

CAITHLEEN 2

ROBBIE. What happened here? (*Off her look.*) In the book.

CAITHLEEN. Oh now you're havin' me on—

ROBBIE. I'm not.

CAITHLEEN. —actin' like you want to know these things just to make me feel better.

ROBBIE. I want to know what happened in this shop.

She considers him. Then...

Caithleen plops a wrapped bar of soap in front of Robbie.

CAITHLEEN. Soap. Lemon soap.

Pause.

ROBBIE. And...?

CAITHLEEN. And that's what happened here. This is Sweny's Chemist Shop. In the book, Leopold Bloom buys a bar of lemon soap in this shop.

This is when I have everyone pick up the soap an' smell it.

She gestures for him to do this. He does.

ROBBIE. Lemon.

CAITHLEEN. 'tis. You're American.

Robbie nods.

Start

From where? I'd like to go. Anywhere in America.

ROBBIE. Seattle. Washington. Well, outside Seattle. Renton.

CAITHLEEN. Is it nice there?

ROBBIE. It's okay.

CAITHLEEN. Sounds like it would be beautiful. Like all those movies about America. Lovely Renton, Washington. There on the ocean, with the dolphins an' the whales an' the sunsets. Is it like that?

ROBBIE. (*A smile.*) Renton is not like that. But we have a little house—kinda beat up. No yard really. Not a great part of town. But sometimes it can be kinda nice. Not nice like a postcard. Just like a day.

CAITHLEEN. What kind of day?

ROBBIE. I don't know.

CAITHLEEN. Tell me about a nice American kind of day.

ROBBIE. Just...a day you get a coffee—shoot some hoops with your

ROBBIE. Just...a day you get a coffee—shoot some hoops with your friends—wash your dad’s car when the sun is out and the radio’s on... I think most places—even Renton—can be pretty great on days like that.

CAITHLEEN. An’ you’ll stay there forever.

ROBBIE. Forever? God, who can think like that?

CAITHLEEN. I can think like that. That’s exactly how I think.

Robbie looks at her.

Is there a big wide road you can walk down?

ROBBIE. I guess—but you’d probably drive.

CAITHLEEN. You know someone with a car?

ROBBIE. Well—yeah—I mean, I have a car—

CAITHLEEN. You have a car?! A car of your own?!

ROBBIE. Just an old beater—but yeah, I mean—

CAITHLEEN. Oh that would be the greatest thing. Drivin’ in a car of your very own!

ROBBIE. Yeah, I guess it’s pretty cool—

CAITHLEEN. Where would you take me? In beautiful Renton, Washington—where would we go?

ROBBIE. Well—it depends—what do you like to do?

CAITHLEEN. (*Sharp.*) How would I know that?

ROBBIE. Well—

CAITHLEEN. How would I know what I like to do when I’ve never done somethin’?!

ROBBIE. We could drive into Seattle—go look at the water—go down to the Market—get something to eat, if you’re hungry—

CAITHLEEN. Oh, I’m hungry, yes—I’m very hungry and I want to eat and see the water and drive—I want to drive a lot—how far can we drive? Can we drive across the whole state?—

ROBBIE. Yeah—

CAITHLEEN. —the whole country?!

ROBBIE. —I guess we could—

CAITHLEEN. Oh I would love that. I’d love to travel like that!

Have you done that with anyone?

ROBBIE. I had a ticket to go to London.

CAITHLEEN. With a girl, I bet.

ROBBIE. Yes—but things changed—

CAITHLEEN. Well, more's the pity for her. London's so nice.

ROBBIE. You've been there?

CAITHLEEN. No. Want to. Haven't yet. But I've a girlfriend who moved to London. Outside London. Croydon. Her bloke works construction. Maybe something electric, I forget. She packs him sandwiches every day. They might be gettin' a cat, sometime soon. It will be a boy—always get a boy cat if you're gonna get a cat. The husband—Peter—wants to start up a family but Mary—that's my friend—Mary's wriggled out of that so far. Good Catholic girl. Has to be creative.

Anyway...*they like where they are*. It's an *ordinary life*. An' doesn't that sound grand?

ROBBIE. Sounds nice.

CAITHLEEN. Not like here. It's all dyin' here but nobody knows. Do you ever think you're the only one knows that all of it is dyin'? Sorry. No one likes a complainer. "*I hate people that have always their poor story to tell.*" Molly Bloom says that. She's right, don't you think?

ROBBIE. Yeah, I guess.

Who's Molly Bloom?

CAITHLEEN. (*With a laugh.*) Have you not heard a word I've said on this tour?! She's the woman in the book! Her husband is walkin' 'round Dublin like we are. An' she's home—lyin' in bed—havin' the tea he made for her—waitin' for her lover to show up.

ROBBIE. And her husband knows this all along?

CAITHLEEN. He does.

ROBBIE. And he just walks around?!

CAITHLEEN. What else is he gonna do?! He doesn't have a car like you! So, he picks up a letter—buys some soap—goes to a funeral, a bathhouse, a pub—watches a baby get born—an' ends where they all end up.

ROBBIE. Where's that?

CAITHLEEN. The brothel.

ROBBIE. Is that part of our tour?

CAITHLEEN. Could be. Play your cards right.

(Off his look.) I'm jokin' with you. I'm not that kind a girl. Not right off the bat, at least.

(Before he can respond.) An' now I wish I hadn't started in. "Your mouth'll be the end of you, Caithleen"—is what my Da is always sayin'. "Your mouth an' the stories that come out of it—they're gonna do you in just like they did your Ma."

I'm shuttin' up now.

Anyway—that's what happened in this shop.

Robbie lifts the soap.

Stop

ROBBIE. Can I keep this?

CAITHLEEN. You'll just carry it around and forget about it. Same as he does in the book.

ROBBIE. Tell me about the letter. The flirtatious one.

CAITHLEEN. It had a flower pressed inside.

ROBBIE. From his mistress.

CAITHLEEN. Only in his dreams. Nothin' ever happens with her.

ROBBIE. That's too bad.

CAITHLEEN. Oh, you're takin' his side then?

ROBBIE. His wife is cheating on him!

CAITHLEEN. Yeah—go on—call Molly Bloom some kinda whore—

ROBBIE. *(With a laugh.)* That's not what I'm doing!—

CAITHLEEN. *(Overlapping.)* —I don't know why everyone does that—I don't know why you *can't kiss a man without going and marrying him first?*—*I wish some man or other would take me sometimes and kiss me in his arms—there's nothing like a kiss—long and hot down to your soul—almost paralyzes you—O Lord to let myself go and come again like that*

Caithleen stops.

ROBBIE. I like her. I like Molly Bloom.

CAITHLEEN. That was the both of us, Robbie. I'm somedays a