

MAUREEN. What?

MAG. But how could you go with him? You do still have me to look after.

MAUREEN. *(In a happy daze.)* He asked me to go to America with him? Pato asked me to go to America with him?

MAG. *(Looking up at her.)* But what about me, Maureen? *(A slight pause before Maureen, in a single and almost lazy motion, throws the considerable remainder of the oil into Mag's midriff, some of it splashing up into her face. Mag doubles-up, screaming, falls to the floor, trying to pat the oil off her, and lies there convulsing, screaming and whimpering. Maureen steps out of her way to avoid her fall, still in a daze, barely noticing her.)*

MAUREEN. *(Dreamily, to herself.)* He asked me to go to America with him...? *(Recovering herself.)* What time is it? Oh feck, he'll be leaving! I've got to see him. Oh God... What will I wear? Uh... Me black dress! Me little black dress! It'll be a remembrance to him... *(Maureen darts off through the hall.)*

MAG. *(Quietly, sobbing.)* Maureen ... help me.... *(Maureen returns a moment later, pulling her black dress on.)*

MAUREEN. *(To herself.)* How do I look? Ah, I'll have to do. What time is it? Oh God....

MAG. Help me, Maureen....

MAUREEN. *(Brushing her hair.)* Help you, is it? After what you've done? Help you, she says. No, I won't help you, and I'll tell you another thing. If you've made me miss Pato before he goes, then you'll really be for it, so you will, and no messing this time. Out of me fecking way, now... *(Maureen steps over Mag, who is still shaking on the floor, and exits through the front door. Pause. Mag is still crawling around slightly. The front door bangs open and Mag looks up at Maureen as she breezes back in.)* Me car keys I forgot... *(Maureen grabs her keys from the table, goes to the door, turns back to the table and switches the radio off.)* Electricity. *(Maureen exits again, slamming the door. Pause. Sound of her car starting and pulling off. Pause.)*

MAG. *(Quietly.)* But who'll look after me, so? *(Mag, still shaking, looks down at her scalded hand. Blackout.)*

MAUREEN

Scene 4

Same night. The only light in the room emanates from the orange coals through the grill of the range, just illuminating the dark shapes of Mag, sitting in her rocking-chair, which rocks back and forth of its own volition, her body unmoving, and Maureen, still in her black dress, who idles very slowly around the room, poker in hand.

MAUREEN. To Boston. To Boston I'll be going. Isn't that where them two were from, the Kennedys, or was that somewhere else, now? Robert Kennedy I did prefer over Jack Kennedy. He seemed to be nicer to women. Although I haven't read up on it. *(Pause.)* Boston. It does have a nice ring to it. Better than England it'll be, I'm sure. Although where wouldn't be better than England? No shite I'll be cleaning there, anyways, and no names called, and Pato'll be there to have a say-so anyways if there was to be names called, but I'm sure there won't be. The Yanks do love the Irish. *(Pause.)* Almost begged me, Pato did. Almost on his hands and knees, he was, near enough crying. At the station I caught him, not five minutes to spare, thanks to you. Thanks to your oul interfering. But too late to be interfering you are now. Oh aye. Be far too late, although you did give it a good go, I'll say that for you. Another five minutes and you'd have had it. Poor you. Poor selfish oul bitch, oul you. *(Pause.)* Kissed the face off me, he did, when he saw me there. Them blue eyes of his. Them muscles. Them arms wrapping me. 'Why did you not answer me letter?' And all for coming over and giving you a good kick he was when I told him, but 'Ah no,' I said, 'isn't she just a feeble-minded oul feck, not worth dirtying your boots on?' I was defending you there. *(Pause.)* 'You will come to Boston with me so, me love, when you get up the money.' 'I will, Pato. Be it married or be it living in sin, what do I care? What do I care if tongues'd be wagging? Tongues have wagged about me before, let them wag again. Let them never stop wagging, so long as I'm with you, Pato, what do I care about

tongues? So long as it's you and me, and the warmth of us cuddled up, and the skins of us asleep, is all I ever really wanted anyway.' (Pause.) 'Except we do still have a problem, what to do with your owl mam, there,' he said. 'Would an owl folks home be too harsh?' 'It wouldn't be too harsh but it would be too expensive.' 'What about your sisters so?' 'Me sisters wouldn't have the bitch. Not even a half-day at Christmas to be with her can them two stand. They clear forgot her birthday this year as well as that. 'How do you stick her without going off your rocker?' they do say to me. Behind her back, like. (Pause.) 'I'll leave it up to yourself so,' Pato says. He was on the train be this time, we was kissing out the window, like they do in films. 'I'll leave it up to yourself so, whatever you decide. If it takes a month, let it take a month. And if it's finally you decide you can't bear to be parted from her and have to stay behind, well, I can't say I would like it, but I'd understand. But if even a year it has to take for you to decide, it is a year I will be waiting, and won't be minding the wait.' 'It won't be a year it is you'll be waiting, Pato', I called out then, the train was pulling away. 'It won't be a year nor yet nearly a year. It won't be a week!' (The rocking-chair has stopped its motions. Mag starts to slowly lean forward at the waist until she finally topples over and falls heavily to the floor, dead. A red chunk of skull hangs from a string of skin at the side of her head. Maureen looks down at her, somewhat bored, taps her on the side with the toe of her shoe, then steps onto her back and stands there in thoughtful contemplation.) 'Twas over the stile she did trip. Aye. And down the hill she did fall. Aye. (Pause.) Aye. (Pause. Blackout.)

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 Cornflour 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 a lead 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 owl 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.