

film there one time with a fella who not only had he no arms and no legs but he was a coloured fella too.

BILLY. A coloured fella? I've never seen a coloured fella, let alone a crippled coloured fella. I didn't know you could get them.

BOBBY. Oh they'd give you a terrible scare.

BILLY. Coloured fellas? Are they fierce?

BOBBY. They're less fierce with no arms or legs on them, because they can't do much to ya, but even so they're still fierce.

BILLY. I heard a coloured fella a year ago came to Dublin a week.

BOBBY. Ireland mustn't be such a bad place, so, if coloured fellas want to come to Ireland.

BILLY. It mustn't. *(Pause.)* Ar, Babbybobby, you've only brought up coloured fellas to put me off the subject again.

BOBBY. There's no cripple fellas coming in this boat, Billy. Maybe some day, in a year or two, like, if your feet straighten out on ya.

BILLY. A year or two's no good to me, Bobby.

BOBBY. Why so? *(Billy takes out a letter and hands it to Bobby, who starts reading it.)* What's this?

BILLY. It's a letter from Doctor McSharry, and you've got to promise you'll not breathe a word of it to another living soul. *(Halfway through the letter, Bobby's expression saddens. He glances at Billy, then continues.)*

BOBBY. When did you get this?

BILLY. Just a day ago I got it. *(Pause.)* Now will you let me come?

BOBBY. Your aunties'll be upset at you going.

BILLY. Well is it their life or is it my life? I'll send word to them from over there. Ah, I may only be gone a day or two anyways. I get bored awful easy. *(Pause.)* Will you let me come?

BOBBY. Nine o'clock tomorrow morning be here.

BILLY. Thank you, Bobby, I'll be here. *(Bobby gives him back the letter and Billy folds it away. Johnny quickly enters, his hand held out.)*

JOHNNY. No, hang on there, now. What did the letter say?

BOBBY. Ah Johnnypateen, will you feck off home for yourself?

JOHNNY. Be showing Johnnypateen that letter now, you, cripple-boy.

BILLY. I won't be showing you me letter.

JOHNNY. What d'you mean you won't be showing me your letter? You showed *him* your letter. Be handing it over, now.

BILLY. Did anybody ever tell you you're a biteen rude, Johnnypateenmike?

JOHNNY. *I'm rude? I'm rude?* With ye two standing there hogging letters, and letters from doctors is the most interesting kind of letters, and ye have the gall then to go calling *me* rude? Tell oul limpy to be handing over that letter, now, else there'll be things I heard here tonight that won't stay secret much longer.

BOBBY. Things like what, now?

JOHNNY. Oh, things like you rowing schoolies to Inishmore and you kissing green-teeth-girls in Antrim is the kind of thing, now. Not that I'm threatening blackmail on ya or anything, or, all right yes I am threatening blackmail on ya but a newsman has to obtain his news be hook or be crook.

BOBBY. Be hook or be crook, is it? Well have this for hook or be crook. *(Bobby grabs Johnny by the hair and wrenches his arm up behind his back.)*

JOHNNY. Aargh! Be letting go of me arm there you, ya thug! I'll get the constabulary on ya.

BOBBY. Be lying down on the sand there, you, for yourself. *(Bobby forces Johnny face down on the ground.)*

JOHNNY. Be running for the polis now you, cripple-boy, or shuffling anyways.

BILLY. I won't. I'll be standing here watching.

JOHNNY. An accomplice that makes ya.

BILLY. Good-oh.

JOHNNY. I'm only an oul fella. *(Bobby steps up onto Johnny's back-side.)* Aargh! Get off of me arse, you!

BOBBY. Billy, go pick up somes stones for me.

BILLY. *(Doing so.)* Big stones?

BOBBY. Middling-size stones.

JOHNNY. What do you want stones for?

BOBBY. To peg them at your head 'til you promise not to bandy me business about town.