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Welcome to the latest edition of the IACI e-news.

Founded in 1962, the IACI is the leading Irish American cultural organization. The IACI is a federally recognized 501(c)(3) not-for-profit national organization devoted to promoting an intelligent appreciation of Ireland and the role and contributions of the Irish in America.

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August Magic

An Irish Short Story

by

Raymond D. Aumack

Maeve Garvey returned home to the Philadelphia public relations firm that she owned and managed. She had been travelling throughout the country to make courtesy calls to clients with whom she was doing business. She had visited ten states in her two-week tour, but it was worth it to solidify business relationships. It would guarantee a boatload of business throughout the year and the possibility of new business through referrals. The plane landed in Philadelphia and she had arranged for Uber to drive her to her office in downtown Philly, so she could solidify relationships with her own staff. She had been in touch with them by telephone every morning and afternoon and the work of her company was well under control. After hellos and hugs with everyone in her office, she retreated to her office with a cup of tea, and a review, with her assistant and office manager, of the activity of the last two weeks. While she kept a close eye on the activity of her firm, she delegated significant responsibility to her staff. Thankfully, they kept the review brief; there were no problems that required her input.

Another call to Uber brought her to her condo home that overlooked the river in Cherry Hill. Exhausted from her trip, she had planned a quiet, sleep-filled weekend except for a brunch with some friends after church on Sunday morning.

Her mail, mostly household bills and advertisements, included a letter from close relatives in Ireland. Mary McCarthy was her mother's sister. Her husband, Sean, died suddenly while plowing a field on their Donegal farm. The farm was rather remote, located in the northeast Donegal mountains. Maeve's mother had shockingly left home for Philadelphia, basically to escape the loneliness of "remote." In America, she married, raised four children, all of whom graduated from university, and she herself, a university graduate, worked as a legal assistant in her husband's law firm. While Maeve's family life was happy, vibrant, and exciting, the life of the Irish family was drudgery.

When her uncle had died in the field, the youngest of the boys inherited the farm because the two older brothers wanted nothing to do with it, and left home for jobs in England. They haven't returned once since they left. Farming would have been the same as it was for the past three of four generations. It did not provide much of a living. The Celtic Tiger passed them by and it was hardly even noticed.

The oldest, Sean, graduated as a mechanical engineer from Leeds University and supported that effort as a waiter in an upscale restaurant. He now works in a power generating company. Brendan graduated from a trade school and was working as an ironworker, building the skyscrapers of London. Both earned more money in a month than the farm could generate in a

year. Neither one sent even a pence back to the farm. Both had adopted a lifestyle they never could have dreamed back on the farm.

As Maeve read the letter, the desperation of her aunt stung her. There was a family crisis and Mary was begging her to come to Ireland.

In a country where everyone walks around with a smart phone, Maeve's aunt did not have a telephone at the farm. She called her mom to discuss the letter and to ask if she had heard anything. "Nothing, not a word. They only write to me if they need money," said Bridget, Maeve's mom.

"You know, Mom, maybe a couple of weeks in Ireland will be good for me. I think I'll go there. I will send them a telegram and let them know that I am coming."

"Well, enjoy yourself but keep your hand on your wallet," replied Bridget.

Maeve sent her telegram and worked on relaxing over the weekend. After Mass on Sunday she went out for brunch with a group of friends. They did this frequently and it was always delightful. Theresa Malone brought her brother with her who had recently moved into Philadelphia. He was slightly older than Maeve, very good looking and very single, and now a professor at St. Joseph's University. She told them about going to Ireland for two weeks. She wasn't planning on spending the whole time at the farm. She wanted to go to Galway City for the music festival, and then move on to Antrim and Tyrone to drink in the beauty of the Glens and the lakes.

When she returned to her condo, there was a phone call from Richard Rice, her sometimes boyfriend. She suspected that Richard only called when he had nothing better to do. He was decent boyfriend material, but she always knew that their relationship would never progress beyond casual companionship. She told him that she would be away for two weeks and they would get together when she returned.

She went to her office on Monday, announced her plans, set up telephone schedules for the time difference. Maeve had international capabilities for her phone, so she was only a phone call away in case of a crisis. She knew that there wasn't a crisis that her assistant and office manager could not handle.

The flight was uneventful. She was able to make a fast railway connection to Galway City where she would rent a car to drive to the farm. The trip to the farm, even from Galway, was tedious. Travelling through the mountains was like taking a trip travelling back through time. Maeve knew from experience that the McCarthy family lived an existence of fifty to one hundred years ago. Her mother spoke frequently of her own struggle to assimilate to a new culture that she could never have imagined if she stayed on the farm. She would have become her mother, not a very encouraging vocational prospect.

When she saw her somber and sad aunt, Maeve tried to put on her happiest greeting face. "Aunt Mary, it is so good to see you. It has been ages."

“Ah, sure, and it has been ages. The last time you were here, it was for my poor Sean’s funeral. Thank you for all your letters, though. It is a joy to read about your exciting life. You were studying to become a barrister. A woman barrister; I never heard of such a thing. Do you work for your father?”

