


A COUNTY WICKLOW MYSTERY

FUGITIVE FROM INJUSTICE



ROBERT T. McMASTER

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by Robert T. McMaster

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**FUGITIVE FROM INJUSTICE:
A COUNTY WICKLOW MYSTERY**

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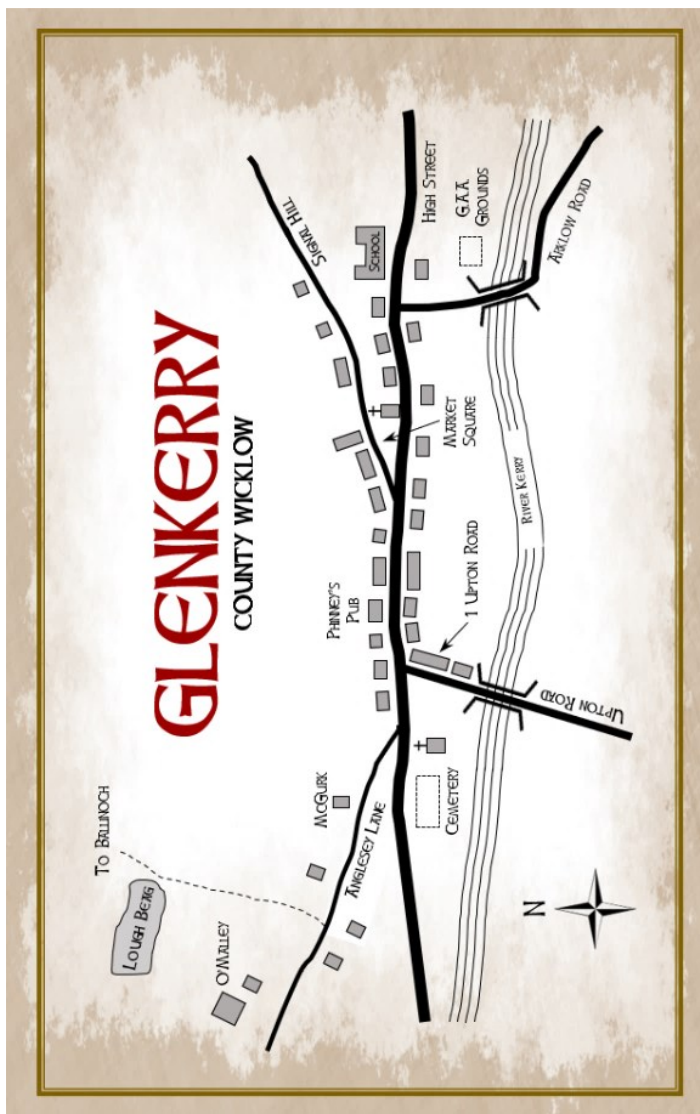
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Preview



Dedicated to
Hannah Hughes McGurk
(1821 – 1884)



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*'There are no strangers here,
only friends you haven't met yet.'*

William Butler Yeats



1 LOST CATS AND JUMBLE SALES

Cary McGurk and Rosie O'Malley stepped out of the Fishmonger on the High Street in Glenkerry carrying their takeaway supper in a brown paper bag. They walked together past a row of lime-washed storefronts—a launderette, a beauty salon, an estate agency—before entering a white two-storey stone building with black quoins at the intersection of High Street and Upton Road, the offices of the *Glenkerry Gazette*.

Cary's father, Patrick McGurk, had published the *Gazette* in that modest building for nearly three decades, beginning in the days of manual typesetting and offset printing. The information age was slow to invade Glenkerry—even in the early years of the new millennium Patrick resisted the inevitable process of computerization. But competition from online news and social networking proved too much for both man and newspaper. It was a sad occasion, some five years past, when the last issue of the *Gazette* went to press—sad for Patrick, sad for his family, and sad for the citizens of Glenkerry.

Then, just two months ago, the *Glenkerry Gazette* got a new lease on life. Twenty-one-year-old Ciaran McGurk, encouraged by his mother, by Rosie, and by many townspeople, decided to revive the newspaper. It seemed a fitting homage to his father who died in early June, just one day before Cary's graduation.

The ground floor of 1 Upton Road that housed the *Gazette* offices consisted of three small rooms furnished with a ragtag collection of desks, chairs, grey file cabinets, and several rickety bookshelves containing a few old reference books: the 2010 *World Almanac*, a 1980s edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and a *Philip's World Atlas* that included a map of the U.S.S.R. and its fifteen Soviet Socialist Republics.

At the top of a steep, narrow flight of stairs was a small flat with a sitting room, bedroom, and kitchen, the place that Cary now called home. It too was furnished sparsely, largely with items Cary had purchased at used furniture shops in Bray and Dublin.

