

CONOR And a cheat.

MONSTER Many things that are true feel like a cheat.
Kingdoms get the princes they deserve, farmers'
daughters die and sometimes witches merit saving.
Quite often, actually - you'd be surprised.

CONOR So how is that supposed to save me from Grandma?

MONSTER It's not her you need saving from.

(The MONSTER disappears.)

11. UNDERSTANDING

(Wednesday afternoon. School playground.)
(LILY enters, collecting her rucksack.)

LILY *(To CONOR)* I forgive you.

CONOR For what?

LILY I forgive you for getting me into trouble, stupid.

CONOR You got yourself into trouble. You're the one who
punched Anton.

LILY I forgive you for lying.

(Pause)

 Well, aren't you going to say you're sorry back?

CONOR No.

LILY Why not?

CONOR Because I'm not sorry.

LILY Conor...

CONOR I'm not sorry, and I don't forgive you.

(Beat)

LILY My mum said we need to make allowances for you.
Because of what you're going through.

CONOR Your mum doesn't know anything. And neither do
you.

(ANTON and SULLY enter.)

SULLY Oi, oi, O'Malley!

ANTON All right.

*(CONOR goes to exit. SULLY blocks his way. LILY stands apart,
watching.)*

SULLY *(To CONOR)* Where you off?

CONOR Home.

ANTON Go on then.

(CONOR tries again, but SULLY stops him.)

SULLY It's not that way, is it?

(CONOR tries another way, but ANTON stops him, half-heartedly.)

ANTON I think it's this way.

*(SULLY and ANTON continue to block CONOR's path. SULLY pushes
CONOR to the floor.)*

(LILY goes to exit.)

(CONOR stays on the floor.)

SULLY Oh, Super Poodle?! You not gonna help him out
today?!

(LILY exits.)

*(Reacting to LILY abandoning CONOR) Owwww! (To
CONOR) Get up then, Bambi.*

(SULLY grabs hold of CONOR, pulling him to his feet.)

(HARRY enters.)

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)