

thinks you've got very big. And he thinks you're handsome!

Boy Aunt Kate got me a spinning-top that won't spin.

Chris He's handsome. Isn't he handsome?

Boy Give up.

Chris I'll tell you a secret. The others aren't to know. He has got a great new job! And he's wonderful at it!

Boy What does he do?

Chris Shhh. And he has bought a bicycle for you – a black bike – a man's bike and he's going to bring it with him the next time he comes. *(She suddenly embraces him and hugs him.)*

Boy Is he coming back soon?

Chris *(eyes closed)* Maybe – maybe. Yes! Yes, he is!

Boy How soon?

Chris Next week – the week after – soon – soon – soon! Oh, yes, you have a handsome father. You are a lucky boy and I'm a very, very lucky woman. *(She gets to her feet, then bends down again and kisses him lightly.)* And another bit of good news for you, lucky boy: you have your mother's eyes! *(She laughs, pirouettes flirtatiously before him and dances into the kitchen.)* And what's the good news here?

Maggie The good news here is . . . that's the most exciting turf we've ever burned!

Kate Gerry's not gone, is he?

Chris Just this minute.

Agnes enters through the back door. She is carrying some roses.

He says to thank you very much for the offer of the bed.

Kate Next time he's back.

Chris That'll be in a week or two – depending on his commitments.

Kate Well, if the outside loft happens to be empty.

Chris And he sends his love to you all. His special love to you, Aggie; and a big kiss.

Agnes For me?

Chris Yes! For you!

Maggie *(quickly)* Those are beautiful, Aggie. Would Jack like some in his room? Put them on his windowsill with a wee card – 'ROSES' – so that the poor man's head won't be demented looking for the word. And now, girls, the daily dilemma: what's for tea?

Chris Let me make the tea, Maggie.

Maggie We'll both make the tea. Perhaps something thrilling with tomatoes? We've got two, I think. Or if you're prepared to wait, I'll get that soda-bread made.

Agnes I'm making the tea, Maggie.

Chris Let me, please. Just today.

Agnes *(almost aggressively)* I make the tea every evening, don't I? Why shouldn't I make it this evening as usual?

Maggie No reason at all. Aggie's the chef. *(Sings raucously:)*

'Everybody's doing it, doing it, doing it.
Picking their noses and chewing it, chewing it,
chewing it . . .'

Kate Maggie, please!