

HIS MOTHER

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MRS. REGAN was at the front window of her tenement-house flat, watching. She was not beautiful. Her eyes were sunken and beady under the worried wrinkles of her forehead. Her high-boned cheeks looked as tough as the corners of a battered leather trunk. Her withered old mouth was drawn tightly shut, as if she were holding pins between her lips. And yet, in those eyes, about that mouth, there was an expression of anxious and loving expectation that was more beautiful than beauty, because it was so human, because it had that endearing ugliness of worn life.

She was watching for her son Larry, and she kept saying to herself: "He's late. I wonder what's keepin' him."

He was twenty-odd, a typesetter by trade, "a sober, law-fearin' good lad," as she would boast, who neither smoked nor drank nor used bad language—"except now an' then, mebbe, when he fergets I'm in hearin'" — and who brought his money home to her on pay-days "as reg'lar, come Friday, as Friday comes." She had worked her hands "to the bone" to give him his school-