

HARRY Hey, what's going on?! Nobody touches O'Malley except for me.

SULLY But we were—

HARRY Err, sorry, but did I ask for your opinion? *(Beat)* Yeh, so shush, schtum, yeh?! *(Beat)* 'Cos O'Malley and I have an unwritten rule, don't we, O'Malley? I'm the only one who touches you, isn't that right?

(HARRY goes to hit CONOR, but stops short. CONOR moves to dodge the attack.)

Ha, ha! You all right Flinchy McFlincherson?!

(HARRY pretends to hit CONOR again, but CONOR doesn't flinch. HARRY tries again and again, but CONOR does not respond.)

Oh, you're getting brave now, are ya?! Do you want me to give you something to be brave about? Come on!

(CONOR looks at HARRY.)

(MISS GODFREY enters.)

MISS GODFREY Year Eight! Home-time was ten minutes ago! What do you think you're still doing out here?

HARRY Sorry, Miss. We were talking about Mr Marl's life writing homework. 'Cos you see, Miss, it's been really tough for Anton with the passing of his hamster, and Conor here was just really worried about him.

MISS GODFREY That sounds entirely plausible, thank you, Harry. Everybody here is on first warning. One more problem this week, and that's detention, for all of you.

ANTON What for?!

SULLY We didn't do nothing!

HARRY Yes, Miss. Miss, that hamster was like a brother to him.

MISS GODFREY That's quite enough, Harry.

(HARRY, SULLY and ANTON exit.)

(CONOR follows but is stopped by MISS GODFREY.)

A moment please, Conor.

(CONOR turns but doesn't look at MISS GODFREY.)

Are you sure everything's all right between you and those three?

CONOR Yes, Miss.

MISS GODFREY Because I'm not blind to the way Harry works, you know. A bully with top marks and charisma is still a bully. He'll probably end up Prime Minister one day, God help us all.

(Pause)

I can't imagine what you must be going through – but if you ever need to talk, my door is always open.

CONOR I'm fine, Miss. I'm not going through anything.

MISS GODFREY All right. Forget about the first warning. Get yourself home.

(MISS GODFREY exits.)

12. LITTLE TALK

(Friday afternoon. The hallway of CONOR's house.)

(GRANDMA enters, carrying MUM's bags for the hospital. MUM sits in the kitchen.)

GRANDMA Ah, we need to have a talk.

CONOR What's wrong?

(Beat)

GRANDMA I'm taking your mother back into hospital. You're going to come and stay with me for a few days. You'll need to pack a bag.

CONOR What's wrong with her?

(Beat)

GRANDMA There's a lot of pain. Much more than there should be.

CONOR She's got medicine for her pain.

(GRANDMA claps her hands together, sharply.)

GRANDMA It's not working, Conor. It is not working.

CONOR What's not working?

(GRANDMA taps her hands together, softly.)

GRANDMA Your mother is in the kitchen – she wants to speak to you before she leaves.

CONOR But—

GRANDMA Your father's flying in from America on Sunday.

CONOR Dad's coming?! Why is Dad coming?

GRANDMA I have to bring the car round.

CONOR But he hasn't been in ages!

GRANDMA Get yourself some supper. I know you can do that. I'll collect you on my way home from the hospital later. Please be ready.

(GRANDMA exits.)

MUM Con?

(CONOR goes into the kitchen.)

Hey...

CONOR What's the matter? Why are you going back to hospital? *(Beat)* What's wrong?

MUM I'm going to be OK. I really am.

CONOR Are you?

MUM Conor, we've been here before, don't worry. I've felt really bad, and I've gone in, and they've taken care of it. That's what'll happen this time.

CONOR Why is Dad coming?

MUM What do you mean? It'll be great for you to see him.

CONOR Grandma doesn't seem too happy.

MUM Well, you know how she feels about your dad. Don't listen to her.

(Beat)

CONOR There's something else, isn't there?

(Beat)

MUM Conor, listen ... this latest treatment's not doing what it's supposed to do. And all that means is they're going to have to adjust it, try something else.

CONOR That's it?

MUM That's it. There's lots more they can do. It's normal. Don't worry.

CONOR You're sure?

MUM I'm sure.

CONOR Because ... you could tell me, you know.

MUM Conor...

(MUM goes to CONOR and hugs him.)

(MUM turns to the window and looks out, encouraging CONOR to do the same.)

Look, you see that—

CONOR Yes, Mum, it's a yew tree – you've told me a hundred times.

MUM Keep an eye on it for me, won't you? Make sure it's there when I get back.

CONOR I will.

(MUM kisses CONOR on the forehead, then puts on her coat, picks up her bag and exits.)

13. GRANDMA'S HOUSE

(Monday afternoon. GRANDMA's house.)

(GRANDMA is in the sitting room. She goes to a grandfather clock, adjusts the time and winds the mechanism.)

(CONOR watches from the doorway, unseen by GRANDMA.)

(GRANDMA sets the pendulum swinging, watches the clock for a moment, then turns to see CONOR watching her.)

GRANDMA *(Surprised)* Oh ... yes... I was just winding the clock.

CONOR Right.

(GRANDMA goes to leave the sitting room, ushering CONOR away from the doorway.)

GRANDMA Well ... erm ... yes. That clock belonged to your great-grandmother, you know.

CONOR I know.

GRANDMA It was made in 1831 by Mark Bartley, clockmaker of Bristol. And to our knowledge, has been in the family ever since. Isn't that marvellous?

(GRANDMA goes into the kitchen. CONOR follows.)

Remember, you're not allowed in the sitting room while I'm not here. It is strictly out of bounds, all right?

CONOR Yes, Grandma.

GRANDMA Thank you. Because that's important to me. *(Beat)* Now, your father will be here soon.

CONOR Does he know where you live?

GRANDMA I've sent him the address. *(Beat)* Now pick up your rucksack please – no need for him to think I'm keeping you in a pigsty.

CONOR Not much chance of that.

GRANDMA No, no chance at all, I don't like pigsties. *(Beat)* Right, I'm off to see your mum.

(GRANDMA prepares to leave the house.)

Oh Conor, your father may not notice how tired your mum gets, OK? So, we're going to have to work together to make sure he doesn't overstay his welcome. Not that that's ever been a problem. *(Beat)* Now be good, and I'll see you at the hospital later.

(GRANDMA ruffles CONOR's hair, then goes to exit.)

Gosh, you're so tall these days.

(GRANDMA exits.)

(CONOR is alone again. He goes to the sitting room, but the doorbell rings.)

(CONOR goes to the front door.)

(DAD enters.)

CONOR Dad!

DAD Hey, Con.

(CONOR and DAD hug.)