



Frank O'Connor is the pseudonym [ˈsjuːdənɪm] of Michael O'Donovan, born in Cork, Ireland, in 1903. He grew up in an Irish provincial town, and his stories preserve amused, and sometimes tender observations of Irish customs, loves and hates. His published works include poems, plays, novels, translations, criticism, political and biographical studies, autobiographical travel books, and, above all, stories. Frank O'Connor was a real master of the short story. He could draw his countless readers into Irish life showing his sense of humour, and his compassion for human beings in their loneliness and their confusions.¹ His most popular books are *An Only Child* and *My Father's Son*. He wrote very successful stories about English public schools. *The Idealist* is among them.

74 Read the words and guess their meanings. Pay attention to the suffixes:

- ism, -ist: real — realism — realist, ideal — idealism — idealist;
- er: climb — climber, murder — murderer, boil — boiler;
- ness: busy — business, unfriendly — unfriendliness, lively — liveliness;
- ly: natural — naturally, firm — firmly, proper — properly, innocent — innocently, threaten — threatening — threateningly;
- y: hair — hairy, wool — woolly, grass — grassy, mud — muddy, ice — icy, milk — milky.

75 Read the sentences and translate them. Pay attention to the words formed by conversion:

- knot:** Can you help me *to knot* my tie? Will you tie it in a tight *knot*?
- cane:** The master *caned* the boy for breaking rules. The boy was punished with a *cane*.
- sob:** The boy began *to sob* all over. He tried to speak through his *sobs*.
- fight:** Who were you *fighting*? The boy tried to start a *fight*.
- step:** Somebody *stepped* out of the darkness. Now the boy had to watch his *step* at school.
- blame:** You have only yourself *to blame*. Don't put *the blame* on somebody else.
- excuse:** I can't *excuse* you for coming so late. There is no *excuse* for such behaviour.
- respect:** We all *respected* him. Everybody looked at the boy with *respect*.

76 Read these proper names which you will come across in the story *The Idealist*:

O'Connor [ou'kɒnə], Moloney [mə'louni], Delaney [də'leɪni], Gorman ['gɔ:mən], Flanagan ['flænəgən], Spillane ['spɪleɪn].

77 Read Part I of the story *The Idealist* and answer the questions:

- Why was Delaney never happy about saying that he had been at Mass after he started reading school stories?
- What did the boys think of Delaney after he had been punished a second time?

The Idealist

Part I

I don't know how it is about education, but it never seemed to do anything for me but get me into trouble.

Adventure stories weren't so bad, but as a kid I was very serious and preferred realism ['riəlɪzəm] to romance [rou'mæns]. School stories were what I liked best. The schools were English, and according to the pictures, they were all clock-towers and spires². The fellows in the stories were all good climbers, and got in and out of school at night on ropes made of knotted sheets³. Whenever they did anything wrong they were given "lines" in Latin⁴. When

they were caned for breaking the rules of the school, they never showed any sign of pain.

Most of them were great at football and cricket. They never told lies and wouldn't talk to anyone who did. If they were caught doing something wrong, they always told the truth, unless someone else was with them, and even if they were to be expelled for it, they wouldn't give his name, even if he was a thief.

I worked hard at football and cricket, though of course we never had either a proper football or a proper cricket team.

Our school was a red brick⁵ building without tower or spires a fellow could climb; we had no football or cricket team, so a fellow, no matter how hard he worked, could never play for the school, and instead of giving you "lines" in Latin, Murderer Moloney either lifted you by the ears or punished you with a cane.

¹ confusion [kən'fju:ʒn] — смущение, замешательство

² spire ['spaɪə] — шпиль

³ ropes made of knotted sheets — веревки, сделанные из связанных узлом простынь

⁴ "lines" in Latin — латинские стихи, переписываемые в виде наказания

⁵ brick — кирпич

But these things were not so important. What was really important was ourselves. The fellows talked to the masters, told them all that went on and got others into trouble. If they were caught doing something wrong, they tried to put the blame on someone else, even if it meant telling lies. When they were caned, they cried and said it wasn't fair. I mean you couldn't help feeling ashamed, imagining what boys from a decent school would think if they saw it.

