

Dear Reader: once again, thank you for reading this story. It takes a lot of courage to declare love for another person. We all fear rejection. We have to make an act of faith in the other person. In the last chapter, both Peadar and Angela struggled with their private thoughts on their relationship. Their courage and act of faith in each other is well rewarded.

Chapter 17 - Engagements Galore

Peadar phoned Angela at Katie's apartment in the latter part of the morning. He was very chatty and made an unusual amount of small talk about the viewing party and the reviews for Katie and Shane's appearance on the Gay Byrne show. Angela responded in kind and the conversation was very pleasant. When it started to wind down, Peadar asked Angela if he could take her out to dinner at Ashford Castle on Friday evening. Angela had heard of Ashford Castle but knew very little about it. Peadar talked about it as a high ranking hotel and restaurant. It was close by near the Galway-Mayo border. It was a 12th century building and he would enjoy very much to show her around.

Angela gracefully and gratefully accepted the invitation.

"Friday then," said Peadar. I will pick you up at half six."

Both rang off and started to plot their respective strategies.

Shane was working tonight and when Katie came home, she suggested to her mom that they go to the Lantern for dinner. Angela asked if they could go to Galway so she could look for a dress for her date at Ashford Castle, don't you know. Katie was impressed. The only time she had been to Ashford Castle was for a wedding reception. Katie knew just where to go. One of her friends owned a dress shop in Galway City and she knew they would find the perfect dress there.

They pulled up in front of Maeve's Dress Barn. When they walked in the store, her friend screamed, "Lord I am not worthy. A celebrity is in my store."

Katie just smiled and said, "Yeah, I get that a lot."

They hugged and danced around the room. They had not seen each other in months. Katie introduced her mom.

"I'm very pleased to meet you Mrs. O'Bierne." Katie explained that her mom was invited to an event at Ashford and she wanted to look nice for it. Maeve evaluated Angela who had a slim, athletic build, just like her daughter. She would be easy to fit.

While they were going through the selection process, Maeve asked, "So what is new that I haven't read about in the papers or seen on television?"

Oh nothing much, said Katie. She put her finger to her chin as if she was thinking and said, “Oh yes, I getting married in December, to the cute guy who owns the pub in Rosseville.”

“I knew that. You said on television that you were engaged. But you set a date. You have been chasing that guy for years and you finally caught him. How did you do it?”

“I just let him think he was chasing me and I finally let him catch up.”

“We are going to have to have a lingerie shower.”

“Sure you have to say something like that to embarrass me in front of my mom.”

“I’m sure you know, Mrs. O’Bieme, that these academics would walk around in their flannel floor length night gowns when they are supposed to look their sexiest.”

“I look sexy even in a floor length flannel night gown,” said a laughing but blushing Katie.

“That is what I am looking for,” said Angela. “I’m looking for something sexy that isn’t supposed to look sexy.”

Katie’s chin almost dropped to the floor but Maeve said, “I think I have just what you are looking for.” She selected a pink dress with delicate red piping on the collar and on the tips of the sleeves, with a red belt. When she tried it on, it fit perfectly, falling to about an inch above her knees and Angela looked sensational. “I think this might be perfect,” said Angela.

They selected a pair of matching shoes, embraced Maeve, and continued on their way to Rosseville. “She looks like a fun friend,” said Angela.

“She is mom. We were all fun friends and then we had to grow up. She is still fun but in a different way now. I guess that I am too.”

They pulled into the car park at the Lantern and a startled Shane greeted them at the door.

“We are just full of surprises,” said Katie. “Mom wanted a sexy dress and we went to my friend Maeve’s shop. We got what she was looking for and since I can’t stop thinking about you, I thought we would pop in.”

The night was warm so they skipped the soup, ordering an open faced turkey sandwich for Angela and a chicken pot pie for Katie. As usual, it was the best pub food in all of Ireland.

Shane was able to join them for coffee. He told Katie about the crowds that had been to the Lantern as a result of the Byrne Show. "If things ever get slow, we'll have to go out and beat up on a bunch of bandits. It is good for business."

He told how he went to the hospital to visit the farmer who was injured in the accident. It was a pleasant visit. The man was going to be released tomorrow and he was grateful to have the opportunity to thank Shane in person.

"Oh by the way, I asked my partners to be my groomsmen. They won't have much to do and I just hope they don't fall over each other."

"Great, I will get to dance with two handsome groomsmen," said Angela.

Chris and Liam stopped over to join them for coffee. The conversation was light and humorous and dinner turned out to be a good time for all.

Several patrons, mostly townspeople stopped by the table to greet Katie. She introduced her mom to each one and there was light and sometimes raucous conversation that made the night even more pleasant.

It was still the daylight of the early Irish summer when they set out for the short trip home. Angela was quiet during the ride home thinking how lucky Katie was to have so many people in her life who admired her. She wasn't going to tell her of her plans with Peadar. Time enough for that on Saturday. It will either be a sad story or a very happy one.

Katie commented that she was so quiet. Angela said she was just thinking how lucky Katie was to have so many friends.

"Yes, I am lucky, and they are such nice people. I think we are going to live in Rosseville," she said. "In many respects, it is an ideal community. Something like Brigadoon, except that it is contemporary. And mom, wherever we live, you are welcome to live with us. There is no reason for you to worry about living arrangements. We'll have a house big enough for all of us. Fortunately we have good incomes and can afford all of this."

"I miss my friends in Leveegee," said Angela.

"Not to worry, mom. I promised Shane that I would show him all my haunts where I grew up. We were going to do that when we were interrupted by that gang. We'll go there together for a few days and reconnect with all of our old friends."

Friday evening could not come fast enough for Angela. Katie and Shane had their appointment with Fr. O'Malley and would probably stay over at Shane's cottage.

Friday did arrive and the sun parted the clouds to reveal a glorious day. With classes ended there were many faculty and administration meetings at the University. There were preparations for summer school to be made. Katie was teaching a seminar on Irish Mythology. Summer classes were three hours long for six weeks. Though Katie had taught the subject before, she wanted to update her research. She was also reading around the 1916 Rising. She wanted to give Dr. McDermott an update by the end of the summer about the influences that motivated the Pearse brothers.

Angela was preparing for her dinner date with Peadar and Katie said that she would help her with her makeup. In her fifties, Angela was a handsome woman with a slim, athletic build. She did not require much makeup but Katie thought that by making a fuss, she would help build her confidence. When Angela put on the new dress, she looked elegant. Katie made a few final touches, stepped back and said, "Mom, you look beautiful. Look out Peadar, here I come." Katie did not realize the prophesy in her attempt at a witty statement. This was but the first skirmish of a full frontal assault to bring the relationship with Peadar to a new level.

As usual, Peadar arrived fifteen minutes early. He immediately remarked on the beauty of Angela's appearance. When the pleasantries were concluded, he escorted Angela to his car for the trip to Ashford Castle.

They headed north, into Connemara, and then toward the Mayo border. It wasn't a long drive but the topography of the land changed dramatically. The mountains were tall and rocky and the foothills were grassy and steep. There was a rugged beauty to the land. Angela wondered how the sheep could graze on land that was so steep. Peadar explained that all the sheep in the area grazed together and that each family's sheep was distinguished by a spot of colored spray paint on the sheep's rump. All the greens belonged to one family, the reds to another, and so forth. They passed by marble mines, lakes, streams, and woods, tied together with a beauty that Angela had not seen in Ireland, except for their trip to Lahinch.

They went around a curve coming down a mountain road and she saw it. Rising out of the evening mists, a large sprawling castle that reminded her of her childhood vision of Camelot. There were lawns and gardens, a golf course, and all the amenities one could possibly ask of a five star hotel. Peadar explained that the original castle dated back to the twelve hundreds and over the years there was much building of new sections and renovations of old sections, each piece architecturally designed to fit into the whole vision. It was once the estate of the Guinness family and the original castle was designed and built by the deBorgos family. Though the name is not one you hear in Ireland today, it is not quite lost. De Borgos is translated as Burke.

They drove around a huge circular field with a magnificent fountain in the center, and pulled up to the entrance where the valet greeted Peadar by name. The lobby was unlike anything that Angela had ever seen, happily blending the ancient and the modern. There were hanging banners thirty feet high with various crests embroidered on them, murals, and paintings that would require an entire day to closely examine. There was the familiar

warmth of wood paneling and wooden beams that may have been part of the original structure. There was a lot of furniture strategically located at specific places in the room. Elegant tables held brass lamps and there were couches and chairs of heavy wood and leather. A uniformed page greeted them and guided them to the dining room.

“Peadar, this is breathtaking. I feel so small in this room.”

“Angela, you couldn’t possibly be small. You are so stunning tonight, even the walls salute you.”

She thanked him through her smiling blush.

