

Chapter 23 – Interviews and More

Shane came by Katie's apartment for breakfast before their meeting with Sean's staff to prepare for the newspaper interviews. Angela and Katie were teasing and embarrassing him with the creation of a breakfast suitable for a Celtic god. The concoction turned out to be scrambled eggs with bacon, and toasted soda bread washed down with strong Irish tea.

Angela announced their wedding date, Saturday, October 10th. They all laughed together over the fact that she and Peadar had planned for everything except the date. Katie and Shane talked more about their own plans. They were looking for a suitable reception place and had narrowed it down to Fitzgerald's or the Faculty Dining Room. They were dining at Fitzgerald's tonight and expected to speak with the manager to discuss the possibility of a reception. They will have dinner tomorrow at the Faculty Dining Room and discuss the same possibility with the manager.

"What does Peadar like about the Faculty Dining Room," asked Shane?"

"I think he likes the convenience since we are going to be married in the University Chapel. He likes the Manor House atmosphere and the room is big enough. He thinks the food is good, and I agree. He likes to work with colleagues, and Lahinche or Ashford Castle is just a little too far to travel," responded Angela.

"Well, that is a good checklist, said Shane. It is close to the one I am following."

The first thing on Katie and Shane's agenda for the day is a meeting with Sean's staff. They drove over to the Academic Building because Shane had three big bundles of mail in his car that he wanted to leave in Katie's office for her interns to work on.

"Oh speaking of mail, said Katie, Bono sends his regards. I received a *thank you* note from him for sending him a copy of my dissertation bibliography."

"Really! Was it a form letter?"

"Oh no, said Katie. It was hand written on Paul Hewitt stationery."

"We'll save that one for attic floorboards. Our children and grandchildren will profit from that one."

Sean's staff enthusiastically welcomed them. For them, this was a break from academia and a chance to work in the real world of public relations.

Just as they did for the preparation for the Gay Byrne Show, they fired a lot of questions at them very quickly. Katie and Shane, by this time, were very smooth in their answers.

“I don’t think that anyone will ask you those kinds of pressure questions in this kind of interview, but we have to prepare for the eventuality,” said Rory Ahearn and his colleague, Edna McCabe agreed.

“This will be basic conversation. If there anything about the sea rescue or the Leveege incident that you haven’t yet told, now is the time to bring it out. They want to know more about you personally. The two of you just exploded on the news scene and while everyone knows about the two incidents and the tragic accident with the farmer and the playboy on the roadway, few know anything about you.”

“Think about the last book you read, your favorite band, your favorite song, reflections on your mother’s marriage. You are both loyal to the Church. They will want to ask you about that. Think about faith and religion in general and where you stand.”

“You are getting married soon. Think about your hopes and dreams for the future. You have three interviews this afternoon and two tomorrow. Don’t worry about repeating yourself. Each periodical has a different constituency of readers for the most part. You will get a lot of local and national coverage from these. It will be read once. It will entertain the reader, and then be gone by the next news cycle. Your first interview is with the *Irish Times* followed by the *Sunday Tribune*. Finally you will meet with people from the *Ireland on Sunday* which is a ‘slip in magazine’ for most of the Sunday papers in Ireland. You will almost certainly be the cover photo for that.”

“Edna and I have a lot of confidence that you will do well. They will have a photographer with them. It is best if you dress as casually as you are dressed now.”

Katie laughed. “What you see is what you get. We’ll go to the commissary for an early lunch and rehearse while we are eating.”

“It looks like you are all set to go, said Rory. Edna and I will be in the room this time so we’ll have your back if anything goes wrong. We’ll debrief you after the last interview.”

Katie and Shane made small talk through lunch in the almost empty commissary. They were very confident for these interviews and felt that was a good thing. They didn’t want to show any weaknesses that could be exploited.

When they got back to the Communications Department, Tom and Nora, representatives from the *Irish Times* were already there. Nora was the interviewer and Tom is her photographer. Both seemed very nice but seemed to Katie to be a little young for this task. They asked if they could use a tape recorder. Katie and Shane nodded to each other and gave their assent.

Nora addressed Shane first and asked if there was anything that he remembered that wasn’t covered on the Byrne show. “Yes, there are a few things I remember that I did not discuss elsewhere, except with Katie. I remember talking with my mate, Quinn, when we got out of the bay that I had never seen the sea so rough. I was afraid for the boat. They

are built to be battered but the sea that night was so high, higher than I had ever seen it before. I was confident that I could maneuver the boat but with great difficulty. We had coordinates where we would find the foundering ship but we were still about three miles away from them. When we arrived at the location I had steered upwind of the location in the hope that the storm and the drift would bring us to them. If you have even been to sea in a storm, you will know how dark it was. One of my crew, Mike O'Leary it was, saw a flash of light between the giant waves. I aimed for it and we found them. Their ship was nose down and sinking. Their lifeboat had capsized and the crew had lashed themselves together and were clinging to the craft. I maneuvered the boat to come up on the other side of the lifeboat so I would not crush the men. The water was so cold that those men would have perished in another few minutes. We lashed their safety line and dragged them aboard, the captain, the last to arrive. We had dry clothes and a heater in the cabin. We were still there when the Nina G started her last voyage to the bottom of the sea."

"It was only a few minutes later that we spied the rogue wave. It was at least six stories high, higher than any building on the campus. That is when the fear hit me. It was also when everything went into slow motion. I turned the boat into the wave and the force of it lifted us up. We were riding up the wall of the wave at about a 45 or 50 degree angle. It was like a great sea monster picking us up. My fright was that I would never see Katie again. And I prayed. The voice inside my mind shouted to concentrate. You have only one chance at this maneuver. I thought that maybe we could move across the top of the wave and down the other side of the wall. I kept watching for the top and the wave started to crest. I swung the boat around and into the pipeline that the crest created. Travelling at breakneck speed I held onto the wheel for dear life. I started to relax. I thought then that we would make it. Drowning was not an acceptable option. Time came back to normal. I could still see the fear in all the eyes around me."

"As capable as I am with a boat, I never had training for an event such as this. Believe me, I felt it was God whispering in my ear telling me what to do, and I'll remember those moments for the rest of my life. My mind and my soul were both fully alert until we ran out of the wave and the sea had flattened considerably. We radioed back that we were alright and proceeded home."

Shane tried to tell the story in a matter of fact manner but the story had drama of its own and Tom and Nora and even Katie were all listening with rapt attention.

"That is quite a story, said Nora. I knew the outline of the story but you brought us into it in a way that I could not have imagined."

Shane thanked her.

"I was petrified, said Katie. I could see early in the evening that the sea was rough and said a prayer for those who had to be out on it that night. We lost contact for a while after their SOS and the realization hit me that it was possible that they wouldn't come back. The sea is a cruel master. I knew all of the crew of the rescue ship as well as most of the crew of the Nina G and their families. When he had to go out with the boat, we were

discussing what it would take for us to be married. Then I had to contemplate the possibility of life without him. Then the radio crackled with the news that all were safe and on their way home. A tremendous weight came off me and I suddenly felt freer than I had at any time in my life. We saw the lights on the boat when it entered into the bay. I waited until I stopped crying while the boat pulled up to the dock. We had no idea what happened, just that they were in life-threatening danger. The crew started to tell the story later on. I ran out onto the dock and I couldn't find him until I saw him walking through the crowd. I ran up to him and hung on to him so that nothing bad could happen to him again.

"And you went through something like that again at Leveegee," asked Nora?

"It was not quite the same, said Katie. The intruders broke into the house and didn't know we were there. We went back to pick up some of my mother's things since she was living with me after they beat her. The element of surprise was on our side. Shane easily subdued three of them and the fourth had pulled a knife and they were maneuvering around the table. I picked up a frying pan and I don't know why or what I was going to do with it. One of the intruders that Shane knocked down got up again and picked up a walking stick. He smashed it across Shane's back and suddenly the knife-wielder had an advantage. He had raised his knife to plunge it into Shane when I hit him on the back of the head with the frying pan. The guy who hit Shane with the cane ran out the door right into the waiting arms of the guards. The whole episode didn't take five minutes. I can't emphasize more that it was Shane who deserves all the credit for what happened that night."

"Katie, tell me more about you. You are a professor of Irish Literature at University College, Galway?"

"Yes, I am that. My dissertation was on Ancient Irish Literature and Mythology. That has been my area of teaching for the last few years. I hope to expand on that within the next few years.

"How are you going to do that?"

"Well I have been asked to do research on the literary roots of the 1916 Rising, especially in the poetry and writings of the Pearse brothers. I guess that I can announce now that we have made a major discovery of previously unseen documents, all signed by Eamonn Ceannt. Maybe I can ask through this interview that if anyone has any documents for that period in their homes, the University and I would be most interested. If anyone has a story to tell about that period, I would like to meet with them."

"How did you get the papers?"

"Well, it turns out that my grandfather was a night rider, that most dangerous of revolutionary jobs, delivering orders to rebel cells in the midlands and in Ulster. We

found the papers in our attic at Leveegee. I am praying that there are more papers in attics around the country.”

“Also, Dr. Nolan, President of the University recently announced a new thrust. We want to bring the ivory tower out into the community at large. We want to partner with communities and corporations and extend to them the incredible resources that we have. Our university system is the heartbeat of Ireland and we, at University College, Galway, have already taken the first steps forward to partner with our communities and professions. It gives our students *real world* experience. It gives the *real world* the opportunity to tune into the thoughtful research of the University. The effort expands our mission and the mission of our faculty. It brings us closer to the civilizing monasteries built by St. Patrick. For their time, they were the heartbeat of Ireland.”

