

*We have all been where Peadar and Angela are in this chapter, too shy, fearful of rejection, filled with love but terrified of misreading the affections of the beloved. They spend restless hours before sleep until they talk themselves into the courage to say, "I love you." Enjoy their reflections and match them with your own.*

## **Chapter 16 - More about Angela and Peadar, Reflections on Romance**

Katie went into her room and called Shane as she promised. She told Shane about the reviews that her mother had seen and that they were mostly positive. She didn't think that Sean would be so excited if he didn't have something positive to talk about. She would call him first thing in the morning.

"I've seen a few of them on television," said Shane. "They are impressive, but you know, now that it is over, I have no interest in it anymore. Everything about it is anticlimactic."

"I feel the same way," replied Katie. "I know that Sean was very excited when he called yesterday and I hope he wasn't offended when I put him off. All I want to think about is a lovely winter wedding and the rest of our lives."

"Oh Shane, do you mind if my mother is my Maiden of Honor?"

"Not at all, I was thinking about having two best men. The Lantern will just have to take care of herself that weekend."

"Where would you like to live?"

"Well for the last five years I've had the opportunity to be able to walk to work."

"And I have as well. But for quality living, I can't think of anyplace better than Rosseville. We have so many friends here and that makes it very comfortable. We have the sea nearby. One of the reasons my friends and I started coming over here from the University was that it was a nice comfortable place, with a cute guy that I knew from college who owned a pub."

"Ah, you can find the likes of that anyplace."

"Sure enough, Shane, sure enough; I like Clifden over in Connemara. It has mountains, the sea, a lake, and woods. It is also a close enough ride to both the University and to Rosseville."

“That is a good choice. I like Rosseville as my first option. Why don’t I start asking around to see what is available? I would love to build a house but that would take at least a year, and even more. Did you ever observe Irish builders working on a house?”

“If you wanted to do that, we could temporarily live either at my apartment at the University or at your cottage. We won’t need a lot of space until our ten children arrive.”

“Well that sounds like a plan. I’ll ask around Rosseville and see what is available.”

“Shane, all this excitement about choosing where to live has made me very sleepy. I have to ring off. I love you. We’ll talk tomorrow.

Before going to bed, Katie pulled a 9 x 12 manila envelope from her desk drawer and a piece of her personal stationary. She addressed it to Paul Hewson, Bono’s given name, at the private contact address he had given to her. She handwrote a brief note:

*Dear Bono,*

*The reviews are in for the Gay Byrne Late Late Show and they indicate that we all did a good job. It is something I am glad is behind us.*

*I wanted to thank you for dedicating your song to my mother. Your thoughtfulness deeply touched her and the rest of us.*

*I continue to be impressed that that your music is something of a ministry. U2 is an icon for culture and spirituality and your music will leave a lasting impression in our world.*

*Enclosed is the bibliography that I promised you of the mythology and ancient literature in Ireland. This is possibly the most complete bibliography of this kind in Ireland and the culmination of almost two years work. Having visited this world in some depth, I can assure you of the ancient music that is there and I will look forward to your discoveries and the celebration of our ancient heritage. If I can help in any way, feel free to call on me. I can translate ancient Gaelic.*

*On a personal note, Shane and I have set a wedding date for December 28<sup>th</sup>. It is cause for great celebration and we look forward to enjoying your music together for many years to come.*

*Best regards to the other guys.*

*Katie O’Bierne*

She sealed and stamped the envelope and put it in her carry all for mailing in the morning.

Meanwhile, Angela was lying in her bed, wide awake, her mind going in different directions all at once. She was not startled by Katie announcing her wedding day. She knew it was coming. She was genuinely happy for Katie. But she was faced with making decisions about her own future.

One major issue was her relationship with Peadar McDermott. Yes, she had to admit that she was hopelessly in love with him. Neither one had yet declared love for the other. She felt certain that he loved her but she was very concerned about their respective status. He was a distinguished scholar and professor, known in his circles the world over. She was a single widow who had not even gone to college. She was very intelligent and well read and she wished she could duplicate Katie's accomplishments. She was impressed with Peadar's accomplishments and his status in the university world. He was well travelled and had lived in London and Boston. She felt very unsophisticated coming from a midlands town near the border that only came to life two days a week, mostly for the benefit of young people and farmers. What could she contribute to Peadar's life? What did he want from her?