They were escorted to a table next to a window where the sun was just beginning to set into the sea. The puffy fair weather clouds were all tinged with red though the sun was still high enough to promise daylight for another hour.

A pianist and harpist provided dinner music, mostly from the classics. Peadar and Angela both ordered a red wine for their pre dinner cocktail. For dinner, Peadar recommended chateaubriand for two and Angela assented. Dinner conversation was lively talking about the various people Angela met at the viewing party the previous Monday. Peadar genuinely liked most of his colleagues at the University and there was no hint of anything negative in the conversation. Peadar did not know that Katie and Shane had set a wedding date but he was very pleased for them. He asked how Katie and Shane had met and Angela told him the story, believing accurately that Katie would not mind.

“That is quite a story,” said Peadar. He knew Katie as her doctoral mentor and they had grown quite close. He never knew that she was dealing with the life distractions that most normal persons have on a daily basis.

They talked about the Byrne show and how easily Katie and Shane performed. Peadar couldn’t believe that there was no hint of nervousness from either of them. Angela explained that Sean Hurley had a lot to do with that by preparing them so well. Angela mentioned that Katie received two bags of fan mail on Wednesday, and a bag each on Thursday and today. She has student assistants sorting through the mail to pick out bills and any important academic or personal mail.

As Peadar predicted, the chateaubriand was outstanding, although there was too much for Angela. They had another glass of wine with dinner and enjoyed the sight of the sun setting into the sea. Both rejected dessert and leisurely sipped their coffee.

Peadar suggested an after dinner walk while there was still light. They would stroll toward the sea near the golf course. As they walked along in the cool of the descending night, Peadar said, “Angela, there is something I want to discuss with you.” After a significant pause, he said, “I am very much in love with you.”

They stopped walking and Angela said to him, "Peadar, I love you very much as well. I had hoped we could talk about this tonight." She threw her arms around his neck and kissed him. Peadar took her left hand, knelt on the ground on one knee. "Angela," he said, looking her directly in the eyes, "I want to share the rest of my life with you. *Will you marry me?*"

Angela let the seconds tick by to savor the moment. She looked him directly in the eye and said, "Thank you Peadar, *Yes, I will marry you.*"

Peadar slipped the ring on her finger, stood up and kissed her again. He laughed and kissed her again. Peadar felt like dancing. His feet were as light as feathers. He had met the enemy of doubt and conquered it. His life was born again. His long dormant spirit had awakened. He had another opportunity to love and he was elated with the experience

"Oh, Peadar, if you hadn't proposed to me tonight, I would have proposed to you. I love you so much. I am in love for the first time in my life and I am so glad that I am in love with you. This is not something I ever expected. I was enamored of you from the very first day that I met you and we had tea and scones in Katie's kitchen. I was like a schoolgirl with a crush and since my close friends are all in Leveegee, I had no one to discuss this with. I would not talk to Katie. How can you ask romantic advice from your daughter? I was so happy with the way that I felt I thought, if this is all there is, it is enough. Our evening at Lahinch was so incredibly beautiful; I knew that feeling good wasn't enough. I needed more. I was like butter and I melted into you."

"It dawned on me last night that I had never invited you to my home in Salt Hill. I would like you, Katie and Shane to join me for a celebration dinner on Sunday evening."

"Oh, I took a lesson from Shane. That is a fake ring for this occasion. We'll go the jewelers next week and pick out the one you want to wear."

The rest of the night was a blur. They kissed on the path, they kissed by the fountain, they kissed on the bench; they kissed in the garden; they kissed on the strand; they kissed under the trees; they kissed in the car. It was an evening to be cherished by both of them for many years to come. They walked arm and arm around the big circular field just talking about their feelings releasing the mystery of their respective lives in a commitment of trust to each other.

They left the hotel but not their version of Paradise. They brought it with them into the car and shared it during the ride home.

Going into the apartment by herself was anticlimactic. Katie was going to stay over at Shane's and they were probably in the Lantern. She found Katie's notebook and called the Lantern. She was there and came to the telephone. When Katie heard Angela's voice she immediately thought something was wrong.

“No, no,” said Angela. Everything is fine, in fact, very fine. Peadar asked me to marry him and I said that I would.”

“Mooooom shrieked, Katie.” Angela could tell she was dancing around the telephone station. “Shane, Shane, come quickly.”

Shane came running over thinking that something was wrong.

“Mom and Peadar are engaged.”

“Mom, I am so happy for you. We’ll be right over and we’ll bring champagne. This is wonderful news. I’ll bet that witch Maeve enchanted that dress with a love spell.”

To be continued

LOVE'S SURPRISES
Chapter 18 – Treasures
By Ray Aumack

Katie and Shane arrived at her apartment about twenty minutes later loaded down with chilled champagne and finger foods.

Angela, Shane, and Katie had a three way hug and Katie and Angela did a jump up dance around the room.

“Tell me everything that happened, said Katie. I want to hear all the details.”

“I’ll tell you the things you need to know, said Angela. Some things are just private and I think I’ll keep them to myself. You just fill in the blanks with your imagination. You will have more fun that way.”

Uh, huh, thought Katie. When did my mother become so smart and vivacious?

Shane popped the cork on the bottle of champagne, and poured three glasses. He put the finger foods out on the tea table and listened intensely as Angela told her story.

“Well to begin with, I don’t think you know how I felt about Peadar. You will remember that I met him right here when he came over to work with you, Katie. We had tea and scones in the kitchen. I had blackened eyes and a body full of bruises. I was unsteady on my feet and I was out of sorts with the pain killing medication. I thought he was quite attractive and nice. Then, if you remember, he invited me out for tea later in the week. From that point on, we went out together two or three times a week. He was very polite and attentive to me. I had such serious doubts. I didn’t want to think about a future with him. I was content to be a friend. I thought he liked me, but I never really dated so what did I know? I knew that I liked him though. We are so different. He is a distinguished professor and I did not complete secondary. He is wealthy. I live on a widow’s pension. He is a sophisticated man of the world. This is the first time I have lived anyplace but Leveegee. He had a very happy marriage with his late wife. I hardly knew my husband.”

“One night while you were with Fr. O’Malley he called at the last minute and invited me to dinner at Lahinch. It was an absolutely beautiful evening. We had to drive across the top of Galway Bay and down the mountainside toward Doolan. I had never seen the Burren and Peadar told me all about it. The Atlantic Ocean was on our right hand side. We left early so we could watch the sun set into the ocean during dinner. Everybody at Lahinch knew Peadar. He is a member of the club but they treated us as if he were the king of the club. Dinner was outstanding. He was very easy to speak with. The sun setting into the sea was beautiful. We only had two drinks of wine during the evening,

but I felt intoxicated. After dinner, we slowly walked up the first fairway which was lighted. When we reached the green, we walked over to some benches where golfers can wait their turn for the next fairway. The bench was shadowed by overhead trees and we had a lovely romantic moment.”

“What do you mean by romantic moment,” asked Katie?

“That will remain private,” said Angela. “You can use your licentious imagination, though.”

Shane and Katie both laughed out loud.

We had several more dinner dates in the Faculty Dining Room, for the theatre, and in various lovely restaurants around Galway City. He introduced me to many of his friends. Then we had our Sundays at Fitzgerald’s. We were spending a lot of time together and I was wondering where all of this was going. We obviously liked each other but I could not help but wonder if all he was looking for was a dinner companion. Ordinarily, that would have been fine but after our night at Lahinch, I was like the teen age school girl I never was. For the first time in my life, I was in love, and I liked it and I wanted more. When he invited me to Ashford Castle, I resolved to see where I was in his life. We bought the enchanted dress, as you call it. I plotted a strategy and even practiced conversation scenarios. We went for a walk after dinner around the Castle grounds, which are quite lovely. When we got to a secluded area near the gardens, he said, ‘Angela, there is something I want to discuss with you.’ I thought that was ominous but apparently he had been practicing too. He told me that he was very much in love with me. I told him that I love him too. He hugged me and then knelt down on one knee and told me that he wanted to spend the rest of his life with me and asked if I would marry him. I was stunned. I don’t know how much time passed. It seemed like an eternity before I told him that I loved him too and yes, I would be proud to be his wife. He slipped the ring on my finger. We walked for another hour around the grounds.”

“What, you walked,” said Katie?

“You are little a minx, Katie, use your imagination. It turns out that as shy as I think I am, Peadar is more so. And Katie, you can fit into your imagination that during that walk we told each other all the secrets of our lives, feelings that I hardly knew existed in me.”

“What a lovely story! May the romantic spirit of that story be the guiding virtue of your lives for the rest of time,” toasted Shane.

They drank more champagne and finished the finger foods while talking together far into the early hours of the morning.

“Oh before I forget, Peadar has invited us all to his home in Salt Hill for dinner on Sunday, is that alright?”