At that point, Shane chimed in. “I recently had an opportunity to use the resources of the medical department. Believe me when I tell you that the University clinic is as well equipped and with physicians as well trained as in any hospital in America. Ireland is in desperate need of a better medical delivery system. The University College medical department is the model for what can be done in every community or region in Ireland.”

“The two of you are getting married soon. What is your attitude toward our changing Church?”

Katie laughed. “Both Shane and I are very committed to our Church. I think the whole world knows of our marriage preparation work with Fr. O’Malley. He reports that he is as busy with pre-marriage counseling as he has ever been in his entire ministry. I pray that every parish in Ireland could provide for its people the way Fr. O’Malley provides for his. As you know, the University has a Newman Center and Fr McCarthy is as vital to the good of the University as any administrator or professor. It is the soul of the University for students and faculty of all faiths.”

“The Church is not doing well in public opinion,” said Nora.

“I can only lay the blame for that on the Church herself. When priests stopped being prayerful, they stopped serving the people of God. When they became so engrossed in their own importance, they forgot the importance of their mission. We Irish do not like to be controlled. Each of us has a rebel gene. That is not a bad thing. When we are controlled by finding sin in every quarter of our lives; when we are controlled with the threat of Hell at every turn; when anything enjoyable is characterized as sinful, we begin to realize that this is not the faith that Patrick brought to Ireland. There are many models of Church and unfortunately too many of our priests and even some bishops pledge allegiance to models that are no longer relevant. The Gospel as a model for living is almost foreign to our experience of Church. Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. We just celebrated that. He is waiting for the Irish people to catch up with him. Paul taught us that we are the mystical body of Christ, not the mysterious body. Shane and I like to believe we are in the forefront of that movement.”

“Amen to that,” said Shane.

At that point, Rory stepped in to say that we had other appointments and asked Edna and Tom if they could wrap up their work.

Nora laughed and said that this was the greatest interview she had ever done. She can't wait to see it in print.

Tom asked for a photo of Shane and Katie with their heads together.

Chapter 24 – The Interviews Continue

Sarah Leis and Tom Cahill, her photographer, from *Ireland on Sunday* were waiting in the outer room. Edna invited them to come right in. The second interview went very much like the first. Shane told the story of the sinking of the Nina G with the same drama as he did in the first interview. In this interview he put more emphasis on his fear and the intensity of his prayer, giving God the credit for bringing them safely home.

Sarah wanted to know about the Leveegee incident but went quickly to the accident incident. Shane told that story and that he had visited the farmer in the hospital. He is home now and doing well. In a couple of months he will be as good as new.

“What about the fellow who was killed?”

“I understand that he was the son of an international investment banker. I don’t know anything about him. He was killed immediately. I took his pulse within a minute after the accident and he was already gone.”

“I understand that there was considerable drink taken,”

“I was told that as well.”

Katie told pretty much the same story she told the Times. She was pleased that she had the opportunity to talk about the university

Sarah asked her about growing up in Leveegee. She was trying to contrast a girl from a back hills rural town with a woman who now held a prominent position in the halls of academe.

“People are people all over the world. We all have values, moral judgment, hopes, dreams, and skills. I earned the opportunity to attend college, but I’m still the girl who grew up in a rural community, the daughter of a farmer and sheep herder. I received a lot of encouragement from my mom after my dad died and as the opportunities appeared, I took advantage of them. “

“I would like to say a word about farmers. Farming was once an exalted position in Ireland. If you had any land at all, you were considered rich. The Celtic Tiger has diminished the status of the farmer. My appreciation of the farmers that I knew is that they are the most creative and skilled people in Ireland. They have a life of backbreaking hardship and they love it. Their reward is a meager income by today’s standards. That doesn’t change their native genius. We still need them and they know that. Several worldwide cultural shifts have occurred in our history and yet the farmer still survives and will continue to survive as long as the rest of us continue to survive. There is nothing broken that a farmer can’t fix. There is almost no waste that a farmer can’t recycle into a useful tool. The proud profession of farming may or may not regain prominence. I do know though that the rest of us cannot survive without farming.”

Leveegee is a model of a community that works. Loyalists and republicans worked through an eight hundred year civil war putting hatred aside and learned cooperative farming, cooperative animal husbandry, the value of friendship, personal loyalty, and that a handshake is as good as any contract. Go there any weekend and just observe the weekly market and auctions.”

“How do you keep your Catholic faith alive? The parish at Leveegee isn’t exactly like a beacon.”

“It is not my place to judge anyone,” said Katie. The people at Leveegee are good people. The friends I grew up with are good people. We kept the faith alive with the support of each other. I have been blessed with a great mother and two great priests in my life, Fr. O’Malley who will be our pastor at the Rosseville parish and Fr. Mc Carthy at the Newman Center on campus. Both are models of what a priest can be and their communities show it. The Church is hardly innocent of the charges leveled against her but a good priest or bishop can make a big difference in the lives of our people.”

“When will you be married?”

“We would rather not say, said Shane. Hopefully our wedding will not be a media event.”

“What will the future hold for you?”

“We are planning to live in Rosseville, replied Katie. Shane will be the community Publican and I will continue to work at the University. We will grow more deeply in love each day, raise a family, and make whatever contribution we can to improving society.”

“That sounds like a good plan. If you don’t mind, we would like to use a photo of the two of you together on the cover. We will use some of the other photos within the body of the article.”

Edna escorted them out and Rory encouraged them to take a break and at least drink a bottle of water before the next interview.

“You are spectacular, said Rory. That last one was a little more difficult. Apparently she did some homework before she arrived here. You are both doing a great job.”

The third interview with *The Sunday Tribune* covered all the information previously mined by the other interviewers. Rory had warned them that there were other interviews and they would probably have to look for a fresh approach. *The Sunday Tribune* did not include the *Ireland on Sunday* magazine insert so there would be no competition or conflict of interest. *The Irish Times*, though more widely circulated, is known as a partisan newspaper and would probably not conflict with the stories of the others. Sean had taken this into consideration when he chose the five.

Katie and Shane were tired after all the interviews and elected to go back to her apartment for a nap before their dinner at Fitzgerald's. Rory again congratulated them on a job well done. He was impressed on how Katie weaved the University aspect of their story into the interviews. He thought the three interviews each emphasized a different facet of their story and would paint an interesting picture for their readers. From his studies, Rory knew that these interviews were not the traditional public relations interview. The five periodicals were selected from among several newspapers who had requested interviews. That won't stop the other tabloid type of newspapers from writing their own stories. Getting the true story out first was the best way to avoid misunderstandings.

They walked slowly back to her apartment. Angela was out and they had the place to themselves. They collapsed on the couch to relieve the mental and physical fatigue they felt. They kissed and held each other and both fell asleep in seconds.

They slept for at least two hours when Angela returned to the apartment. The nap was refreshing. They shared a cup of tea and talked about their day. Angela was fascinated by the interviews.

"They can print anything they want. Doesn't that frighten you?"

"Not from the papers who interviewed us," said Katie. "Their stock in trade is their journalistic integrity. The people with whom we interviewed would not jeopardize that integrity. It would mean that they would be out of the business. Sean uses that room for student practice interviews and everything we said in that room is taped. So there is an accurate record of everything."

"Angela, we are going to Fitzgerald's for dinner to test it out for the possibility of a wedding reception. If you would like to come with us, we could draw on your considerable wisdom," said Shane.

"You really know how to flatter a girl. Give me a minute or two to freshen up. I'll be happy to join you."

Shane had made a reservation and since they were so well known at Fitzgerald's, they were greeted by the manager, Brian Smythe, when they arrived. He led them to a table he had personally selected for them and took their drink order, white wine for the three of them. Shane had a small notebook with him and wrote something without anyone's notice.

The room could easily hold 200 people with plenty of space for a band and dancing. They toasted each other for a good job on the interviews.

A waitress came and took their dinner orders. Shane, conscious of the mandate to lose a little weight, ordered baked Salmon, Angela ordered a baked, stuffed chicken breast, and Katie ordered chicken cordon bleu. They talked about the room, how tables could be

arranged; the noise level for conversation and what a typically loud dance band would do to conversation.

Again, Shane jotted notes.

Dinner was delicious and it was complimented by more white wine and they enjoyed the leisurely pace of fine dining. When the waiter came to take their dessert order Brian accompanied him and joined them at the table. Shane had arranged for this.

Brian told them that as a professional courtesy to Shane, drinks were on the house, a courtesy Brian had enjoyed many times at the Lantern. They chatted lightly while they were waiting for coffee. Everyone passed on dessert.

“Oh, Mom,” exclaimed Katie, “I meant to tell you that Bono sends you his best regards.” Katie is not known as a name dropper but she couldn’t resist the temptation. Brian was no end of impressed.

“Now, how did Bono manage to ask for me,” asked Angela?

“Well, I am helping him with a project. He is researching ancient Irish literature to get material for new songs. I sent him a copy of my dissertation bibliography. He is working on several possibilities and I will get a credit when they publish that album. He wrote me a note to thank me for the bibliography”

“Are you going to ask him to play at the wedding,” asked Angela?

“No, I am thinking of Springsteen or Bonjovi”

The joke didn’t work. Everyone was stunned but they didn’t laugh.

Katie blushed and said that she and Shane were working toward a low key wedding celebrated with great joy and dignity that they could share with their friends.

“Is it true that you are working with Bono,” asked Brian?”

“It is absolutely true,” replied Katie.

Shane asked Brian about the possibility of using Fitzgerald’s for a reception.

“We don’t use this room for receptions, said Brian. We have one downstairs that is roughly the same size. When is the wedding?”

Shane told him and Brian browsed through his book. The date was available.

“Tell me about the costs.”

