and, smiling, opened it slowly to the gaze of his disciple. A small gold coin[2] shone in the palm.

The Boarding House

Mrs Mooney was a butcher's daughter. She was a woman who was quite able to keep things to herself: a determined woman. She had married her father's foreman and opened a butcher's shop near Spring Gardens.[1] But as soon as his father-in-law was dead Mr Mooney began to go to the devil. He drank, plundered the till, ran headlong into debt. It was no use making him take the pledge:[2] he was sure to break out again a few days after. By fighting his wife in the presence of customers and by buying bad meat he ruined his business. One night he went for his wife with the cleaver[3] and she had to sleep in a neighbour's house.

After that they lived apart. She went to the priests and got a separation[4] from him with care of the children. She would give him neither money nor food nor houseroom and so he was obliged to enlist himself as a sheriff's man.[5] He was a shabby stooped little drunkard with a white face and a white mous= tache and white eyebrows, pencilled above his little eyes, which were pinkveined and raw; and all day long he sat in the bailiffs' room waiting to be put on a job. Mrs Mooney, who had taken what remained of her money out of the butcher business and

2. A sovereign, or a pound, worth twenty shillings. If Eveline Hill earns seven shillings per week as a shop girl, then the slavey presumably earns considerably less. The gold coin could therefore represent as much as a month or two of her wages. The story, however, does not make clear how she acquired the coin, whether it was her own or stolen from her employer.

Copy-text: Manuscript Yale 2.3 (MS); Collated texts: 1910 late proofs (10); 1914 proofs (14P) and 1914 first edition (14) [IDENTITY IN BOTH IS REPORTED AS '14']; 1967 Viking edition in the 1969 Viking Critical Library printing (67).

4 near--Gardens.] 10; in Fairview. MS 6 till,--headlong] 10; till and ran MS 7 a] <in> a MS 10 went for] 10; attacked MS 10 the] 10; a MS 12 priests] STET MS 13 him with] 10; her husband and MS 14–15 was obliged] 10; had MS 15 enlist--as] 10; become MS 16 stooped] 10; ABSENT MS 16–17 a--moustache] 10; white moustaches MS 17–18 and--raw;] 10; ABSENT MS 18 long] 10; ABSENT MS

1. A street between the Royal Canal and the Tolka River in northeastern Dublin.
2. To make a formal, public promise to give up alcoholic drink.
3. A heavy, square butcher's knife used to chop up animal carcasses.
4. Roman Catholics were forbidden to divorce, but were able to request a formal separation from the Church, which allowed them to live apart from their spouses, but without permission to remarry.
5. A deputy in a bailiff's office who does various law-enforcement errands.

set up a boarding house in Hardwicke Street,[6] was a big imposing woman. Her house had a floating population[7] made up of tourists from Liverpool[8] and the Isle of Man[9] and occa= sionally *artistes* from the musichalls.[1] Its resident population was made up of clerks from the city. She governed her house cunningly and firmly, knew when to give credit, when to be stern and when to let things pass. All the resident young men spoke of her as *The Madam*.[2]

Mrs Mooney's young men paid fifteen shillings a week for board and lodgings (beer or stout at dinner excluded). They shared in common tastes and occupations and for this reason they were very chummy with one another. They discussed with one another the chances of favourites and outsiders.[3] Jack Mooney, the Madam's son, who was clerk to a commission agent[4] in Fleet Street,[5] had the reputation of being a hard case.[6] He was fond of using soldiers' obscenities: usually he came home in the small hours.[7] When he met his friends he had always a good one to tell them and he was always sure to be on to a good thing,[8] that is to say, a likely horse or a likely *artiste*. He was also handy with the mits[9] and sang comic songs. On Sunday nights there would often be a reunion[1] in Mrs Mooney's front drawingroom.[2] The musichall *artistes* would oblige; and Sheridan played waltzes and polkas and vamped[3] accompani= ments. Polly Mooney, the Madam's daughter, would also sing. She sang:

21 set up] 10; started MS 36 usually] 10; sometimes MS 40 handy--mits] 10; an amateur boxer MS

6. A street in northwestern Dublin containing both middle-class homes and tenements.
7. Boarders who stayed for short periods only, and therefore produced considerable turnover.
8. A seaport in the northwest of England, whose harbor served as a major steamship link between England and Ireland.
9. A British island in the Irish Sea, between Dublin and Scotland.
1. Actors, singers, or dancers in the entertainment business, thought to be on the fringe of respectability.
2. Presumably a term of mock respect that may hint at the name given to the female proprietress of a house of prostitution.
3. Racehorses with either low odds (favourites) because everyone is betting on them to win, or high odds (outsiders) because everyone thinks they are unlikely to win.
4. A representative who works for others in return for a commission or a percentage of specific transactions. For example, collecting overdue bills might be entrusted to a commission agent.
5. Fleet Street in London was the site of the major newspapers and general press. But the Fleet Street in Dublin was a more general business area that contained law offices and other commercial concerns.
6. A rough character.
7. After midnight—at one, two, or three in the morning, for example.
8. A likely possibility or a good chance at lucking out.
9. Slang for the hands or, by implication, the fists.
1. A social gathering for people who know one another.
2. A room reserved for the reception of company.
3. Improvised.