She loved the romance in their relationship. She had long since put aside any thoughts of being a sexual person but Peadar certainly awakened those long dormant feelings. Her marriage to Colum O'Bierne had been arranged by her own parents, something relatively common because of the poverty of the era. Her parent's meant well, she knew. They wanted her to be secure. Colum was considerably older when they married and, thank God, he was a good man. Her pregnancy and the birth of Katie was something of a surprise that filled them with joy. Being a bachelor all of his life Colum was better at breeding sheep than children. He was an indifferent father not knowing what to do with and around a child, especially a female toddler. Katie was just three when her father had a heart attack in the fields and died instantly. Angela remembered selling the fields and the sheep. Some of those fields are now part of the town of Leveegee. As the town expanded with the peace efforts with the North and became a marketplace, the O'Bierne cottage was eventually absorbed into the town. Angela was now financially secure with her husband's legacy, the sale of the fields, and her widow's pension. There was no hint of romance in her life after Colum's death. She had no property any longer and no dowry. She settled into the life of the town, made a lot of good friends, was very active in her parish, and had a very independent, free spirited, brilliant, and athletic daughter, who was also blessed with common sense. When Katie left for college, even though it was only an hour's drive away, she was alone again but had a rich and fulfilling life in her community, until her house was invaded by drug driven vandals.

The romance with Peadar was a startling surprise. She never had much of a romance with Katie's dad. In fact, Peadar was the only love of her life. She was more like Colum's housekeeper. Peadar was attentive, loving, intent on pleasing her, anxious to share the emotional feelings he had been hoarding since the death of his wife. She often thought that they were like a pair of lovesick teenagers and enjoyed the feelings that she never had before. Could it be that all he wanted was a dinner companion? "Now that I have a taste of the romance," she thought, "I want more." Another factor is that Peadar is terribly shy and seems insecure in their relationship.

That is the answer, as plain as the nose on my face. I have to help him get past these insecurities. I hate confrontations but I have to face this head on. If I wait for Peadar, it may never happen. They are both at an age when a long postponement of anything is not in order.

With the beginning of a plan forming in her mind, Angela rolled over, hugged her pillow and slipped into a deep and dreamless sleep.

In Salt Hill, in an older but well kept Tudor manor house, much too big for only one person, Peadar McDermott was also trying to fall asleep but the demons of doubt were keeping him awake.

I love Angela; I really do. I want to spend the rest of my life with her. She is the object of my passion, the stimulation of my intellect, the peace of my restless soul. How can I tell her all of this without scaring her half to death? I want her to marry me and I am so afraid to ask her. For over twenty years I have had a gaping hole in my life. I haven't met anyone who can fill it like she does.

I understand that she might feel awkward because of my academic status. It didn't bother me or Theresa when she was living. She was not an academic. At Sean's party Angela was a brilliant conversationalist with people that she just met. She fits into any circumstance in which she finds herself.

Katie's is getting married. I am sure that Angela is very happy for her. If I ask her to marry me will Katie's pending nuptials get in the way of her decision?

I haven't told Angela that I love her. Why haven't I? What am I afraid of? Why does courtship have to be so hard? Young people don't seem to have a problem with it. They seem to get married, live together, or just have sex without even thinking about it. If it doesn't work out, they just move on.

Why am I even thinking like this? It is not about Angela. My doubt is about me. I am afraid of losing. I am terrified of rejection. You old fuddy duddy, you are supposed to be a leader. You are the University's champion. Whatever you wanted or needed you went out and got it. Don't you trust the quality of the relationship you have built with Angela? I am certain that Angela loves me. Of course she loves me. She opens herself to me. She leads me. She is the flame that ignites the passions of my being. Get yourself together, man. She is going to be my partner for the rest of my life. Yes, that is what I want. Now how do I get it? Tomorrow I will ask her to dinner at Ashford Castle. They have a beautiful lighted garden and the place is all dressed up for the summer tourist trade. I will get a loaner ring like Shane did. During our walk, I will simply say, "Angela, I have something to tell you. I love you very much. I love you so much that I really don't want to face the rest of my life without you. Then I'll get down on one knee and ask her to marry me. Yes, that is the plan. I will call her tomorrow and make the arrangements.

