

# Untitled

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*Throughout the play, in the stage directions, left and right mean stage left and stage right.*

*A tiny bedroom, yet you can somehow sense that it must have been cozy for some time. Walls of all four sides are covered with wallpapers patterned of rose blossom, however, the color is no longer pure pink but dingy yellow with no luster even under the pale dazzling incandescent bulb, which looks pretty funny under a retro-Medieval style lampshade. Joyce, the housewife in worn lilac flannel pajamas, is lying on the right half of the double-bed in the middle of the room with her back straight leaning against the bedside board, reading a cooking magazine, with a thick, brick-like quilt in grayish blush covering her legs and feet. A bedside table stands on the right of the bed. Suddenly, a girl's crying appears. It is so penetrating, although from upstairs. Joyce frowns, yet not moving her eyesight from the recipe that she is reading. The war upstairs continues. Following a silvery slap and the noise of something dropping on the ground and breaking, the girl howls more shrilly against footsteps revealing slipping and sliding. Joyce finally closes the magazine, looking upwards, grumbling with brows wrinkled more tightly. She has long been thinking of moving out of the aged "snail house", as well as leaving the annoying young lovers who lead a cat-and-dog life. However, her husband, Justin, seems to be capable of tolerating this condition easily and never directly responds to her suggestion. She is planning on one more try.*

*Justin is coming in from the door on the left when the crying is lower. His brows are also knitted, but it is more related to his full realization of Joyce's coming complaint and proposal of moving. It is not that he doesn't want to move, he just clearly knows about the*

*financial condition of the family while Joyce doesn't and, moreover, he was fired today, which must be the last straw if Joyce knows. He is not going to let this happen while he still needs to turn down her each and every attempt of moving, no matter how firm she is. He gets straightly to bed without looking upwards, lying flat next to Joyce with his eyes still open. Joyce sighs, and then puts aside her magazine and lies down too, with one arm left outside the quilt.*

*The noise finally stops.*

Joyce: *(Turns to him, that is she faces the left)* Perfectly right time to come in, huh?

Justin: *(weakly)* What?

Joyce: Them. They were at it again, and I just had a nice enjoyment.

Justin: *(smiling with a bad grace)* Easy, darling, easy. Being far too acrid makes a lovely woman in her most beautiful years grow old more quickly.

Joyce: *(Lowers her eyes for a second with smile, gently)* OK, I will try to be tenderer, as I promised. *(pause)* But you know what I mean, my dear, dear Justin?

Justin: *(Raises an arm and holds her. The arm lies outside the quilt.)* Let's pray them a peaceful life as ours, and you will gradually, gradually fall asleep and have a good dream. *(His head moves ahead for he wants to kiss her forehead and then ends the conversation)*

Joyce: *(Pointing a finger on his nose, thus stops him.)* Or maybe we should discuss something more than praying.

Justin: *(Sighs soundlessly)* Look darling, I have some difficulties in my work and I need to solve them tomorrow, could you...

Joyce: Nothing is more important than this one. You know, you had just come across whatever problems in your work, but I've been bearing this for years. *(Her sound is indeed gentle, yet it brings more*

*foreboding than a simple forceful tone would create.)*

Justin: Darling, I bet mine is more vital. I need to go out earlier tomorrow than before. Let's pray...

Joyce: *(Her breasts are moving up and down)* Don't you ever listen to me?

Justin: Yes, yes of course. I'm always listening to you. You know how deeply I love you.

Joyce: *(pause)* But why you never reply?

Justin: Not to reply does not mean I do not listen.

*(Joyce's hand outside the quilt clenches. Obvious folds appear on the surface of the quilt.)*

Joyce: *(more weakly than Justin's first line)* You know how tired I am. You know how tired I am...You know that...

Justin: *(with concern)* Surely, surely I do. I...

