

Scene 2

Mag is sitting at the table, staring at her reflection in a hand-mirror. She pats her hair a couple of times. The TV is on, showing an old episode of The Sullivans. There is a knock at the front door, which startles her slightly.

MAG. Who...? Maureen. Oh-h. The door, Maureen. *(Mag gets up and shuffles towards the kitchen window. There is another knock. She shuffles back to the door.)* Who's at the door?

RAY. *(Off.)* It's Ray Dooley, Mrs. From over the way.

MAG. Dooley?

RAY. Ray Dooley, aye. You know me.

MAG. Are you one of the Dooleys so?

RAY. I am. I'm Ray.

MAG. Oh-h.

RAY. *(Pause. Irritated.)* Well, will you let me in or am I going to talk to the door?

MAG. She's feeding the chickens. *(Pause.)* Have you gone?
RAY. *(Angrily.)* Open the outh door, Mrs.! Haven't I walked a mile out of my way just to get here?
MAG. Have you?
RAY. I have. 'Have you?' she says. *(Mag unlatches the door with some difficulty and Ray Dooley, a lad of about nineteen, enters.)* Thank you! An hour I thought you'd be keeping me waiting.
MAG. Oh, it's you, so it is.
RAY. Of course it's me. Who else?
MAG. You're the Dooley with the uncle.
RAY. It's only a million times you've seen me the past twenty year. Aye, I'm the Dooley with the uncle, and it's me uncle the message is. *(Ray stops and watches the TV a moment.)*
MAG. Maureen's at the chickens.
RAY. You've said Maureen's at the chickens. What's on the telly?
MAG. I was waiting for the news.
RAY. You'll have a long wait.
MAG. I was combing my hair.
RAY. I think it's *The Sullivans*.
MAG. I don't know what it is.
RAY. You do get a good reception.
MAG. A middling reception.
RAY. Everything's Australian nowadays.
MAG. I don't know if it is or it isn't. *(Mag sits in the rocking-chair.)* At the chickens, Maureen is.
RAY. That's three times now you've told me Maureen's at the chickens. Are you going for the world's record in saying 'Maureen's at the chickens'?
MAG. *(Pause. Confused.)* She's feeding them. *(Ray stares at her a moment, then sighs and looks out through the kitchen window.)*
RAY. Well, I'm not wading through all that skitter just to tell her. I've done enough wading. Coming up that outhill.
MAG. It's a big outhill.
RAY. It is a big outhill.
MAG. Steep.
RAY. Steep is right and if not steep then muddy.
MAG. Muddy and rocky.

RAY. Muddy and rocky is right. Uh-huh. How do ye two manage up it every day?

MAG. We do drive.

RAY. Of course. *(Pause.)* That's what I want to do is drive. I'll have to be getting driving lessons. And a car. *(Pause.)* Not a good one, like. A second-hand one, y'know?

MAG. A used one.

RAY. A used one, aye.

MAG. Off somebody.

RAY. Oul Father Welsh — Walsh — has a car he's selling, but I'd look a poof buying a car off a priest.

MAG. I don't like Father Welsh — Welsh — at all.

RAY. He punched Mairtin Hanlon in the head once, and for no reason.

MAG. God love us!

RAY. Aye. Although, now, that was out of character for Father Welsh. Father Welsh seldom uses violence, same as most young priests. It's usually only the older priests go punching you in the head. I don't know why. I suppose it's the way they were brought up.

MAG. There was a priest the news Wednesday had a babby with a Yank!

RAY. That's no news at all. That's everyday. It'd be hard to find a priest who hasn't had a babby with a Yank. If he'd punched that babby in the head, that'd be news. Aye. Anyways. Aye. What was I saying? Oh aye, so if I give you the message, Mrs., you'll be passing it on to Maureen, so you will, or will I be writing it down for you?

MAG. I'll be passing it on.

RAY. Good-oh. Me brother Pato said to invite yous to our uncle's going-away do. The Riordan's hall out in Carraroe.

MAG. Is your brother back so?

RAY. He is.

MAG. Back from England?

RAY. Back from England, aye. England's where he was, so that's where he would be back from. Our Yankee uncle's going home to Boston after his holiday and taking those two ugly duckling daughters back with him and that Dolores whatyocall,

Healey or Hooley, so there'll be a little to-do in the Riordan's as a good-bye or a *big* to-do knowing them show-off bastards and free food anyways, so me brother says ye're welcome to come or Maureen anyways, he knows you don't like getting out much. Isn't it you has the bad hip?

MAG. No.

RAY. Oh. Who is it has the bad hip so?

MAG. I don't know. I do have the urine infection.

RAY. Maybe that's what I was thinking of. And thanks for telling me.

MAG. Me urine.

RAY. I know, your urine.

MAG. And me bad back. And me burned hand.

RAY. Aye, aye, aye. Anyways, you'll be passing the message on to that one.

MAG. Eh?

RAY. You'll be remembering the message to pass it on to that one?

MAG. Aye.

RAY. Say it back to me so.

MAG. Say it back to you?

RAY. Aye.

MAG. (*Long pause.*) About me hip...?

RAY. (*Angrily.*) I should've fecking written it down in the first fecking place, I fecking knew! And save all this fecking time! (*Ray grabs a pen and a piece of paper, sits at the table and writes the message out.*) Talking with a loon!

MAG. (*Pause.*) Do me a mug of tea while you're here, Pato. Em, Ray.

RAY. *Ray* my fecking name is! Pato's me fecking brother!

MAG. I do forget.

RAY. It's like talking to a ... talking to a...

MAG. Brick wall.

RAY. Brick wall is right.

MAG. (*Pause.*) Or some soup do me. (*Ray finishes writing and gets up.*)

RAY. There. Forget about soup. The message is there. Point that one in the direction of it when she returns from beyond.

The Riordan's hall out in Carraroe. Seven o'clock tomorrow night. Free food. Okay?

MAG. All right now, Ray. Are you still in the choir nowadays, Ray?

RAY. I am *not* in the choir nowadays. Isn't it ten years since I was in the choir?

MAG. Doesn't time be flying?

RAY. Not since I took an interest in girls have I been in the choir because you do get no girls in choirs, only fat girls and what use are they? No. I go to discos, me.

MAG. Good enough for yourself.

RAY. What am I doing standing around here conversing with you? I have left me message and now I am off.

MAG. Good-bye to you, Ray.

RAY. Good-bye to you, Mrs.

MAG. And pull the door.

RAY. I was going to pull the door anyways.... *(Ray pulls the front door shut behind him as he exits. Off.)* I don't need your advice! *(As Ray's footsteps fade, Mag gets up, reads the message on the table, goes to the kitchen window and glances out, then finds a box of matches, comes back to the table, strikes a match, lights the message, goes to the range with it burning and drops it inside. Sound of footsteps approaching the front door. Mag shuffles back to her rocking chair and sits in it just as Maureen enters.)*