

## ACT I

### Scene 1

*SETTING: Grace O'Malley's Public House. There is a small bar, a few tables and mismatched chairs. Off in a corner, a small table is set with a solitary chair. A fiddle case rests on a shelf above the chair.*

*AT RISE: A Friday, early evening. GRACE O'MALLEY is engaged in conversation with YOUNG MARTIN at the bar.*

YOUNG MARTIN      Pour me another, Grace. I need to be chasin' the dust from my throat.

GRACE                Dust is it now. It has been rainin' steady on for the last five days.

YOUNG MARTIN      *(Feigning a cough.)* It's the bad air in my shop, you know.

GRACE                *(Refilling his glass)* Well, if you'd be givin' that rust and dust bin a good goin' over with the solid sweep of a broom, ya might be breathin' easier, Young Martin. I'll wager a good glass of whiskey that place of yours hasn't been looked after since Annie died, God rest her.

YOUNG MARTIN      A man needs a woman's kind and gentle hand.

GRACE                Ha! And what woman with all her right senses would take on the cleanin' up of yer clutter ... car parts, rusty fenders, hub caps lyin' about. It's like livin' next door to a tinker!

YOUNG MARTIN      Clutter ya call it! I have the grandest collection of car parts in the county ... parts ya won't be findin' anywhere else. There's a great call for this kind of thing!

GRACE                Right ya are ... If someone happens to be drivin' a 1936 Austin 7 in need of a bumper!

YOUNG MARTIN      Ya never know ... ya just never know.

*(PETER ENTERS, tousled and windblown.)*

PETER                Hello then. *(AD LIB greetings exchanged.)* It's a damp day, it is. I could use a whiskey.

*(Grace moves to fill his order.)*

YOUNG MARTIN      Any luck with the nets today?

PETER                    Naw ... the sea is cappin'.  
(Grace serves his drink. He takes a healthy swig.)

YOUNG MARTIN        Then this is the better place to be, Peter lad. And 'tis Friday after all. A man needs a proper celebration for the closin' of the work week and a chance to raise a toast to the toils of his labors.

GRACE                    Says you, Young Martin. Some would say you favor the celebratin' more than the toilin'.

*(The SOUND of a car engine sputtering, then silence. A door SLAMS. JACK CONLIN ENTERS in a high state of agitation.)*

JACK                    *(To Grace)* Do you have a phone I could use? My rental car died and I can't get a signal on my cell. The garage I just passed ... you happen to know who owns the place?

YOUNG MARTIN        I would.

JACK                    Great! *(pregnant pause)* And that would be?

GRACE                    It's Young Martin McSweeney you're after.

PETER                    A fine man who knows his business.

JACK                    Got his phone number?

GRACE                    Sure but you won't be findin' him there.

YOUNG MARTIN        A man can't be two places at the same time.

JACK                    Where CAN I find him?

PETER                    Now where would ya be lookin' for a true workin' man at the end of a tiresome week?

JACK                    You tell me.

YOUNG MARTIN        Why right here in Grace O'Malley's Public House!

*(Jack glares at Peter.)*

JACK                    You're the mechanic?

PETER                    I make my livin' from the sea. Yank, are ya?

JACK                    Yeah. Look, when is this guy gonna show? I need to get the car fixed and get back on the road.

YOUNG MARTIN     This car ... what would the make and model be?

JACK                 It's a Ford! A damn Ford!

YOUNG MARTIN     And so ... what was she doin' just before she died on ya?

JACK                 Run ... ning!

YOUNG MARTIN     Ah ...

GRACE                *(To Jack)* Is it a drink you'll be havin'?

JACK                 Sure. Why not. Give me a Paddy's, straight up. *(He eyes the door expectantly.)*

GRACE                The name is Grace O'Malley. She was Ireland's great pirate queen, ya know. My late husband would say, "Grainne (*Gran - ya*) darlin', 'twas queen I made ya by the hand of marriage, for 'tis sure girl, you were the thievin' pirate who stole my heart." *Grace hands Jack his drink.)* And what do they call you, lad?

JACK                 Jack Conlin.

PETER                From Boston?

JACK                 Chicago.

*(Peter extends a hand in friendship.)*

PETER                Peter Cain. You're on holiday then?

JACK                 Hell no! This ain't my idea of a vacation! My uncle ... who I never laid eyes on in my life ... died ... and left me a run-down farm, a sty of pigs, and a dung heap of back taxes. I'm on my way to sell the dive and fly out of Shannon on Tuesday. Excuse me. *(He moves off, sits in the solitary chair in the corner.)*

GRACE                I wouldn't be sittin' there, Jack.

JACK                 I didn't know the seat was taken.

YOUNG MARTIN     That's Crowley's corner.

JACK                 I don't see anybody.

PETER                He's gone.

YOUNG MARTIN     Departed.

PETER                A fortnight, it's been.

*(Jack moves to the bar.)*

GRACE                    And by the grace of God, who's to say if he took the high road or the low. The Saints preserve him.

YOUNG MARTIN        Such a lad.

GRACE                    A fine fiddler.

PETER                    That would be his fiddle there, restin' quiet on the shelf.

GRACE                    *(Reflective)* It's a strange silence that fills this room on a Saturday night, without the sound of Crowley's fiddle ... wouldn't ya be agreein', Young Martin?

JACK                     *(On his feet.)* You're YOUNG Martin?! The mechanic?

YOUNG MARTIN        One and the same. The oldest son of me Da.

JACK                     Why didn't you say so!

YOUNG MARTIN        But I did.

JACK                     Look ... can you fix my car? Like quick, fast, pronto?

YOUNG MARTIN        Might need some parts. Don't know if I have 'em.

JACK                     Can you just *look* at the car.

YOUNG MARTIN        I can. *(He stands, EXITS. Jack follows him.)*

GRACE                    *(To Peter)* A tangle of nerves he is, Jack Conlin from America, wouldn't ya say so, Peter?

PETER                    I'll have another, Grace, and be givin' your question some thought.

**LIGHTS TO DIM**

**END OF SCENE**