I'm a .... naughty girl.
You needn't sham:
You know I am.[4]

Polly was a slim girl of nineteen; she had light soft hair and a small full mouth. Her eyes, which were grey with a shade of green through them, had a habit of glancing upwards when she spoke with anyone, which made her look like a little perverse madonna. Mrs Mooney had first sent her daughter to be a typewriter in a cornfactor's office[5] but, as a disreputable sheriff's man used to come every other day to the office asking to be allowed to say a word to his daughter, she had taken her daughter home again and set her to do housework. As Polly was very lively the intention was to give her the run of the young men. Besides, young men like to feel that there is a young woman not very far away. Polly, of course, flirted with the young men but Mrs Mooney, who was a shrewd judge, knew that the young men were only passing the time away: none of them meant business. Things went on so for a long time and Mrs Mooney began to think of sending Polly back to typewriting when she noticed that something was going on between Polly and one of the young men. She watched the pair and kept her own counsel.

Polly knew that she was being watched but still her mother's persistent silence could not be misunderstood. There had been no open complicity between mother and daughter, no open understanding but, though people in the house began to talk of the affair, still Mrs Mooney did not intervene. Polly began to grow a little strange in her manner and the young man was evidently perturbed. At last, when she judged it to be the right moment, Mrs Mooney intervened. She dealt with moral problems as a cleaver deals with meat: and in this case she had made up her mind.

It was a bright Sunday morning of early summer, promising heat, but with a fresh breeze blowing. All the windows of the boarding house were open and the lace curtains ballooned gently towards the street beneath the raised sashes. The belfry of George's church[6] sent out constant peals and worshippers,

52 perverse] 10; hypocritical MS 54 typewriter] STET MS; CF 229, 234, 246 54 cornfactor's] e:10; corn merchant's MS; corn factor's 10 71 understanding--though] 10; understanding. MS 72 still Mrs Mooney] 10; Mrs Mooney still MS 81 the(2)] ⟨them⟩ the MS

4. A song that begins: "I'm an imp on mischief bent, / Only feeling quite content / When doing wrong! / When doing wrong!"
5. A wholesale dealer in corn and cornmeal.
6. St. George's Church, a Protestant church around the corner from Hardwicke Street.

singly or in groups, traversed the little circus before the church, revealing their purpose by their self-contained demeanour no less than by the little volumes[7] in their gloved hands. Breakfast was over in the boarding house and the table of the breakfast room was covered with plates on which lay yellow streaks of eggs with morsels of bacon fat and bacon rind. Mrs Mooney sat in the straw armchair and watched the servant, Mary, remove the breakfast things. She made Mary collect the crusts and pieces of broken bread to help to make Tuesday's bread pudding. When the table was cleared, the broken bread col= lected, the sugar and butter safe under lock and key, she began to reconstruct the interview which she had had the night before with Polly. Things were as she had suspected: she had been frank in her questions and Polly had been frank in her answers. Both had been somewhat awkward, of course. She had been made awkward by her not wishing to receive the news in too cavalier a fashion or to seem to have connived and Polly had been made awkward not merely because allusions of that kind always made her awkward but also because she did not wish it to be thought that in her wise innocence she had divined the intention behind her mother's tolerance.

Mrs Mooney glanced instinctively at the little gilt clock on the mantelpiece as soon as she had become aware through her revery that the bells of George's church had stopped ringing. It was seventeen minutes past eleven: she would have lots of time to have the matter out with Mr Doran and then catch short twelve at Marlborough Street.[8] She was sure she would win. To begin with she had all the weight of social opinion on her side: she was an outraged mother. She had allowed him to live beneath her roof, assuming that he was a man of honour, and he had simply abused her hospitality. He was thirty-four or thirty-five years of age so that youth could not be pleaded as his excuse; nor could ignorance be his excuse since he was a man who had seen something of the world. He had simply taken advantage of Polly's youth and inexperience: that was evident. The question was: What reparation[9] would he make?

