

*(MUM enters and goes to CONOR. MUM strokes CONOR's hair.)*  
*(The school bell rings again, marking the end of the school day. MUM exits. The PUPILS exit.)*  
*(CONOR picks up his rucksack and rushes off.)*

**6.**  
**LILY**

*(LILY chases after CONOR.)*  
 LILY            Hey! Hey, Conor, wait!  
                   *(CONOR stops, reluctantly.)*  
                   Why did you do that today?  
 CONOR           Leave me alone.  
 LILY            Why didn't you tell Miss Godfrey what really happened? Why did you let me get into trouble?  
 CONOR           Why did you butt in when it was none of your business?  
 LILY            I was trying to help you.  
 CONOR           I don't need your help. I was doing fine on my own.  
 LILY            No, you weren't – you were bleeding.  
 CONOR           It's none of your business.  
 LILY            I've got detention all week. And a note home to my mum.  
 CONOR           That's not my problem.  
 LILY            But it's your fault.  
 CONOR           It's your fault! It's all your fault!  
                   *(Pause)*  
 LILY            We used to be friends.

CONOR           Yeah – used to be! Until you got such a big mouth!  
                   *(CONOR rushes away again.)*  
 LILY            Conor!  
                   *(LILY chases him.)*  
                   Conor, will you wait!  
                   *(CONOR turns to face LILY.)*  
 CONOR           Just leave me alone, Lily!  
                   *(LILY exits.)*  
                   *(The walls begin to shake and the floor tremors.)*  
                   *(CONOR changes his clothes for bed.)*

**7.**  
**A MONSTER CALLS**

*(Monday night. CONOR's bedroom.)*  
 MUM            *(From off)* Night, Con. See you in the morning.  
 CONOR           Night, Mum. Sleep well.  
                   *(The nightmare.)*  
 CONOR           Go away!  
                   *(CONOR wakes up.)*  
                   Go away!  
                   *(CONOR checks the time on his alarm clock. It is 12.07.)*  
 ENSEMBLE       12.07.  
                   *(Pause)*  
 MONSTER        *(From off, whispered)* Conor...  
 CONOR           What was that?! *(Beat)* I'm awake. I'm in my bedroom. There's the window. I'm awake.

*(Pause)*

MONSTER *(From off, louder whisper)* Conor...

CONOR It's the wind. It's just the wind shushing the curtains.

MONSTER *(From off, half-voice)* Conor.

CONOR All right, it's not the wind – it's definitely a voice.  
*(Beat)* Don't be stupid – monsters are for babies, monsters are for bed-wetters, monsters are for—

*(CONOR is aware of something approaching outside.)*MONSTER *(From off, louder voice)* Conor.*(CONOR goes to the window and looks out.)**(The MONSTER enters and creaks into life, slowly.)*

Conor O'Malley! I have come to get you, Conor O'Malley.

CONOR So come and get me then.

MONSTER What did you say?!

CONOR I said, come and get me then.

*(The MONSTER roars.)*

Shout all you want – I've seen worse.

*(The MONSTER goes to roar again, but stops.)*

MONSTER You really aren't scared, are you?

CONOR No. Not of you, anyway.

MONSTER You will be, before the end.

*(The MONSTER roars.)*

CONOR What do you want from me?

MONSTER It is not what I want from you, Conor O'Malley. It's what you want from me.

CONOR I don't want anything from you!

MONSTER Not yet. But you will.

CONOR What are you?

MONSTER I am not a "what"! I'm a "who"!

CONOR Who are you, then?

MONSTER Who am I? Who am I?! I am the ancient yew tree! And I have as many names as there are years to time itself! *(Beat)* I am Herne the Hunter! I am the eternal Green Man! *(Beat)* I am the spine on which mountains hang! I am the tears that rivers cry! I am the wolf that kills the stag, the spider that kills the fly! I am the snake of the world devouring its own tail! I am everything untamed and untameable! I am this wild earth, come for you, Conor O'Malley.

CONOR You're just a tree – with branches and berries.

MONSTER I do not often come walking, boy – only for matters of life and death. I will be listened to!

CONOR What do you want with me?

MONSTER Here is what will happen, Conor O'Malley. I will come to you again on further nights. And I will tell you three stories – three tales from when I walked before.

CONOR Yeah sure, because that's what monsters always do – tell stories.

MONSTER Stories are the wildest things of all! Stories chase and bite and hunt. And when I have finished my three stories, you will tell me a fourth. And it will be the truth.

CONOR The truth?

MONSTER Your truth – the one you hide, Conor O'Malley – the thing you are most afraid of.

*(Sounds from the nightmare.)*

You will tell the truth, for that is why you called me.  
 CONOR And what if I don't?  
 MONSTER Then I will eat you alive.  
*(The MONSTER approaches CONOR, threateningly, then recedes.)*

## 8. GRANDMA

*(Tuesday morning. CONOR's bedroom.)*  
*(The sound of an alarm clock.)*  
*(CONOR goes to the window and looks out.)*  
*(CONOR changes into his school uniform; in doing so, he finds several yew tree berries in his shoes, which he tips onto the floor. The MONSTER watches him.)*  
 MUM *(From off)* Con, are you up? Don't want to be late for school.  
*(CONOR tidies the berries into his rucksack.)*  
 CONOR Yes, Mum, I'm just getting my bag together.  
*(Time passes. We hear sounds from CONOR's school day.)*  
*(Tuesday afternoon. CONOR's house. CONOR arrives back from school. GRANDMA and MUM are in the sitting room. GRANDMA has a carrier bag next to her.)*  
 GRANDMA How was school, young man?  
 CONOR Fine.  
 GRANDMA You know there's a tremendous independent boys' school not half a mile from me.  
 MUM He's happy where he is, Mum. Aren't you, Con?  
 GRANDMA The academic standards are quite high, much higher than the comprehensive, I'm sure.

CONOR I'm fine where I am.  
*(GRANDMA goes to CONOR and pinches his cheeks, hard.)*  
 GRANDMA Are you being a good boy for your mum, though?  
 MUM He's been very good, Mum – so there's no need to inflict quite so much pain.  
 GRANDMA Oh, nonsense.  
*(GRANDMA slaps CONOR on his cheeks, playfully but hard. CONOR stands and takes it.)*  
 CONOR Grandma?!  
 GRANDMA Go and put the kettle on for your mum and me.  
*(CONOR goes towards the kitchen.)*  
*(Grabbing the carrier bag)* Oh Bea ... wigs.  
 MUM Conor, Grandma brought me her wigs.  
*(CONOR turns.)*  
 Do you want to see?  
 GRANDMA Yes, look.  
*(GRANDMA takes a wig from the carrier bag and inspects it.)*  
 Now, when was this...? 1968 or something.  
*(GRANDMA puts on the wig.)*  
 MUM When you were burning your bra.  
 CONOR Mum!  
 MUM What? I just said bra.  
 GRANDMA *(Presenting herself, wiggled)* Cathy McGowan.  
 CONOR Who's Cathy McGowan?  
 GRANDMA Cathy McGowan. *(To MUM)* "Ready, Steady, Go"?  
 MUM I've no idea.