My own way to school led me past the gate of the military barracks. You could have a look at the boys marching at the barrack square; if you came past at dinner-time, they even called you in and gave you pudding and tea. Naturally, I was often late. The only excuse was to say you were at early Mass¹.

But after I started reading those school stories, I was never happy about saying I had been at Mass. It was a lie, and I knew that the boys in the stories would have died sooner than² tell a lie.

One morning I came in very late and rather frightened.

"What kept you till this hour, Delaney?" Murderer Moloney asked, looking at the clock.

I wanted to say I had been at Mass, but I couldn't.

"I was at the barracks, sir," I replied in panic. "I was watching the soldiers marching, sir."

There was soft laughter from the class, and Moloney raised his brows³ in mild surprise, "Oh, I never knew you were such a military man. Hold out your hand!"

Compared with the laughter from the class, the caning was nothing. I returned to my desk slowly and quietly, and the Murderer looked after me in surprise as if to show that this was something new for him. The others looked at me in surprise too and whispered as if I were⁴ some strange animal. At playtime, they gathered about me, full of curiosity and excitement.

"Delaney, why did you say that about the barrack?"

"Because it was true." I replied firmly. "I wasn't going to tell him a lie."

"What lie?"

"That I was at Mass."

"Then couldn't you say you had to go on a message⁵?"

"That would be a lie too."

"My Goodness!⁶" they said. "You'd better mind yourself. The murderer will kill you."

I knew that and for the rest of the day was on my best behaviour. But my best wasn't good enough. Though he pretended to be reading, he was watching me the whole time.

"Delaney," he said at last without raising his head from his book, "was that you talking?"

"It was, sir," I replied.

The whole class laughed.

"Oh," he said, throwing down his book, "we'll soon stop that."

This time he punished me more cruelly. I got through it without moving a muscle ['mʌsəl], and returned to my desk with my hands by my sides. After school some of the boys followed me down the school yard.

"Go on!" they shouted. "Boasting, as usual! You are always boasting. Trying to pretend he didn't hurt you — a cry-baby like you!"

"I wasn't boasting! I wasn't trying to pretend," I shouted. "Only decent fellows don't cry over every little pain like kids."

"Go on!" they shouted after me. "You old idiot ['ɪdɪət]!" And as I went down the school lane⁸, I heard them laughing behind me.

78 Read and translate:

- 1 They never told lies and wouldn't talk to anyone who did.
- 2 We had no football or cricket team, so a fellow, no matter how hard he worked, could never play for the school.
- 3 But after I started reading those school stories I was never happy about saying I had been at Mass.
- 4 For the rest of the day I was on my best behaviour. But my best wasn't good enough.

79 Answer the questions:

- 1 What kind of books did young Delaney like best?
- 2 What did he like about the boys in stories about English school life?
- 3 What did he not like about the school he went to in Ireland?
- 4 What did he think was really wrong, the boys themselves or the school itself?
- 5 What was the only excuse that those who were late for school could give?
- 6 Why do you think the boys laughed when they heard Delaney say he had told the truth?
- 7 How do you understand the words, "compared with the laughter from the class, the caning was nothing"?
- 8 Why did the master and the boys look at Delaney in surprise?

¹ Mass [mæʃ] — месса

² would have died sooner than — скорее бы умерли, чем

³ to raise one's brows — (удивленно) поднимать брови

⁴ as if I were — как если бы я был

⁵ to go on a message — пойти с поручением

⁶ My Goodness — О боже!

⁷ Go on! — Продолжай! Давай дальше!

⁸ lane — узкая дорога, переулок

80 Read Part II of the story *The Idealist* and answer the questions:

- Why did Delaney take all that punishment rather than give Gorman away?
- Did the master learn the truth about the shilling?

The Idealist

Part II

I realized that I should have to watch my step at school.

So I did, all through that year. But one day an awful thing happened. I was coming in from the yard, and in the porch¹ outside our classroom I saw a fellow called Gorman taking something from a coat hanging there. He was a fellow I disliked and feared.

"Who are you looking at?" Gorman asked threateningly.

"I wasn't looking at anyone," I replied.

"I was only getting a pencil out of the pocket of my coat," he added.

"Nobody said you weren't," I replied.

"You'd better not, either," he added.

