

Talk of Th' Town

by

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Cast of Characters

DREW: 40's

PETE: 40's

CRISSY: 40's

Place

Pete and Crissy's home

Time

Evening

2.

Setting: Twilight is approaching in the county of Cork, Ireland on a wintery Christmas evening. The play takes place inside the modest and warm home of Peter and Crissy. The main action of the play takes place inside the dining room, which acts as the play's center. Stage right of this center is the living room, with no wall separation and stage left to the center is the kitchen that does have a wall and swinging door.

At Rise: The play opens up with Pete and Drew sitting on one end of the dining room table. Later, when they are invited to be seated for dinner, they cross over to the opposite end of the same table.

CRISSY (from the kitchen): Dinner be out in five minutes!

PETE (regretfully): Oy, that one there...

DREW (agreeing): Aye...

PETE: Our final countdown till sudden death. I reckon we make it as far as the potatoes fore one of us goes belly under.

DREW: Aye, doing this one out of loyalty fer ye, being as though it's Christmas an' I've been invited an' all.

PETE: Well, who else can I call to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune?

DREW: You could'a called Mitch Henry.

PETE: Ah, Mitch Henry doesn't have th' stomach fer it.

DREW: An' I do?

PETE: Well---

DREW: On th' toilet fer two full days before I was able to feel th' rear of me ass again.

PETE: I know. You're a real pal.

DREW: Should be gettin' some kind of reward fer this.

PETE: Eat lightly. No need to take seconds an' thirds like ye did last year. You bring it upon yerself. It's one thing to be a good friend but you don't have to go th' whole nine yards, is it.

DREW: Can't deny your wife's charms! She's th' kindest, most friendliest person this side o' Cork.

PETE: Well, thank you fer sayin', you are one of th' family.

DREW: Don't I know it.

PETE: Wouldn't ye know that out of all th' women in Ireland, I find th' single one out of th' lot that can't cook worth a damn.

DREW: Ah, she tries, she's all heart that woman is.

PETE: Aye, through and through that is, but I haven't th' heart to tell her.

DREW (warning): Nooo, you should never.

PETE: The thought has crossed me mind.

DREW: You don't say?

PETE: Whenever I break out in a hot sweat, on *those* nights, when I feel the inside of me neck throbbin', o' ye could be sure I am a hair away from penance an' prayer.

DREW: I admire you. I would have broke years ago.

Enter CRISSY. She places gravy on table.

CRISSY: I made th' most fantastic gravy. Drew I know yeh especially love my gravy an' I managed a little extra just for ye.

DREW: This is Christmas, I'm all in.

CRISSY: Wonderful!

Exit CRISSY.

PETE: Christ! Her an' that bloody Goddamned gravy. Told her not to make it, to try something new, but she went on and on about her 'famous' feckin' gravy like it's th' talk of the town. It certainly is th' talk of the town, just not for th' reasons she thinks! D'ye know she must have nearly killed at least twenty different men, women and child throughout them years. Can't tell yeh how many fellas I brought over here from work and they all never come back...too polite to admit th' truth, well, that's honorable people, but every now and again I catch a whisper bouncin' off the bar counter, an' I don't know what to do, usually just pretend I don't hear a damn ting, just as well. I can't blame 'em.

DREW: It's a frustratin' business.

PETE: I tried being nonchalant about it. Bought her some cookin' classes, told her it's good start to get ideas an' all, an' even then, after spendin' months learnin' new dishes, it is one charade after another.

DREW: Ye're jokin'?

PETE: No.

DREW: You mean to tell me you sent your wife to cookin' classes an' it didn't help her none?

PETE: As sure as Jesus is on th' cross.

DREW: But she had to learn *something*, Peter.

PETE: I kid ye not, it's as if she came out of that school worse than when she went in.

DREW (shocked): You don't say.

PETE: I'm not puttin' you on, Drew. Worse than she went in!

DREW: What in th' hell do you think it is?

PETE: I've watched her.

DREW: How so?

PETE: In th' kitchen. I've kept an eye on her, to see that is, to see how she goes about her business. Can't make heads or tails out of it. She does everythin' right! Times everythin' perfectly. Seasons everythin' exactly! Food goes in an' comes out an' by the time it hits th' table it's transformed itself. I'll tell yeh what she's famous for, makin' dishes look absolutely appetizin' but when yeh taste it, it's no good. She's great at th' decoration bit an' the designing of it all, but not th' taste, yeh follow?

DREW: Strangest thing.

PETE: I already went through three, count them, one-two-three feckin' new stoves in that feckin' waste of a...ah let me calm down, me blood's going up, it's Christmas fer God sakes. I'll be diggin' myself into some other bad luck before yeh know it.

DREW: Aye, aye.

PETE and DREW hold their beers, clink and drink.

PETE: If I wasn't in love with her.

