll sit the picture

out for I hate to leave before the end. It's Robert Taylor an' he's lovely. It puts me in a good temper the week long if I see a real love story. I was born romantic an' it's a great help when you live with pigs' cheeks an' butter an' black puddings all day, to think of a film star at night.

LAURENCE: Ah! get out wid you. Give me that paper - 'Licensed Grocer' - there, woman, forinst you. I must read some sinse after all your rubbish.

THERESA: Sinse is one thing and a sour face is another. What good will all your money do you and you in your coffin?

LAURENCE: That's fine for you who came to me a penniless widow an' will be a rich one if you don't offend me and make me leave it all to the clergy. When you married me you were after burying one waster, I'd wonder you'd want two.

THERESA: Don't be faulting poor Christy Murphy - God rest his soul!

LAURENCE: God rest his soul right enough, but he had you in poverty an' 'twas that made me think you'd be a fine working housekeeper and a great assistant in the shop.

THERESA: So you did - I knew it. But Christy had a great wish for me, and if he was a waster and a bit of a lad and if he did take a sup of an odd time he had a great heart and a gay laugh an' he took his drink like a gentleman.

LAURENCE: So you'd like me a drinkin', roarin', idlin' waster, would you ? Now I know.

THERESA: Laurence, will you have sinse? It's only I'd like you to get a bit more joy out of your money now you're pushin' sixty and has a snug little bit laid by.

LAURENCE: Joy? What's joy at all but to put pound to pound in a Bank account and have the Manager smile at you when you come in on the door. That's the joy I know.

THERESA: (bustling about) Is that so? See the time, I'm late talking. Christina Walsh will ate me for keeping her late. It's terrible close, you'll need the windows wide. I've got me key for I'm sure you'll be fast asleep when I get back - don't bar the door now.

(EXIT- The street door bangs behind her.)

LAURENCE is quiet. There may be a strain of music here like a beggar playing a whistle or a violin in the street outside. It is gay music, some old Irish dance. A snore is heard when it softens. Then there enters the room a woman with a basket on her arm. She has a shawl over her head concealing even her hair.

WOMAN: Flowers, sir, buy the pretty flowers? I haven't had a cup o' tay an' I'm starved with the hunger. Look at the pretty cowslips. Buy a bunch, sir, for the love of God. . . .

LAURENCE: (waking indignantly) Flowers - is it me buy flowers?  
An' how the divil did you get in - the likes o' you ?

WOMAN: The street door was open.

LAURENCE: The back of my hand to that careless woman, an' I'd take my oath I heard it bang! An' what rights had you to come up the stairs of a private house and into this room? Such uncivilized conduct! I'll get the Garda to you in one minnit.

WOMAN: Smell the pretty cowslips, sir. Isn't them lovely? I'm not asking your money, I'll give them to you for the sake of old times.

LAURENCE: Old times? And what's my old times to you that's a black stranger to me an' always will be, for you may take your old trash off with you.

WOMAN: You wouldn't have said that once, Laurence Mulligan, when you were a young lad in the fields of Glencullen. (She laughs very softly) You'd sweat yourself to get climbing the hills on the old bicycle on a Wednesday afternoon or a Sunday and then you'd come flying down Killakee hill. You didn't envy the swallows in those days!

LAURENCE: Now what way do you know all that? You must be an elderly woman - I thought you were a girl, the first sight of you. Did you live in thim parts ?

WOMAN: Oftentimes I did.

LAURENCE: I suppose you're Tinker stock.

WOMAN: Maybe . . . Still an' all I'm friends with a lot o' good people, - artists and the like, - but it's true for you I'm with the Tinkers some days. But it's long since I met with yourself. Yet many a day and night I saw you when you were a young lad. Nights in summer you'd be up in the hills till the moon was big and the corncrake calling in every deep meadow.

LAURENCE: That is so, an' hard it was to wake the next morning, an' I'd get 'down-the-banks' from old Hurley because I'd be half asleep in the shop or have my mind up in the hills. Did you ever go Ticknock way ?

WOMAN: Many's the time and God bless the days, for that's the gentle place surely.

LAURENCE: I got a puncture up there and I walked the bicycle back down them hills into Dublin an' still I didn't care. The bats were all out an' there was a great smell of new hay an' elder flowers. Elders is terrible strong at night. Quare now I never gave <sup>it</sup> a thought till this day.

WOMAN: The cowslips have a sweet smell too. I'm giving you thim, so you've no need to think of money. Seeing you so often as a lad I've a wish for you, Laurence Mulligan. I suppose it's a great life you have here, the shop and the pub and the careful wife, an' the fine new house.