At the rear of the building a wooden table stood on a tiny patch of grass with a view of the River Kerry. There Cary and Rosie sat in the late afternoon sun, their fish, chips, and mushy peas spread on a serviette before them.

'So, you excited about your new job, Rosie?' asked Cary. He cast her a doubtful gaze, struggling to imagine Rosie O'Malley, the epitome of sweetness and light, in that particular role.

'Yeah, sure,' she replied confidently. 'I mean, I know the place, right? And I can ride my bike to work—that's a big plus.' She paused, munching on a chip. 'We'll see how it goes. Anyway, I can't just stay at home weeding the garden and feeding the chickens the rest of my life, can I? I need some regular income.'

Rosie was now the sole occupant of her family's home on Anglesey Lane, a short distance west of the centre of Glenkerry. Her father, Harry O'Malley, had died in July. Her mother, Mary O'Malley, was living in Galway now with Gerald Flaherty, an old flame from her school days. She had left Harry last spring after enduring his abuse and neglect for many years, leaving Rosie alone in the family homestead.

‘What does your ma think about your new job? Have you told her?’

‘I talked to her a bit last evening. She thinks it’s a good idea.’

‘She and Gerry doing okay?’

‘Yep, just fine. They invited me to visit, maybe on Michaelmas weekend.’

‘What about the house? Any news?’

Only after her father’s death had Rosie learned that her parents had never been legally married. Harry, it turned out at the time of his death, was still married to a woman from Wexford. He left no will, but the nearly thirty years that Mary and Harry lived together seemed to leave the way clear for Mary to inherit the property.

Rosie shook her head. ‘No, but she thinks it will be hers in just a few weeks, if the probate court approves. Then she says she’ll sign it over to me and Buddy.’

Buddy O’Malley was Rosie’s younger brother. Just nineteen, he was living with his girlfriend Danielle in Shankill and working in a garage in Dalkey. They had an older brother, now twenty-five, but Jimmy O’Malley was serving several sentences in a prison in Dublin for drugs offences and did not figure in his family’s plans.

‘So, is the next issue of the *Gazette* almost ready to go?’ asked Rosie. She knew the weekly went to press on Tuesdays.

Cary shook his head. ‘No, not nearly,’ he groaned. ‘I’ve got so much work to do. Plus the printer will be wanting to be paid, of course, and I’m skint-flat broke. My ma will lend me the cash, if I ask, but she’s sunk so much into this place, and helped me with most of my August bills, so I hate to ask her again.’

‘Well, you must have *some* income, right?’ asked Rosie.

He picked distractedly at the last piece of battered monkfish. Rosie had noticed a certain darkening of Cary's mood in recent weeks. She had a feeling she had hit on the source of his gloom.

'Yeah, subscriptions and advertising, but they're all so slow. Meanwhile I gotta pay the printer, insurance, the electricity bill.'

He buried his head in his hands for a moment, as if trying to fend off all the bad news.

'My big mistake was that special offer for new subscribers, yeh know?' He spread both hands to suggest a banner headline: '*Get the first four issues free—then we'll bill you for a one-year subscription.*'

'But I thought you said you were surprised at the response.'

Cary nodded. 'Well, yeah. There were over six hundred takers—for those four free weeks.' He rolled his eyes to emphasise his point. 'But the subscription bills went out two weeks ago and so far I've received only a few dozen payments. What if that's it? Fewer than one hundred paid subscribers?'

He shuddered, then took a deep breath. 'A good story's what I need. Something other than lost cats and jumble sales. Something that will get people interested, make them want to buy the paper.' He paused, then added with a chuckle, 'Maybe even make a few subscribers feel obligated to *actually pay.*'

'It'll happen, Car. Everyone in Glenkerry wants the *Gazette* to succeed—they want *you* to succeed. They'll come through, I'm sure of it.'

She stood, took his hand, and led him out across the small patch of grass to that view of the river, its waters roiling as they passed beneath the Upton Road bridge. The distant hills were bathed in the late day sun, each pasture a different hue of green or gold, the sky beyond a stunning turquoise. She wrapped her arms around Cary's waist and kissed him.

‘Trust me, they will,’ she added.

Gazing into her green eyes, then at her plaits of auburn hair turned golden in the sunlight, he couldn’t help but smile. ‘Yeah, you’re right—or at least I hope you are, else the *Glenkerry Gazette* and Cary McGurk are goin’ down—hard.’

‘Walk me up the hill?’ she asked.

‘You could stay here tonight, yeh know.’

She smiled shyly, holding one of his hands in hers and stroking it softly. ‘Thank you, Car. I’d love to. But I got animals to feed. And I need a good night’s sleep.’

