

those old things are *not* clean. Wear some nice shoes please,' she says in her soft Irish voice that's both gentle and firm.

The only *nice* shoes I have are heavy and blister my heels. I'm about to tell Nana this, when her eyes meet a spot on my hoodie.

'Now come on, Apple, what are you playing at? You don't have a clean top on either?' she asks. I scratch at the spot where I dripped egg yolk this morning. I'd forgotten about it, and you'd think by Nana's tone and big bulging eyes that the blotch was poisonous. 'It's my favourite top,' I say. And I want to wear it. I want to wear it with my smelly trainers.

'Get yourself up those stairs immediately and change, young lady,' Nana says. She pinches her mouth into a prune. When she does this, there's no arguing. When she does this, I always wish my mum were still here.

In my room, I squeeze into a dress and a pair of too-tight lace-up shoes. The last time I wore this outfit was six months ago to Nana's friend's funeral. Since then, Nana hasn't stopped talking about death. She says things like, *Oh you'll miss me when I'm six feet under like poor Marjorie* or *I don't want everyone wearing black to my funeral, Apple. A bit of pink here and there won't harm*. It's not good for a thirteen-year-old to be around someone who thinks she's going to drop dead any second. I told