

Those bastards'd charge the earth anyways. I'll tell ya, I'm getting pissed off with the whole thing. I've been thinking of forming a splinter group. *(Pause.)* I know we're already a splinter group, but there's no law says you can't splinter from a splinter group. A splinter group is the best kind of group to splinter from anyways. It shows you know your own mind, *(Whispering)* but there's someone in the room, Dad, I can't be talking about splinter groups. *(To James, politely.)* I'll be with you in a minute now, James. *(James shudders slightly.)* What was it you were ringing about anyways, Dad? *(Pause. Padraic's face suddenly becomes very serious, eyes filling with tears.)* Eh? What about Wee Thomas? *(Pause.)* Poorly? How poorly, have you brought him to the doctor? *(Pause.)* How long has he been off his food, and why didn't you tell me when it first started? *(Pause.)* He's not too bad? Either he's poorly or he's not too bad now, Dad, he's either one or the fecking other, there's a major difference, now, between not too bad and fecking poorly, he cannot be the fecking two at fecking once, now, *(Crying heavily)* and you wouldn't be fecking calling me at all if he was not too bad, now! What have you done to Wee Thomas now, you fecking bastard? Put Wee Thomas on the phone. He's sleeping? Well, put a blanket on him and be stroking and stroking him and get a second opinion from the doctor and don't be talking loud near him and I'll be home the first fecking boat in the fecking morning. Ar, you fecker, yal *(Padraic smashes the phone to pieces on the table, shoots the pieces a few times, then sits there crying quietly. Pause.)*

JAMES. Is anything the matter, Padraic?

PADRAIC. Me cat's poorly, James. Me best friend in the world, he is.

JAMES. What's wrong with him?

PADRAIC. I don't know, now. He's off his food, like.

JAMES. Sure that's nothing to go crying over, being off his food.

He probably has ringworm.

PADRAIC. Ringworm? Is that serious, now?

JAMES. Sure, ringworm isn't serious at all. Just get him some ringworm pellets from the chemist and feed them him wrapped up in a bit of cheese. They don't like the taste of ringworm pellets, cats, so if you hide them in a bit of cheese he'll eat them unbeknownst and never know the differ, and he'll be as right as rain in

a day or two, or at the outside three. Just don't exceed the stated dose. Y'know, read the instructions, like.

PADRAIC. How do you know so much about ringworm?

JAMES. Sure, don't I have a cat of me own I love with all my heart, had ringworm a month back?

PADRAIC. Do ya? I didn't know drug pushers had cats.

JAMES. Sure, drug pushers are the same as anybody underneath.

PADRAIC. What's his name?

JAMES. Eh?

PADRAIC. What's his name?

JAMES. Em, Dominic. *(Pause.)* And I promise not to sell drugs to children any more, Padraic. On Dominic's life I promise. And that's a big promise, because Dominic means more to me than anything.

PADRAIC. *(Pause.)* Are you gipping me now, James?

JAMES. I'm not gipping you. This is a serious subject. *(Padraic approaches James with the razor and slices through the ropes that bind him. James falls to the floor in a heap, then half picks himself up, testing out his weight on his bloody foot. Padraic holsters his guns.)*

PADRAIC. How are them toes?

JAMES. They're perfect, Padraic.

PADRAIC. You admit you deserved the toes at least?

JAMES. Oh I did. The toes and an arm, really.

PADRAIC. Do you have money to get the bus to the hospital?

JAMES. I don't. *(Padraic gives the confused James some change.)*

PADRAIC. Because you want to get them toes looked at. The last thing you want now is septic toes.

JAMES. Oh d'you know, that's the last thing I'd want.

PADRAIC. I'm off to Galway to see me cat. *(Padraic exits.)*

JAMES. *(Calling out.)* And I hope by the time you get home he's laughing and smiling and as fit as a fiddle, Padraic! *(Pause. Sound of a distant outer door banging shut. Crying.)* I hope that he's dead already and buried in shite, you stupid mental fecking bastard, yal *(Blackout.)*

END