Both were startled by a ringing telephone. Maeve searched and quickly retrieved it from her purse. “Excuse me, Aunt Mary. I told my staff to contact me each day at this time. I’ll just step into the kitchen to take the call.” As expected, everything was going well at her office. Susan and David were loving the opportunity to run the company for another two weeks.

When she returned to the parlor, her aunt was astounded. She had never seen a portable phone.

“This is an international phone. I can use it anyplace in the world. It is also a computer, and I can send messages on it similar to the telegraph. I don’t work for my dad. I own my own company.”

“Glory be to God, I never heard of such a thing, a woman running a company.”

“Why don’t we have a cup of tea and we can talk about your letter.”

As Mary poured the tea, she became very weepy. Instinctively, Maeve got up and hugged her in a stroke of compassion. She led Mary to her chair and asked her to talk about the problem.

Mary took a deep breath before she spoke. “Liam has been walking about with Nora O’Connor who lives about two kilometers north of us. About two weeks ago, Liam brought her in at tea time and they announced that she was pregnant. Again, a loud sob and more tears. “Oh, the disgrace of it all. What will people think of me? Liam will be read out from the pulpit. I depend on Liam. What will I do if he leaves me, too?”

The professional Nora listened intently and patted her aunt’s hand with compassion. Meanwhile, her mind was racing and becoming tinged with rage. The problem seemed to be Mary’s as if it had little to do with Nora and Liam.

“I have some thoughts, Aunt Mary, but I would like to speak with Liam and Nora.”

“Liam will be in for his tea, before long. I think this whole thing was set up by the O’Connor’s so they could take over our fields.”

A big WHY flashed in Maeve’s mind. This farm was hardly desirable land. As Mary led her to her room, Maeve silently vowed to keep her head on straight and her opinions to herself until she had all the information.

“By the way, Aunt Mary, how well do you know the O’Connor’s?”

“Not very well, but everyone in these mountains knows everyone else. I know them from Church. We greet each other each week. Little Nora is usually with them. They are a big family. I see them in the village from time to time.”

About a half hour later, Liam came in from the fields. It was five in the afternoon and the sun was still high in the sky. Sunset is around ten-thirty in the Irish summer. His mother never mentioned that Maeve was coming; he was very surprised to see her. As astonished as he was, he still gave her a big hug. Maeve noted that you could cut the tension in the room with a dull butter knife.

She greeted him with her biggest smile and hugged him again. "Let's have our tea together and then then I'd like you to take me for a walk around the fields. I haven't seen them in a few years."

Maeve dissipated the tension at supper with stories of her parents, life in Philadelphia and America, about her own business and the companies that were her clients. Every company has its share of crises every year and her company is available to help them solve their problems. She didn't want to mention that the problems frequently revolved about sexual harassment and abuse, for fear that it would start another flow of tears from Mary. They sat for a bit after tea. Maeve helped Mary with the dishes, after which she and Liam caught up with each other while walking through the fields.

Maeve noted that it was a beautiful evening and the heat of the day was softening as the sun reached toward the western sky.

"I guess Ma told you about our troubles."

"I am not sure they are troubles, Liam. After all, a new life is preparing to be born. I am more inclined to congratulate you."

"Well, that's a grand switch."

"I'm not trying to placate you. It is the way I feel. Tell me about Nora. I want to know everything about her including the details of your relationship. Don't leave out anything because I need all the information available if I am going to help you chart a course through the future."

"Well, Nora is seven years younger than me, but I've known her since she was a wee girl. I used to see her at school. I used to be friendly with her brothers, but now they want to castrate me. Suddenly, she was a grown beautiful woman. She went to the dances in town, as did I. She had the attention of all the boys in these mountains. I worked up the courage to ask her to dance with me. We danced and talked, and I was instantly smitten with her. She was too young for me at that time. She was always surrounded with younger boys, but each week we would dance and talk. About a year ago, I asked her to go to the movies with me. I had the farm pickup truck. It was first time I went anyplace with a girl, and it was a magical night. We walked hand in hand and at the end of the evening we kissed. I think it was the first real kiss for both of us. She was older now and the difference in our ages didn't seem to matter much anymore. The Brothers at school used to teach us about boy-girl relationships. Before we knew what was happening, we were deeply in love. We both knew what we were doing, and we did what we wanted to. It was the only time we made love and she became pregnant. "

"How does she feel about being pregnant?"

“Well, except for the circumstances, I think she is thrilled to be pregnant. Her family is, of course, considerably less thrilled, but the baby continues to grow, in spite of them.”

“You and Nora have spoken with her parents”

“Yes, the same day that we spoke with Ma. We have a lifetime of sweetness and we thought we might as well get the bitterness out of the way all at once.”

“Do you love Nora?”

“I love her like no other person on earth”

“Is marriage an option? I am not necessarily suggesting that; I’m just considering obvious options”

“Yes, we would like to be married. Nora will be eighteen in two months and we won’t need anyone’s permission.”