Peadar lay back on his pillow with his hands on behind head. He felt very good about his plan and said a prayer of thanks for the gift of self-talk. He breathed deeply and fell into the deep sleep of the truly contented.

The first thing next morning Katie called Sean Hurley from home. “Sean, I am going to my office in a few minutes. Can I stop by yours on the way?”

“Of course you can, Katie. I have a nice package of material to show you.”

“Great, I look forward to seeing it.”

Katie walked to the post and mailed the package to Bono and within ten minutes was at Sean’s office.

Sean greeted her with a hug. Katie demurely apologized for not coming over the day before. “Sean, I was up to my eyeballs grading papers and exams. I didn’t finish up until after nine o’clock last night. I know how important this is to you and I am ashamed of myself for being so selfish.”

“Not at all, Katie; nobody knows better than me that immediately after a major communications event, life continues to go on. As great a triumph this was for Gay Byrne, he was taping one of this week’s shows on Monday when we were partying.”

Sean showed Katie the reviews.

“I’m going to have copies bound for each of us and for Gay and Dr. Nolan.”

Katie went through them carefully but quickly and then burst out laughing. “Shane is too handsome to be straight; I’m a *goodie two shoes*? My mother and secondary teachers will have fun with that one.”

“We always have fun with the negatives, Katie. We usually keep them for humility. As you can see, the reviews are not only good, they are outstanding. I wouldn’t be surprised if this show is nominated for an Irish Film and Television Award and almost certainly for a People’s Choice Award. You and Shane may have another chance to wear a gown and tuxedo.”

“Oh Sean, we have one of those chances coming up on December 28<sup>th</sup>. That will be our wedding day. Circle your calendar.”

“Katie, I can’t tell you how happy I am for both of you. I will consider it an honor to see you get married.”

“Thank you, Sean. I can’t tell you enough how grateful we are that you guided us through this event. You took a lot pressure off of both of us.”

“Well, if my judgment is right, Katie, we will have a lot of opportunity to work together. I expect that we will have to screen interviews for various magazines.

“You can be sure that I won’t pose for Playboy,” laughed Katie.

“You can be sure they will ask. You looked great on TV, and you always look great anyway.”

“We’ll screen the magazines and newspapers. You will have a chance to confirm or reject our suggestions. It would be nice if one of the academic journals that you wrote for contacted us for as profile.”

“Well thank you kind sir. I am in my 30s and I have very little concern for my body image.”

Katie gave Sean another hug and then made her way to her own office.

She arrived at the same time as the postman. “Good morning, Dr. O’Bierne,” said Bill McBride. “I’m used to bringing you a few letters, notices, and an occasional bill. I think these bags represent fan mail. I saw the show and you were wonderful. Can I have your autograph to give to my mother?”

Katie laughed and directed Bill to put the bags in the corner closest to her desk. She took one of her announcement cards out of her desk drawer and signed it over the face for Bill’s mom.”

“Thank you,” said Bill. “She is a great fan.”

“Please thank her for me,” said Katie.

Katie immediately called Sean and asked him about what she should be doing.

Sean asked her to get a couple of student interns from the administrative office to go through them. Make a list of addresses and we’ll send them a form letter of thanks.

Meanwhile, Shane made his first appearance in the Lantern since the previous Friday. He expected and received a lot of ragging from his partners. They told him that there were people lined up from the door up to the street above on Monday night. Fortunately it was a mild evening and we were able to set up a TV outside. The wait staff was crazy but, God bless them, they kept up with the demand and each one finished the night with over two hundred pounds in tips. “It was the busiest night in our five year history,” said Chris. “It continued on Tuesday and Wednesday, as well. Every tourist in Ireland wanted to see where you hang out.”

Shane laughed and told him that he wanted to speak with them. It was an ominous tone of voice. Liam thought that he was going off to be a TV star.

When he had them over by the bar, he leaned into them speaking softly. “Katie and I are getting married on December 28th and I want both of you to be my groomsmen.”

They stared at him in silence for a few seconds and then jumped on him with hugs and handshakes.

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As always, I appreciate your comments and criticism. They help me to be a better story teller.