“Costs vary depending on the menu you choose. If you figure around 60 pounds a plate, with an open bar, you have an idea of the costs. Where else are you looking,” asked Brian?

“We are only considering one other option, the Faculty Dining Room at the University”

“Pick that one, said Brian. You have the privilege of using it and you should go for it. We can’t match the costs. The dining room is subsidized for the benefit of the faculty. You will find it much less expensive with excellent food and ambiance. You know you are welcome here, but I recommend that you seriously consider the University. If you want to consider putting up guests here, I can block out rooms at a good discount.”

“You are very frank and very fair,” said Shane. “We are going to the University tomorrow and we will let you know what we decide. Either way, we will do some business.”

Brian shook Shane’s hand and thanked him for considering Fitzgerald’s and invited them to have some Irish Mist for an after dinner drink.

“What do you think, Angela,” asked Shane?

“I would say that you have a respectful and honest man here. He is probably right. He might feel you wouldn’t be pleased with the downstairs room. He gets lots of business from your crowd every Sunday. He also knows that there is a difference in price that you will probably have to accept for similar quality. He will do well with a block of rooms sold in the middle of winter. He is a good man. He did you a favor and kept your friendship.”

“You are right, Angela. Do you know anything about the costs at the Faculty Dining Room?”

I don’t know the costs but I do know that it is the place that Peadar wants for a reception, and as you know, he is a man of impeccable taste. He also likes Fitzgerald’s.

“Will you join us for dinner tomorrow at the Faculty Dining Room and Katie, will you use your considerable charm to make an appointment for the manager to join us for dessert to discuss this matter?”

Angela and Katie nodded to each other and laughed at Shane’s feigned formality.

“Yes sir, Will there be anything else sir?” laughed Katie as she poked his ribs with her elbow?

Shane stayed over but in the morning Katie received a phone call from Sean. He had spoken with Rory and Edna and did a courtesy check with the reporters from the three newspapers. Everyone was very pleased.

“They seemed enthusiastic and pleased with themselves. We certainly were.”

“Do you have any thoughts for today’s interviews,” asked Katie?

“These are the local papers. I think I did well publicizing the University and our projects and I plugged the research for unread papers from the 1916 Rising that might be in attics. There won’t be much of that to be found in Connaught, at least I don’t think so and I could be wrong. Do me a favor, though. Don’t destroy the tapes of our interviews. My mom hit a raw nerve when she talked about risks involved with interviews at dinner last night. I would like to hold onto the tapes for at least a month or two when all of this will have blown away. I don’t think we said anything controversial but you never know how something that Shane or I said can be twisted to mean something else. The politicians have a phrase for it, *spinning the truth*. Also, it doesn’t stop the British tabloids from taking the information from the other papers and create some fiction around it. Let’s be prepared to protect ourselves if necessary. Otherwise, I think that Dr. Nolan will be very pleased. The fan mail from the Gay Byrne show has almost stopped so our fifteen minutes of fame is almost up. The interns are doing a wonderful job sorting the mail. They picked out a personal note from Paul Hewitt.”

“Who is that,” asked Sean.

“It is a *nom de plume* for Bono,” laughed Katie. I’m helping him on a project.”

“Well the shy girl that I first met ten years ago is certainly travelling in rarified circles.”

“Go away with you,” said Katie. “I was never a shy girl.”

Sean laughed and said he would see them later in the afternoon and, yes, he would preserve the tapes.

Shane slept late on the comfortable couch.

Katie was in her room reading some of Pearse’s poetry and letters.

Angela fussed around cleaning the kitchen and straightened up her own room.

Chapter 25 – Slanderous Accusations

The Friday interviews were actually fun. They were with two local publications of the Connaught Province and the interviewers were charming and most interested in their local activities. They listened with rapt attention when Shane told his stories. They wanted to know more about his Sea Rescue work and how he met Katie. They were interested in the story of their developing relationship. One interviewer remarked that *they were bound together in the cement of crisis*.

Ah, a poet thought Katie and was immediately distracted to thoughts about Padraic Pearse.

One of the interviewers told Katie that she had been at Leveegee for the weekend fair and that she really enjoyed it. That gave Katie the opportunity to speak about Leveegee as a border community that works, about growing up there, about the relationships that developed among the peoples on either side of the border, and to further elaborate on the dignity of the farmer and fisherman, something that the readers of Galway would appreciate.

They talked about the University, about their work with Fr. O'Malley, about how they relate to the Church and spirituality in general.

One of the interviewers had gone to school in Scotland and wanted to know as much as possible about the University, especially the plans going forward and more about Katie's experience as a professor. Katie laughed and said while she was slightly older than the students, she still considered herself their contemporary.

One of the interviewers apologized for asking a personal question and said that they didn't have to answer it if they didn't want to. She addressed them both and asked, "How do you feel about sex before marriage?"

Katie said they would be glad to answer that one.

"I would never judge anyone who had pre-marriage sex. I do not feel that it is as horrible a sin as we have been taught, depending on the level of commitment of the couples involved. Shane and I have not had pre-marriage sex. We discussed it when we knew our relationship was moving toward commitment and decided we would wait until we are married. I have been teaching nubile and passionate young people for four years, and I have had the opportunity to get to know many of them not only as a teacher but as a counselor. I noticed that many times a developing relationship tends to flatten out once the couple starts having sex. I wanted a growing and deepening relationship with Shane, and our reason for connecting with Fr. O'Malley was to achieve just that."

Shane agreed. "I won't pretend that it is easy but I realize, especially now, that our relationship has achieved a level that I would never have thought possible. We are now ready for marriage and that celebration will take place in a few months. What I have

learned from this is there is far more to sexuality than sexual intercourse and we celebrate that in our mutual attention, respect, and all the little romantic things that we do to share our love for each other. It doesn't mean that we are any less passionate. I dare say that most of my contemporaries would not understand this and neither would either of us if we didn't have each other to share the experience. It all started with Katie's instinct that we could do better and we would have to do so for the next fifty years or more. We have learned to communicate in dynamic new ways and we are looking forward to communicating through sex."

Katie had to swallow hard to keep the tears from flowing. Shane's statement was beautiful and eloquent.

"What are the little romantic things that you do, asked the interviewer?"

"Ah, that is something that you have to figure out for yourself and part of the fun of a developing relationship is to discover that together. There is no 'how to' book to teach you that."

"Fr. O'Malley has been a big part of your preparation. Does he keep you on a short leash?"

"He doesn't keep us on any kind of leash, said Katie. He treats us with dignity, respect, and recognizes that we are two unique individuals and treats us that way. We have complete freedom, a freedom that is empowering. He doesn't try to put us in any kind of pigeon hole. We discussed God, the Church, spirituality, our own sense of ministry, our professions, sex, money, children, community, friendships, and many other things that celebrate life. It was also Shane's idea to work with him and I couldn't be happier. I try to be a devout Catholic, but I am a little leery of 'churchy' things. Still, I love what has happened as a result of our work. I am ecstatic that we will be living in the Rosseville parish."

They were long interviews because both took a different track than the interviews of the previous day. The interviewers and photographers were very pleasant and Katie and Shane were very relaxed.

Rory wisely interrupted after Katie answered the last question with the notice that the time allotted was up. In fact, they were overtime.

In each instance, the interviewers and photographers were pleased with the time given, the interaction with Shane and Katie, and especially their willingness to discuss things that might be considered "edgy." Shane and Katie were pleased that they had been able to go far beyond the routine interview and that made it interesting and fun for them. What they did not know was that Sean had slipped into the room for the last interview.

Sean was ecstatic. He thought the last interview was wonderful and hoped all the others had gone the same way. Rory and Edna assured him that they did, though each interview had qualities that made them unique.

He made certain that the tapes for all the interviews were stored in a safe. He told Katie that he marveled at the wisdom of her mother. It occurred to him that there could be a fabrication of pieces of their story but they were so clear and forceful in their presentation, he thought it remote. Angela was right and he was wrong and he freely admitted that. There are reputations and careers to be considered.

Plans for the evening included a short nap and then dinner at the Faculty Dining Room with Angela. It was a good day and they were looking forward to a pleasant evening.

When they arrived at the apartment, Peadar was there as well and they asked him to join them.

Peadar and Angela wanted to know how the interviews went.

Katie responded that she thought they went well and Shane concurred. She said the line of questioning was a little different today than it was yesterday. It was fun for them because the questions were fresh and gave them the opportunity to discuss things that they had not discussed in previous interviews. For the next two weeks they will be all over the newsstands of Ireland again.

Katie pulled Shane into her room and told Angela that they were going to take a well deserved nap, after which they would go to dinner. "You guys have the whole apartment to yourselves for at least an hour," said Katie.

Once inside the room, Katie looked him straight in the eye and said, "You made me cry today."

"Oh, I am so sorry, said Shane. What did I do?"

"You were brilliant, loving, gentle, tender, and showed an incredible depth of understanding and I love you more and more each day."

The much relieved Shane held her and kissed her again, and again, and again. They fell asleep in each other's arms.

They awoke slowly about an hour later much refreshed by a deep and restful nap. They washed up to prepare for dinner. Katie added a touch of makeup which she really did not need. The four of them then walked over to the Commissary.

John Kelly, the manager, assured them that he would join them for dessert and showed them to a table in the Faculty Dining Room. Shane had been in the room several times before and always admired the rustic ambiance. Clearly the room could accommodate

two hundred people with room for a band and dancing. The fireplace would be lighted in December adding to the romantic nature of the event.