“Your mom thinks the priest would read you out from the pulpit. Is that true?”

“Not at all. That is a figment of Ma’s imagination. The clergy no longer have power and most of them know it. The priest in the village is a very decent fellow. I think that is why Ma doesn’t like him”

“What about work. The farm barely supports you now.”

“It was a mistake to accept the farm as an inheritance. Each year I work harder for an ever-decreasing yield. The farm really can’t maintain itself.”

“I would like to go to trade school like my brother, Brendan. I would like to become an electrician and work in an expanding area like Galway City or Cork City. The Tiger is dead, but the economy of Ireland is recovering. Expansion and building will continue to increase. Ireland has a lot of catching up to do. I would like to be part of that.”

“Does Nora share your ambitions?”

“Yes, she does. She has ambitions of her own as well.”

“What might they be?”

“There is a real need throughout Ireland for day care for children. She would also eventually like to go to university and become a teacher?”

“It sounds like you have set real goals for yourself, none of them easy. “

“I am well accustomed to hard work.”

“What about your mom?”.

“That’s the sand in the gears. We would like to sell the farm and resettle in Galway. I would like to get a night job, maybe in a restaurant, like Sean did and go to University during the day. I would like to set her up in one of the retirement communities. She would have a lot of activity

and friends her own age. She has none of that here. I don't think anyone has come by since my dad's funeral. This farm is her fiefdom and she is the reigning queen, even though she has no subjects. It is not likely that she will buy into that plan."

"That is a good plan, but you are right. She won't want to buy into it. We'll cross that bridge in due time. I would like to speak with Nora tomorrow."

Nora did indeed arrange the meeting with her parents at noon and she would meet with Maeve at 10:30. Like she did with Liam, they planned a walk in the fields, so they could talk casually but privately.

Nora was waiting by the gate as Liam had arranged. Maeve parked the car and was greeted by a stunningly beautiful young lady and not the 'little Nora' that Mary described. Liam has chosen well, thought Mary. She parked the car inside the gate. Maeve observed that Nora was just starting to show, probably in the fourth month of her pregnancy.

"I am so glad to meet you and so glad that you are here to help us." said an excited Nora. "Liam told me about your talk and what a difference having you here has made in his home."

"That is good to hear, Nora. Helping my clients solve problems is my work. When I received my Aunt Mary's letter, I thought that a couple of weeks in Ireland would do me some good. Of course, she never mentioned what the terrible crisis was. It is certainly not terrible, and before we go on, let me give you my congratulations. I am thrilled to know there will be new life in our family."

"Thank you, Liam told me you took his breath away when you said that to him."

"It is the way I feel, Nora. God is your partner and you are working with him to create new life."

"The nuns at school always told us it was the greatest sin you could commit."

"Well, I can think of many that are far more severe. It would take moving the earth out of orbit to convince me that a normal, human act of love, not selfishness, but love, is sinful. I once gave a lot of thought to entering the convent. The nuns in America are doing terrific work and having fun at the same time. I'm very happy with the path I've chosen. I am not married but I would like to be someday. My current boyfriend is not marriage material."

"Enough about me. I have come to learn all about you. First of all, you look great. How do you feel?"

"Thank you, I feel great now. Morning sickness wasn't much fun, but I feel terrific."

"How do you feel about being pregnant?"

"The circumstances are really terrible. Liam and I chose to be lovers. Pregnancy was always a possibility. We never thought it would happen so soon. We have been talking about marriage. We knew that our parents would object, but I'll be eighteen in two months and free to make my own decisions. I just feel so badly that everyone isn't as happy as I am. Liam has a bigger problem than I have. There is no one to take care of his mom. My parents and my

mother's parents who live with us are very unhappy with the situation. They want me to go into a home for unfortunate women during the rest of my pregnancy and put the baby up for adoption. I will certainly do neither."

"Have you seen a doctor to make sure your pregnancy is developing all right?"

"No, but next week we are going to the hospital in Galway. We made the appointment last week. We'll eventually be living there."

"Liam and I talked about work. I hope you are prepared for the struggle that will be especially hard during the first years of your marriage."

"I've watched my family struggle on the farm for all my life. I worked side by side with them and my brothers. I'm used to hard work with low or no pay. Being a member of a farming family makes real demands on a person. I never resented it, but I do know it is a long day and a long year with very little to show for it. My family does better now that the boys are grown. My dad is slowing down and I can't see much of a future for my family. The boys will want to be moving on before long."

"Do your brothers really want to castrate Liam?"

"Ach, this is strictly man talk. I don't why they should be so offended except that they feel that it is the way brothers are supposed to act. If they tried to hurt Liam, I would beat the daylight out of them. You don't grow up with four brothers without knowing how to take care of yourself."

"We had better start back. I don't want to make a bad impression on your parents by being late."

"Ah, you'll like them. They are very uptight about this situation, but they are really nice, normal people. Remember, they are parents. They are supposed to act this way."

