

CONOR Yes, Mum – Shreddies and juice. I put the dishes in the dishwasher.

MUM And put the washing on. Sorry I wasn't up.

CONOR It's OK.

MUM It's just this new round of—

CONOR It's OK.

(CONOR picks up his rucksack and goes to exit.)

MUM Were you all right last night?

CONOR Err, fine. Probably just ... talking in my sleep or something.

(Beat)

MUM I forgot to tell you, your grandma's coming by tomorrow.

CONOR *(Throwing rucksack to floor)* Aw, Mum!

MUM I know. But you're thirteen – you can't be expected to do the housework every morning.

CONOR Every morning?! How long is she going to be here?

MUM Conor...

CONOR We don't need her here.

MUM You know how I get at this point in my—

CONOR We've been OK so far.

MUM I know you don't like giving up your room and I'm sorry—

CONOR It's not just giving up my room – she treats me like I'm her employee or something.

MUM I wouldn't have asked her if I didn't need her to come. All right? *(Beat)* It's only for a couple of days.

(CONOR picks up his rucksack.)

She's going to bring me some of her old wigs. Can you imagine? I could go blonde, Con. Or curly, or redhead. What do you think?

CONOR I'm going to be late, Mum.

MUM All right, sweetheart. See you later.

(CONOR goes to exit, then turns to look at MUM.)

(Elsewhere) There's that old yew tree.

(MUM exits.)

4. SCHOOL

(Monday lunchtime. School playground.)

(HARRY, SULLY and ANTON enter.)

HARRY Conor O'Malley! Where did you creep in from?
(Beat) You see there's something that's been bugging me for a long while now and I've really just gotta get it off my chest. You see the thing I've been wondering is ... where did you get them shoes?

SULLY *(Laughing)* "Where did you get them shoes?"!

(HARRY and SULLY laugh. ANTON stands quietly.)

HARRY 'Cos I'm hoping you didn't pick them yourself. I mean, them shoes are so ugly Sully's dad wouldn't even wear them. And he wears Crocs!

(SULLY laughs. HARRY turns on ANTON.)

Did you not find that funny, Anton?

ANTON Yeah.

HARRY So why aren't you laughing then? Because when somebody thinks something's funny they—

(CONOR goes to leave.)

(To CONOR) Hey! Where do you think you're going, O'Malley? Playtime isn't over yet.

(HARRY approaches CONOR.)

How are we today then, O'Malley?

CONOR Fine thanks.

HARRY "Fine thanks." Fine's good. Fine's really good.

(HARRY pushes CONOR to ANTON.)

Come on, Anton, send him back.

(ANTON joins in, then SULLY, pushing CONOR about.)

Send him back, come on. Send him back. Let's play us some O'Malley ping-pong!

(After a few more pushes, HARRY grabs hold of CONOR.)

How about now, O'Malley? How are you feeling now?

(HARRY pushes CONOR to the ground, violently.)

(LILY enters.)

LILY Leave him alone!

SULLY Oh, your poodle's here to save you!

(CONOR stays on the ground, touching his lip, testing for blood.)

LILY I'm just making it a fair fight.

SULLY Go on then.

(SULLY grabs LILY's rucksack.)

LILY (Holding on to the rucksack) Get off!

(LILY goes to CONOR.)

(To CONOR) You all right?

(CONOR stands, still touching his lip.)

Conor, you're bleeding!

HARRY (Mocking) "Oh Conor, you're bleeding. You're bleeding, Conor." (To ANTON) What should he do Anton? (Beat) Anton, did you not hear me? What should he do?

SULLY Anton.

HARRY Come on, big man, open your mouth and say something!

SULLY Anton, will you say something!

HARRY Come on, Anton, what should he do?!

(ANTON doesn't know what to say, then blurts out...)

ANTON He should get his bald mother to kiss it better for him!

(LILY punches ANTON and he falls to the floor.)

(The deputy headteacher, MISS GODFREY, enters.)

MISS GODFREY Lillian Andrews!

LILY They started it, Miss.

MISS GODFREY I don't want to hear it. We do not tolerate violence in this school.

(ANTON gets to his feet.)

(To ANTON) Are you all right, Anton?

HARRY No, Miss, he looks like he might have some serious swelling to the brain. He's gonna need an ambulance.

MISS GODFREY (To HARRY) Don't milk it. (To ANTON) Anton, get yourself to the nurse. (To LILY) My office, Lillian.

LILY But, Miss, they were talking—

MISS GODFREY Now, Lillian!

LILY They were making fun of Conor's mum!

MISS GODFREY Is this true, Conor?

(Pause)

CONOR No, Miss, it's not true.

MISS GODFREY Get to your forms. Go!

HARRY Yes, Miss.

(ANTON and SULLY exit. HARRY goes to CONOR.)

Well done O'Malley.

(HARRY exits.)

MISS GODFREY Lillian, my office! Now!

(LILY exits.)

Conor? How are things at home?

CONOR Fine, Miss.

(MISS GODFREY exits.)

5. LIFE WRITING

(Monday afternoon. School classroom.)

(CONOR, HARRY, ANTON and SULLY take their places in the class.)

(The ENSEMBLE become PUPILS.)

(MR MARL enters.)

MR MARL *(Quieting the pupils)* Thank you, Year Eight. And thank you, Anton, for your excellent suggestion. So, why do we think Anton's idea might be a suitable subject matter for—

(LILY enters and takes her place in the class.)

Ah, "But soft, what light through yonder window breaks" — Lillian Andrews, good morning, very nice of you to join us.

LILY I was talking to Miss Godfrey, sir.

SULLY *(Mocking)* "I was talking to Miss Godfrey, sir."

MR MARL *(To LILY)* Of course you were. *(To SULLY)* Thank you. *(To LILY)* We were just discussing Anton's idea for our upcoming life writing assignment. *(To ANTON)* Can you share your idea with Lily, please, Anton?

ANTON I was just saying about when we had a funeral for my dead hamster, and I made a speech and that.

MR MARL And that will be a very sad story indeed. *(Beat)* Anyone else?

(SULLY puts up her hand.)

Jessica?

SULLY Yeah, I was thinking that ... I could write about how everyone thinks I'm five foot four, but actually I'm five foot five.

(The PUPILS react.)

MR MARL You could, yes.

(HARRY puts up his hand.)

Harry, save us, please.

HARRY I'm gonna write about one time in PE, when Sully sneezed so hard that a nugget of do-do dropped out of her bottom.

(The PUPILS — except SULLY — laugh hysterically, then suddenly go silent and turn towards CONOR and stare at him.)

(MUM enters, laughing, and crosses the space. CONOR watches her.)

(MUM exits.)

(The PUPILS return to normal. The school bell rings. The PUPILS move to another classroom.)

(The sounds from a boring biology lesson. The PUPILS copy something from the whiteboard in silence. The sounds begin to distort and become sounds from CONOR's past.)