

DAD. Oh—sorry. I meant to put it away.

JOYCE. Because of me?

DAD. Didn't seem very tactful, not on your first visit here.

JOYCE. No point in hiding the past, we've both got our memories, and they're important. She was a lovely looking woman, your wife. And you cut quite a dash. Is this Jeffrey?

DAD. On his twenty-first.

JOYCE. Mmmm. It's a wonder some girl hasn't snatched him up.

*(Her comment might not be as innocent as it sounds. DAD flicks the merest glance at the audience.)*

DAD. Yes. It's a wonder.

JOYCE. Playing the field, I suppose. Still, he shouldn't leave it too long, you men get very set in your ways.

DAD. I—um—suppose he hasn't met the right person yet.

JOYCE. Not through lack of choice, I'd say. He takes after his dad in the looks department.

DAD. Do you think? Oh, I don't know—most people say there isn't much resemblance.

JOYCE. Some people can't see the forest for the trees.

DAD. Or the bald head for the hair. One Orgasm coming up.

JOYCE. *(Giggles.)* It's a very rude name for a drink.

DAD. To us?

JOYCE. To us.

*(THEY drink.)*

JOYCE. Oh, yes, very smooth. I could get quite fond of those.

DAD. I hope you do, my dear.

JOYCE. I must say, this has all been a bit of a shock to me, us getting on so well. A very nice shock, I might add. I didn't have very high hopes when I went to the agency. It seemed a bit—degrading—to have to go looking for a man. But perhaps there are a few things we should sort out—now things seems to be getting a bit serious.

DAD. They are on my side.

JOYCE. How serious?

DAD. I want you to meet Jeffrey, and if you two get on, well, I'm going to pop the question.

JOYCE. And if we don't?

DAD. We'll cross that bridge if we have to. He's been talking about moving out, anyway.

JOYCE. It's a big step, all the same, and I'm more wary these days, there's more to consider when one marriage has failed on you.

DAD. He left you, it was hardly your fault.

JOYCE. Of course it was, part of it. You can't put all the blame on one side when a marriage breaks down, however much you might want to. We just got older, that's all. So when that floosy battered her eyelids at him, he was a sitting duck. She wasn't a floosy, I shouldn't call her that. She was quite a nice woman, actually, but she was young, and she made me look old. And that hurt, that hurt more than anything. Of course, it didn't last, I told him it wouldn't, but that didn't seem to make any difference to him. You're probably right, he said, you

usually are, but I don't care. I want the chance, whatever happens, I want my freedom. Well, he's got it, and I hope he's happy. With her he was a silly boy all over again, a young ram sowing his oats, and he hadn't looked at me that way for a long time, I can tell you. Oh, we still—you know—did it, but it was habit as much as anything, like doing the dishes or feeding the cat. But I've got my needs too. Like you have.

DAD. Oh. Um—

JOYCE. You probably think I'm a bit bold coming right out and talking about it, but it's best we put our cards on the table. I may not be very imaginative in the bed department, Harry, I'm not keen on all the sexual gymnastics you read about in the magazines these days, but I never said no to him, not all the years we were together.

DAD. (*Intrigued, of course, but tries not to show it.*) Not once?

JOYCE. Well, obviously, there were certain times, after my daughter was born, and when I wasn't well. But apart from that, he always got his onions, whenever he wanted them. (*Giggles.*) He could have had 'em a bit more if he'd played his cards right. I like to be wooed.

DAD. I'll remember that.

JOYCE. So as long as you're not too demanding, you'll get what you want on that score.

DAD. You're a very generous woman.

JOYCE. Are you?

DAD. What?

JOYCE. Very demanding?

DAD. Oh—ah—I've no idea. I've never really thought about it.

JOYCE. Like hell you hadn't. (*SHE looks for a little Dutch courage.*) I wouldn't mind another one of those what'dy'call'um.

DAD. Orgasms.

JOYCE. (*Giggles.*) Couldn't quite bring myself to say the word.

DAD. I think it's time we stopped beating around the bush, Joyce—

JOYCE. I didn't think I was.

DAD. Let's not waste any more time, we haven't got enough of it to waste. (*DAD gets down on one knee.*) You don't have to give me an answer now, but you know what's on my mind. I've told you that already. So I'm going to ask you. Will you marry me?

JOYCE. (*Looks at him for a long moment. Then SHE starts to cry.*) Oh, Harry—

DAD. Come on, what's all this, what's there to cry about?

JOYCE. I'd given up hope. I didn't think—I didn't think it was ever going to happen to me again.

DAD. No. Neither did I.

JOYCE. I've been so lonely, for so long. And I didn't think it was ever going to happen to me again. (*SHE recovers a little, and smiles through her tears.*) It was you kneeling down that did it.

DAD. Well? Will you?

JOYCE. No.

DAD. Why? I thought—

JOYCE. It's too soon! I don't want to make another mistake. Let's give it six months, see how we go, see how I get on with Jeff, and if we still feel the same way then, I'll say yes.