

The Lieutenant of Inishmore by Martin McDonagh

Padraic, twenty-one, Galway accent.

In this darkly comic and often shockingly violent play, we meet 'mad' chip-shop bomber Padraic, the eponymous and self-styled Lieutenant, who has formed his own single-handed splinter group from the Irish National Liberation Army, in his personal quest to hunt down and punish drug takers, peddlers and pushers. The play pivots around the mysterious death of his cat, Wee Thomas, and attempts by others to hide both the fact and, later, the identity of the perpetrator.

In this scene we see him at his most crusading and vengeful, removing the toenails from the upside-down James as a penalty for selling drugs to schoolchildren. Much of the humour comes from the juxtaposition of Padraic's sadistic calling and his commitment to politeness, fairness and consideration. Here he goes into detail describing the execution of his task, but at the same time giving helpful medical advice.

As the author says, Padraic loves his cat more than life itself and that should be kept in mind when approaching this slightly surreal character. It must also be remembered that he shoots in the head both men whom he thinks are responsible for the cat's death, and one of them is his father.

Padraic James Hanley, don't keep going on about your stupid fucking toenails! The way you talk it sounds as if I took off a rake of them, when it was only two I took off, and them only small ones. If they'd been big ones I could understand, but they weren't. They were small. You'd hardly notice them gone. And if it was so concerned you were about the health of them toenails it would've been once in a while you cleaned out the muck from under them.

[James Well, you've saved me that job for good now anyways.]

Padraic If I hadn't been such a nice fella I would've taken one toenail off of separate feet, but I didn't, I took two toenails off the one foot, so that it's only the one foot you'll have to be limping on and not the two. If it had been the two you'd've found it a devil to be getting about. But with the pain concentrated on the one, if you can get hold of a crutch or a decent stick, I'm not sure if the General Hospital does hand them out but they might do, I don't know. You could phone them up and ask, or go in and see them would be the best thing, and make sure them toes won't be going septic at the same time. I didn't disinfect this razor at all, I never do, I see no need, but they'd be the best people to ask, sure they're the experts. You'll probably need a tetanus job too, oh there's no question. I do hate injections, I do. I think I'd rather be slashed with a razor than have an injection. I don't know why. Of course, I'd rather have neither. You'll have had both by the end of the day. What a bad day you've had. *(Pause.)* But, em . . . I have lost me train of thought now, so I have.