"You'd better mind your own business."

"You mind yours!" I said. "I never spoke to you at all."

And that was the end of it.

But after the playtime the Murderer said, "Everyone who left the classroom this morning, stand out!"

I stood out with the others, so did Gorman.

"Did you take anything from a coat hanging in the porch this morning?" the Murderer asked, laying a heavy, hairy paw² on Gorman's shoulder and looking into his eyes.

"Me, sir?" Gorman exclaimed innocently. "No, sir."

"You?" he asked another boy, but even before he reached me at all I realized why Gorman had told the lie and wondered what I should do.

"You?" he asked me, and his big red face was close to mine. My panic made me say the wrong thing as though I had planned it.

"I didn't take anything, sir," I said in a low voice.

"Did you see someone else do it?" he asked. "Have you a tongue in your head?" he shouted suddenly, and the whole class looked at me. "You?" he added to the next boy as though he had lost interest in me.

"No, sir."

"Back to your desks, the rest of you!" he ordered. "Delaney, you stay here. Turn out your pockets!"

I did. Even for a small boy I had pockets that were museums in themselves; why I kept half the things I couldn't have explained myself³. Among them was a school story borrowed from a boy.

"Oh," he said, "so this is how you waste your time! Is that what you did with the money!" he asked quickly.

"Money?" I repeated. "What money?"

"The shilling that was taken from Flanagan's overcoat this morning."

"I never took Flanagan's shilling," I said, beginning to cry, "and you have no right to say I did."

"I have the right to say you're the most impudent puppy in the school," he replied. And he tore my school story in halves and threw them to the furthest corner of the classroom. "Now hold out your hand!"

This time the Murderer went mad. Even the other fellows were frightened.

"But why didn't you say you didn't see anyone?" asked the eldest, a fellow called Spillane.

"Because I did," I said, beginning to sob all over again. "I saw Gorman."

"Gorman? Was it Gorman who took Flanagan's money? And why didn't you say so?"

"Because it wouldn't be right." I sobbed.

"Why wouldn't it be right?"

"Because Gorman should have told⁴ the truth himself," I said. "And if this were a proper school no one would ever speak to him again."

Suddenly Gorman came up, red and angry.

"Delaney," he shouted threateningly, "Did you say I took Flanagan's money?"

He had come at a moment when I didn't care for him at all⁵. I didn't even bother to reply, I hit⁶ with all my strength at his face. This was the last thing he expected. At the same moment a door opened and a teacher

³ I couldn't have explained myself — я сам бы не смог объяснить

⁴ should have told — следовало бы сказать

⁵ I didn't care for him at all — я о нем вообще не беспокоился

⁶ to hit — ударить

¹ in the porch — в подъезде

² paw [pɔ:] — лапа

appeared. We all ran like mad and the fight was forgotten.

It didn't remain forgotten, though. Next morning the Murderer looked at me.

"Delaney, were you fighting in the yard after school yesterday?"

For a second I didn't reply. I couldn't help feeling that it wasn't worth it. But before I answered I made another effort.

"I was, sir," I said, and this time nobody laughed. I was out of my mind. The whole class knew it.

"Who were you fighting?"

"I prefer not to say, sir," I replied.

"Who was he fighting with?" he asked.

"Gorman, sir," replied three or four voices — as easy as that!

"Did Gorman hit him first?"

"No, sir. He hit Gorman first."

"Stand out," he said, taking up the cane.

"Now," he added, going up to Gorman, "you take this and hit him. He thinks he is a great fellow. You show him what we think of him."

"Hold out your hand, hold out your hand, I say," he shouted.

"I will not," I shouted back losing all control of myself.

"You what?" he cried. "What's that you said, you dirty little thief?"

"I'm not a thief, I'm not a thief," I shouted. "And if he comes near me I'll put him in his place. You have no right to give

him that cane, and you have no right to call me a thief either. If you do it again, I'll go down to the police and then we'll see who the thief is."

"You refused to answer my questions," he said.

"No," I said through my sobs, "and I won't answer them now either. I'm not a spy."

"That's enough now, that's enough! Go back to your seat now and I'll talk to you another time."

I obeyed, but I did no work. No one else did much either.