John took their drink order, wine for the ladies, Guinness for Shane, and a vodka martini for Peadar. While they were enjoying their drinks, Shane asked Peadar why he chose the Faculty Dining Room for their reception. Peadar thought for a minute and said that he always liked it here. "It has an ancient, rustic quality that I enjoy. The food is outstanding. Angela and I have spent many happy hours dining here. The service is excellent with great attention to detail. The room is big enough. They will do all the planning for you. Just put it in their hands. It is convenient since we are marrying in the Chapel. Besides, this is the University. This is my element."

"Well it certainly has a lot going for it," said Shane.

"Do you like it, Angela?"

"I love it, she said. Yes, we have been here a lot but it is here that we began move from mutual interest to falling in love. I can remember every conversation that we had here and I'll cherish them all for the rest of my life. But you must remember that I am new to the neighborhood. I have been to Lahinch and to Ashford but guests would have to travel too far to get to either one. I like Fitzgerald's but I have great memories here and our wedding reception will be another one."

Shane was impressed with Angela's answer because he also had many happy memories of meals with Katie.

The waiter took their order after greeting Peadar and Katie with considerable deference. He shook Shane's hand with, "Nice to see you again, Mr. Ryan." He bowed to Angela and said that it was a pleasure to meet her. Katie ordered salmon, Angela ordered rack of lamb, Shane ordered lobster tails, and Peadar ordered a steak.

They took another round of drinks but Shane ordered white wine to compliment the lobster. Table conversation was very pleasant and Shane and Katie regaled them with stories of their interview adventures. The Times could run their interview tomorrow. The others are Sunday papers so their stories might be out by Sunday.

When it came time for dessert, everyone ordered coffee or tea, avoiding the extra calories of a rich dessert. John Kelly, the manager, came to their table knowing that they were going to talk about a wedding reception.

Katie told John that they were getting married on December 28th and asked if that presented any problem.

"Not at all, said John, The day is not otherwise booked." We stay open for the benefit of the faculty and the international students. All I have to do is bring in enough staff to provide for you."

“Dr. McDermott told me that you provide all the wedding planning details such as decorations, flowers, and music/”

“That is correct, Mr. Ryan.”

“Is this a house band and can we go to hear them somewhere?”

“Yes, Mr. Ryan. There is a retirement dinner next Friday evening for Professor Bennet. I can make arrangements. I believe that you are coming with Mrs. O’Bierne, Doctor,”

Peadar nodded, yes.

“I can’t sit you with Dr McDermott, but I can arrange a private table for you on the outer fringe of guests.”

“That is perfect, said Shane. Please draw up the contract. Dr. O’Bierne and I will discuss dinner options and let you know.”

“I can give you a menu of options from which to choose.”

“Thank you,” said Shane as he got up to shake Kelly’s hand.

Kelly called the waiter over and told him to bring whatever we wanted for after dinner drinks and they were not to be added to the bill.

As the evening drew to a close, Katie and Peadar wrestled politely over who was going to sign the bill. Katie graciously let Peadar win. She knew him well enough to know that this was something that enhanced his masculine pride. Kelly provided a menu of dinner options and they walked back across the campus to Katie’s apartment.

The next morning, the phone rang early. It was one of Katie’s friends, Jennie, who said she was sitting on her porch reading the Irish Times and when she turned the page, there was Katie’s smiling face.

“Oh isn’t that exciting?” said Katie sarcastically.

Both of them laughed and Katie said it was good to hear her voice.

“I knew, along with the whole civilized world, that you were getting married. Did you set a date?”

‘Yes, circle December 28th. I want you to be there with me. When the invitations go out I am going to ask for secrecy. I don’t want a media event. So keep the date under your hat. They continued to chat about wedding plans and Katie said that their mutual friend, Maeve the Druid Witch, was making her wedding dress. And, I almost forgot that you

know my mom. She is also getting married in October and Maeve is making her dress, and we'll be each other's maid or matron of honor. They talked more about locations of the church, receptions, her mom's fiancé, and where they are both planning to live.

"Katie asked, "What did you think of the interview?"

"Oh, it was great, said her friend. It was mostly stuff that you covered on the Byrne Show. It presented you as sweet and nice, so they could be accused of false journalism."

Katie laughed, expecting no quarter.

"You gave a great plug for your work at the University. I don't know if anyone in my family was connected with the Rising."

"You were so inspiring about your church and those priests that I am going to Mass tomorrow morning. You might have saved another soul."

"Those are the burdens that weigh me down," said Katie. Stay good and give me a break."

"Well, I'll get to Mass. I don't want to rush into being good."

They both rang off laughing.

No sooner did Katie hang up when the phone rang again.

"Good morning, Katie, this is Archbishop Manning."

Chapter 26 – Misunderstandings

“Good morning, Archbishop. Don’t tell me that you read the Irish Times and I haven’t yet and, while I know what we said in the interview, I don’t know what they wrote down.”

“Yes, Katie, I read Shane’s and your interview. Thank you for what you said in that interview. I wish you could say those things from every pulpit in the three dioceses for which I am responsible.”

“Well, I recently learned that I have a charism from both my Baptism and Confirmation to be a prophetic voice, a little known fact that was glossed over in my religious education. *Ireland on Sunday* and the *Sunday Tribune* will be out tomorrow and they are carrying separate interviews and the *Connaught Tribune* and the *Galway Independent* will be publishing interviews during the next week. Every Catholic, whether or not they are in church tomorrow will have an opportunity read those remarks. In fact, I just heard from an old friend who said she was going to church tomorrow simply because of what was written in the Times.”

“Well, I thank you for it, Katie. Maybe we can parlay your thoughts into some parish policy.”

“Speaking of parishes, I understand that you will be roundly criticized in the Leveegee parish. I received two calls from a Fr. O’Mahoney who was livid because you came out against the Church.”

Katie smiled and told the story of their baptismal certificate visit. She assured the Archbishop that she did no such thing. She assured him that the *Times* have their own tape of the interview, and we did the interviews in the University Communications Office and that we had tapes of all the interviews. “There was no criticism of the Church and no hint of scandal. I haven’t read the interview but the interviewer was familiar with the Leveegee parish and described it as not exactly a beacon. I passed over her remark and made some positive comments. Everyone in the parish and the town knows those priests are amadons. Incidentally, that has been the lot of the Leveegee parish since I was a child. I wish you could do something about that.”

“Alas, Katie, I don’t have much to work with.”

“So I am told and most people already know that. I wish I could help you with that,” said Katie.

“Send me about three dozen young men like your Celtic god.”

“No way,” said Katie. “I got him first.”

“Now you can understand the quandary that I’m in.”

“I just wanted to warn you about O’Mahoney. I can put brakes on him but he is the leader of an extreme right wing cult that can make a lot of noise.

“Thank you Archbishop. I will keep my wits alert and keep you informed. The best approach might be to just ignore him. I’ll discuss it with Hurley.”

The next call was from Sean. He was very excited about the *Times* interview. Katie told him about the call from her friend, Jen and from the Archbishop. She went into detail about the Archbishop’s comments.

“I think it might be a good strategy to just ignore them. There is nothing controversial in that article. Anyone who reads it will know that. They’ll make a loud noise but lose their voices real fast. I’ll try to work up a backup plan in case we need it.”

“Katie, you will have to kiss your mother for me. Her instincts were right on the money. How anything in that interview can be interpreted as anything but praise for the Church is beyond me.”

“No proxy kisses, Sean. You’ll have to kiss her yourself. I’ll see you in Church tomorrow.”

The phone rang again. This time it was Dr. Nolan. He just wanted to thank her for the great things she said about the University.

Katie thanked him and told him about Archbishop Manning’s call.

“Interesting, said Nolan. I thought your comments on the Church were inspiring.”

“So did some of my friends who called as did Archbishop Manning. We have tapes of all the interviews and the *Times* made their own tape as well. I just don’t want to see any of us embarrassed.”

“Don’t worry about it Katie. Those kinds of things can also be good publicity, especially when the context is so clear; anyone who can think reasonably will be able to figure out the truth.

“*Ireland on Sunday* and *The Sunday Tribune* will be out tomorrow. Those interviews were similar to *The Irish Times*. I hope there won’t be any controversy. All the interviewers were really nice and were very appreciative of the time and information we gave them.”

“I’m sure that Dr. Hurley is on top of it.”

“Indeed he is. He called me earlier.”

“Enjoy the moment, Katie.”

When she hung up, Shane came into the apartment with several copies of *The Times*. They read the interview together and they were impressed. “The Archbishop is right,” said Shane, “There is nothing controversial here.”

Their photograph was on the front page guiding readers to the page of the interview. One could safely bet that eighty percent of their readership gravitated to those pages.

“It sounds like they are just looking to pick a fight, said Katie. A fight generates a little publicity.”

Shane had to work at the Lantern on Saturday and Katie organized a dinner party there with Angela, Peadar, and the Hurley’s at half seven.

On this Saturday night in the summer time, the Lantern was jumping. It was filled with revelers and tourists looking for good Irish music. Seamus O’Byrne did not disappoint. The craic was mighty in the pub that night.

They talked, laughed, and sang their way through a delicious dinner and several pints of Guinness. The locals came up to Katie to congratulate her on the interview in the *Times*. There was no hint of any controversy here. Katie pointed out again that Shane had done all the work, but she was their princess. Shane was just the prince consort. Even if she was controversial they would just cheer, “Right on, Katie.”

Peadar who would be thought to be out of place in the environment had a great time. He knew all the songs and sang them with gusto as did the rest of the table. Shane came over and sat with them when he had the opportunity.

Angela and Katie were both moving a little slow on Sunday morning. It must have been because of the lateness of the evening. It couldn’t have been the Guinness. Shane arrived with another armload of papers. *Ireland on Sunday* was an insert in the *Irish Daily News* and the *Sunday Tribune* was thick and heavy. *Ireland on Sunday* had Katie and Shane’s photo on the cover and the *Sunday Tribune* had Katie and Shane’s photo on the bottom of the front page with a direction to the page of the interview.