Katie and Shane nodded to each other and Shane said, “Yes.”

Everyone was exhausted by the rigors of a busy day, topped off with champagne.

Angela retired to her room still wearing the enchanted dress.

Katie and Shane collapsed on the couch and promptly fell asleep in each other’s arms, a fitting end to a great day. Katie awakened during the night and thought about going to her room. Then she thought, “no,” and wrapped herself around Shane on the couch and fell fast asleep.

Saturday was a hard day after a short night’s sleep. Katie drove Shane back to Rosseville. It was his Saturday to work at the Lantern. She came back to the University and spent the rest of the day in the library. Katie had asked Angela to join her for dinner at the Lantern.

Angela spent the day speaking with Peadar on the telephone and confirmed their dinner for Sunday. They would meet at Mass and go to Fitzgerald’s, as usual. She also called some her closest friends in Leveegee to bring them up to date on her life since she came to live with Katie. She told them about her daughter, the professor, who is engaged, and shared some of the things that she never knew about Katie. Of course, they all had seen Katie and Shane on television. She spoke with them about the surprise of Peadar in her life and that they were going to be married. She told them that they were coming to Leveegee within the next couple of weeks and she would be sure to call them and let them know the timetable.

Early in the evening, as they were driving to Rosseville, Angela asked Katie about the work she was doing in the library. Katie described the two things she was doing, upgrading her notes for the summer course she was teaching and the other thing was to read around the 1916 Rebellion. She told Angela about researching the roots of the rebellion and her search for what motivated school teachers and poets to lead a very unpopular rebellion at the time.

When Katie mentioned that, flashes of memories lit up inside Angela’s head.

“Katie, I know where there might be some secret material that no one has ever seen before.”

“How would you know that, mom?”

“I never saw the papers but they are in a safebox under the attic floorboards of the house at Leveegee. Eamonn Ceannt was the Director of Communications for the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and a close personal friend of your grandfather. Your grandfather was the liaison between IRB headquarters in Dublin and all the cells of Ulster and the midlands counties. He was a night rider, a very dangerous occupation because there were informers afoot who would sell out the country and the lives of the republicans for a few shillings. All the information had something to do with planning the Rising.”

“Mom, I never knew this.”

“Your father was a very proud republican and he told me these stories about his father. It was before my time and I had no interest in it. I just remembered that they were there.”

“I wonder how many other people have papers like these hidden away. Well, our trip to Leveegee may generate of windfall of historical information.”

The weather was beautiful the next morning. Shane came over and the three of them walked to the University Chapel for Mass. Peadar was outside waiting for them and Katie ran up to hug him and wish him congratulations. Shane came up and shook his hand before giving him a man hug. Catching up to them was Angela. She and Peadar kissed and then walked hand in hand into the chapel. They greeted Fr. McCarthy and announced their engagement for the first time. McCarthy was elated for them and hugged Angela and shook Peadar’s hand. McCarthy asked if he could announce that during the Mass and Peadar said that he could.

After the Eucharist was distributed there was a place in the liturgy for announcements, usually directed at students. Most students were on holiday so no announcements were expected. Fr. McCarthy walked to the pulpit and said, “I am very pleased to announce the engagement of one of our most esteemed faculty members, Dr. Peadar McDermott to Angela O’Bierne who has contributed her considerable charm to our group since she moved in with Katie a few months ago. We wish them many years of happiness and bless their joy. Katie and Shane who have been part of this congregation for a long time have already announced their engagement before about three million people. Everyone laughed. We wish them many years of happiness; we bless their joy; and we thank them for their contribution to this community over the past several years and I am extremely grateful for their beneficence to the Newman Center. May God continue to bless their lives!”

Everyone stood and clapped for them.

At the end of Mass there were hugs and greetings at the door. Shane invited Fr. McCarthy to join them at Fitzgerald’s and he accepted, since most of the students were

gone. Also Shane explained that the good craic of Mass would continue into the afternoon at their weekly brunch.

The brunch at Fitzgerald's was extraordinarily joyful. Peadar was pleased that their engagement was so enthusiastically received by people he cared about. The crowd included many of his colleagues from the University.

After brunch, Angela went with Peadar to his home to help prepare dinner. Katie and Shane went back to her apartment to take a nap to prepare for dinner. They were ready at half five for the short drive to Salt Hill.

On the way, Katie told Shane about her research and the material her mom said was in the house at Leveegee. "We had planned to go there so I could show you where I grew up. I have to pick up a Baptism Certificate at the parish there. Mom wants to meet with some of her old friends. She hasn't seen them in months. We should check in with the guards to see how the case is going."

"I can do that as long as no one tries to kill me again," said Shane. They made plans for the following Saturday.

Peadar's house in Salt Hill was really a mansion. It was a large two story Tudor house with symmetrical wings on the right and left, one of which was Peadar's office. The entrance room had a cathedral ceiling laced with dark stained beams against the white plastered ceiling. Against the north wall of the house was a huge granite fireplace. The house was built on a rise to ensure a view of the bay. Attached to Peadar's office was a room dedicated as a library with books lining all four walls with the wooden book cases cleverly built around the windows. The book cases were extended into Peadar's office.

The office was furnished with mahogany furniture featuring a large executive style desk in the center of the room. There was a deep wine red leather couch and two comfortable lounging chairs with hassocks, accented by mahogany end tables with bronze lamps for reading. Peadar's desk was absolutely clean emphasizing his predilection for neatness.

A smaller fire place looked like it was well used. Large floor to ceiling windows ensured that the room was filled with natural light.

The dining room was baronial with a large table like the one they dined at prior to the viewing party at the University's Faculty Dining Room.

Original paintings lined the walls of the entrance hall, the living room and the dining room. Peadar relished describing each painting and discussing the life of the painter. Other paintings lined the wall of the staircase to the second floor on which there were five bedrooms.

He had taken Angela through the house earlier asking if she minded living there. Angela was stunned at the beauty and the order of the place. Peadar failed to mention that he had servants, a cook, a housekeeper, and a part-time butler who was on duty for the evening. The butler also doubled as a chauffeur when Peadar attended state affairs.

The house stayed as his late wife, Therese, had decorated it for a number of years after her death. When Peadar emerged from grieving he renovated the entire house, working with architects and decorators to evolve his own taste. Angela loved it. She had no preconceived notions about décor and the current state was fine with her. Angela was very easy to please and very low maintenance which was one of her endearing qualities to Peadar. Angela felt comfortable with the opulence and felt certain that she would find her own level with new friends and new activities. She did not know how she would work with the cook and the housekeeper, but she would find her way.

They had drinks and hors d'ouvres out on the patio. The sun was still high in the western sky and would not set for a few hours.

The butler announced, "Dinner is served."

Chapter 19 - Discoveries

Peadar's dinner was a big success. The food was great, roasted lamb marinated in Irish whiskey and a variety of chopped spices and stuffed with various vegetables, served with wild rice. It was absolutely delicious. Peadar said that he discovered the recipe in his research of ancient monasteries. The good monks left many treasures behind and this recipe was among them.

Dessert was a small celebratory wedding cake, fitting for the theme of the evening since most of the conversation was devoted to wedding plans. Peadar wanted to know if it was alright with Katie and Shane if he and Angela married in October. Both agreed and Katie asked Peadar if he would escort her down the aisle of the church since he would be her step father by then. Pradar agreed.

Peadar wanted to be married at the University Chapel since it was the only church he attended. Angela asked about attending daily Mass at the local parish church in Salt Hill. She felt that it would give her the opportunity to meet local people and become involved in the parish and the community. She and Peadar would still attend the Sunday Mass at the University and the regular brunch at Fitzgerald's.

Angela and Peadar seem to have worked out a lot of things very quickly, thought Katie. The house at Salt Hill would be the center of entertainment and celebration for many years to come. Angela would very much enjoy being the hostess.

Katie and Shane had not discussed any of the details of their wedding but the discussion was planned with Fr. O'Malley for one of their meetings this coming week. The way they saw it, they had prepared long and hard for their marriage. The details of the wedding would take care of themselves.

They talked about wedding breakfasts and receptions, invited guests. They discussed timetables for planning things, Shane's house hunting in Rosseville, and all the necessary but annoying things about planning for such a joyful event in their lives.

Katie wanted simplicity. She thought that you can have the most elegant of weddings at low cost with careful planning. She was also concerned about the possibility of their wedding becoming a media event. She would work that out with Sean.

She and Shane were still getting bag loads of fan mail and they were still facing the inevitable interviews from the print media and possibly from radio talk shows. They would honor them all as long as their favorite charities benefitted as well.

Shane drove Katie back to her apartment with plans to stay overnight. Katie had work for Monday but had no teaching assignments for the next two weeks.

Angela was going to stay over with Peadar. She needed at least another day to learn about the house.