With a stiff politeness, Marguerite and Jeremiah O'Connor were waiting in the living room. Nora was bursting with enthusiasm after her walk and talk with Maeve. She introduced her parents. Jeremiah mentioned that he remembered her from her uncle's funeral as did Marguerite. Jeremiah was far more outgoing. Though Marguerite was prim, proper, and polite, she was not going to be anything but a deeply offended mother. She played that role perfectly.

"I'm sorry that we have to meet again under such tense circumstances," said Maeve. "My aunt feels the same way and it is obviously an unpleasant feeling."

"What would you expect under the circumstances," said Marguerite, a little more sharply than necessary.

"I had received a letter from my aunt and she sounded desperate. She asked me to come over to help with the crisis. I had no idea what the crisis was until I arrived."

"I had better explain my background and how I might be able to help. I am an attorney, following in my father's footsteps. You call us barristers over here and my work is Public

Relations. I help corporations address and solve problems they might have with their products or their employees.”

“That is a far step from an unwanted pregnancy,” muttered Marguerite.

“You would be quite surprised,” said Maeve, “especially when the people involved are officers in the company and are married to other people.”

“Glory be to God,” said Marguerite, “what kind of morals do Americans have?”

“Actually, we are very good people. Sometimes, like good people everywhere, some lose sight of their better nature. Once you take a bad step, it is hard to buy it back. Ireland and America have that in common.” said Maeve, pleased with herself that she addressed an insult with grace and dignity.

Jeremiah finally interjected much to Maeve’s relief. “Our plan is to have Nora enrolled in a rehabilitation home during her confinement and when the baby is born, give it up for adoption. Then Nora can return home, and everything will be as it was.”

“How does Nora feel about that,” asked Maeve.

“She is not happy with the plan, but she’ll get over it,” stated Jeremiah while his wife nodded in assent.

“Was Nora part of the discussion to formulate this plan?”

“No, when we tried to speak with her about it, she rejected the idea outright. But she is just a child, she’ll get over it.” said he.

“Are you sure that Nora is just a child? I met a beautiful, sophisticated, and smart young woman this morning who is very much in love with the man she has chosen for a husband.”

“No, No, that can’t be.” gasped Marguerite. “We’ll never give our permission for that.”

“In two months, she won’t need your permission. They will marry anyway. You run the risk of losing your daughter as well as your grandchild.”

Jeremiah quickly spoke up, “But we never would have chosen Liam to be her husband.”

“Ah, but you raised your child to be the beautiful person that she is, so that she could make her own decisions about her life. You don’t get to make her choices,”

“But that isn’t the way we were married,” cried Marguerite.

“You were lucky to be given over to a man you could love for a lifetime. You have built a fine family and worked very hard to accomplish what you have. The world has changed, though. Women have rights they never had before. Ireland is still catching up”

“How will they ever live, asked Jeremiah? “That farm of Liam’s can barely support the two people who live on it.”

“He knows that, Mr. O’Connor. Liam plans to sell the farm and become an electrician. He will take courses at Galway University to become certified. Every place in Ireland will soon be rebuilt. His prospects are excellent. Nora has plans as well. She will work with a day care facility and work toward becoming a teacher. They are going to Galway next week to visit a doctor to check the baby’s progress and lay the groundwork for their plans.”

“She didn’t tell us that those were her plans,” said Jeremiah.

“You didn’t give her much of a chance,” responded Maeve “you were making plans for her confinement,”

“Mr. and Mrs. O’Connor, do you love your daughter? Do you want her and her husband and children to be part of your life? I won’t presume to tell you what to do. I think you should discuss it with Nora and preferably with Liam. Nora has my phone number and she can tell me what your talk together has accomplished.”

Nora rang about two hours later. She had a very civilized talk with her parents and they agreed to support her plans with Liam.

“Congratulations Nora. Your parents have made a wise, though difficult choice. You were right. They are two wonderful people. It wasn’t a hard decision to make because they love you and they want you to be part of their lives. They thought it through and it was their choice to make. Let’s go in and visit with the parish priest tomorrow. I’ll join you, but you and Liam should make all the arrangements. Then we’ll deal with my aunt tomorrow at tea time. Be sure you make peace with your brothers. By the way, when do you want to get married?”

“We’ll work that out with the priest, said Nora. I know I’ll need some kind of dispensation because of my age.”

“I’m sure he’ll work that out.”

Nora drove back to the farm feeling very satisfied that the family crisis was resolved at least with Nora’s family. The last piece to complete this picture was Aunt Mary.

Dave called to report that everything was going well at the office. Maeve’s tour of client visits had already yielded one referral. When I told them that you were vacationing out of the country, they just said there is not a problem. We’ll meet her when she returns.

“That’s great, Dave. Assign Jim to research the company in depth so we can be prepared for the meeting. Keep an eye on him. I want him to sharpen his research skills, but I would like to do it without bullying.”

Liam told Mary that Nora would be coming for tea this evening. That sent her into a dither. She had to clean the whole house so that the O’Conner’s could speak well of her. She had no idea of the activity of the last two days.

