

Maureen Oh, aye, aye, aye. Just to say hello he popped his head in.

Mag Just to say hello and how is all. Aye. A nice wee lad he is.

Maureen Aye. *(Pause.)* With no news?

Mag With no news. Sure, what news would a gasur have?

Maureen None at all, I suppose. Ah, no.

Mag Ah, no. *(Pause.)* Thinking of getting a car I think he said he was.

Maureen Oh aye?

Mag A second-hand one.

Maureen Uh-huh?

Mag To drive, y'know?

Maureen To drive, aye.

Mag Off Father Welsh – Walsh – Welsh.

Maureen Welsh.

Mag Welsh.

Maureen *switches off the kettle, pours a sachet of Complan into a mug and fills it up with water.*

Maureen I'll do you some of your Complan.

Mag Have I not had me Complan already, Maureen? I have.

Maureen Sure, another one won't hurt.

Mag *(wary)* No, I suppose.

Maureen *tops the drink up with tap water to cool it, stirs it just twice to keep it lumpy, takes the spoon out, hands the drink to Mag, then leans back against the table to watch her drink it. Mag looks at it in distaste.*

Mag A bit lumpy, Maureen.

Maureen Never mind lumpy, Mam. The lumps will do you good. That's the best part of Complan is the lumps. Drink ahead.

Mag A little spoon, do you have?

Maureen No, I have no little spoon. There's no little spoons for liars in this house. No little spoons at all. Be drinking ahead.

Mag *takes the smallest of sickly sips.*

Maureen The whole of it, now!

Mag I do have a funny tummy, Maureen, and I do have no room.

Maureen Drink ahead, I said! You had room enough to be spouting your lies about Ray Dooley had no message! Did I not meet him on the road beyond as he was going? The lies of you. The whole of that Complan you'll drink now, and suck the lumps down too, and whatever's left you haven't drank, it is over your head I will be emptying it, and you know well enough I mean it!

Mag *slowly drinks the rest of the sickly brew.*

Maureen Arsing me around, eh? Interfering with my life again? Isn't it enough I've had to be on beck and call for you every day for the past twenty year? Is it one evening out you begrudge me?

Mag Young girls should not be out gallivanting with fellas . . . !

Maureen Young girls! I'm forty years old, for feck's sake! Finish it!

Mag *drinks again.*

Maureen 'Young girls'! That's the best yet. And how did Annette or Margo ever get married if it wasn't first out gallivanting that they were?

Mag I don't know.

Maureen Drink!

Mag I don't like it, Maureen.

Maureen Would you like it better over your head?

Mag *drinks again.*

Maureen I'll tell you, eh? 'Young girls out gallivanting,' I've heard it all now. What have I ever done but *kissed* two men the past forty year?

Mag Two men is plenty!

Maureen Finish!

Mag I've finished!

She holds out the mug. Maureen washes it.

Mag Two men is two men too much!

Maureen To you, maybe. To you. Not to me.

Mag Two men too much!

Maureen Do you think I like being stuck up here with you? Eh? Like a dried up owl . . .

Mag Whore!

Maureen *laughs.*

Maureen 'Whore'? *(Pause.)* Do I not *wish*, now? Do I not wish? *(Pause.)* Sometimes I *dream* . . .

Mag Of being a . . . ?

Maureen Of anything! *(Pause. Quietly.)* Of anything. Other than this.

Mag Well, an odd dream that is!

Maureen It's not at all. Not at all is it an odd dream. *(Pause.)* And if it is it's not the only odd dream I do have. Do you want to be hearing another one?

Mag I don't.

Maureen I have a dream sometimes there of you, dressed all nice and white, in your coffin there, and me all in black

looking in on you, and a fella beside me there, comforting me, the smell of aftershave off him, his arm round me waist. And the fella asks me then if I'll be going for a drink with him at his place after.

Mag And what do you say?

Maureen I say, 'Aye, what's stopping me now?'

Mag You don't!

Maureen I do!

Mag At me funeral?

Maureen At your bloody wake, sure! Is even sooner!

Mag Well, that's not a nice thing to be dreaming!

Maureen I know it's not, sure, and it isn't a *dream*-dream at all. It's more of a day-dream. Y'know, something happy to be thinking of when I'm scraping the skitter out of them hens.

Mag Not at all is that a nice dream. That's a mean dream.

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

Pause. She sits at the table with a pack of Kimberley biscuits.

I suppose now you'll never be dying. You'll be hanging on for ever, just to spite me.

Mag I *will* be hanging on for ever!

Maureen I know well you will!

Mag Seventy you'll be at my wake, and then how many men'll there be round your waist with their aftershave?

Maureen None at all, I suppose.

Mag None at all is right!

Maureen Oh aye. *(Pause.)* Do you want a Kimberley?

Mag *(pause)* Have we no shortbread fingers?

Maureen No, you've ate all the shortbread fingers. Like a pig.