LAURENCE: Why wouldn't it be great too an' I that was a penniless bit of a boy and earned it all by sinse and thrift? I didn't learn it too quick either an' whosomiver you are you seem to have known me when I had no more wit than an ass's colt.

WOMAN: I wonder now . . . When you smell the cowslips, doesn't it bring the good days back? Money and all, Laurence Mulligan, do you ever get the joy you had those summer nights above on the mountainy roads when the whins were sweet gold and the cowslips thick in the fields? There was a girl you knew then -

LAURENCE: Aye! - did you know her too? (His voice is startled)

WOMAN: Mary Kilfoyle . . .

LAURENCE: Poor Mary . . . God rest her soul.

WOMAN: (softly) I wonder is it poor Mary? Is it so bad at all, never to grow old and blind and deaf with the world's ways? Is it so bad to die before you're dead in heart and soul, as dead as you are now, Laurence Mulligan?

LAURENCE: .Who gave you the right to talk to me so?

WOMAN: Didn't I see you the night that you and she were kissing under the hawthorns at Kilkernan with the young moon laughing over the mountain. Did you think no one saw you? The two of you thought Heaven was a night in June. And you wandered off to the Druid Stone that's among the furze bushes. And you threw up stones to see would they stay on it because the people say you'll get money if you land them stones rightly.

LAURENCE: (sourly) Didn't I get my money? The stone played me fair that time.

WOMAN: Poor Laurence Mulligan, you'd no thought of money the night you lay face down in the grass under the stars the time they'd laid Mary Kilfoyle in Deansgrange burying ground.

LAURENCE: How do you know, woman? There wasn't a soul in earshot.

WOMAN: Wasn't there now? I sat near you in the long, dark hours. You wished you were dead then, Laurence. Money could buy you nothing you wanted when it couldn't buy back Mary Kilfoyle.

LAURENCE: You're right .. You're right. Whoever you are you know me well. If I hadn't hardened my heart how could I have made the money and made myself what I am?

WOMAN: Is it worth while?

LAURENCE: My God - it is not! I put Mary away from me heart and soul, thinking there'd be ease in forgetfulness and there's not.

(The piper out in the street plays the air of Danny Boy.)

LAURENCE: Are you going? Tell me your name for I disremember you. You should be an old woman and yet you look young some way, an' I seem to remember you now.

(The WOMAN throws back her shawl. She is a girl in looks.)

LAURENCE: Who are you at all?

WOMAN: My name is Joy. ... Here I'm leaving. Keep the cowslips or you'll think I was all a dream.

(She puts the cowslips down before him and goes out.)

(The piper goes on playing. LAURENCE sits with his hands to his eyes. After a minute the street door is heard being opened, there are steps on the stairs and THERESA comes in.)

Fade out record.

THERESA: Dear be good to us! You're in the dark! You've been asleep so? There's a very sweet smell in the room.

LAURENCE: It's cowslips.

THERESA: (Almost shrieking) Cowslips!

(She switches on the electric light.)

LAURENCE: Cowslips are very sweet.

THERESA: How did you get them at all, Laurence Mulligan?

LAURENCE: A flower-woman left them.

THERESA: God in Heaven! And you didn't run her? An' you bought all these?

LAURENCE: She gave them me.

THERESA: (anxiously) Laurence .. are you sick, man?

LAURENCE: I never was better.

THERESA: Was she a young woman?

LAURENCE: She was as old as meself. She'd known me from a boy. Up Glencullen way she lives.

THERESA: That's a queer story. You don't look yourself, someway. You aren't natural.

LAURENCE: What's the differ?

THERESA: You're gentle somehow .. not faulting me when I come in as you do, most nights.

LAURENCE: I had a pleasant dream, maybe it's put me in a good temper. And do you know, Theresa Mulligan, what's in my mind?

THERESA: I do not. I think you're strange. You'd best see the doctor to-morrow. I'd say you have a temperature.

LAURENCE: Temperature - how are you? I was going to say that I thought the two of us might take a holiday somewhere. We've never had one yet. And we've neither chick nor child to save for. We'll plan it out to-morrow.

THERESA: To-morrow you'll see a doctor .. is it a Mental Home you're going to - you that never used the word 'holiday' yet? What'll I do with the cowslips?

LAURENCE: Put them in water.

THERESA: It's queer about that woman .. I can't make it out at all .. She must be an old one surely if she knew you as a boy. What was her name, did you say?

LAURENCE: Joy.

THERESA: I don't remember to have heard the name in these parts. What was her Christian name - Mary or Kate or what?

LAURENCE: She told me no more than that. It's a good name enough - Joy. She said 'My name is Joy.'

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