

RAY (w Maureen)

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

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.

MAUREEN. I know the name, aye.

RAY. She was at me uncle's do they had there, dancing with me brother early on. You remember?

MAUREEN. Dancing with him, was it? Throwing herself at him would be nearer the mark. Like a cheap oul whore.

RAY. I don't know about that, now.

MAUREEN. Like a cheap oul whore. And where did it get her?

RAY. She did seem nice enough to me, there, now. Big brown eyes she had. And I do like brown eyes, me, I do. Oh aye. Like the lass used to be on *Bosco*. Or I *think* the lass used to be on *Bosco* had brown eyes. We had a black and white telly at that time. *(Pause.)* What was I talking about, now?

MAUREEN. Something about this Dolores Hooley or whoever she fecking is.

RAY. Oh aye. Herself and Pato did get engaged a week ago, now, he wrote and told me.

MAUREEN. *(Shocked.)* Engaged to do what?

RAY. Engaged to get married. What do you usually get engaged for? 'Engaged to do what?' Engaged to eat a bun! *(Maureen is dumbstruck.)* A bit young for him, I think, but good luck to him. A whirlwind oul whatyoucall. July next year, they're thinking of having it, but I'll have to write and tell him to move it either forward or back, else it'll coincide with the European Championships. I wonder if they'll have the European Championships on telly over there at all? Probably not, now, the Yankee bastards. They don't care about football at all. Ah well. *(Pause.)* It won't be much of a change for her anyways, from Hooley to Dooley. Only one letter. The 'h'. That'll be a good thing. *(Pause.)* Unless it's Healey that she is. I can't remember. *(Pause.)* If it's Healey, it'll be three letters. The 'h', the 'e' and the 'a'. *(Pause.)* Would you want me to be passing any message on, now, when I'm writing, Mrs.? I'm writing tomorrow.

MAUREEN. I get ... I do get confused. Dolores Hooley...?

RAY. *(Pause. Irritated.)* Would you want me to be passing on any message, now, I'm saying?

MAUREEN. *(Pause.)* Dolores Hooley...?

RAY. *(Sighing.)* Fecking.... The loons you do get in this house! Only repeating!

MAUREEN. Who's a loon?

RAY. Who's a loon, she says! *(Ray scoffs and turns away, looking out the window. Maureen quietly picks up the poker from beside the range and, holding it low at her side, slowly approaches him from behind.)*

MAUREEN. *(Angrily.)* Who's a loon?! *(Ray suddenly sees something hidden behind a couple of boxes on the inner window ledge.)*

RAY. *(Angrily.)* Well, isn't that fecking just the fecking best yet...! *(Ray picks up a faded tennis ball with a string sticking out of it from the ledge and spins around to confront Maureen with it, so angry that he doesn't even notice the poker. Maureen stops in her tracks.)* Sitting on that fecking shelf all these fecking years you've had it, and what good did it do ya?! A tenner that swingball set did cost me poor ma and da and in 1979 that was, when a tenner was a lot of money. The best fecking present I did ever get and only two oul months' play out of it I got before you went and confiscated it on me. What right did you have? What right at all? No right. And just left it sitting there then to fade to fecking skitter. I wouldn't've minded if you'd got some use out of it, if you'd taken the string out and played pat-ball or something agin a wall, but no. Just out of pure spite is the only reason you kept it, and right under me fecking nose. And then you go wondering who's a fecking loon? Who's a fecking loon, she says. I'll tell you who's a fecking loon, lady. You're a fecking loon! *(Maureen lets the poker fall to the floor with a clatter and sits in the rocking-chair, dazed.)*

MAUREEN. I don't know why I did keep your swingball on you, Raymond. I can't remember at all, now. I think me head was in a funny oul way in them days.

RAY. 'In them days,' she says, as she pegs a good poker on the floor and talks about trains. *(Ray picks the poker up and puts it in its place.)* That's a good poker, that is. Don't be banging it against anything hard like that, now.

MAUREEN. I won't.

RAY. That's an awful good poker. *(Pause.)* To show there's no hard feelings over me swingball, will you sell me that poker, Mrs.? A fiver I'll give you.

MAUREEN. Ah, I don't want to be selling me poker now, Ray.

RAY. G'wan. Six!

MAUREEN. No. It does have sentimental value to me.

RAY. I don't forgive you, so!

MAUREEN. Ah, don't be like that, now, Ray....

RAY. No, I don't forgive you at all.... *(Ray goes to the front door and opens it.)*

MAUREEN. Ray! Are you writing to your brother, so?

RAY. *(Sighing.)* I am. Why?

MAUREEN. Will you be passing a message on from me?

RAY. *(Sighs.)* Messages, messages, messages, messages! What's the message, so? And make it a short one.

MAUREEN. Just say... *(Maureen thinks about it a while.)*

RAY. This week, if you can!

MAUREEN. Just say... Just say, 'The beauty queen of Leenane says hello.' That's all.

RAY. 'The beauty queen of Leenane says hello.'

MAUREEN. Aye. No! *(Ray sighs again.)* Good-bye. Good-bye. 'The beauty queen of Leenane says good-bye.'

RAY. 'The beauty queen of Leenane says good-bye.' Whatever the feck that means, I'll pass it on. 'The beauty queen of Leenane says good-bye', although after this fecking swingball business, I don't see why the feck I should. Good-bye to you so, Mrs....

~~MAUREEN. Will you turn the radio up a bit on too, before you go, there, Pato, now? Ray, I mean ...~~

RAY. *(Exasperated.)* Feck... *(Ray turns the radio up.)* The exact fecking image of your mother you are, sitting there pegging orders and forgetting me name! Good-bye!

MAUREEN. And pull the door after you...

RAY. *(Shouting angrily.)* I was going to pull the fecking door after me! *(Ray slams the door behind him as he exits. Pause. Maureen starts rocking slightly in the chair, listening to the song such as one by The Chieftains* on the radio. The announcer's quiet, soothing voice is then heard.)*

ANNOUNCER. A lovely tune from The Chieftains there. This next one, now, goes out from Annette and Margo Folan to their mother Maggie, on the way out in the mountains of Leenane, a lovely part of the world there, on the occasion of her seventy-first birthday last month now. Well, we hope you had a happy one, Maggie, and we hope there'll be a good many more of them to come on top of it. I'm sure there will. This one's for

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