There must be reparation made in such cases. It is all very well for the man: he can go his ways as if nothing had happened, having had his moment of pleasure, but the girl has

96 frank(1)] 10; specific MS 96 questions] 10; enquiries MS 96 frank(2)] 10; decided MS 107 lots] 10; plenty MS 108–109 short twelve] 10; short twelve mass MS

7. Presumably Bibles or prayer books.
8. A Mass without the liturgical embellishments of a "High Mass" at the Roman Catholic Pro-Cathedral.
9. Compensation for an injury, part of atonement for a sin.

to bear the brunt. Some mothers would be content to patch up such an affair for a sum of money: she had known cases of it. But she would not do so. For her only one reparation could make up for the loss of her daughter's honour: marriage.

She counted all her cards again before sending Mary up to Mr Doran's room to say that she wished to speak with him. She felt sure she would win. He was a serious young man, not rakish or loudvoiced like the others. If it had been Mr Sheridan or Mr Meade or Bantam Lyons her task would have been much harder. She did not think he would face publicity. All the lodgers in the house knew something of the affair; details had been invented by some. Besides, he had been employed for thirteen years in a great catholic winemerchant's office and publicity would mean for him, perhaps, the loss of his sit.[1] Whereas if he agreed all might be well. She knew he had a good screw[2] for one thing and she suspected he had a bit of stuff put by.

Nearly the half-hour! She stood up and surveyed herself in the pierglass.[3] The decisive expression of her great florid face satisfied her and she thought of some mothers she knew who could not get their daughters off their hands.

Mr Doran was very anxious indeed this Sunday morning. He had made two attempts to shave but his hand had been so unsteady that he had been obliged to desist. Three days' reddish beard fringed his jaws and every two or three minutes a mist gathered on his glasses so that he had to take them off and polish them with his pocket-handkerchief. The recollection of his confession[4] of the night before was a cause of acute pain to him: the priest had drawn out every ridiculous detail of the affair and in the end had so magnified his sin that he was almost thankful at being afforded a loophole of reparation. The harm was done. What could he do now but marry her or run away? He could not brazen it out: the affair would be sure to be talked of. His employer would be certain to hear of it. Dublin is such a small city—everyone knows everyone else's business. He felt his heart leap warmly in his throat as he heard in his excited imagination old Mr Leonard calling out in his rasping voice *Send Mr Doran here, please.*

124 could] 10; would MS 126 She] 10; NO PARAGRAPH MS 127 him.] 10; him(:); MS 130 Bantam] 10; Mr MS 136 sit.] 10; job. MS 138 stuff] 10; money MS 139 Nearly] 10; NO PARAGRAPH MS 143 Mr] 10; NO PARAGRAPH MS

1. Situation, or position.
2. Salary, or wages.
3. A tall mirror, often between two windows or over a chimneypiece.
4. The Roman Catholic sacrament or ritual whereby the sinner, or penitent, privately recounts sins to the priest in return for formal forgiveness and restitution to God's grace.

All his long years of service gone for nothing! All his industry and diligence thrown away! As a young man he had sown his wild oats, of course; he had boasted of his freethinking and denied the existence of God to his companions in publichouses. But that was all past and done with .... nearly. He still bought a copy of *Reynolds's Newspaper*[5] every week but he attended to his religious duties[6] and for nine tenths of the year lived a regular life. He had money enough to settle down on: it was not that. But the family would look down on her. First of all there was her disreputable father and then her mother's boarding house was beginning to get a certain fame. He had a notion that he was being had. He could imagine his friends talking of the affair and laughing. She *was* a little vulgar; sometimes she said *I seen* and *If I had've known*. But what would grammar matter if he really loved her? He could not make up his mind whether to like her or despise her for what she had done. Of course, he had done it too. His instinct urged him to remain free, not to marry. Once you are married you are done for, it said.

While he was sitting helplessly on the side of the bed in shirt and trousers she tapped lightly at his door and entered. She told him all, that she had made a clean breast of it to her mother and that her mother would speak with him that morning. She cried and threw her arms round his neck, saying:

—O Bob! Bob! What am I to do? what am I to do at all?

She would put an end to herself, she said. He comforted her feebly, telling her not to cry, that it would be all right, never fear. He felt against his shirt the agitation of her bosom.