Katie and Shane snuggled together holding on to each other for dear life, it seemed. They had precious little time to be close with each other and relished every moment they had together. They hugged and kissed, joked and laughed, professed love for each other, and talked about serious things that were going to be part of their lives.

“Shane, promise me that we will always have time together like this.”

“Let's pledge to each other that we will always make time for loving, no matter what,” said Shane.

“I pledge,” said Katie.

“Even with our ten children running around,” asked Shane?

“We'll build a safe room where we can put them so we can have time together.”

“Or we can give them the rest of the house and build a safe room for ourselves,” said Shane.

“Hmmm, you have the best ideas.”

“How are you doing with your bags of fan mail,” asked Katie?

“I haven't opened any of them yet,” said Shane.

“The student assistants are having fun reading mine. Would you like me to enclose yours in the bundle?”

“That would be great,” said Shane. “That way they would get a response and it would save me a lot of grief.”

“Oh boy,” said Katie. “It must be tough to be so popular.”

“Only you would know, my dear.”

They laughed, kissed, and clung tightly to each other. Finally fatigue won the night and they fell asleep in each other's arms.

Shane awakened the next morning, a little later than usual, to the smells of percolating coffee and cooking bacon. He walked into the kitchen, put his arms around Katie, kissed her on the ear and breathed into it.

“Hmmm, I'll give you a half hour to stop that,” she said.

He laughed and gave her a proper kiss to greet the new day.

During breakfast Katie said, “Shane, I can’t tell you how great it has been working with Father O’Malley. It was the best idea you ever had, one of the many yet to come, I’m sure. We are communicating so much better and I am so happy, I can’t believe how happy I feel.”

“I know, Katie. I feel the same way. I feel confident and free to love you as you deserve to be loved. I am no longer afraid to speak my mind and share with you my inmost thoughts. I had hoped that we would get to this place but feared that it would never happen. Well, it has happened and heaven must be a little like this.”

When they finished breakfast, Shane ran into the shower. He was due at the Lantern to analyze inventory and order food and drink for the rest of the week.

He slipped into the Bermuda shorts and golf shirt that he had packed in his overnight bag and prepared to leave.

They were trapped at the door exchanging goodbye kisses.

“Think how great it will be when we say, ‘hello,’” said Katie.

“I wish I could stay and have a picnic on the parlor floor.”

“Then a lot of people would not get their dinner or their pint, including Father O’Malley.”

“Well, I guess we can’t disappoint the source of all this joy.”

The phone rang and they finally had to break their clinch. Shane reached in for a quick kiss and went out the door while Katie ran for the phone.

The caller was Sean Hurley. He had screened down five requests for interviews and wanted to discuss them with Katie.

“My concern,” said Katie, “is that this is a small country and most people are aware of our story. How do we give interviews without being boring or repetitive?”

“Katie, I admire your perceptions. I have given that a lot of thought. Can you come into my office so we can talk about it later? I do have some ideas.”

“I have to work in the library today. Can we meet about half one?”

“That is good for me. I’ll see you then.”

“Oh Sean, you mentioned that you screened interviews. Were there a lot of them?”

“Well Playboy wanted you for a photo shoot.”

“Whaaat!”

I told them no deal. They wouldn't take Shane.

“As you know, I can't tell you for certain, but Shane would probably look a whole lot better naked than I would.”

“Well, I'm sure that a lot of Playboy readers would rather see you.”

“Enough of that you horny toad.”

“No, I'm just a red blooded male, and I'm just teasing you, Katie.”

“Go away with ya,” said Katie, “I'll see you later.”

Katie cleaned up the kitchen, straightened up the apartment, showered, and set out for the library to work on Irish Mythology and the 1916 Rising.

At half one, Katie arrived at Sean's office and he was there waiting for her. He continued the teasing that he started in the early morning and Katie gave back as good as she got. That is what makes working in a University such fun.

They got into the business of the meeting quickly and Sean shared with her some ideas about how to do these interviews in such a way that they are not boring or repetitive.

“Everyone in Ireland knows the story thanks to Gay Byrne and the extensive newspaper reviews of his show. These interviews will be shorter and I can guide the reporters. We'll give them what they want but guide the responses so that they highlight one or another facet of the diamond that is Katie and Shane. We will tell them that we want to work with them to keep the story interesting. You can talk about what it is that motivates you, the depth of your thinking on life, love, and faith. The Church is in bad shape these days and a little positive publicity would do it some good, especially coming from observing believers like the two of you.”

“I'm afraid that I am a bit of an iconoclast,” said Katie. She then told the stories of how she was always sent to the priests for being a heretic.

“You might be more progressive than most, but my observation is that you are a faithful, and faith-filled Catholic and I've known you for almost ten years. If the Church says or does something stupid and your back goes up, it is because you love God and the Church. In the long run, God chooses lovers of the Church as a prophetic voice to speak up because we have to help them get it right. Think Thomas Aquinas, Catherine of Siena,

Pope John XXIII, and many others who have guided the Church through some bad storms.”

I’m hardly a saint,” said Katie.

“You underestimate yourself,” replied Sean. “Perhaps that is why we are not our own judges.”

“But enough of this; we are on the right track and my staff will prep you beforehand. I will try to identify what each reporter is interested in and make suggestions that might be advantageous to their readers. Remember, their profession is my forte. I would love it if they would send a former student to conduct the interview.

”What periodicals are we talking about, and will they make donations to our charities.”

“I have chosen *Ireland on Sunday*, *The Irish Times*, *The Sunday Tribune*, *The Connaught Tribune*, and *The Galway Independent*. The two locals should be the most fun. And yes, they will make contributions to the three charities.”

“Can we try to do them all in one or two afternoons? I am going to be teaching an all morning seminar in two weeks.”

“Two might be better,” said Sean. “I have a morning seminar to teach as well.”

“I didn’t know senior professors took on these seminars,” noted Katie.

“I do it because I love it, but don’t tell anyone. I wouldn’t want to ruin my gruff journalist reputation.”

Katie laughed and hugged him with her thanks for all his help, and then left to return to her apartment.

During their meeting with Fr. O’Malley, he asked if they could finish their work, most of which he considered done, by meeting only once a week. It seems that there is a run on his counseling services since the Gay Byrne program. They agreed that much of the work had been done but they wanted to continue to meet at least once a week. O’Malley asked them to make a list of issues that they wanted to discuss.

Shane, Katie, Peadar, and Angela decided to leave for Leveegee on Friday afternoon. Katie wanted to see Tom Donnolly for an update on the fate of the intruders in her mother’s home. She thought it might be a good idea just to walk around the town to show Shane her old haunts. She called a few old friends and made arrangements for dinner on Saturday along with Angela’s friends. In the earlier part of the day, she and Shane would lift the floorboards and search for the box of documents that she expected would be hidden there.

To Be Continued

Chapter 20 - A Treasure Trove

Shane pulled the Lantern's Dodge minivan into Angela's driveway. He wanted to use the van for the sake of comfort and because it was big enough to store anything else that Angela might want to bring back to Galway.

On the way in they drove through the town. Angela and Katie directed their attention to points of interest. There weren't many points of interest. Leveegee had little historical significance except for the history of economic commerce still being made. The commerce continued through the Troubles without any experience of hostility. The fact is that the farming communities of both the North and the Republic need each other and have enough sense not to bite the hands that feed them.

It was very colorful. In addition to the cattle, pig, and sheep auctions, there were dairy products such as butter, eggs, and a variety of cheese, prepared meats, harvested vegetables, picks, shovels, axes, saws, tractor accessories, jarred and canned products, hand made clothing, foul weather gear, saddles, bridles, a variety of leather products, along with artifacts, kitchen ware, essential house furniture, paintings and other art and craft works. There wasn't anything that a farmer couldn't do when faced with some necessity. There wasn't anything broken that couldn't be fixed by the ingenuity of the farmer.

Katie reflected that the once glorious profession of farming has fallen to the level of marginal in Ireland's new Celtic Tiger economy. Yet the farmer is among the most capable, talented, and visionary of Irishmen. The reward of their labor is a life of physical hardship with little financial return. They are victims of the weather, political intrigue, economic forces, and now, times that are dramatically changing. Though the world has moved from an agrarian society, they still depended on the farmer. Through the industrial revolutions they survived because what they do was essential to fuel the still fragile economy. We are in an electronic and digital age where modern equipment can produce data with the speed of light. Yet these same inventors marvel at the ability of a man to plant a seed, cultivate it, and harvest it as a potato, a process that takes months. No machine can do that. And the farmer knows that.

Katie reflected back on the friends of her youth who expected to spend the rest of their lives on the family farmstead. They were displaced by the economic realities that betrayed their inheritance to condominiums, office buildings, industrial parks, and upscale housing that no farmer could ever afford. Many of her friends had to flee to America where they would work with the skills they had. The new economy required highly educated specialists and there was no work available for those who worked with their hands, even the most talented and resourceful people in Ireland.