‘What, you’re saying you wouldn’t get a good night’s sleep here?’ he asked with an innocent grin.

‘Yeah, well, we both know how that goes, eh?’ She blushed. ‘On the weekend—Friday night, Saturday night—I promise we can lie in all we want, okay?’

They walked up Anglesey Lane hand-in-hand, past Cary’s mother’s house, to the O’Malley farmhouse a short distance beyond. At Rosie’s front door they said their final goodbyes.

‘Oh, I’m running on the beach in the morning—early,’ added Cary. ‘Hope to get my head in a better place, yeh know?’

This is good, thought Rosie, self-help—he knows he needs to pull himself out of this funk.

‘Okay, well, I’ll stop by the office on my way ‘ome, half-three or so—if I survive my first day, that is.’

Cary smiled. ‘I hope everything goes well for you. Just remember my advice: don’t so much as crack a smile for at least a month, Rosie.’ She contorted her sweet smile into an ogrish glower. They both laughed.

‘*Slán agat,*’ said Cary.

‘*Slán leat,*’ replied Rosie.



The Black Castle



2 RUNNER'S HIGH

The placid waters of the Irish Sea shine dark green in the pre-dawn light as Cary descends the stone steps to the beach at Wicklow town the next morning. He's wearing tan gym shorts, a pair of well-worn runners, and a t-shirt sporting the profile of his idol, Irish songster Van Morrison.

He stands for several minutes taking in the scene before him. Sunrise is still a few minutes away, but the eastern horizon is already streaked with crimson, pink, and blue. High on a rocky promontory to the north stands Black Castle, waves heaving and ebbing at its base. According to archaeologists, the original fortress at that site dated back nearly a thousand years to Viking times. The structure was destroyed several times, then rebuilt on the same site. All that remains today are several sections of stone wall, the mortar holding them in place having been repaired many times.

To the south a long narrow strip of sand stretches into the distance. Cary kicks off his runners and leaves them in the sand, then begins his barefoot run along the beach. All is stillness but for the raucous calls of herring gulls soaring over the shallows, searching for a meal.

This beach holds a special place in Cary's childhood memories. Many were the times his father took him and his brother Aiden on early morning rambles here. The pungent smell of the salty air, the thunderous crash of the waves, and the warmth of his father's

hand around his, those sensations feel just as fresh now as they did all those years ago.

Cary is missing his father these days. Patrick McGurk died suddenly after a series of strokes over two days back in June. The empty feeling Cary felt in his chest that day remains even now, a visceral reminder of his loss that all the sympathy he and his mother received, all those gifts of meat pie and aubergine lasagna, could not assuage. Revisiting this beach at sunrise is his way of calling up those memories, of holding them, examining them, reliving them.

For days he has wished for a break from his worries about the *Gazette*, for a chance to fill his lungs with fresh sea air and perhaps rejuvenate his flagging spirits. And right now a run at Travelhawk Beach feels like a remedy, a badly needed antidote, for his malaise.

He runs for nearly half an hour in the firm, moist sand just above the tideline, the wind at his back, only occasionally dodging small rafts of seaweed and the odd piece of driftwood lying partially buried in the sand. As he runs, he tries not to dwell on his worries and self-doubts. Instead he conjures up images of him and his brother wading gingerly in the shallows, then retreating hastily as a wave approaches, of his father picking up a crab, then wincing and releasing the many-legged creature with a loud 'ouch' when it pinches his finger, father and sons laughing together.

Finally he pauses and rests, gazing out at the rising sun and the thin line of the coast of Wales now visible to the east. He is thinking of Rosie, soon to be off to the first day at her new job on this September morning. And his mother, Catherine McGurk, kneeling in dew-soaked trousers, pulling weeds in her flower garden.

He turns, then begins his return run, now with an icy wind in his face that makes his eyes water. When he passes the Wicklow Head Lighthouse, he knows he is approaching his starting point.

Finally he arrives at the cove where he began his run, in the shadow of the Black Castle. He stops and bends forward, hands on knees, trying to catch his breath.

A good workout clears the brain, cleanses the body, lends a certain euphoria, he thinks. Which is precisely what he needs right now.

Finally he straightens, catches one last lungful of the briny air, one last glimpse of the sea, before climbing the steps.

But at that moment he spots something out of the ordinary at the base of the nearly vertical cliff beneath the Black Castle. It's on the beach, right at the water line. It looks very much like a mound of seaweed, except that it is a little too big and rises a little higher above the sand than a mere clot of seaweed. It is dark like seaweed except for a small patch of bright red at the seaward end.