The phone rang. It was Kathleen, a friend of Angela’s from Leveegee. Angela was stunned. Her hand went to her mouth and she gasped for breath. She handed Katie the telephone and she asked about what happened.

“Oh Katie, said Kathleen, you were read out from the pulpit this morning at Mass. That scurrilous gobshite said the most awful things about you. Three quarters of the church got up and walked out.”

“Kathleen, please do me a favor. Ask your friends to get together and try to remember everything that was said. I want to pass that on Bishop Manning who will I am sure

remind that priest of the sinfulness and the legal consequences of slander, calumny, and detraction.”

“Thank you so much for telling us. As you meet people who walked out, tell them that I am grateful for their support.”

Katie and Shane quickly read through the articles in both papers.

“Nothing controversial here, said Shane, as he traded papers with Katie. I almost cried at your description of the life of a farmer and the faith of the people of Leveegee.

“I didn’t see anything either. I would say they did a very good job.

She quickly turned to her mom who was now red with anger. “Relax mom. This is something we can expect from those amadons.”

Katie, you are my daughter and I will not stand for this, especially given our history with that parish.”

“It is not the parish, Mom. It is just a few warped individuals who are power hungry and get off on controlling the lives of the people in their care. God bless the people who walked out of that Church. I hope we can get it back for them someday. They are the true heroes for sticking it out all these years. The Grace of God empowered them to draw a line in the sand.”

“None the less, when they hear from me, all of the north and midlands will know it.”

“I’ll be in touch with Bishop Manning tomorrow. I’ll let you speak with him. I know he will enjoy meeting you and will listen to whatever you say.”

Thoroughly awakened by this turn of events, they dressed and prepared to walk over to the University Chapel.

Out on the road two busses were parked and a line of picketers were walking up and down in front of the chapel, They were carrying signs that read, NEWMAN WAS NEVER CATHOLIC; O’BIERNE IS A DISGRACE, KEEP HER AWAY FROM OUR CHILDREN; THIS PLACE IS NOT THE TRUE CHURCH; SHANE RYAN PROMOTES DRUNKENESS; WHY DON’T YOU HAVE A REAL CHURCH; GOD PRESERVE OUR CHILDREN FROM NEWMAN CENTERS, among many others.

Dr. Nolan was in the sacristy shouting at security to disperse that crowd and arrest anyone who resists or interrupts the service, and he wanted it done immediately if not sooner.

It was interesting that no one recognized Katie and Shane as they boldly marched up the stairs into the Chapel. Meanwhile Sean was unobtrusively taping the whole event on a video camera.

Fr. Jim greeted Katie and Shane at the door of the church, as usual. "It looks as though Fr. O'Mahoney made his statement. I can't believe how he could find anything wrong with these interviews. You did a wonderful job and I am grateful for all the things you said about the Newman Center."

"I am in touch with Bishop Manning," said Katie. "I am sure we'll see an end to this sort of thing. As for O'Mahoney, I suspect he'll be transferred to a chaplaincy with our Irish UN peacekeeping troops in Nairobi."

"I don't know about that," said Fr. Jim. "That is a terrible thing to do to the troops abroad."

"My mother is really angry. Maybe she'll think of something better and she has the Archbishop's ear."

Fr. Jim laughed. "Never piss off a devoted mother."

Katie took her seat with her family and Fr. Jim started the procession. Again the congregational singing rocked the room. It seemed as though the incident outside before the Mass stimulated everyone's faith and devotion.

As he came to the end of his homily, Fr. Jim addressed the picket line incident. "Unfortunately, even the clearest messages can be misinterpreted or even twisted."

"Liar." screamed someone from the rear of the church. The security detail was right on him and took him outside to arrest him.

Fr. Jim continued without even blinking. "The interviews that Dr. O'Bierne and her fiancé, Shane Ryan, gave to the papers are a perfect example of evangelism. I understand that some people are in church this morning because of the beautiful things they said about their church and their faith in Christ. Good for you. Come back again because, as you can see, this is a very exciting place because of our faith and trust in the Lord. I am very grateful, as is Archbishop Manning, for the things they said about the priesthood, about ministry, and the impact of the Spirit on the community. Thank you, Katie and Shane. I'm sorry if you were embarrassed, but it is a small price to pay to live in the life of the Spirit."

The whole congregation stood up and applauded.

Katie shyly looked up to see the beaming faces of her mother and Peadar and with her hand locked tightly in Shane's, they stood up and waved to the crowd as a gesture of thanks.

After Mass, the crowd outside of Church was unusually vibrant and took a while to disperse, with the majority off to Fitzgerald's for their weekly brunch. Fr. Jim came to Fitzgerald's with them but wanted to ride with Peadar and Angela so he could experience for the first time in his life a ride in a Mercedes.

To Be Continued

Chapter 27 - Slander, Calumny, and Detraction

The afternoon at Fitzgerald's was a delight. The group seems to look forward to Mass and brunch each week and enjoy both with gusto. Fr. Jim thoroughly enjoyed himself. It is hard for him to get away during the fall and spring semesters because of his need to be available to the students. These Sundays were like a vacation for him.

People came by their table to say how much they enjoyed the interviews and how sorry they were that we all had to endure the episode of the morning. It was consoling and comforting to have that kind of support. But these are friends, thought Katie. She wondered what the ordinary person in the street thought.

Sean and Mairead came by their table to deliver the kiss that he had promised as a reward for Angela's insight into the possibility of backlash. Angela was startled and started to laugh. "You kissed me six times at the Lantern last night for the same reason."

"Last night must have been a busy night. I don't remember much," at which point his wife, Mairead, gently poked him in the ribs.

"Well I never forget a kiss, said Angela. Until recently I haven't had that many."

"What are your thoughts about today's incident," asked Katie?

"Fun, wasn't it, he said."

"That's because it is not your name being dragged through the mud."

"That is a good point, said Sean. I videotaped the whole thing from the time of their arrival. I noted something very interesting. You and Shane walked right through the picket line and up the center of the staircase into the church. Not one picketer recognized you, even though the newspapers were filled with your photos and *Ireland on Sunday* had a photo of the both of you on the front cover, big enough to make it impossible to miss. Katie, not one of those people recognized you."

"That is interesting; what does that tell you?"

"That they are imports. They came from outside the region. They were probably hired to stir up trouble. I have Rory and Edna on it. We are trying to find out who they are and how they came to be here. There are a couple of arrestees and Dr. Brown insists that they stay in jail until they talk. He doesn't have to press trespassing charges until late tomorrow so the police have a whole day with them. Rory and Edna are also doing a street survey and they are going to Leveegee for the closing of the weekend fair for the same reason. I understand that a Fr. O'Mahoney libeled you from the pulpit this morning. I don't know how he could do that from the articles and apparently neither could the congregation. They walked out on him."

“My mother’s friend called this morning to tell us that. I asked her to gather as many people as she could and write down what was said.”

“Now you get the kiss.”

“You are really enjoying this, aren’t you?”

“It is my business. We start teaching tomorrow and it will be a great semester. I’m really excited that I have something ‘real world’ to talk about.”

“Hmm, I wonder what my new students will think of me.”

Before they left, Peadar invited everyone, including the Hurley’s, to Lahinch for dinner to celebrate the end of their break.

Angela went with Peadar and Shane and Katie went back to her apartment.

“I feel relieved that Sean is on top of this and even having fun with it,” said Katie in the car.

“I have confidence in him. Sean is a real pro,” responded Shane.

“I’m starting to have fun with it too, said Katie, I never thought of myself enjoying life on the edge. Maybe that is because I have never been on the edge. It is kind of exciting out here.”

“I agree, Katie. I feel a little giddy about the whole thing. I know we did well, did the right thing, and everything right. As Oscar Wilde once said, ‘the good that you do sometimes comes back to bite you in the backside.’ Knowing that we did the right thing well makes any pain worth while. On top of that, look at the benefits to our charities.”

“Great thinking Shane, I haven’t averted to that at all. That should be over a thousand pounds to each charity.”

When they entered the apartment, the light on the telephone was blinking. One was a call from Archbishop Manning. Another was a call from Tom Donnolly from Leveegee. There were several calls for her mother and Katie noted and wrote down the numbers for each one of them and one from Maeve, the Druid witch.

She called Tom first. He was concerned about the incident at the Leveegee parish this morning. He said, “Katie, you know we all love you and we are very proud of you. What you said about our people and our community was absolutely brilliant. Everyone walked out on that amadon’s sermon. The only people who stayed in the church were tourists who didn’t know what was happening.

“Tom, thank you so much for your love and support. It means everything to me.

Everything I said about our Leveegee people and the farmers, I truly believe. I wasn't prepared for those questions in the interviews. They were trying to contrast being a big deal professor and the girl from a backwater town. My responses were spontaneous, so those values are imbedded in my belief system. I am so fortunate to have grown up with all of you and no matter where I am or whatever I do in life, Leveegee will always be a part of me."

"I know that Katie. We have always been proud of you, even when we were back in school. I have ordered two of our detectives who are parishioners here to make discrete inquiries and investigate our not so good pastor. Something smells very rotten and we want to find it and expose it."

"Be careful, Tom. I don't know how dangerous these people can be. They picketed the University Chapel this morning and the interesting thing is was that no one in that group recognized either Shane or me. It suggests that they were imports, possibly from outside of Ireland. Dr. Hurley made a TV tape of the whole thing. I'll have him call you. I know that he has his staff working on an investigation as well."