Their dinner went surprisingly well. Maeve regaled them with stories of the people she met in her work, the historical romance that is Philadelphia, funny stories of her family life, especially her mother, and in general set the scene for the tense discussions that were sure to follow.

“It is hard to believe that little Bridget would have such a prominent life, said Mary. She was always a little dreamy when she was a child. There were times when we couldn’t get a lick of work out of her.”

Maeve responded, “now that I am an adult, I can look back on her life in awe. When she left here, she took a daring leap into the unknown. Settling in Philadelphia was like settling into a different planet. You have a village of a few hundred people here. She moved into a city of millions of people. She didn’t have specific plans for the future, yet she created a beautiful life for herself. She started without any money but worked hard to earn every step she took. She took a menial job in the cafeteria of Chestnut Hill College. She wasn’t paid much but she had free tuition and a dormitory room. She had a lot of catching up to do but her friends tell me she was a good student because she worked so hard at it. Chestnut Hill is an all-girls school, but she made good friends and had a proper social life. She met my father when he was a Law student at Villanova.”

“That is quite a story,” said Nora. “It is little wonder that you are the independent woman you are.”

“Mom is a great role-model. She taught me everything that is worth while just by being Mom.”

It was time and Liam grabbed the moment.

“Ma, Nora and I would like to tell you our plans. We are going to be married. We have talked with her parents and they have given us their blessing. We’ll be meeting with Father Martin tomorrow to make the arrangements.”

Mary sat stunned and just stared into space.

“We would like your blessing as well.”

“You’re going to meet the priest. Glory be to God, what will he think of us?”

“I expect that he will think very well of us.”

“Where will you live. I hope you don’t expect me to be chasing after the little bastard.”

Shock registered on the faces of Maeve and Nora. Liam gently bit his tongue and took a deep breath.

“Not at all. I’ll have to sell the farm and we’ll be living in Galway.”

“No,” Mary gasped, “Sell the farm! Your father poured out his life’s blood for this farm. He lay face down in the field and breathed in the dirt of this earth with his last breath. What kind of son are you anyway? Oh, how did we go so wrong with you? Did O’Connor out you up to this? He always wanted this field.”

“No Ma, Mr. O’Connor has no interest in this field. In fact, he is considering retirement himself,” said Liam in the some gentle, even voice in spite of the insult. “You know as well as I

do, Ma, that this farm can't support us anymore. Sean and Brendan knew that seven years ago. That is why they moved on."

Mary started to sob, "Oh what will become of me?"

"Hear me out Ma, Nora and I will live in Galway. Nora will work with a day care center and I will work at maintenance or in a restaurant like Sean did while I study at Galway University for my electrician's license. There is a senior citizen's community near Salt Hill. You can have your own cottage, be with people your age, be part of a lively community, with shows and movies. You will have a television and a telephone."

"The telephone is the devil's instrument."

"It is just a tool for keeping in touch with your friends and children."

Mary started sobbing again, "I never thought I would see the day when my children would put me away in an old ladies' home. I'll not hear another word of this disgrace. I'm going to my room."

After Mary left, Liam noted that the conversation did not go well. "On the contrary," said Maeve. "That was magnificent. I am so proud you are my cousin. You kept your cool and delivered your message. It is up to Aunt Mary to think about it and make a decision. We'll ask the priest to come and visit with her. We'll tell him the whole story because she is certain to change it."

Father Martin looked like he came out of central casting. He was tall and muscular, with brown curling hair greying at the temples. According to Liam he worked hard. He was on every community committee and was recognized as a wise leader. He made it his business to know everyone in the mountain area. While he was involved with everything, there was still precious little to consume time and energy. Maeve made it a point to find out what occupied his day.

He greeted them warmly and led them into his parlor. Liam introduced Maeve as his closest cousin. And Maeve responded that she was just there to help out, if necessary.

"And what is it that you do in America when you're not just helping out?"

Maeve laughed and said, "Ironically, that is my job. I am an attorney or what you would call a barrister. I don't practice law, but I can. I have my own public relations firm. I help companies when they have communications, personnel, or product problems. My work is similar to yours."

"Except that I work with families and celebrate sacraments."

"I would love to celebrate sacraments."

"Ah, a woman after my own heart."

Be careful with your answer, thought Maeve. There are several meanings in that statement. She simply smiled and said, "thank you."

He raised one eyebrow and turned his attention to Nora and Liam.

“Nora, I expect that you are about to break the heart of every young man in these mountains.”

Ah, Father, the only heart I care about beats in Liam’s breast. We are here to make arrangements to marry, with complications.

Together, Nora and Liam told him their entire story.

“You know that being pregnant is not necessarily a reason to marry.”

“Father, it was the path to marriage that led to this pregnancy.”

“Liam spoke up saying. It might sound foolish to say so, Father, but this child was conceived in love, not lust.

Nora, how old are you.” I am just two months shy of my 18th birthday. However, we have my parent’s blessing.”

“When do you want to celebrate your wedding?”