The outcome of their talent was what made them survivors. Their profession became part of the underclass but they still made themselves essential to their society. The weekly Leveegee fair was evidence of that.

It was in Leveegee that they recognized the futility of an 800 year old civil war. It was through Leveegee that they learned cooperative farming and cooperative animal husbandry.

It was in Leveegee that they built a sub economy based on their ability to work together for the benefit of everyone. It could be called socialism or communism by the social engineers; Christianity by churchfolk of a variety of denominations; economic reality by the farmers themselves and therefore, no one disturbed the peace. They are entrepreneurs of the first order disguised as the least of common men knowing from history that their wit and talent will carry them through.

They celebrate together every Saturday with sales and barter. They generate good craic with drinking, music, dancing, and sports. They know the value of sharing a pint and continually build the bonds that drive the fragile economy. They know the value of friendship and the binding contract of a handshake.

“They knew Him in the breaking of the bread,” said Shane, as Katie finished her reminiscences.

Angela was amazed at Katie’s reflection. “Where did she get those values?”

Peadar thought he had never heard Ireland’s current biggest problem articulated with such passion and intelligence. With the threat of tears in his eyes he made another note of the depth of Katie’s abilities of thinking and perception. That was a presentation off the top of her head and yet, it was something that would ring true in the great halls of universities and even in the chambers of the United Nations.

Shane just nodded. This is the Katie he knows and loves. She really knows how to penetrate the heart of society. He is constantly amazed by the blending of their belief systems.

Shane and Peadar carried the overnight bags into the house. They had already settled on sleeping arrangements. Angela and Katie would share a room and Peadar and Shane could have each of the two smaller bedrooms. Angela started making calls to her friends to solidify dinner tomorrow evening. Katie wanted to go the Leveegee Parish House to get her baptismal certificate and invited Shane to come with her.

The afternoon was lovely and they walked the half mile to the parish.

“I haven’t been in this house in over ten years, but I remember it as palatial. This was where they hauled me off to recant my heresies when I was in secondary school.”

“Did you recant your heresies?”

“Are you kidding? Those friggin eejits would not know a heresy if they fell over one. We are not talking Fr. O’Malley or Fr. McCarthy here. For these priests, a heresy was anything that challenged their control over you. I doubt that anyone who knows me is still here. It has been over ten years. Mom got along with them, so I just kept my mouth shut.”

A housekeeper answered the door. When we asked to see one of the priests, she asked if we had an appointment.

“Hmmm, not a good start,” thought Katie.

“I’m sorry,” said Katie, but we don’t have an appointment. We just arrived from out of town. All we want is a baptism certificate.”

“I’m sorry,” said the house keeper, “We only give baptism certificates during office hours. It is too late now. You will have to come back on Monday?”

“But that would be impossible. We are leaving on Sunday and we travelled a long way to be here today.”

“I’m sorry but that is the policy. The rules are the rules.”

“Listen lady,” said Katie. What if I said that I was pregnant and my boyfriend wants to kill my baby?”

“Oh my God, Oh my God, come in. Go into this office here.”

The priest was there in two minutes.

Katie calmly said that she wanted a baptism certificate.

“What about the murder of your baby?”

“There is no baby. We are leaving town on Sunday and I simply gave your lady a *what if*. She overreacted.”

The priest was clearly annoyed. “What is your name and the date of your birth?”

“Kathryn O’Bierne, I was born on November 19, 1965.” She spelled Kathryn and O’Bierne for his convenience since there could be various spellings of her name.

“Oh, you’re the one they are all talking about, the famous one. How is your mother? We haven’t seen her in months.”

“Oh, did you know that intruders broke into her house and beat her up about four months ago.”

“No, is she alright?”

“She is now. She was badly bruised. It was in all the newspapers and on the television news. I’m surprised that you didn’t see it. The story spread throughout Ireland.”

“Oh, we don’t have time for that sort of thing.”

“I guess you are very busy. Permit me to introduce my fiancé, Shane Ryan. You would have seen him on the Gay Byrne show about a month ago. He saved the lives of several fishermen and then ran a rogue wave. And on the night the show was aired, he saved yet another life.”

Shane reached out to shake his hand but the priest did not take it. He merely nodded in acknowledgement.

“I would never watch Gay Byrne. He is bitterly anti-Catholic.”

“Really! I have reason to believe that he is a very faithful Catholic. In fact I know where he and his family worship on Sundays.”

“You must be mistaken.”

“I don’t think so.”

“My mother is getting married too. I should get a baptism certificate for her. I’m sure she will need it. She was born in March of 1946.”

“My father died in June of 1971. I might as well pick up a death certificate. My mother will need that.”

“Why isn’t your mother getting married at her own parish?”

“Well, she lives with me in Galway Town now.”

“Oh, I didn’t know that.”

“Well, I’m sure you are busy. I’ll bet you miss her at daily Mass.”

“Ah, yes! She was a good lady.”

“Actually, she still is,” responded Katie.

Katie collected her documents, thanked the still nameless priest, and apologized that the lady who answered the door misunderstood her. She gave the priest her card. Kathryn O’ Bierne, Ph.D, Professor of Irish Literature, University College, Galway.

“Thank you, Father. If ever I can do anything for you, don’t hesitate to call.”

They left the priest house and Shane held it in until they were halfway down the street. He had to stop and laugh hysterically. Katie you are such a witch. That conversation should have been recorded for a comedy routine. Remind me to never get on your dark side.

“I don’t have a dark side,” said Katie. “I have a moral obligation to shake them up. Sean says that I have a prophetic voice. Unfortunately it went right over his head. How does a guy like that get ordained? He was absolutely clueless. We are known throughout Ireland but not in the town where I was born and grew up.”

They stopped at the Guard’s Barracks to speak with Tom Donnolly.

Tom greeted both of them with hugs and introduced them around to the staff and the other guards.

Tom congratulated them on their recent engagement. Katie told him that her mother was marrying as well. “The air is good in Galway,” she laughed.

Tom told them about the four who invaded her mom’s house. All survived. Their trial will be coming up soon and he expected that all of them will be out of society for a long time. All confessed, so there was no need for their testimony.

Katie kissed him on the cheek and thanked him for everything. “It is good to have friends in high places,” she said.

“I’ll always be your friend, Katie. You know that.”

She and Shane waved to the others and made their way back to her mother’s house.

The rest of the afternoon was delightful. They sat out on a patio in the yard and just talked. Angela wanted Peadar to know everything about her and her life in Leveegee. They walked the parameters of the O’Byrne farm, most of which was now the town. Katie thought that Angela’s last date was with her father. Angela told them that there was no courtship and no dating. They were very different times and being poor meant to struggle for survival. Her parents did an honorable thing to arrange her marriage to Katie’s dad. She would be cared for the rest of her life and they didn’t have to worry about her. The very first date of her life was afternoon tea with Peadar at Fitzgerald’s when she first arrived at Galway. She squeezed Peadar’s hand as she told her story and the story of their romance. The romance was sure to continue for many years.

Shane couldn’t contain himself and told Angela and Peadar about their encounter at the Priest House. All laughed heartily and Peadar again locked the story in his heart and head. Katie was truly fast on her feet. She told them that Sean said that she had a prophetic voice as the result of her Baptism and Confirmation and that she better use it.

Angela was shocked that no one remembered her ordeal and that she was not even missed from daily Mass. The priest's name is O'Mahoney and was known to live in his own little world. In fact, all three priests in the parish were in their own spatial universe and the real world did not interfere with it.

"We are so lucky to have Frs. Liam and Jim in our lives. As we meet other priests, they become more and more outstanding," said Katie.

They went out to dinner at the local pub and had a good meal and a great time. Shane greeted the owner and told him so. The owner was delighted to have him and Katie in his establishment. He picked up their check and drinks were on the house for them for the rest of the night. Angela and Katie both met several people that they knew and there was great craic altogether and Peadar and Shane reveled in it.

The next morning Angela had a hearty Irish breakfast ready for them when they wakened. Afterwards, Shane and Peadar took some of Katie's father's tools and went to attack the floorboards in the attic.

They loosened all the boards, found the safe box, and renailed the boards.

Shane carried the box to Katie as if it was the Ark of the Covenant.

When she opened the old box, it was filled with hundreds of papers. They were well kept but Katie treated them like an archeological discovery. She wore latex gloves and started to read some of the papers.

"Mother of God, will you look at this," she said to Peadar. "These are the plans for the whole Rising with special plans for the cell groups in both Ulster and South."

