

Scene 5

A rainy afternoon. Front door opens and Maureen enters in funeral attire, takes her jacket off and idles around quietly, her mind elsewhere. She lights a fire in the range, turns the radio on low and sits down in the rocking-chair. After a moment she half-laughs, takes down the boxes of Complan and porridge from the kitchen shelf, goes back to the range and empties the contents of both on the fire. She exits into the hall and returns a moment later with an old suitcase which she lays on the table, brushing off a thick layer of dust. She opens it, considers for a second what she needs to pack, then returns to the hall. There is a knock at the door. Maureen returns, thinks a moment, takes the suitcase off the table and places it to one side, fixes her hair a little, then answers the door.

MAUREEN. Oh hello there, Ray.

RAY. *(Off.)* Hello there, Mrs....

MAUREEN. Come in ahead for yourself.

RAY. I did see you coming ahead up the road. *(Ray enters, closing the door. Maureen idles to the kitchen and makes herself some tea.)* I didn't think so early you would be back. Did you not want to go on to the reception or the whatyoucall they're having at Rory's so?

MAUREEN. No. I do have better things to do with me time.

RAY. Aye, aye. Have your sisters gone on to it?

MAUREEN. They have, aye.

RAY. Of course. Coming back here after, will they be?

MAUREEN. Going straight home, I think they said they'd be.

RAY. Oh aye. Sure, it's a long oul drive for them. Or fairly long. *(Pause.)* It did all go off okay, then?

MAUREEN. It did.

RAY. Despite the rain.

MAUREEN. Despite the rain.

RAY. A poor oul day for a funeral.

MAUREEN. It was. When it could've been last month we buried her, and she could've got the last of the sun, if it wasn't for the hundred bastarding inquests, proved nothing.

RAY. You'll be glad that's all over and done with now, anyways.

MAUREEN. Very glad.

RAY. I suppose they do only have their jobs to do. *(Pause.)* Although no fan am I of the bastarding polis. Me too wee toes they went and broke on me for no reason, me arsehole drunk and disorderly.

MAUREEN. The polis broke your toes, did they?

RAY. They did.

MAUREEN. Oh. Tom Hanlon said what it was you kicked a door in just your socks.

RAY. Did he now? And I suppose you believe a policeman's word over mine. Oh aye. Isn't that how the Birmingham Six went down?

MAUREEN. Sure, you can't equate your toes with the Birmingham Six, now, Ray.

RAY. It's the selfsame differ. *(Pause.)* What was I saying, now?

MAUREEN. Some bull.

RAY. Some bull, is it? No. Asking about your mam's funeral, I was.

MAUREEN. That's what I'm saying.

RAY. *(Pause.)* Was there a big turn-out at it?

MAUREEN. Me sisters and one of their husbands and nobody else but Maryjohnny Rafferty and oul Father Walsh — Welsh — saying the thing.

RAY. Father Welsh punched Mairtin Hanlon in the head once, and for no reason. *(Pause.)* Are you not watching telly for yourself, no?

MAUREEN. I'm not. It's only Australian oul shite they do ever show on that thing.

RAY. *(Slightly bemused.)* Sure, that's why I do like it. Who wants to see Ireland on telly?

MAUREEN. I do.

RAY. All you have to do is look out your window to see Ireland. And it's soon bored you'd be. 'There goes a calf.' *(Pause.)* I be

bored anyway. I be continually bored. *(Pause.)* London I'm thinking of going to. Aye. Thinking of it, anyways. To work, y'know. One of these days. Or else Manchester. They have a lot more drugs in Manchester. Supposedly, anyways.

MAUREEN. Don't be getting messed up in drugs, now, Ray, for yourself. Drugs are terrible dangerous.

RAY. Terrible dangerous, are they? Drugs, now?

MAUREEN. You know full well they are.

RAY. Maybe they are, maybe they are. But there are plenty of other things just as dangerous, would kill you just as easy. Maybe even easier.

MAUREEN. *(Wary.)* Things like what, now?

RAY. *(Pause. Shrugging.)* This bastarding town for one.

MAUREEN. *(Pause. Sadly.)* Is true enough.

RAY. Just that it takes seventy years. Well, it won't take me seventy years. I'll tell you that. No way, boy. *(Pause.)* How old was your mother, now, when she passed?

MAUREEN. Seventy, aye. Bang on.

RAY. She had a good innings, anyway. *(Pause.)* Or an innings, anyway. *(Sniffs the air.)* What's this you've been burning?

MAUREEN. Porridge and Complian I've been burning.

RAY. For why?

MAUREEN. Because I don't eat porridge or Complian. The remainders of me mother's, they were. I was having a good clear-out.

RAY. Only a waste that was.

MAUREEN. Do I need your say-so so?

RAY. I'd've been glad to take them off your hands, I'm saying.

MAUREEN. *(Quietly.)* I don't need your say-so.

RAY. The porridge, anyway. I do like a bit of porridge. I'd've left the Complian. I don't drink Complian. Never had no call to.

MAUREEN. There's some Kimberleys left in the packet I was about to burn too, you can have, if it's such a big thing.

RAY. I *will* have them Kimberleys. I do love Kimberleys.

MAUREEN. I bet you do. *(Ray eats a couple of Kimberleys.)*

RAY. Are they a bit stale, now? *(Chews.)* It does be hard to tell with Kimberleys. *(Pause.)* I think Kimberleys are me favourite biscuits out of any biscuits. Them or Jaffa Cakes. *(Pause.)* Or Wagon

Wheels. *(Pause.)* Or would you classify Wagon Wheels as biscuits at all now. Aren't they more of a kind of a bar...?

MAUREEN. *(Interrupting.)* I've things to do now, Ray. Was it some reason you had to come over or was it just to discuss Wagon Wheels?

RAY. Oh aye, now. No, I did have a letter from Pato the other day and he did ask me to come up. *(Maureen sits in the rocking-chair and listens with keen interest.)*

MAUREEN. He did? What did he have to say?

RAY. He said sorry to hear about your mother and all, and his condolences he sent.

MAUREEN. Aye, aye, aye, and anything else, now?

RAY. That was the main gist of it, the message he said to pass onto you.

MAUREEN. It had no times or details, now?

RAY. Times or details? No....

MAUREEN. I suppose....

RAY. Eh?

MAUREEN. Eh?

RAY. Eh? Oh, also he said he was sorry he didn't get to see you the night he left, there, he would've liked to've said good-bye. But if that was the way you wanted it, so be it. Although rude, too, I thought that was.

MAUREEN. *(Standing, confused.)* I did see him the night he left. At the station there.

RAY. What station? Be taxicab Pato left. What are you thinking of?

MAUREEN. *(Sitting.)* I don't know now.

RAY. Be taxicab Pato left, and sad that he never got your good-bye, although why he wanted your good-bye I don't know. *(Pause.)* I'll tell you this, Maureen, not being harsh, but your house does smell an awful lot nicer now that your mother's dead. I'll say it does, now.

MAUREEN. Well, isn't that the best? With me thinking I did see him the night he left, there. The train that pulled away. *(He looks at her as if she's mad.)*

RAY. Aye, aye. *(Mumbled, sarcastic.)* Have a rest for yourself. *(Pause.)* Oh, do you know a lass called, em ... Dolores Hooley, or Healey, now? She was over with the Yanks when they was over.