"Thanks Tom. If the Leveegee paper decides to do a story on it, tell them how much I appreciate their support. I always consider Leveegeeites my friends."

The next call was to Archbishop Manning.

"I'm sorry I wasn't here to receive your call, Archbishop. I was at Mass, which was picketed by the way, at the University Chapel after which almost the whole community goes to Fitzgerald's for brunch."

"Well Dr. Nolan didn't go to Fitzgerald's. He was on the phone with me. He is one angry man."

"Well that is justified. We have reason to believe that the picketers were imports, perhaps from out of the country. Shane and I walked right among them and they didn't recognize us. Dr. Hurley videotaped the entire episode and he has his staff investigating. Tom Donnolly, Captain of the Guards at Leveegee is also conducting an investigation. I'm sure the newspapers are on top of it as well. Did you hear about the Mass at the Leveegee parish? I don't ever remember anyone being 'read out' during my lifetime. That kind of slander not only impacts my reputation but it also imperils my career."

"Katie, I hear your anger and I will do something about it."

"You're just lucky that my mother is not here."

"Believe me, your reputation and your career are very safe. The support for you and Shane is incredible. The published interviews in this morning's editions are outstanding and again, I owe you serious thanks."

“Not at all, Archbishop, that burst of anger just slipped out and it is not directed at you. Actually, Shane and I are trying to have a little fun with this.”

“Good for you, Katie. Please keep me informed. I would rather talk with you than Dr. Nolan any day.”

She called her friend Maeve, the Druid Witch. “I went to Mass this morning because of you.”

“Good for you, Maeve. Where else are you going to get as much stimulation? Let me tell you what I have been through today.”

“I heard it on the radio and TV news. How do you generate such excitement? I read those interviews and while I thought they were great, they are lame compared to the conversations we used to have in college.”

“It was a different world then, Maeve. The world is a lot more uptight than it was at that time. There is something sinister going on and it may take a couple of weeks to find out the truth.”

“Oh, I love sinister. Should I conjure up the Morrigan?” (A creature from ancient Irish mythology that transforms from a female witch to a Raven and wreaks havoc.)

“Whoa, let’s save that for the big stuff.”

“This isn’t big stuff?”

“Yeah, but not that big; I’m think I’m going to have fun with this for a while. I’ve never really lived on the edge before. This is relatively exciting.”

“Well just let me know when you want her. She hasn’t had a good fight in centuries. Sounds like you have everything under control.”

“We are getting there. We have a good plan and some creative strategies. I really can’t talk about them but we’ll have dinner at the Lantern some night and I’ll fill you in.”

“Well, in between these great battles, I would like to have you and your mother in for a fitting.”

“The sublime always has to yield to the mundane; we have to come in the afternoon. I start teaching again tomorrow.”

“What are you teaching?”

“Mythology in Ancient Irish Literature,” said Katie.

“Be kind to the Morrigan. She’s your friend, you know.”

“I know. How about Wednesday afternoon about three?”

“I’ll see you then.”

Katie turned to Shane and said, “Wow...if I didn’t think she was on the level, I would be frightened.”

Dinner at Lahinch was very pleasant. Peadar was right. It was a place where they could retreat into anonymity. Only Peadar was recognized while everyone was politely acknowledged. It was a peaceful experience. Everyone sipped their wine and kept silence while the setting sun fell into the ever restless sea. It was a beautiful moment when the top of the sun was no longer visible. It was only then that conversation resumed. The sacred moment had passed.

Katie told Sean about her conversations with Tom Donnolly and Bishop Manning. She gave Sean a sheet of note paper with Tom Donnolly’s number. “Call him. He is willing to be very helpful and he has highly trained resources at our disposal.”

“Mom, I told Bishop Manning that he was lucky you weren’t home. There is a long list of phone messages for you when you get to them. And we have to go on Wednesday at three for a fitting.”

“Are you alright Katie,” asked Peadar?

“I couldn’t be better. Shane and I are resolved to have fun with this. Right now everything is on our side of the ledger and when all the information is in, we can make the right decisions.”

“Well, there is an important item outside of today’s crisis that I would like to announce. Sean has agreed to be our best man.”

“Yeah, everybody clapped and shook Sean’s hand.”

Katie told the story of the conversation with Maeve.

“Is she really a witch,” asked Angela?

“I don’t think there is any such thing as a witch, but we Irish have so many superstitions, I want her on my side, just in case.”

Dinner was delicious, the conversation light and funny, and the craic couldn’t be better. Everybody thanked Peadar for such a good idea. The evening lightened the mood of the group considerably. Sean was especially affable. Katie knew that somewhere behind those sparkling eyes, a devious mind had already set a plan of counter attack.

The group went straight home after dinner in deference to Katie and Sean who both had to start teaching a new class tomorrow morning at nine. Angela left with Peadar and Shane drove Katie to her apartment and stayed over as he had planned. He had to be at the Lantern by mid morning to do his weekly inventory and face his partners who, for sure, would roast him for his new found fame.

They slept together in Katie's room and gently fell asleep in each other's arms.

When Katie arrived at the University the next morning, Dr, Nolan caught up with her in the hallway.

"Katie, you can't go to your regular classroom."

"Why, asked Katie?"

"So many students registered for your class that we have to use the amphitheatre. We had to disappoint more than one hundred students."

"I'll have to change my plans, she said. I was hoping for workshop time during this session."

"Make do for today. We'll help you in any way we can. There are several empty classrooms available for break outs."

"Katie walked into the amphitheatre and sure enough, there were two hundred young men and women. They stood up and clapped. Katie was astonished and when the applause stopped she said that this was a class in the Literature of Ancient Irish Mythology.

One of the students raised his hand and Katie recognized him.

"Dr. O'Bierne, most of us are here because we want to learn about the roots of our heritage. We want to be able to say for as long as we live, that we were students of Dr. O'Bierne."

"Dr. O'Bierne, We want what you have. We want your spirit, your confidence, your faith and this is the best way we can get it."

"Alright, said Katie. I'll try to give you what you came here for. And here is how we'll do it. I will lecture for the first hour. In the second hour, we will have free wheeling discussions based on the lectures and possible applications to contemporary life. In the third hour, I will assign readings and you will break out into the surrounding classrooms. I want you to elect a leader for administration purposes for each class. Every smaller group will write a paper over the next three weeks based on a chapter of the assigned reading. You will be graded on the quality of the paper. We'll begin the third hour breakout on Wednesday. I expected a class of about fifteen and I am not prepared for all

of this, but I will be by Wednesday. Today and tomorrow you can leave after the second hour.”

The lecture and discussion went very well and many students thanked her as they left the amphitheatre. After the class, she went to Dr Nolan’s office and asked for eight classrooms each to hold about twenty-five students. Dr. Nolan came out of his office and apologized. She told him how she proposed to handle the situation. It would be nice if I could have eight graduate students to work with me. I would like them to meet with me tomorrow at eleven and be prepared for the third hour beginning on Wednesday.

“Done, said a relieved Dr. Nolan. Thank you for responding to this so quickly and so creatively. This is unprecedented throughout the University System.”

“I am frightened of this kind of adulation.”

“You are smart to be so. Use Dr. McDermott as a mentor. He’ll help you keep your head on straight.”

To Be Continued

A sincere “thank you” to all who read these chapters! Last week someone stopped me at a meeting and asked if I was the author of Love’s Promises. She told me that she was new to Ducas and looked forward to reading the chapters each month. I am also very grateful to Ducas and IACI for letting me serialize this novel.

I enjoy hearing from readers. I learn a lot from you. Keep your comments coming.

Raymond D. Aumack
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Chapter 28 - Counter Attack

With help from the graduate students, and her outstanding bibliography, Katie was able to work out the summer semester program for her students. As interested as her students were to be taught by Katie, the graduate students were just as interested to be her assistants. Beginning Wednesday, she will work her way around the eight breakout rooms and supervise both the graduate students and the work of her students. That she was able to do so was a big relief to the administration.

The interviews were also published early in the week. The Galway Independent is a daily publication and the Connaught Tribune is a weekly. The interviews both appeared on Tuesday. The interviews were a lot of fun for Katie and Shane and that was reflected in the articles. They wrote about Shane's healthy fear of the giant wave and they were positively eloquent about his coolness and skill even in the face of that fear.

They wrote well about the mission and work of the Sea Rescue Squad, an organization vital to fishing fleets of all the seacoast villages.

They also wrote about Katie's concern for the intruder that she struck with the pan and wrote extensively about her childhood and adolescence at Leveegee. They wrote about her views on the dignity of workers and noted that the farmers and fisherman of Galway had a patron who actually knew them and the hardship of their lives.

The articles talked about their faith, their romance, and their developing relationship with the help of Fr. O'Malley, the pastor of the Rosseville church and Fr. McCarthy, Chaplain of the University Newman Center. They focused on their loyalty to the Church and to the attitudes espoused by Fr. O'Malley on living the life of a Christian in the contemporary world.

Finally they wrote about the joint attitudes of both Katie and Shane on sexuality and sex before marriage and about their decision to wait until they are married to have sex. They were fascinated with the distinction Shane made between sex and sexuality and the tolerance of both toward those who don't embrace similar values.

On Tuesday evening, they had their regular meeting with Fr. O'Malley who wanted to go over the various topics discussed over the past five months. They talked together for two hours with each of the three marveling at how far they had come in these past months.

Wednesday's seminar was still a little hairy for Katie's taste but everyone was on the right track and pleased with the plan. Katie wanted to meet with the Graduate Assistants at half eight on Thursday morning to make sure everyone

was on the same page. Students and assistants alike carried the interview pages with their books, their esteem for Katie rising even higher.

In the afternoon, Katie and Angela drove into Galway for a late lunch and their gown fitting appointment.