After that I was the hero of the school for the whole afternoon.

Gorman tried to start the fight again, but Spillane ordered him away.

Next morning I was in such a state of panic that I didn't know how I should go to school at all. I had made myself late as well.

"What kept you, Delaney?" the Murderer asked quietly.

"I was at Mass, sir."

"All right. Take your seat."

He seemed a bit surprised. What I had not realized was the advantage of our school over the English one. By this time half a dozen of his pets had brought the Murderer the true story of Flanagan's shilling.

But by that time I didn't care. In my school bag I had another story. Not a school story this time, though.

81 *Answer the questions:*

- 1 What did Delaney see in the porch outside the classroom one day?
- 2 Delaney had seen Gorman taking something from a coat, hadn't he? Why didn't he say so? Why did he think it wouldn't be right to tell the truth in this case?
- 3 Do you think Delaney was right in saying that Gorman should have told the truth himself?
- 4 Why did the master think that it was Delaney who had stolen a shilling?
- 5 How did the master learn the truth about the shilling?

82 *Read the sentences and translate them.*

- 1 "Did you take anything from a coat hanging in the porch this morning?" The Murderer asked, laying a heavy, hairy paw on Gorman's shoulder and looking into his eyes.— "Me, sir?" Gorman exclaimed innocently.
- 2 "I have the right to say you're the most impudent puppy in the school", he replied.
- 3 "Gorman should have told the truth himself," I said. "And if this were a proper school no one would ever speak to him again."
- 4 For a second I didn't reply. I couldn't help feeling that it wasn't worth it. But before I answered I made another effort.

¹ as easy as that — само собой разумеется, зд. а кто же еще?

The following sentences describe things that Delaney, the schoolmaster, and Gorman, one of Delaney's classmates, said or did. How does each item characterize them?

Gorman

- ◆ In the porch outside the classroom Delaney saw a fellow called Gorman taking something from a coat hanging there.
- ◆ "Did you take anything from a coat hanging in the porch this morning?" the Murderer asked looking into Gorman's eyes. — "Me, sir?" Gorman exclaimed innocently. "No, sir."

You may find the following words helpful in describing Gorman:

mean	dishonest
cowardly	unpleasant
indecent	

Moloney

- ◆ Murderer Moloney either lifted someone by the ears or punished him with a cane.
- ◆ He punished Delaney cruelly.
- ◆ "I have the right to say you're the most impudent puppy in the school," Moloney replied. And he tore Delaney's school story in halves and threw them to the furthest corner of the classroom. "Now hold out your hand." This time the Murderer went mad. Even the other fellows were frightened.

You may find the following words helpful in describing Moloney:

cruel	rude
indifferent	hateful
unpleasant	unjust

Delaney

- ◆ Delaney wanted to say he had been at Mass, but he couldn't.
- ◆ "I wasn't boasting! I wasn't trying to pretend," Delaney shouted. "Only decent fellows don't cry over every little pain like kids."
- ◆ "Gorman should have told the truth himself," Delaney said.
- ◆ Delaney hit with all his strength at Gorman's face.
- ◆ "I'm not a thief, I'm not a thief," Delaney shouted. "And if he comes near me I'll put him in his place. You have no right to give him that cane, and you have no right to call me a thief, either."

You may find the following words helpful in describing Delaney:

truthful	decisive
frank	firm
conscientious	serious
romantic	fair

82 *How did Delaney show his anger, his indignation with the master's unjust attitude towards himself? What do you think caused Delaney's stormy emotions? What qualities of character were needed to speak to the master in such a manner?*

83 *Which episodes show that Delaney had a determined character?*

84 *Quote the lines of the story which show Delaney's character.*

85 *Delaney mentioned in the story that he disliked and feared Gorman. What do you think the reasons could be?*

86 *Say how the author depicts Moloney.*

87 *What feelings does each character of the story arouse in you? Give reasons.*

88 *Role play.*

Delaney's classmates are discussing the incident in class after school. They are exchanging opinions about the teacher's behaviour and Delaney's reaction. Some boys are greatly surprised at Delaney's fearless manner, some think he is showing off and some are greatly impressed by Delaney's behaviour.

Act out a conversation in which different opinions are expressed and different attitudes are shown about this.