

## 14. CHAMP

*(Monday afternoon. A park.)*

*(CONOR and DAD walk together, eating takeaway chips.)*

CONOR           She looked all right, didn't she?

DAD             Yeah ... all things considered, I suppose she did.

CONOR           And the doctor said she might be able to come home soon.

DAD             Well, that'd be nice, wouldn't it?

CONOR           It will.

*(CONOR and DAD sit down on the floor to eat their chips.)*

DAD             So how are you hanging in there, champ?

CONOR           Champ?

DAD             Sorry. Americans talk completely differently.

CONOR           Your voice sounds funnier every time I talk to you.

DAD             *(Cod American accent)* Well, gee, next time you see me I'll be talking like—

CONOR           Dad!

DAD             It's good to see you.

*(Pause)*

                  Con, your mum... *(Beat)* She's a fighter, isn't she?

*(CONOR shrugs.)*

                  You doing OK?

CONOR           That's like the eight hundredth time you've asked me since you got here! I'm fine.

DAD             Sorry.

CONOR           Mum's on this new medicine. I know she looks bad, but she's looked bad before. Why is everyone acting like—

DAD             No, you're right. But you're going to need to be brave — real brave.

CONOR           You talk like American television.

*(Pause)*

DAD             Your sister's doing well.

CONOR           Half-sister.

DAD             She's walking now ... toddling about all over the place. I can't wait for you to meet her. You'll have to come visit. Maybe this Christmas.

CONOR           What about Mum?

DAD             I've talked to your grandma — she seemed to think it was a good idea, just as long as we get you back for the start of the new school term.

CONOR           So it'd just be a visit then?

DAD             As opposed to—? *(Beat)* Con.

CONOR           There's a tree that's been visiting me. It comes to the house at night and tells me stories.

DAD             What?

CONOR           I thought it was a dream at first, but then I found these berries in my shoes, so I hid them so no one will find out.

DAD             Conor—

CONOR           It hasn't come to Grandma's house yet. I think she might live too far away—

DAD             What are you—?

CONOR But why should it matter if it's all a dream? Why wouldn't a dream be able to walk across town? Not if it's as old as the earth and as big as the world—

DAD Conor, stop—

CONOR I don't want to live at Grandma's house! Why can't I come and live with you? Why can't I come to America?

*(Pause)*

Grandma's house is an old lady house.

*(Beat)*

DAD I'm going to tell her you called her an old lady.

CONOR You can't touch anything or sit anywhere. You can't leave a mess for even two seconds. And she's only got the internet in her office and I'm not even allowed in there.

DAD We can talk to her about that stuff. We can make you more comfortable there.

CONOR I don't want to be comfortable there! I want my own room in my own house.

DAD You wouldn't have that in America, Conor. We live in a small apartment. Your grandma's got more money, more space than we have. And your whole life is here, isn't it? Your friends, your school, everything. It'd be unfair to take you away from all of that.

CONOR Unfair to who?

DAD This is what I meant ... about needing to be brave.

CONOR As if that means anything.

DAD I wish things were different.

CONOR Do you?

DAD Of course I do. I know it seems unfair... But it's for the best, you'll see.

CONOR Can we stop talking about this now?

DAD Of course we can, buddy.

CONOR Buddy?

*(CONOR goes to exit.)*

DAD Sorry.

*(DAD chases after CONOR.)*

## 15. AMERICANS DON'T GET MUCH HOLIDAY

*(Monday evening, just before 10 p.m. Outside GRANDMA's house.)*

*(CONOR and DAD arrive at GRANDMA's front door.)*

DAD Doesn't look like your grandma's home yet.

CONOR She sometimes stays late at the hospital. The nurses let her sleep in a chair.

DAD She might not like me, Con, but it doesn't mean she's a bad person.

CONOR How long are you here for?

DAD Just a few days, I'm afraid.

CONOR That's all?

DAD Americans don't get much holiday.

CONOR You're not American.

DAD I live there now.

*(Beat)*

CONOR Why did you come then? Why bother coming at all?

DAD I came because your mum asked me to.