They greeted Maeve with enthusiasm but Maeve seemed like she was upset with something. They talked about wedding stuff but there was nothing of the joviality of their last telephone conversation. Peadar wants to send out engraved invitations and the University print shop is going to take care of it. Katie had not yet thought about that and said that she was going for straight printing. Peadar was independently wealthy and could do anything he wanted.

They went through the fittings. Maeve and her staff had done extremely well and they were very pleased with the fit and look of the four gowns.

While her assistants were making adjustments on Angela's matron of honor gown, Maeve asked Katie step into her office at the back of the shop.

Maeve started crying and pulled a copy of a tabloid, the London Sun, out of her desk drawer. The headlines were salacious.

The Face of Young Ireland, a Slut

Popular Professor Condones and Teaches Premarital Sex

Couple Publicly Challenge Church teaching

Those miserable bastards said Katie, in a rare display of profane language. My mother is going to see this and I am the one who has to show it to her. She'll have a heart attack if I am not there. Tears were running down Maeve's face. "None of this is true Maeve. You know that."

"Oh, what are you going to do?"

"They crossed the line and we are going to fight back."

"How?"

You just get the Morrigan ready. She is going to have some fun now, after a quiet century."

Katie asked her mom to come to the office. When she showed her the paper, her face went white. "Take a deep breath, mom. It is time to fight back."

"Before leaving she called Shane and asked him to pick up several copies of the Sun."

"Why would we read that rag" asked Shane?

"Because you are this week's feature, pictures and all," replied Katie.

"What can you do," asked Angela?

"Mom, I'm sure that Sean has our entire Law School on alert by now, among them the best litigators in the country. We have audio tapes of all the interviews and Sean's video taped the picketing. All of those people were imports, probably from outside the country. Shane and I walked right through them and no one recognized us. They are probably a right wing religious group trying to establish themselves as defenders of the faith. They picked Ireland because we are so gullible about those things."

"Rory and Edna, Sean's assistants have been conducting an investigation as has Tom Donnolly and Archbishop Manning. It seems like your priest is up to his eyeballs in this mess."

"He is not my priest," said Angela.

There were a myriad of calls when she got back to the apartment, one of them from Sean Hurley.

Sean picked up and said, "Ah, the dirty face of young Ireland."

"Sean, when I see you, I think I'll kill you."

"Be careful what you say, your phone may be tapped. I'm coming over with a story you won't believe."

"Sean, I think I figured it out. You should know the details by now."

Sean arrived about five minutes later, having run along the way. He turned on the water in the kitchen sink to a noisy full force. "Rory and Edna uncovered the conspiracy, coordinated with Captain Donnolly, and Bishop Manning, all of whom discovered the same. They didn't cover their tracks so well. Incidentally, the Sun is registered in Dublin. We fight them on our own turf. I've turned over all the documents to our Law School and they are drawing up a suit even as we speak."

"Be careful, Sean. They can't be that stupid. They are being passively aggressive and leading us into something. Let's have our best legal minds think it through."

Sean checked all the lamp switches and the telephone receivers for bugs but didn't find any. "Security is coming with their electronic equipment" whispered Sean, while he ran the water in the kitchen sink.

After the apartment was thoroughly screened, Sean spoke freely. "The name of the group is The One True Church, based in London. Fr. O'Mahoney is actually a high ranking officer. They are an extreme right wing group, making the Jansenists look like delinquent altar boys. They are very well funded by conservative industrialists, movie stars, and zillions of pounds and Euros from ordinary people who are duped by their propaganda.

The publisher of the London Sun is a member and a heavy contributor.

"Sean, indulge me on this one. I have a feeling about it. Try to get a complete list of the membership and don't let anyone but the two of us and whoever gets it know about it. They can't be that stupid without having cards up their sleeves. They already know what we are going to do. Put something fictitious in our papers that has to be made public and let's see if we meet it in court. "

"You are suspicious. We'll get right on that, Katie. I also trust your judgment and I know where you are going with this."

The papers prepared by the Law Department were sent to the court the very next day by courier. Dr. John McIlroy, Dean of the Law School assigned a staff to himself as lead attorney for the plaintiff. The judge assigned to the case was the Honorable David Fitzpatrick. And he called for a hearing the following Monday afternoon.

Sean, Shane, and Katie had lunch together at the Lantern on Saturday. "What did Rory discover, Sean," asked Katie?

"The honorable judge is the Chief Legal Officer for the One True Church. We have a pile of legal papers that he signed and a list of his contributions over the last five years. The one that shocked me though is that one of our own law professors, a guy named David Lynch, is also a member of the Church and is obviously the one who has been feeding information to the opposition. Apparently the One True Church is not above political and judicial corruption. We have our friends at the *Times* to thank for that information. I have asked the Chief Judge, whose name is not on the membership list, not to act until the fabrication I inserted emerges in court. Arrest warrants have already been prepared and they will be in the hands of the guards before the day is done."

"No wonder they were so confident," said Shane.

"Where did that feeling come from, Katie?"

"I saw a black raven sitting on a tree branch outside my window and it came to me."

"I don't get the connection."

"I do and if I told you, you would not believe it."

The pickets did not show up on Sunday and Shane and Katie lived through their day as if they were totally unaware of the conspiracy.

On Monday, Katie left the third hour of her seminar in the hands of her assistants and she and Shane drove to Dublin for the two O'clock hearing.

The magistrate read the charges, including the fabricated charge that only Sean and Dr. McIlroy knew about.

Dr, McIlroy objected and asked permission to approach the bench.

"Your honor, I am asking you to recuse yourself from this case and I am asking Barrister David Lynch to withdraw from these proceedings."

"For what reason, pray tell," asked the amused judge?

"You are the Chief Legal Officer for the One True Church and your presence here is a conflict of interest. As for Mr. Lynch, he is a member of the One True Church and has been passing confidential information that he could have only have gotten in our offices.

The charges that have been read are a fiction. We have reams of evidence and, of course, you may review the copies after your arrest."

The Chief Justice took the bench and asked the barristers for the defense to come forward. "I will give you one hour to review the evidence presented against you. After that, we can go forward with the suit hearing or you can sit down with Professor McIlroy and negotiate a settlement. You are partners in this crime of judicial corruption. You can settle or defend. If you enter into the legal process you will lose the case. The evidence is stacked against you and is overwhelming. If you stay in the legal process, you could lose your licenses to practice Law as well."

They reviewed the evidence that was overwhelming in favor of the plaintiffs and asked for a settlement meeting.

"At the meeting, they asked what kind of settlement they wanted. Dr. McIlroy said that he thought a payment of five million pounds would be satisfactory plus two million pounds each for Shane and Katie for their personal embarrassment, professional risk, pain and suffering."

"We'll need time to discuss it." Dr. McIlroy said that they could have all the time they needed but with each delay, the pain and suffering increases.

A public apology will be required for Dr. O'Bierne and Mr. Ryan. We expect that within twenty-four hours'

A certified bank draft for nine million pounds should be delivered to my office within two weeks. Any delay will produce additional pain and suffering.

"Shane, I don't want any of that money."

"Yes, we do," said Shane. "I have some great ideas and we can help some of our friends. We'll talk about them in the car on the way home."

"Don't forget, we still have to take on the Sun," said, Dr. McIlroy who was overwhelmed at the cleverness of Drs. O'Bierne and Hurley .

As they walked down the courthouse steps, Fr. O'Mahoney was walking ahead of them and a raven swooped down and grabbed the toupee from the top of his head, chanting *caw, caw* as it flew away.

"Could that be the Morrigan?" .

Katie just shrugged her shoulders. "I think she'll be back for the Sun trial. She enjoys warfare and hasn't had a good battle in a couple of centuries."

Chapter 29 – Complete Victory

As they drove back to Galway, Shane outlined the beginnings of a plan.

“Katie, we have to accept the money. If we don’t there is no one else to give it to and they get off totally free. However, if we set up a foundation in both of our names we can accept the money and dedicate it our charities. I suggest that we expand our charities. We can set up a Chair of Ethical Journalism in Sean’s department and I’m certain that he’ll be happy with the O’Bierne – Ryan Television Studio. For the Law Department, we can establish a Chair for Political Ethics and Law. Dr. Nolan would love to create a department to facilitate his program of outreach to corporations and communities, and we’ll call it the O’Bierne – Ryan University and Community Development Center. Fr. McCarthy might love to have a Catholic Chapel for the Newman Center. Sea Rescue can have their helicopter, the finest and safest helicopter you can imagine. We can talk with Fr. O’Malley and Bishop Manning about building a center to treat dysfunctional families, especially physically and emotionally abused children. The money leftover will be invested and continue to grow within the foundation. We are likely to win the case with the Sun and there will be plenty of money to continue to fund these things for the rest of our lives. If any needs come up; in the meantime, we will have the money to help. What do you think?”

“I think it is brilliant,” said Katie. We can spend all their money on great projects that oppose everything they stand for. Can we expand the Theology Department and include a Chair for Women and Religion?”

“I love you, Katie. Yes we can.” We made nine million pounds this afternoon and gave almost all of it away in fifteen minutes. It will take time for all those programs to be up and running and properly invested we can generate another half million pounds before we give it all away.

If we receive any money from the Sun trial, it can remain in the foundation and just make more money. Let’s not say anything about our plans until after the Sun trial. We’ll just say that we are committed giving it all away.

“That goes for you too, Sean. You are much too quiet back there.”

“Of course, I’ll keep your secret. I just can’t believe your generosity. You could be among the richest people in Ireland.”

“Sean, there are few people in any country who are as wealthy as we are. Besides we are fortunate enough to be able to live our lives with financial security. Half the world is homeless and we have two homes. That money is dirty and if we can cleanse it before anyone is poisoned by it, all the better.”