Nora looked at Liam and asked, “How about next Thursday.”

“Why did you pick Thursday?”

“Because Maeve is going home on Friday and I would like her to be the Maid of Honor.”

Maeve was in the group listening to everything and you could have knocked her over with a feather. “Of course, I am honored to be the Maid of Honor.” She got up from her chair and hugged Nora.

“None of this would have been possible without you.”

“How do you feel about four Best Men, Father? Nora’s brothers will be less inclined the murder me if they have a role in the ceremony.”

“Would you like a Nuptial Mass or a simple ceremony?”

Nora looked at Liam who nodded, yes.

“Then a Nuptial Mass it is Father. I’d like that, and I know our parents would as well.”

“And speaking of parents, there is one more complication,” said Liam.

They spent the next half hour telling the story of Mary.

“You have planned well,” said Fr. Martin.

“Aunt Mary has to be part of the plan both for her sake and the peace of Liam and Nora,” said Maeve. “She can’t live alone. Even with help, the farm can’t support her.”

“I know the complex you are speaking of in Salt Hill. It is rather nice,” said Fr. Martin. “I’ll go out tomorrow and visit with Mary. I can’t make a promise, but I’ll do what I can.”

“I would like to meet with you and Nora on Monday afternoon. I want to discuss Christian marriage with you. We can also take care of the necessary paper work. Get your marriage license by tomorrow. You’ll need your parent’s letter of permission and a copy for my files.”

By the way, Maeve, I write in my spare time. I write poetry, novels, short stories, historical essays, and about anything that catches my fancy.”

Maeve blushed, “and you read minds.”

“No, I spent a year in Chicago getting a masters at Loyola. I know how hectic an American parish can be. It is not unusual for visitors to ask that. But if you prefer mind-reading, I’ll go along with that. “

“Dear God, I hope not” And they parted with everyone laughing at the trivial flirtation.

Maeve left the next day for Galway City and the music festival. She made arrangements with Liam to meet for dinner when they came into the city the following Tuesday. She made reservations in a restaurant overlooking the bay, near the docks where all the tourists hang out. The area is as close as you can get to a town square. On one corner is a private school where only the Irish language is spoken. Across the square all the tourist busses are lined up for the morning trips. As many times that she has been to Ireland, Maeve always took tourist trips because she loved the stories. In Galway, most of the tourist leaders are bi-lingual Connemarans and they tell the best stories.

Nora and Liam arrived at the restaurant just after Maeve, brimming with enthusiasm over the progress of their day. The doctor’s visit went well, and the baby is doing fine. Nora pulled photos of the ultra sound from her purse.

“These are the baby’s first pictures, a darling little girl. “

“Father Martin did visit with Mom. He had a file of the Salt Hill Estates. Apparently, there are a lot of retirements among his flock and he keeps a file of retirement options. I explained a lot of what you explained to her, but the catalogue photos were the selling point. She’ll live a life of grandeur there, much more so than she ever had at the farm. She was worried about the cost of it all.

Maeve suggested that she had a plan. You and Nora will have to live at the farm until it is sold and that will take a while. I should have a solution by next week.

“She almost had a heart attack when he told her about the Nuptial Mass. She told him that God would strike him with lightning before the Gospel.”

Nora said that her parents will host a wedding breakfast at the O’Connor home and that we could invite anyone we wanted.

Liam chimed in, “Sean and Brendan are coming for the wedding. It will be their first visit since they left for England.”

“Isn’t it grand that everything worked out. Now you can concentrate on just living your lives,” said Maeve.

“We would have been mired in the muck if it wasn’t for you. I don’t know how we can ever repay you.

“Just be happy, be loving, and be open to God’s future and love that child as if she is a special angel, because that is just what she is.”

Maeve called her mother to talk about the events of the week. Midnight in Ireland is supertime in Philadelphia.

“Do you think dad might want to park an investment in a retirement home for Aunt Mary. You would own the cottage and she would never have to know that.”

“That sounds interesting. We’ll talk about that. Is she still an old skinflint?”

“All of that and more,” laughed Maeve.

“She hasn’t changed a bit in more than forty years.”

“She is part of another world that doesn’t exist anymore. As the world around her changed, she stood her ground. You were lucky to get out of there, Mom. “

“And don’t I know it. I thank God for that every day of my life.”

After a few days of persistent rain, Thursday was a beautiful day. The guests were all seated for the wedding. The four O’Connor groomsmen stood next to Liam at the side of the altar. Maeve stood at the entrance of the church with Nora and her father. Father Martin stood out of the way, so all attention would be directed to the bride.

The organist started a Bach wedding march and that was Maeve’s cue to begin the walk down the aisle. Maeve’s smile was brilliant as she slowly led the procession to the altar. Maeve stepped up to her seat near the altar and watched as a tearful Malachy escorted the radiant Nora to where Liam had stepped out to the center of the aisle. Malachy kissed his daughter, took her hand and placed it in Liam’s left hand then shook his right hand. Malachy returned to his seat and Fr. Martin stepped to the front of the altar to greet the bride and groom. Maeve was positioned at the right side of the altar opposite the four best men on the other side.