"Not only do we have the plans, we have the names of all those for whom this information was destined. Their families are surely living and at least an oral history is possible. With these papers, I can identify the sources of rebellion and trace it through speeches and literature. I would like these to be copied. I will share it with the History Department and we can create a museum section in the Library to be opened in April of 2016. They are all signed, Eamonn Ceannt. Mom, this is so incredible."

They put the papers back in the box with great care and locked them in a cabinet. Katie calmed down with another cup of tea. Later on, she and Shane went on a tour of the fair and her favorite haunts in the town where she spent her childhood. Along the way, she met some old friends and acquaintances and she relished the opportunity to introduce her fiancé. Of course, with all the publicity they generated, everyone already knew Shane but it was special to meet him in person. As they walked hand in hand, he didn't mind being her trophy.

Dinner with Katie and Angela's friends turned out to be a great reunion. They had spoken with them on the phone, of course, to assure them that she was alright. Angela didn't know when or if she would return to Leveegee. At first she was simply frightened after what happened. She didn't want to be alone anymore. When she started to be distracted by Peadar, she was afraid to think about the possibilities that lay ahead. Finally, she knew she could stay with Katie without interfering with her life. They had to talk about Katie and her news and television appearances. She called them to tell them about her engagement to Peadar and about Katie's engagement. Even though they are in separate communities, they will still be lifelong friends. They are a piece of who she is. They gave her courage when she faced discouragement. They gave her companionship when she faced loneliness. They made her laugh when she was cheerless. As much as Angela benefitted from their presence in her life, they benefitted from having Angela in their lives. They were six of them and they were known all over town. In the Leveegee parish, they were the church ladies. They had breakfast together each day after morning Mass in a local coffee shop. They had a book club and a bridge afternoon. There were others, but these five were like Angela's sisters.

Katie's three childhood friends, Orla, Norita, and Claire were among the few close friends still living at Leveegee. With Angela's friends, they made for a joyful, laughter-filled reunion

They weren't at all shy. They pumped Peadar relentlessly until they collectively voted to approve the marriage. They had planned to do that. Peadar enjoyed every moment. Then they did the same with Shane. Katie's friends want to know where she found a Celtic god, and then teased the god about his blushing face. Angela's friends teased Katie about being, "my daughter the professor." They joked about their appearance on the Byrne show. They were every bit as critical as the newspapers but they had a lot of fun doing so. It also told Katie and Shane that ordinary people outside the University world really enjoyed their appearance. They wanted to know all about Byrne. "What was he like? Is he really hostile? I heard he was a bad Catholic. Tell us about U2." Katie and Shane both had a good time. They were recognized by the other diners and graciously signed autographs for them. The rapid fire banter, the quick repartee, and the laughter from their table of twelve set the standard for the other tables in the restaurant. Shane told the story of their visit to the parish the previous afternoon. They all laughed hysterically and their esteem for Katie rose even higher. "Yes, that is our parish and those are our priests, God help us. The Lord will surely give us a higher place in heaven for enduring them. We try to loosen them up but all we do is scandalize them."

Katie told stories about her secondary school experiences as a heretic, stories certified and amplified by her friends. "I should have been embarrassed to death every time they spoke to me about her, said Angela. "Fortunately, I had more confidence in my daughter than I had in them." The stories and laughter were uproarious. The craic was mighty that night.

They parted with tears, laughter, and endless hugs. Angela promised her friends that they would be with her when Peadar made her an honest woman. "Are you kidding," asked

their ringleader? We are hiring busses. This will be the greatest invasion of Galway since the Norman Conquest.

When they finally got back into Shane's van, Peadar remarked, "What wonderful women! Angela and Katie, you are blest with great friends."

Katie remarked thoughtfully, "They are the heart and soul of Ireland."

Early the next morning, they loaded the van, carefully carrying the Ark of the Covenant. They wanted to make the 11:00 A.M. Mass at the University Chapel.

Chapter 21 - Wedding Preparations

They arrived back at the University in plenty of time for Mass. Katie invited them to use her apartment to freshen up. She asked for the Leveegee Papers, as she started to call the Ceannt documents, because she wanted to catalogue them. Fortunately the papers were in good shape and not as fragile as are many discoveries of this kind. However, they hadn't been exposed to climate or handling for one hundred years and still had to be treated carefully. Once catalogued, she would have Peadar certify them and then turn them over to the library for copying and preservation. Once the contents were certified and copied, she would turn a copy over to the History Department. Documentary research would be available through the library.

Katie would try to identify the families for whom the letters were destined to see if they had any papers of a similar nature and, at the least, try to get an oral history from what they knew of family lore. She thought that this was a significant historical discovery but whether or not it was significant for her research would still have to be evaluated. Once the contents were certified and copied, she would turn the originals over to the History Department. Documentary research would be available through the library. Now that she had some sense of the history leading to the Rising, her next step was to read the poetry of the Pearse brothers.

Having gotten themselves together, they went over to the Chapel for Mass. Fr. Jim greeted them at the door. When they were speaking together with no one else around Fr. Jim mentioned to Katie that he heard they were at the Leveegee parish. Katie smiled and said, "Yes, we were there, but I don't think we'll be welcomed back any time soon."

"A Father O'Mahoney called me last night and asked if I knew you."

"I left him my card, but I never dreamed he would do anything with it."

"Apparently, you shook him up something fierce. He said something about you being pregnant and Shane wanting to murder your baby."

Katie laughed and told him the whole story. "I never said I was pregnant. I told the house keeper that *if I was pregnant and my boyfriend wanted to kill my baby, would you call the priest or would we have to await office hours on Monday*. Well, she misinterpreted and overreacted, as I expected she would. The priest arrived about two minutes later."

"I have to confess, Jim, that I was a little rough with him at first. But he didn't have a clue. My mother was one of the daily Mass church ladies and he didn't even realize that she hadn't been around in several months. I sarcastically said that I guess you are very busy. He didn't pick up on the sarcasm at all. Everyone in town seemed to know us and we even spent some time signing autographs in the restaurant last night. I mentioned that the break in at my mother's house was in all the papers and on the TV news. He said he didn't have time for that. I introduced Shane and told him that he was the star of the Gay Byrne Show a couple of weeks ago. Well, he would never watch that anti-Catholic,

Byrne. I mentioned that I knew on good authority that he was a faithful and practicing Catholic. He just responded that it couldn't possibly be true. Jim, this guy lives on another planet and occasionally visits earth. How does a guy like that get ordained?"

"Katie you are touching on one of the key problems of the Church in Ireland. They are ordaining anyone who presents themselves, many of whom belong to a model of Church that no longer exists. They want all the privileges of the clerical elite, and they don't exist anymore either. I laughed hard when I hung up the phone. I had figured out what happened and your story confirms it."

"When Shane told the story last night at the restaurant, the ladies howled with laughter and said that they are entitled to a higher place in heaven simply for putting up with the priests."

"He is probably going to call Archbishop Manning who thinks very highly of you."

"I should have told him that we had dinner together a couple of weeks ago."

"I'll call Manning tomorrow and tell him the story so he is forewarned."

"Jim, I assure you that I was very kind to him, far more so than he was to us. He was so clueless that he couldn't possibly be offended. In fact, I was even more gentle with him when I realized that. He wasn't acting malicious. He is just oriented that way and all the people of Leveegee know it. That poor parish has had bad luck for a couple of generations. Yet, the faith has survived. Someday I'll have to tell you the story of my flaming youth."

"Oh, I did get my mom's birth certificate and my dad's death certificate for you."

"Thanks Katie, I had better get Mass started."

Since it was holiday time, there was no choir to lead the singing, but the music from the Mass filled the building and stirred the hearts of the worshippers. It was the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ and Fr. Jim's homily was a beautiful panegyric on the love God has for us and the love we share with each other. For the four of them it was very touching.

Again, Fr. Jim was free to join the group at Fitzgerald's and, as usual, the early afternoon was an extension of the morning celebration.

Shane drove back to Rossville to tend to his duties at the Lantern. Angela, Katie, and Peadar had a leisurely dinner in the Faculty Dining Room. They discussed wedding details realizing that October would come very rapidly. Fr. Jim who joined them for dinner would celebrate the wedding Mass with Fr. Liam as a concelebrant. The marriage would take place at the University Chapel. They would have to meet with Fr. Jim for filling out all the relevant papers.'

Katie asked her mom if she wanted to go back to her friend Maeve in Galway City for a wedding dress, indicating that was what she was going to do and they could go together. "I liked her," said Angela. "And the other dress worked out nicely."

"I'm sure she did some kind of Druid incantation over it," laughed Katie.

They agreed to go shopping together in Galway on Tuesday.

The next morning Katie took the Leveegee papers to her office. She wanted a lot of space for the cataloging process and she expected the work to take up the entire day. It would require reading every document. She worked diligently at the conference table in her office and separated more than half the papers into categories, carefully documenting which paper went into which category. She took a break for a late lunch, which she brought back to her office, and finally completed her work about four hours later. Peadar was not in his office so she carefully packed up the papers and brought them back to her apartment.

