

at least no open enmity was shown her. She had grown into a slim slip of a girl, with wild-rose cheeks and gray eyes full of dreams and laughter. She was not tall; stalwart Danny Doolan, from his six feet of young manhood, easily looked down upon the mass of red-gold curls that crowned her small head, but she held herself erect and walked lightly and springily, "swayin' in the wind like a harebell on its stalk," thought Danny as he watched her.

He had never wavered in his devotion to her since their first meeting and no one who watched Mary Ellen's face sparkle and soften at sight of him could doubt that his affection was returned. They were but waiting until he had completed the purchase of the fishing boat, a half share of which, together with a tumbledown cottage and a tiny patch of garden, had come to him upon his father's death.

But of late things had not been going well with Danny. Of more active mentality and quicker wits than those with whom he must associate, the monotony of life in the little village fretted him sorely. More and more often of an evening his steps were turned towards O'Hare's shebeen, which stood at the end of the straggling village street. Here, in the small front room with its plastered walls and smell of stale liquor, might be found light, laughter and whatever news reached that out-of-the-way spot. Occasionally a stranger from overseas would come to the village and put up for a day or two at O'Hare's and Danny would listen with avidity to his tales of the outside world. Such glimpses, however, only served to rouse to a more dangerous heat the fires of unrest that burned within him.

There was a shadow in the soft depths of Mary Ellen's eyes in these days and her low laugh was less frequent than of old. But Danny, who a year ago would have been quick to notice the change, saw nothing. More and more often he left O'Hare's with unsteady feet and bemused brain,

angrily resenting Mary Ellen's entreaty when he sought her:

"Ah, go home with you, Danny. 'Tis not yourself you are the night. It scalds my heart you to be going ever to that place. Go home with you now if you would wish to have me happy."

"Is it grudging me all pleasure in life you are?" he would reply hotly. "Sure, 'tis little enough a man does be gettin' in this desolate place, the way you would be takin' that little from me, Mary Ellen Conerty." Then he would fling away from her, leaving her hurt and angry, until at their next meeting he would come with eager words of repentance and endearment to be forgiven once more.

At last the blow fell. Mary Ellen, waiting in vain all through the hours of one evening at their usual meeting place, felt in her heart that a crisis had come and so was not taken wholly by surprise when her old-time enemy, Katy Hagarty, called to her as she passed down the village street next morning. Katy had grown into a buxom womanhood, full of a certain blowsy comeliness. Her eyes were sparkling and her cheeks flushed with excitement.

"Has yourself not heard the news this morning, Mary Ellen?" she said, as Mary Ellen paused at her summons.

Mary Ellen's pale cheeks flushed a little as she detected the undernote of malicious pleasure in the voice. "I have heard no news, Katy Hagarty," she answered.

"Shure, it was last night at O'Hare's there were the wild doings," went on Katy, her eyes fixed on Mary Ellen's face. "Black Tim Kerrigan was nearly killed. . . . 'Tis dyin' he is this morning, and Danny Doolan the one that did it. Faith, if Tim dies, 'tis short shrift he will be gettin' when the polis catch him."

Mary Ellen's gray eyes met the black ones scornfully and her voice never faltered. "'Twill be small loss to Ballyheigue, I'm thinkin', Tim Kerrigan to die. But he won't. The devil looks after his own."