Father Martin was a careful and deliberate liturgist, observed Maeve. His homily was beautiful. *As radiantly beautiful as Nora is and as handsome as Liam is, with the grace of God their love will mature and grow to become a source of brilliance, like a new star in our universe. The new life they have created and the children yet to come will be like satellites drawing life and strength from that brilliant star.*

Everyone applauded when they exchanged their vows and again at the final blessing.

Liam and Nora then led the procession to the outside of the church where they greeted their family and friends. The O'Connor boys greeted Liam with enthusiastic hugs to welcome him as their brother. Castration and murder were no longer on their minds. Mary was greeted as a person of dignity and importance. She too is at the precipice of an exciting new life as well.

Maeve had arranged to provide a honeymoon for Nora and Liam at a luxury lakeshore hotel in County Tyrone. If they leave on Monday, they will have the benefit of a six-day vacation. As guests progressed to their cars, Maeve grabbed Nora and Liam to discretely tell them of her gift. She even rented a car for them to use. Maeve didn't want anyone to know about her gift.

The wedding breakfast was elegant, and the O'Connor household was filled with unanticipated joy.

At precisely 1:00 PM, Maeve's phone rang. Maeve had forgotten to tell Susan not to telephone on Thursday. She stepped outside to take the call.

"It has been very quiet here," said Susan. "It is August, and nothing happens in August."

"I used to think that as well," said Maeve. "I just served as Maid of Honor for my cousin's wedding and avoided what would have been a human disaster."

Susan laughed, "Well then get back here. We need our rainmaker."

"Oh! There is one more thing, an impossibly handsome man stopped by the office yesterday to ask when you were expected to return."

"I hope he isn't an IRS agent."

"I don't think so. You wouldn't find an IRS agent in church and he said he was hoping to see you in church on Sunday. He left his card, Patrick Malone, Ph.D, St. Joseph's University."

"Hmmm, I see. Well, don't let cute features, a body like a Greek god, penetrating blue eyes, a brilliant mind, a good head of black, curly hair, and communication skills like the Angel Gabriel, distract you from the work at hand," laughed Maeve.

"I'll see you on Monday" said Susan. "I'm going to ask you for details about the sermon."

As Maeve walked back into the house, she thought that maybe August magic would strike her as well.

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Literature

Who wrote "Angela's Ashes"?	Frank McCourt
What followed Paddy Clarke in the title of Roddy Doyle's Booker Prize winner?	Ha Ha Ha
The Tara Road was written by which novelist?	Maeve Binchy
What is the name of Frank McCourt's follow-up memoir to "Angela's Ashes"?	'Tis
What was the title of Bram Stoker's first novel?	"The Primrose Path"
In which northern county was Nobel Poetry Laureate Seamus Heaney born?	Derry
Which Irish poet was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1923?	WB Yeats
When is Bloomsday? (Ulysses)	June 16th
Who wrote the poem 'I am Ireland'?	Padraig Pearse
Which initials did poet Yeats have?	W. B.
James Joyce's first novel shares it's name with which inhabitants of an Irish city?	Dubliners
Who was the author of Gulliver's Travels?	Jonathan Swift
The <i>Book of Kells</i> was written in what language?	Latin
Where is the Book Of Kells on display?	Trinity College, Dublin
Who wrote the Importance Of Being Earnest?	Oscar Wilde
What was the first name of the playwright Beckett?	Samuel
Which Seamus became Ireland's fourth Nobel literary laureate in 1995?	Heaney

Who wrote Juno and the Paycock?	Sean O'Casey
Peig Sayers' autobiography is one of the most read pieces of Irish literature. Why was this a unique achievement for her?	Peig was illiterate but she dictated her story to her son
Roddy Doyle wrote of the Woman Who Walked Into what?	Doors
Who was being 'Waited for' in the Samuel Beckett play?	Godot
Name the estate in Colleen McCullough's <i>Thorn birds</i> ?	Drogheda
What animal was Pangur Bán in the poem of that name?	A cat
Who was the author of both 'The Butcher Boy' and 'The Dead School'?	Patrick McCabe
In which city was Bram Stoker born?	Dublin
In which century was the poet Yeats born?	19th
"The Field" was written by which Irish playwright?	John B. Keane
Who wrote The Pygmalion that was adapted into My Fair Lady?	George Bernard Shaw
What was the Irish writer AE also known as?	George Russell
Which Irish poet was killed at the Battle of Ypres in World War 1?	Francis Ledwidge

Rochester IACI Updates

2018 - 2019 Board Members

President: Michael E. McCarthy

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Secretary: Gail Kindlon

Kathleen Russell

Katherine Mahon Flynn

Dolores Federation

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Three upcoming October events:

1. **Sean Tyrell**

Irish folk and traditional musician

Free - Donations accepted

October 6, 2018 @ 7:00 p.m.

