

Mag No smell at all is there, Maureen. I do promise, now.

Maureen *returns to the porridge. Pause.*

Mag Is the radio a biteen loud there, Maureen?

Maureen A biteen loud, is it?

Maureen *swipes angrily at the radio again, turning it off. Pause.*

Mag Nothing on it, anyways. An oul fella singing nonsense.

Maureen Isn't it you wanted it set for that oul station?

Mag Only for *Ceilidh Time* and for whatyoucall.

Maureen It's too late to go complaining now.

Mag Not for nonsense did I want it set.

Maureen *(pause)* It isn't nonsense anyways. Isn't it Irish?

Mag It sounds like nonsense to me. Why can't they just speak English like everybody?

Maureen Why should they speak English?

Mag To know what they're saying.

Maureen What country are you living in?

Mag Eh?

Maureen What country are you living in?

Mag Galway.

Maureen Not what county!

Mag Oh-h . . .

Maureen Ireland you're living in!

Mag *Ireland.*

Maureen So why should you be speaking English in Ireland?

Mag I don't know why.

Maureen It's Irish you should be speaking in Ireland.

Mag It is.

Maureen Eh?

Mag Eh?

Maureen 'Speaking English in Ireland.'

Mag *(pause)* Except where would Irish get you going for a job in England? Nowhere.

Maureen Well, isn't that the crux of the matter?

Mag Is it, Maureen?

Maureen If it wasn't for the English stealing our language, and our land, and our God-knows-what, wouldn't it be we wouldn't need to go over there begging for jobs and for handouts?

Mag I suppose that's the crux of the matter.

Maureen It *is* the crux of the matter.

Mag *(pause)* Except America, too.

Maureen What except America too?

Mag If it was to America you had to go begging for handouts, it isn't Irish would be any good to you. It would be English!

Maureen Isn't that the same crux of the same matter?

Mag I don't know if it is or it isn't.

Maureen Bringing up kids to think all they'll ever be good for is begging handouts from the English and the Yanks. That's the selfsame crux.

Mag I suppose.

Maureen Of course you suppose, because it's true. *Start*

Mag *(pause)* If I had to go begging for handouts anywhere, I'd rather beg for them in America than in England, because in America it does be more sunny anyways. *(Pause.)* Or is that

just something they say, that the weather is more sunny, Maureen? Or is that a lie, now?

Maureen *slops the porridge out and hands it to Mag, speaking as she does so.*

Maureen You're oul and you're stupid and you don't know what you're talking about. Now shut up and eat your oul porridge.

Maureen *goes back to wash the pan in the sink. Mag glances at the porridge, then turns back to her.*

Mag Me mug of tea you forgot!

Maureen *clutches the edges of the sink and lowers her head, exasperated, then quietly, with visible self-control, fills the kettle to make her mother's tea. Pause. Mag speaks while slowly eating.*

Mag Did you meet anybody on your travels, Maureen? *(No response.)* Ah no, not on a day like today. *(Pause.)* Although you don't say hello to people is your trouble, Maureen. *(Pause.)* Although some people it would be better not to say hello to. The fella up and murdered the poor oul woman in Dublin and he didn't even know her. The news that story was on, did you hear of it? *(Pause.)* Strangled, and didn't even know her. That's a fella it would be better not to talk to. That's a fella it would be better to avoid outright.

Maureen *brings Mag her tea, then sits at the table.*

Maureen Sure, that sounds exactly the type of fella I would like to meet, and then bring him home to meet you, if he likes murdering oul women.

Mag That's not a nice thing to say, Maureen.

Maureen Is it not, now?

Mag *(pause)* Sure why would he be coming all this way out from Dublin? He'd just be going out of his way.

Maureen For the pleasure of me company he'd come. Killing you, it'd just be a bonus for him.

Mag Killing *you* I bet he first would be.

Maureen I could live with that so long as I was sure he'd be clobbering you soon after. If he clobbered you with a big axe or something and took your oul head off and spat in your neck, I wouldn't mind at all, going first. Oh no, I'd enjoy it, I would. No more oul Complan to get, and no more oul porridge to get, and no more –

Mag *(interrupting, holding her tea out)* No sugar in this, Maureen, you forgot, go and get me some.

Maureen *stares at her a moment, then takes the tea, brings it to the sink and pours it away, goes back to Mag, grabs her half-eaten porridge, returns to the kitchen, scrapes it out into the bin, leaves the bowl in the sink and exits into the hallway, giving Mag a dirty look on the way and closing the door behind her. Mag stares grumpily out into space.*

Blackout.

Scene Two

Mag *is sitting at the table, staring at her reflection in a hand mirror. She pats her hair a couple of times. The TV is on, showing an old episode of The Sullivans. There is a knock at the front door, which startles her slightly.*

Mag Who . . . ? Maureen. Oh-h. The door, Maureen.

She gets up and shuffles towards the kitchen window. There is another knock. She shuffles back to the door.

Who's at the door?

Ray *(off)* It's Ray Dooley, Mrs. From over the way.

Mag Dooley?

Ray Ray Dooley, aye. You know me.

Mag Are you one of the Dooleys so?

Ray I am. I'm Ray.