On the way out, she picked up a large pile of personal mail that the student interns had sorted out from the bags of mail that were still arriving each day.

She was a little disturbed by what she was reading in the Leveegee Papers. The documents were a preparation for war with details of training procedures, weapons use, and precautions to be taken lest the enemy discover what was about to happen. There would be killing and dying. This would be a war. She would note that later on tonight because it was a feeling that she felt might be important for her own research.

When she arrived at her apartment, Angela was still out. There was a message from Sean who called her at home presuming that she would not be in her office all day. She poured herself a glass of wine and called Sean. He had scheduled all five interviews for the afternoons of Thursday and Friday of this week. He and his staff would meet her and Shane on Thursday morning to go over the ground rules that were agreed to and to role play some questions and answers. Katie thought that was fine. It would be over sooner than she thought and she could concentrate, without distraction, on some of the important business at hand. The Times and the Tribune would contribute 500 pounds to each of their charities and the three smaller periodicals would contribute 200 pounds each. Katie was pleased with their generosity.

When Angela came in, Katie would take her to dinner at the Lantern. It would be just the two of them and some girl talk would be nice. She and Shane were going to discuss wedding plans tomorrow evening with Fr. O'Malley. She wasn't sure where to begin but had enough confidence in herself to know that she would figure it out. She sipped her wine, turned on the TV, and dozed in her chair.

Katie woke with a start when Angela gently touched her arm. It took her a while to wake up. "What time is it," she asked?

“Just about eight o’clock,” replied Angela.

“Wow, I was going to take you to the Lantern for a ‘just us girls’ dinner.”

“I’ll fix something for us,” said Angela. “We can have the same conversation right here.”

Angela searched in the refrigerator and found the ingredients for a good salad.

She served Katie at the kitchen table.

“Wow, that looks good.” said Katie.

“Well, don’t you know, I have a maid and a cook now.”

“You don’t have one, yet and I’ll never have one. I guess, I’ll just be the poor relative.

“Ahhh.” sighed Angela.

“Just kidding, Mom there is no way that Shane and I can be called poor.”

“I wanted to talk about your wedding plans, Mom. The time will pass quickly and we need to set up a timetable for plans.”

Katie took out a pad and began to write. “You have a groom, most important. You have a church right here on campus. You have a couple of priests and a maid of honor. Your reception will be right here on campus in the Faculty Dining Room.”

“Who will be the best man?”

“I think that Peadar will ask Sean. They have been best friends for as long as forever.”

“Does Peadar have any relatives or in-law relatives that he would like to involve?”

“He had never mentioned any, but I will ask him. We are having a little tug of war in that I would like everything to be small and simple. He thinks the wedding should be a grand celebration because neither of us had one for the first time.”

“Go with it, mom. It won’t cost you any dignity and it will please Peadar. You can do this with simple elegance. I’ll help you with it. Being an old maid into my thirties, I have been to more than my share of weddings. I am the last of my friends to marry. It gave me plenty of opportunity to plan the wedding I never thought I would have. We’ll begin with the dress tomorrow. We’ll pick something beautiful but strikingly simple. Peadar won’t see it until your wearing it and by then he will be so dazzled with your beauty, he won’t even notice it.”

“Plan your reception with the University Chefs. Plan it with Peadar taking the lead. It will make him feel important. Ask him if you should call and make an appointment with them while they have some downtime. Once you decide on what you want, leave it in their hands. They will bend over backwards to please Peadar. You will have to pick a band. Peadar will know what he wants. He’ll probably want classics with a lot of Irish traditional and ceili music. After all, Irish culture is our business.”

“As far as the liturgy of the wedding Mass goes, discuss that with Fr. Jim. Shane and I will be doing that tomorrow with Fr. Liam and maybe we’ll pick up some good ideas. Just don’t let it be maudlin. Make it a grand celebration. You and Peadar should pick a time and place for a honeymoon and make your reservations as soon as possible.”

“Start now to make a list of guests. Don’t trim it down now. Wait till you have everyone that you think you want to invite. Your invitations should go out six weeks before the wedding. Depending on the October date you set, that could be as early as late August. That’s next month.”

“Ask Peadar to nail down the date. That will be important for planning.”

“After all that, you will live happily ever after.”

Angela smiled and said, “As my Jewish friends say, ‘from your lips to God’s ears.’”

“I think that God has already heard us.”

The next afternoon, Katie and Angela walked into Maeve’s Dress Barn to the hyper cheering of Katie’s friend, Maeve.

“To what do I owe this pleasure.” said Maeve?

“We both are looking for wedding dresses and for bridesmaid dresses as well.”

“Wow, the other dress must have worked wonders.”

“It wasn’t the dress, although that was spectacular, replied Katie. It was the beauty, charm, and grace of the wearer.”

“I knew that,” exclaimed Maeve.

“Our wedding dresses are mostly custom made. I’ll go through some catalogues with you and when you get an idea of what you like, we can make the adjustments and pick the material. When are the weddings?”

“Mom’s is in October, at a date yet to be set and mine is December 28th,”

Here are some catalogues. Get an idea of what you like, and then we'll talk. If there is a gown you like but something about it that you don't like, I can make adjustments."

They went through the catalogues and Angela picked out four or five that she liked. Katie picked out one that she liked.

They sat down with Maeve and with deft questions she eliminated three of Angela's choices. The remaining two were very similar. Maeve asked her to pick out what she liked about each one. She then made a pencil drawing incorporating the best features of both dresses.

"Oh yes, that is it," said Angela and Katie nodded her approval.

Katie chose a very simple dress that would hang freely, yet cling to every part of her body. The dress was sleeveless and Katie asked Maeve to give her thoughts on sleeves since it would be a winter wedding. Maeve opted for the sleeveless to support the integrity of the design of the dress. Katie asked about the material that the model in photograph was wearing. It was called a soft satin blend and Maeve thought she would look stunning in it.

With Angela's approval, Katie selected a vermillion bridesmaid's dress and Angela selected a soft yellow gown suitable for a December wedding.

"I will order the material and call you for an appointment for a fitting."

She took endless measurements and complimented both that they were easy to fit with their gorgeous figures. If they bought dresses off the rack they would both wear the same size.

"Well, that wasn't at all painful," said Maeve, as she poured three cups of tea.

While they were chatting and sipping tea, Katie talked about the marriage preparation work she and Shane were doing with Fr. O'Malley.

"Six months of working with a priest and you, little miss heretic of 1986, is so surprising."

Katie replied that there is a difference between faith and whatever it was that was taught in their religion classes and that she had the good fortune to be part of the Newman Center at the University and had two priests in her life both of whom were ideal men and priests. Maeve was amazed at what they covered in their sessions, as was Angela, and the outcomes described by Katie.

"I am very comfortable with my faith and I expect to keep growing. It will take two or three years to finish the project I am working on now, but after that I want to take another degree in Theology. I feel the need to shake things up. I love studying and teaching Irish

culture and learned something through that. We Irish are bred to be poets and revolutionaries. That is where I think I want to go.

To be continued

Chapter 22 - The Revolution Begins

The following evening, Shane and Katie met with Fr. O'Malley to discuss their own wedding plans. This time they were seated around Fr. O'Malley's desk. The ever present tea was available to them. O'Malley had a note pad.

Fr. O'Malley asked about music for the wedding. Katie asked if they could choose something appropriate that was Irish Classical for the entrance walk up the aisle. She suggested that they look for something from the Torper Dublin Canon which impressed O'Malley no end.

"How do you know about that? Are you a secret musician?"

"Our music falls into Irish culture and that is my business," smiled Katie.

"So few people know that there is a canon of Irish classical music, it shocks me when someone does. As a matter of fact, I know a piece that would be very appropriate. I'll try to find a recording."

"If you can't find it, let me know. We probably have a recording at the University library. I would love to have our University Chapel choir but they will be on holiday. I will ask. Perhaps many of them live close by."

"We could get some of the regulars from the Lantern," laughed Shane.

"That would add some local color," laughed O'Malley.

"Will you have a breakfast or brunch after the Mass," asked O'Malley?

"Yes," said Shane. "I would love to use the Lantern, but I'm afraid that it is too small."

"We have so many friends, I would love to celebrate with everyone," said Katie. "What do you think of Fitzgerald's? They have a reception room that is probably big enough and it isn't too far to travel from the church. Shane, you're the restaurateur. Think of something."

"I was thinking of a large tent on the lawn of the Lantern but it is winter and that would probably invite a huge winter storm blowing in off the bay. Fitzgerald's is the best of the options we have. Another thought is the commissary or Faculty Dining Room at the University."

"That's a thought. My mom and Peadar are going to use the Faculty Dining Room."