St. John Fisher College, Basil Hall - Golisano Gateway

Use parking lot "F" follow signage

2. **"Philadelphia Here I Come"**

Monthly film and dinner

Members: \$20 / Non members: \$25

October 7, 2018 @ 4:00 p.m.

St. John Meadows

1 Johnsarbor Dr.

Rochester, NY 14620

3. **Gabriel Fitzmaurice**

Irish Poet and author

Free - Donations accepted

October 12, 2018 @ 7:00 p.m.

St. John Fisher College, Basil Hall - Golisano Gateway

Use parking lot "F" follow signage

For further information: www.rochesteriaci.org

The John O'Sullivan Memorial Film Series

at
St. John's Meadows
1 Johnsarbor Dr W.
Rochester, NY 14620

October - April
2018-19
4:00 - 7: 00 p.m.

October 7th:

Philadelphia, Here I Come

95 min. 1975

Based on the stage play by Brian Friel and filmed in Ireland with an all Irish cast includes Donal McCann, Des Cave, Siobhan McKenna. The hero is leaving for Philadelphia. His alter ego tells the truth while the "public man" hides his emotions.

November 4th:

The Boxer

117 min. 1997

Young Danny Flynn is released from prison after 14 years. After "taking the rap" for the IRA, he returns to Belfast and tries to rebuild his life.

Stars Daniel Day-Lewis and Emma Watson. Directed by Jim Sheridan

January 6th:

The Journey

94 min. 2017

A gripping account of how two enemies, Martin McGuinness (Colm Meaney) and Ian Paisley (Timothy Spall) find humanity in one another. Could peace be possible?

February 10th:

A Love Divided

98 min. 1999

Oral Brady and Liam Cunningham star in this true story of a Catholic, Protestant marriage that runs into conflict with the parish priest.

March 3rd:

War of the Buttons

94 min. 1995

When rival gangs of Irish kids win a battle, they remove the buttons and laces of the losers. Trouble is sure to follow!

April 7th:

Sing Street

116 min. 2016

End the season with music and comedy! A Dublin boy starts a band to impress a mysterious girl.

ON THIS DAY IN IRISH HISTORY – SEPTEMBER

- 1st** **1913** - Protest by locked-out workers lead to serious riots in Dublin.
1939 - A state of emergency is declared by the Irish government.
1974 - Transition Year is introduced as a pilot scheme in three schools.
1994 - Transition Year is introduced to all secondary schools.
- 2nd** **1933** - United Ireland Organisation founded. It is to adopt the name of 'Fine Gael'.
- 3rd** **1939** - The Emergency Powers Act comes into force as Britain declares war on Germany.
- 4th** **1907** - Sinn Féin disrupt an Irish Parliamentary Party meeting.
1967 - CIÉ, a scheme for free school transport for older students, is introduced.
- 5th** **1926** - 48 people die in a temporary cinema in Dromcolliher when it catches fire.
1954 - KLM Flight 633 crashes leaving Shannon airport, killing 27 people.
- 6th** **1899** - The Countess of Shaftesbury laid the foundation stone of St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast.
1994 - John Hume, the Taoiseach Albert Reynolds and Gerry Adams meet to pledge support for democracy.
- 8th** **1893** - Second Home Rule Bill rejected by the Lords.
1908 - Patrick Pearse founds St Enda's school.
1921 - David Lloyd George makes a final offer to Éamon de Valera.
- 9th** **1887** - Three men killed by the police at an Irish National League demonstration at Mitchelstown.
1922 - First meeting of the Provisional Parliament (Third Dáil).
- 10th** **1928** - Irish pound issued.
- 12th** **1919** - The Dáil Éireann is declared illegal.
1938 - Éamon de Valera is elected President of the Assembly of the League of Nations.
1997 - Mary Robinson resigns as President of Ireland to take up a post at the United Nations.
- 13th** **1845** - *Gardener's Chronicle* announces that the potato blight has appeared in Ireland.
- 14th** **1921** - Sinn Féin put together a delegation to meet Lloyd George in London; it includes Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith.
- 17th** **1913** - Edward Carson declares that a Provisional Government will be set up if Home Rule is enacted.

- 18th 1867** - Thomas J. Kelly and Timothy Deasy escape while being transferred to jail in Manchester.
1922 - Constitution of Saorstát Éireann Bill introduced by W. T. Cosgrave.
- 19th 1923** - Fourth Dáil meet for the first time at Leinster House.
- 20th 1803** - Execution of Robert Emmet.
- 22nd 1959** - First conference of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, which is not recognised by Northern Ireland.
- 23rd 1992** - The IRA destroys Belfast's forensic science laboratory.
- 25th 1971** - Rally in Dublin in support of civil disobedience in Northern Ireland.
- 26th 1932** - Éamon de Valera gives his inaugural speech as President of the League of Nations.
- 27th 1913** - 12,000 Ulster Volunteers parade at Balmoral to protest Home Rule.
- 28th 1912** - 'Ulster Day' on which the Ulster Covenant is signed.
- 29th 1979** - Pope John Paul II arrives in Ireland for a three-day visit.