Joyce: *(just keeps talking)* I see you out every day. Sometimes you're in a hurry even having no time to eat the breakfast that I carefully prepared, so I eat alone. Or I keep them as lunch. I clean the rooms again and again when you're out working, and calculate the clock and I realize: oh Justin must be walking out of his office and I start to select which to cook for a warm welcome dinner, although sometimes, again, you say nothing and just sink into bed with snore...and...and...

Justin: *(looks at her deep in eyes and gently pats her)* I know, I know.

Joyce: *(suddenly being extremely excited, shaking her head like a broken robot)* No! No! How can you!?! You know what the most unbearable thing is? Them! *(pointing at the ceiling)* Those pitiful wretches, seem to have nothing to do but quarreling or fighting when they're not sleeping! Perhaps they fight even in their dreams! They have countless items to throw and break! Will the ceiling fall down one day? Huh? I don't know! *(already in a tearful voice but having no tears)*

*(Justin gives her a tight hug, and then lifts the quilt and go out of the bedroom. While Joyce keeps trembling, he comes in, head slightly down, with a glass of water. He sits on the right edge of the bed, and then pats her. Joyce sits up, again leaning against the bedside board. )*

Justin: *(hands the glass)* Here.

Joyce: *(takes a swig or two, jabbbers)* Thank you.

Justin: You are too tired today. Just sleep fast. I will ask for a leave tomorrow and prepare breakfast for you. *(pause)* And I promise I will come to them and ask them for peacefulness.

Joyce: *(squints at him)* And to repair the ugly cement steps with edges broken? And to change all the wallpaper inside? And to whitewash the whole corridor? Oh forgot to say, if you promise to enlarge the house a li---ttle bit with your magic, I would appreciate that!

Justin: Oh look at you. You are like this again. You've always been a perfect wife, and now could you please show a li---ttle bit patient and tolerance? *(pause)* Come on, lie down and close your eyes and try to sleep. I will sing cradlesong for you as I did when we were a newly-married couple.

Joyce: Can't you just stop this kind of fucking meaningless fine-sounding words!?! *(screaming)* I'm done. I'm so done! *(plops the water glass on the bedside table; some water spills)* Tell you what, you will ask for a leave tomorrow huh? Why don't you go with me to the house agent's?

Justin: *(raises the voice too)* ARE YOU CRAZY? I'M telling YOU, that I am tired every day, all day long, TOO! And you have no way to know that! Just stop complaining OK? And give up your fucking idea of moving out! Today, I was just...

Joyce: *(can't believe, grins with bitterness, tears in eyes)* You want a divorce huh? You want a divorce!

*(They look into the eyes of one another. Silence for a while. All of*

*a sudden, there is a knock on the door.)*

Joyce: *(tensely, whispering)* That late! Who could this be? (She clenches Justin's sleeve automatically.)

Justin: *(also lower his voice)* I don't know! Stay here and I'll check! (He gets up and walks out bypass the bed.)

Joyce: *(gets up in a restless manner)* No no no I'll go with you!

*(They creep out like ghosts. Justin puts one ear touching the door, trying to distinguish some voice. Joyce stares at him. Finally, Justin unlocks the door, slowly pulling it. A girl with scars in the corner of the mouth is standing outside, smiling.)*

The Girl: Um...Hi Mr., I'm Gloria living right above. Sorry about disturbing you, but could you please kindly turn down your voice a little bit? We are tired... *(embarrassedly)* you know. *(turns to Joyce)* Hello Mrs.

Justin: *(stands surprised)* Oh, OK. Sorry. We will. Good night Gloria.

*(The girl goes upstairs. Justin locks the door. They walk into the bedroom slowly with relief, and finally lie down, both facing the ceiling.)*

Joyce: *(calmly)* I don't want to be like them at all.

Justin: *(calmly)* Me neither.

Joyce: *(turns to him)* What did you say just now? What did you say before we went to the door?

Justin: *(turns to her)* Which one? Stay here?

Joyce: *(frowns)* No no! Before that!

Justin: I don't remember.

Joyce: It's something like... Yeah! You said today, you were just what?

Justin: Nothing, nothing... *(He holds her with his right arm.)*

*(The lights fade on them.)*