"I'll investigate both Fitzgerald's and the University. Either one will work. I'll consider space, cost, amenities, and quality. We'll discuss the results and report back to Fr. O'Malley."

“Done,” said Katie. “What’s next?”

“Where will you go for a honeymoon?”

“Well I already told Shane what I wanted to see. With all this experience with communications, I should ask Shane what it is that he wants to see.”

“Well I have given it some thought and narrowed it down to three. The Canary Islands, the Amalfi Coast in Italy, or Monaco in southern France.

“They are all fine with me,” said Katie. “They all have ceilings.”

“It could be stormy in the Canaries during the winter. Check with some of the travel people.”

“I probably won’t even notice,” said Katie.

“How is the housing situation developing?” asked O’Malley.

“I’ve seen a few that are available. Nothing yet that grabs me or that I would want Katie to see. We are not under great pressure because we are fortunate enough to have two homes at the present time.”

“My mom will be living in a manor house at Salt Hill. Fortunately she’ll be cared for. It was nice having her at the apartment. We were never distant but I feel that we have moved much closer to each other over these months. We’ll see each other more now that we are living so close to each other.”

“I have a list of Scripture readings for the Mass,” said Fr. O’Malley. “You can pick from among these or select others that you feel would be appropriate.” He handed them a booklet with the readings.

“Here is my Baptism Certificate,” said Katie. “Shane’s is already in the parish register.”

“I have some official papers that I have to fill out with you that you have to sign.”

“Oh, I almost forgot. Mom and I have picked out wedding and bridesmaid dresses. You’ll not see them until I arrive at the church on the December 28th.”

After filling out and signing the papers, O’Malley said he would see them next Tuesday.

They walked hand in hand back to the Lantern feeling as if they were three feet off the ground. Katie had planned to stay over at Shane’s cottage. They stopped in the Lantern for a late supper where they were greeted by many friends.

“This night might be the end of my holiday,” said Katie. “I have a very busy day tomorrow. Thursday and Friday are booked solid with our interviews. I start teaching again next week.”

“Well, we just have to make the best of it then.”

They finished their dinner, made their goodbyes, and walked over toward Shane’s cottage. On the way they paused to sit on top of the hill overlooking the strand. The night was cloudless and moonless and there were a million stars shining on them. The sea was gentle and they could hear the lapping of the waters of the bay on the sandy shore. Both leaned back on the ground to contemplate the wonder before them.

“I have no idea what God is like,” said Katie, “but I love Her signature.”

“To think that this is one of an innumerable number of galaxies just staggers my imagination,” reflected Shane.

“And here we are just starting to live out the biggest decision of our lives. Shane, you are my universe. You are the sun on my shoulders. You are everything I require to grow. Loving you nurtures me. It is through you that I know that life and love are sacred. If I ever achieve holiness I know it will be because God loves me and I know that because you love me.”

“I thought I loved you as much as possible six months ago. When I was riding the rogue wave, I thought I had lost you forever. When I held you on the dock, I knew that I wanted to be with you forever. It is hard to grasp how much more I love you now. Our lives are now intertwined for eternity and I expect that love will continue to grow for as long as we are able to breathe.”

Katie snuggled over closer to him, threw her leg over his and kissed him with all the passion she could muster. They were lying on the mattress of God’s good earth, wrapped in the blanket of the most beautiful night of the year, so far, protected by the star-filled darkness, and cooled by the gentle breeze.

“I knew it would be a wonderful experience to love you, Shane.”

“It has been an experience, more of one than I could ever conjure in a dream. It has been an adventure without a dull moment ever since we allowed Fr. O’Malley to enter into our lives. We have to give credit to him.”

“Oh, I definitely do. One of the heresies I had to defend in secondary school was the fact that *Grace builds on nature*. He or She is the potter; we are the clay. It is Fr. O’Malley that helps make the clay malleable.”

They walked the rest of the way to Shane's cottage and fell asleep in each other's arms as soon as their heads hit the pillows.

When they awoke the next morning, they rose very slowly. Katie felt she was still on holiday until she arrived at her office. They snuggled together and just enjoyed the opportunity to be physically present to each other. She then went into the kitchen to put water on for tea and to scramble some eggs.

She was going to meet Peadar at his office about mid-morning with the documents she called the Leveege Papers. They were all catalogued and Peadar was going to certify them and turn them over to the library for copying. Katie had read the text of every page. She had some ideas about searching for more such papers and wanted to discuss them with Peadar.

They had a leisurely breakfast with the usual and ordinary conversation. Shane suggested that they have dinner that evening at Fitzgerald's and assess the possibilities for a reception. The next evening, since they were going to be on the campus all day for their newspaper interviews and they could plan for dinner at the Faculty Dining Room for the same purpose.

She left the kitchen cleanup for Shane and hurried back to the University to keep her appointment with Peadar. She drove directly to the Academic Building, took the Leveege Papers from the locked boot of her car, and ran up the stairs to Peadar's office. She could have been a little late. After all, he was going to be her stepfather. However, her academic integrity would not let her take advantage of that situation.

Peadar was working at his desk when she walked in and seemed surprised to see her. Then he looked at his watch and realized that she was right on time. He was so locked into his own work that he did not realize how quickly the time passed.

He reviewed Katie's cataloging work and approved it. He had a meeting with the Director of the Library later in the morning and everything was in good order for him.

Katie asked for his thoughts about contacting the families to whom the Ceannt notes were addressed. There could be families with enough living memory of the events, and perhaps papers like these, to make a great story.

"How is the research going," asked Peadar?

"It is going well, but I haven't found anything that we don't already know. I love Pearse's poetry. It is really passionate and powerful. My next step is to look into the school. Perhaps I can interview former students. The only place where we can find something fresh is in papers like these that haven't seen the light of day, or in oral history that we may or may not be able to verify. There are at least five different tracks of leadership that resulted in the Rising. Everyone had an agenda. It was Pearse, though, that had the rebel gene. He was the leader whom everyone else joined. The rebel traits can be found in his

poetry, but every English teacher in the country has already done that. I can work with that but I want to find some fresh insight, something more that connects the driving forces of Pearse with those of Wolfe Tonne a little more than a century before. I am convinced there is a connection.”

“Well go for it, Katie. We have a budget for this so we’ll be able to reimburse your expenses.”

“We had so much fun at your dinner party. Your home is lovely. I have never been in one quite like it.”

“Thank you for saying so, Katie. I didn’t have any interest in it for years after my wife’s death. We also lived abroad for several years during our marriage so there wasn’t any necessity to do anything with it until I had resettled in Galway. Then, on a single day, like a fog was lifting, I woke up from my depression. I had a dream where my wife was telling me to get up and become you again. I didn’t know where else to begin, so I started rebuilding and redecorating this house. It took a couple of years but I was very satisfied but now that it is finished I was asking myself, now what? It wasn’t long after that I saw your mother in church. I had to meet her so I plotted to meet you at your apartment, knowing that I would meet your mother. These have been among the happiest months of my life. I suspect that we will be referred to as the odd couple, but I am looking forward to having that house filled with learning, culture, laughter, stories, and good craic.

“Don’t sell mom short, Peadar. She has no formal education. Times were difficult when she was a child and she never had the opportunities I had. She is well read, completely self taught, with deep faith and an intense spirituality. She is a very deep thinker. You know me better than most people. I am her daughter and the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree. Everything that I am, she is first. She was my champion all those times I was accused of being a heretic. Faith is carried by storytellers, poets, artists, and musicians. She took my side because she knew more about faith than the amadon priests in our parish. Mom has a Ph.D. just living out of our culture. Now I find out that I also have rebel blood and it is being fed and nourished by the deeply spiritual, highly cultured, rebel, Padraic Pearse. I don’t know where this project will take me, Peadar, but I promise you, we will have a lot of fun.”

“Katie, I believe you and I feel the same way. It is going to be quite a trip and I’m looking forward to it. Keep up your good work.”

Katie thanked Peadar and went downstairs to her own office to pick up her personal mail. One handwritten envelope had a return address under the name, Paul Hewitt. She put the others down and opened that one first.

Bono thanked her profusely for the bibliography. He had no idea that the resources were so vast. He has already found stories and his pen is moving again. He wrote about how much fun the Byrne show was and how much he and the boys enjoyed meeting the two of them. They are between tours but Bono related some funny things that occurred in the

studio. "If our fans knew we made these blunders, we would all be poor." He wished her well with her wedding plans; sent regards to Shane and her mom; and hoped that they would meet again. For certain, she would be given credit if any of those songs are published or used on an album.

The rest of the mail was from old friends congratulating her on her engagement. There were the inevitable bills.

She decided to spend the rest of the day curled up in her apartment with biographies and the poetry of Padraic Pearse, her overlooked hero.