“Good answer,” said Sean.

“We’ll create a Board of Directors from the Finance and Economics’ Departments, and from the Law School, among others. We’ll hire Rory and Edna to be Co-Executive Directors. Those kids get things done.”

We have a couple of weeks before we have to do anything but at least we can plan.

They got back to Galway too late to do anything so they went out for pizza for supper. Afterwards, Sean went home and Katie and Shane went back to her apartment. Exhausted from the stress and excitement of the day, both instantly fell into a deep sleep. What they did not know was that news of the settlement was on TV news and would be in every newspaper in Ireland the next day.

Katie was at her amphitheatre the next morning by half eight reviewing the notes for her lecture. She was very grateful that she took time from the intercession to update her notes. Part of her class today was on the legend of the Morrigan and she was prepared to cover a couple of Morrigan stories in her lecture. During her lecture, there was a disturbance by one of the screened but open windows. Katie paid no heed except to look up when she heard the noise. Sitting on the window sill was a beautiful black raven. When Katie looked up, she flapped her wings, cawed a few times, and majestically flew off. In her mind, she thanked the Morrigan, but it did not go unnoticed by her students.

During the discussion phase of the morning, one of the students asked about the reality of the legends. The two hundred students moved to the edge of their seats to hear her answer.

Katie asked the students to write her answer down in their notes.

“All mythology is built upon truth. The ancients were not the scientific historians that we are, but they did either write down or store in their memories their impressions of things and they created stories to explain the mysterious. The unexplainable in their lives was communicated mostly orally by these stories. Do we actually know what was unexplainable? We do not, but we have marvelous stories and legends. We have an example in Judeo-Christian theology. God has entered into our history in a way that we call the History of Salvation. Several cultures shared this history and it is explained in the history, traditions, and stories of those cultures. Scholars who study the Bible have created disciplines called literary criticism, historical criticism and form criticism and through these studies get a better understanding of God’s intervention in human life. In this class you are studying The Literature of Ancient Irish Mythology and Legend. We are doing something analogous to the Biblical scholar to better understand our culture. The first step is to appreciate the stories. The stories are passed down through an oral tradition and so they change in the passing. Let me demonstrate.”

She asked the students to close their notebooks. She called on a young lady to repeat to the best of her ability what she just told them. The student did well. A second student varied a little in repeating Katie’s story. A third student varied even more. She went through five students and each one told her story slightly different from her presentation.

“Now do you understand what happened? I answered a question and ten minutes later there are five variations on my answer. If that answer was passed down orally for two or three thousand years or so, how expansive the stories become the further away we get from the episode that caused the story to be told in the first place. When they were finally written down you have to factor in the fertile imaginations of perhaps several authors and brilliant story tellers and the cultural influences that shape them. The bottom line is that among us Irish, superstition is still part of our nature.”

“That is a good segway. You can take your break now and move on to your breakout rooms.”

She picked up her lecture notes and as she bent down to pick up her carrying bag a couple of students started clapping and within seconds the entire amphitheatre was on their feet clapping. The black raven was back on her window sill flapping her wings.

Katie went back to her office and called her friend, Maeve. “Were you at my classroom this morning?”

“You know I don’t do anything intellectual. What is going on?”

“Well the case appeared to be going well, too well. I told Sean and our barristers that I had a bad feeling that we were being sucked into something. I walked over to the window and a black raven was sitting on a tree outside my apartment. All of a sudden I knew what was happening and made some suggestion that won the case. The judge was the Chief Legal Officer for the One True Church and one of our own faculty, on our team, was a member of the church and was handing on information about our strategies. Then as we were leaving the courthouse, a black raven swooped down and plucked the toupee off of the head of that awful Fr. O’Mahoney. And then this morning, I was discussing the myth of the Morrigan in my class and on the amphitheatre windowsill a raven was sitting and I thought she was waving to me. At the end of the class, everyone applauded and on the windowsill the raven was flapping her wings as if she was clapping as well.”

“That is quite a story, Katie. I don’t know how to respond. You must have been saying good things about the Morrigan in your class.”

“How long does it take to fly from the campus to downtown Galway?”

“It wasn’t me Katie. You must have been saying kind things about the Morrigan. “

“A student asked me if I thought the old legends were true. I answered that there is an element of truth in all myth.”

“She must have loved you for that.”

“This is all very strange. You know I love you in spite of your *witchiness*.”

“Maybe that is why she is so protective of you.”

Katie smiled and said that she would see her for the next fitting.

When she rang off, Katie thought it strange that Maeve never asked her about what she was going to do with all the money. Hmmm.

After Katie left for her class, Shane called Dr. McIlroy and asked if he could stop by his office. McIlroy invited him to come right over and Shane appeared at his doorstep.

When they sat down together, McIlroy said that he had received a call from the barrister for the Sun, suggesting the possibility of an out-of-court settlement. Shane was somewhat surprised until Dr. McIlroy said that is what he would do if he was in their shoes. The legal costs for what would have to be a futile defense would be astronomical.

Shane told him the story of what he and Katie had decided to do with the money and wanted help with setting up a foundation. He did not mention their gift of a Chair for the Law School for fear that would create a conflict of interest. McIlroy asked if one of the professors could do that with the help of students. It would give them “real world” experience. That was fine with Shane as long as McIlroy supervised the work and signed off on it. “We are talking about using a lot of money to do a lot of good. We want to make certain that everything is done right.” McIlroy assured him that a plan would be ready by the end of the summer. Shane thought that it would be best to wait until the check from the One True Church cleared before making any announcements. Mc Ilroy concurred.

Before he left, McIlroy asked him why.

“Katie and I don’t need the money. We both have good salaries with reasonable assurance that we will for the rest of our lives. Katie is a very wise woman and she knows that having a lot of money that you did nothing to earn can actually ruin lives. I support that with her. We both grew up poor and earned our way to financial security by working hard for it. We will continue to work hard. It would be nice to use their dirty money to support charities that are diametrically opposed to everything they stand for.”

McIlroy shook his hand with tears in his eyes. He also said that he would drive for an even greater settlement now that he knows the money won’t be wasted.

The week went by quickly. They used their meeting with Fr. O’Malley to discuss their plans for the money. Shane mentioned that the Sun made overtures for an out of court settlement and that their barristers from the Law Department were in negotiations with them. O’Malley was overwhelmed at their generosity. They asked that nothing be mentioned to Bishop Manning until they were ready to make an announcement. O’Malley lobbied that they keep some of the money in an account for themselves.

Suppose that you need it for some emergency, medical reasons, a gift that you want to make to help anyone else. He pointed out that foundations have strict rules and it is not easy to get money out if you need it, even if you own the foundation. Katie saw the wisdom of it but was still reluctant. However, Shane said that they would discuss it with Dr. McIlroy.

Fr. O'Malley also mentioned that the priests at the Leveegee parish were all transferred to administration assignments by the Archbishop and he personally selected two excellent priests, Fr. O'Malley's classmates, to replace them. Fr. O'Mahoney was given the option to apply for laicization or go to a monastery in Scotland for repentance.

On Wednesday afternoon, they finally went to the jeweler for a real diamond engagement ring. Katie insisted that the fake one meant more to her and that she would like to keep it. She would wear them interchangeably as the spirit moved her.

They selected the Amalfi Coast for a honeymoon. They selected a style of wedding invitation that would be printed in the University print shop and expanded their plans for a reception. When they returned from their honeymoon, they would host an open house for all their Rosseville friends at the Lantern, from the end of Mass that Sunday through the afternoon. On Friday they would go to the retirement dinner to hear the house band of the Faculty Lounge. Katie's classes went well and the black raven was not seen again during that week.

Katie returned all of her congratulatory telephone calls and she and Shane received up to three bags of mail each day for the rest of the week. The news that they were giving all their money away was in all the newspapers of Ireland but no details were given. When asked about it by reporters who called her, Katie just said that they hadn't been paid anything yet and would not make any firm commitments until the money was in hand.

Katie's mom felt a lot better after she and Shane won the case from The One True Church. Katie was helping her write wedding invitations using the elegant cursive handwriting that she learned in primary school.

Dr. McIlroy reported that negotiations with the barristers for The Sun were going well. They were being resistant to the amount that McIlroy was asking, but in the last analysis, they had no bargaining power. McIlroy just said that they were doing their job and he would let it play out. Shane also insisted on a full front page apology considering that the slander against them was read by several million people and reported in all the newspapers in Ireland and England. Katie was eloquent about the sense of shame she felt about being classed as a slut to about eight million people. McIlroy assured Shane that these were factors that were presented in the settlement proposal. The alternative is a court case that would cost The Sun considerably more.

On Friday evening Katie and Shane listened to the band at the retirement dinner, and danced the evening away totally relaxed from the stress and turmoil of the past few weeks. They loved the band and contracted them for their wedding reception. Katie told

them that she would like a lot of Irish dance music and sung ballads but they should also play U2, Bonjovi, and Springsteen. She wasn't crazy about American Country Western, but if folks requested it, by all means play it.

This is just a word to say thanks to the readers of Love's Promises. Almost every month I hear from folks who tell me they love the characters and the story. Believe me, I loved creating them. Your comments can be addressed to me at rdaumack@aol.com.

Also, I extend my deep gratitude to IACI, editor, Carol Buck, and the Board of IACI for publishing this story. I am working on another Katie O'Bierne story with a third in the planning stage. I also write a weekly blog that now reaches about 3000 people each week, The Sermon I Wish I Heard Today. If anyone would like to receive that, just send me your address. It is my little contribution to evangelization during this Year of Faith.