DREW (agreeing): Aye.

PETE: I've suffered more cramps than a woman during her menstruation cycle. That what it's called, when the lady gets her monthly---

DREW: Yeah, yeah, sure.

PETE: Tossin' and turnin' throughout th' nights. She sleeps like Bambi, an' I'm drippin' with sweat in an ongoin' nightmare. Can't tell yeh how many times I've told her I've already eaten. But she insists. Always tryin' different dishes. An' passionate like I've never seen it. Magnificent passion! Can you believe it? If I ever told her that she was a lousy cook, it'd break her little beating heart an' I couldn't live with meself to bring upon such a sad story to her. What's a man to do?

DREW: You can always cook yourself.

PETE: ...Suicide?

DREW: Noo, noo, I mean COOK YOURSELF, show her th' ropes a bit!

PETE: I'm a worse cook than her, lad.

DREW: Didn't yeh learn nothin' growing up from home?

PETE: This and that but I was always working the land, you know that.

DREW: What about ordering out?

PETE: My saving grace.

DREW: Is it now?

PETE: Three times, sometimes four times a week. Expensive habit but it's th' only way I can go on survivin' this way. I figure I take on three or four days of bad food and cut me odds in half.

DREW: Half?

PETE: I can get through th' week fifty-percent well off.

DREW (sympathetic): That's terrible. I feel so sorry for ya. You're a good man, you don't deserve to be fed such food.

PETE: It's true. I work hard.

DREW: Is there no solution in sight?

PETE: Not a one I'm afraid. I've tried everything in th' book.

Enter CRISSY. She carries a large turkey on tray.

CRISSY: Wait till yeh gentleman try this!

CRISSY places tray on the table.

PETE: Oh, that looks grand, dear.

CRISSY: Wait till ye try my stuffing! I made so much of it cause I know yer are a big fan of my stuffin' Drew.

DREW: Ah, that's for sure, big fan.

CRISSY: Let's sit down.

DREW: I must say, this is all such a nice display you have here, th' whole house looks remarkable so. You really are a terrific decorator, Crissy.

CRISSY: O thank you, but my specialty's in th' cookin'!

DREW: Oh, well, yeah, there you go.

PETE carves the turkey.

PETE (teasing Drew): Here's a nice large slice for you Drew, considerin' ye're our favorite guest.

DREW: Oh, thank you lad, I'm forever in your debt.

PETE (teasing Drew): Yeah, Drew was just going on about how he waited all day so he could fill his tummy with your fine cookin'.

DREW: Oh, yeah, all day long that is.

CRISSY: Wouldn't ya say? That makes me so happy to hear. I've been murderin' away in that hot kitchen for three full days.

DREW: Just for me?

CRISSY: Well, for you and we're expectin' some family over tomorrow that couldn't make it today, unfortunately...plans were delayed. So it goes.

DREW: So it goes.

PETE hands dish to DREW and another dish to
CRISSY.

PETE: An' fer you, my dear.

CRISSY: Thank you, darling.

PETE: An' fer me.

PETE sits down. Everyone has their plate of
food before them.

CRISSY: Why didn't you take more Pete? Your plate doesn't look nearly as full as Drews.

PETE: Oh, I'd like to start out slow now and accelerate as I go along.

CRISSY: Sláinte, God bless us! Dig in, boys!

Each one clinks their glasses together. DREW almost fully finishes his drink. PETE and DREW hesitate and then close their eyes to bite their first piece of food.

PETE and DREW's eyes POP OPEN WIDE.

CRISSY (cont'd): Now...what d'ye think?

PETE (near tears): I must say...this is really good darling.

CRISSY: Is it now?

PETE: Oh, yes, yes, it really, it really is quite good.

DREW: Wow. This is quite the surprise. The flavours. Are you gettin' all them flavours, Pete?

PETE (awed): Amazing. It's almost as if you didn't cook this darlin'. I mean, I know ye have but it's, it's, it's extraordinary.

CRISSY: I am so delighted that th' two of ye enjoy my cookin'! I worked so hard on it this good year. Did I really get it right?

PETE: On my livin' soul, Crissy. This is the greatest meal ye ever cooked in this here house. I love it.

PETE kisses his wife on the cheek.

DREW: I must say that this is the greatest Christmas surprise, I mean meal, th' greatest Christmas meal I've had here in, since last year that is.

PHONE rings.

CRISSY: Oh! I'll get that, you boys eat up. Be right back.

Exit CRISSY.

PETE: What d'ye think?

DREW: I am shocked.

PETE: Me, too.

DREW: Did she really make this?

PETE: Apparently.

DREW: This is like th' best kept secret.

PETE: I would never have imagined it!

DREW: I am flabbergasted.

PETE: O' God almighty! Thank you, thank you Lord. An' do I even deserve it? Another chance at life! You've made a new man o'me!

END OF PLAY