It was not altogether his fault that it had happened. He remembered well, with the curious patient memory of the celibate, the first casual caresses her dress, her breath, her fingers had given him. Then late one night as he was undressing for bed she had tapped at his door, timidly. She wanted to relight her candle at his for hers had been blown out by a gust. It was her bath night. She wore a loose open combing jacket[7] of

160 All(1)] 10; NO PARAGRAPH MS 164 past] STET MS 168 But the] 10; His MS 179 the(2)] 10; his MS 185 She] 10; She said she MS 185 herself,--said.] 10; herself. MS 185 He] STET NO PARAGRAPH MS 186 telling her] 10; saying that she was MS 188 It] 10; NO PARAGRAPH MS 191 fingers] 10; arms MS 191–198 Then--arose.] 10; ABSENT MS

5. A London newspaper that specialized in political and social scandals.
6. To be Catholics in good standing, the Church required its members to perform certain religious duties including attending Mass on Sunday, making an annual confession, abstaining from meat on Fridays and fasting in Lent, receiving Communion during Easter week, and observing the laws of the Church with respect to marriage.
7. A bed jacket adorned with a border.

printed flannel. Her white instep shone in the opening of her furry slippers and the blood glowed warmly behind her perfumed skin. From her hands and wrists too as she lit and steadied her candle a faint perfume arose.

On nights when he came in very late it was she who warmed up his dinner. He scarcely knew what he was eating, feeling her beside him alone, at night, in the sleeping house. And her thoughtfulness! If the night was anyway cold or wet or windy there was sure to be a little tumbler of punch[8] ready for him. Perhaps they could be happy together .....

They used to go upstairs together on tiptoe, each with a candle, and on the third landing exchange reluctant goodnights. They used to kiss. He remembered well her eyes, the touch of her hand and his delirium .....

But delirium passes. He echoed her phrase, applying it to himself: *What am I to do?* The instinct of the celibate warned him to hold back. But the sin was there: even his sense of honour told him that reparation must be made for such a sin.

While he was sitting with her on the side of the bed Mary came to the door and said that the missus wanted to see him in the parlour. He stood up to put on his coat and waistcoat, more helpless than ever. When he was dressed he went over to her to comfort her. It would be all right, never fear. He left her crying on the bed and moaning softly: *O my God!*

Going down the stairs his glasses became so dimmed with moisture that he had to take them off and polish them. He longed to ascend through the roof and fly away to another country where he would never hear again of his trouble and yet a force pushed him downstairs step by step. The implacable faces of his employer and of the Madam stared upon his discomfiture. On the last flight of stairs he passed Jack Mooney who was coming up from the pantry nursing two bottles of *Bass*.[9] They saluted coldly and the lover's eyes rested for a second or two on a thick bulldog face and a pair of thick short arms. When he reached the foot of the stairs he glanced up and saw Jack regarding him from the door of the return room.[1]

Suddenly he remembered the night when one of the music-

199 On] 10; NO PARAGRAPH MS 200 dinner.] 10; dinner for him. MS 200 scarcely knew] 10; could scarcely tell MS 203 sure to be] 10; ABSENT MS 205 They] 10; NO PARAGRAPH MS 219 dimmed] 10; muffed MS 226 nursing] 10; with MS 228 on] on ⟨t⟩ MS 229 stairs] STET MS 231 Suddenly] 10; NO PARAGRAPH MS

8. A hot beverage of wine, whiskey, rum, or other liquor mixed with hot water or milk, and honey or spices—popular in cold or rainy weather.
9. A brand of strong, dark ale.
1. A small addition attached to the house.

hall *artistes,* a little blond Londoner, had made a rather free allusion to Polly. The reunion had been almost broken up on account of Jack's violence. Everyone tried to quieten him. The musichall *artiste,* a little paler than usual, kept smiling and saying that there was no harm meant but Jack kept shouting at him that if any fellow tried that sort of a game on with *his* sister he'd bloody well put his teeth down his throat, so he would.

◆ ◆ ◆

Polly sat for a little time on the side of the bed, crying. Then she dried her eyes and went over to the lookingglass. She dipped the end of the towel in the waterjug and refreshed her eyes with the cool water. She looked at herself in profile and readjusted a hairpin above her ear. Then she went back to the bed again and sat at the foot. She regarded the pillows for a long time and the sight of them awoke in her mind secret amiable memories. She rested the nape of her neck against the cool iron bedrail and fell into a revery. There was no longer any perturbation visible on her face.

She waited on patiently, almost cheerfully, without alarm, her memories gradually giving place to hopes and visions of the future. Her hopes and visions were so intricate that she no longer saw the white pillows on which her gaze was fixed or remembered that she was waiting for anything.

At last she heard her mother calling. She started to her feet and ran to the banisters.

—Polly! Polly!

—Yes, mamma?

—Come down, dear. Mr Doran wants to speak to you.

Then she remembered what she had been waiting for.

234 Jack's] Jack's ⟨▭⟩ MS 234 quieten] STET MS 236 Jack] Jack ⟨ha⟩ MS 246 awoke] STET MS 248 revery.] 10; mood of reminiscence. MS 255 At] 10; NO PARAGRAPH MS 255–256 calling.--ran] 10; calling her and she jumped up and ran out MS 260 Then--remembered] 10; She remembered now MS 260 for.] 10; for: this was it. MS