He walks toward that bulk, blinking to sharpen his view. As he approaches, the patch of red resolves into a single shoe, a runner, nearly covered with kelp but for a bit of exposed canvas. Then there emerges a whitish-grey patch, then a broader expanse of grey, then a mass of hair, dark, wet, with deep red splotches that make his stomach churn. It's a body, a man's body, wrapped in seaweed like a mummy that has been prepared for a watery grave.

Cary stands several feet away, stunned. His first impulse is to flee, to separate himself from this thing. He looks around frantically to see if anyone else is nearby, someone, anyone who might help him to make sense of what he is seeing. There is no one.

He steps forward slowly until he is looking down on it. The head is awash in a dark sticky mass, hair matted against the skull, face pressed into the sand. One arm is stretched out as if reaching

for a handhold against the surging tide. He leans down and touches the arm. The skin is cold, very cold, and stiff. He feels for a pulse—nothing.

As he watches, a crab scuttles over the body and a many-legged seaworm weaves among the hair. Suddenly Cary's breathing becomes laboured and he feels nauseated. He turns, walks a few steps away, bends over, and vomits forcefully and repeatedly into the water. He slumps down into the sand and sits for a moment, willing his stomach to settle.

Finally he reaches into his pocket, pulls out his mobile, and dials 9-9-9.

'Yeah, I—I need an ambulance, at Travelhawk Beach, the Black Castle. Right away. There's a man lying here, on the sand—I think he's dead.'

The emergency dispatcher asks a series of questions—his name, location, the time of the discovery, the appearance of the victim. Finally, the questions concluded, he is assured that help is already on its way. He is instructed to stay away from the victim and to keep his mobile on to help responders locate him.

He stands, still woozy, looking up toward the top of the steps, expecting at any moment to see gardaí or EMTs coming his way. Still there is no one in sight.

Then he turns and looks down at the man again. And in that instant his journalistic impulses kick in: he should take a photo. The very thought repulses him—the intrusion, the indecency, of photographing the dead. It feels like a violation, an invasion of privacy. Would he want his own bloodied corpse photographed, he asks himself?

At that moment a siren sounds in the distance. He looks up toward the headlands. Still seeing nothing, he turns back to the

body and snaps a photo, one single photo. He slips his mobile into his pocket just as two gardaí appear at the top of the steps.

* * *

A half hour later Cary was sitting on the sand, a bright green gardaí poncho wrapped around him. An ambulance crew had departed after examining the body while two gardaí cordoned off the area with yellow tape. Several other officers stood at the top of the steps turning away walkers and rubberneckers.

A garda, Sergeant Farrell, was questioning him about his arrival time, his exact route from motorcycle to beach, the route of his run and the time. When exactly had he first noticed the body? Did he approach the body? Did he touch it? Had he seen anyone else in the vicinity? Had he heard anything out of the ordinary?

Yes, he replied, he had approached the man. He had reached down and touched his right arm, felt for a pulse. The man's arm was cold and stiff. But he had seen no one else—he had heard not a sound.

Then followed a series of questions about himself, his full name, address, date of birth, occupation, etc. And the bike? A Ducati purchased during the summer following his first year at uni. He showed the garda his driver's licence and motorcycle registration.

'So you say you're a newspaper editor. What paper?'

'The *Glenkerry Gazette*,' replied Cary.

'Uh-huh,' replied the sergeant as he scribbled on his notepad.

Finally the sergeant thanked him, handed Cary his card, then told him he could go.

'I don't suppose they know who he is—the victim?' asked Cary.

‘Nope. No information on that yet. But the forensics team will be here soon from Dublin—they’ll try to get an ID.’

Cary stood up.

‘One more thing, Mr McGurk. Please don’t share any details of the victim in your newspaper—understand? The Press Office will probably release a statement later today.’

Cary nodded. ‘Yeah, sure. A course.’

* * *

When he returned to Glenkerry, Cary parked his motorcycle in his mother’s drive. She smiled when he walked through the door, her pale blue eyes twinkling.

‘Oh, love, I was just about to have a cuppa. Join me?’

He sat with her at the kitchen table and told her about his run on the beach.

‘I bet you had the place to yerself, yeah?’ she asked.

‘Not exactly.’ He sighed and buried his face in his hands.

‘What’s the matter, Car? What happened?’

Then he told her everything—the beach—the stillness—his memories of walking with his father and brother.

‘It was all so beautiful. And I had a good run. I felt better than I have in days. Yeh know, runner’s high?’

But then he got to the details of the body. He paused and swallowed, the emotions of that experience still washing over him. ‘There were crabs climbing on ‘im. It made me sick. I boked.’

‘Oh, dear, that musta been awful, love. What did you do?’

He told her of his call to 9-9-9 and the long wait—at least it seemed long—for the first garda car to arrive.

'The tide was rising and I was thinking if they don't come soon he'll be carried off by the waves—maybe I should move him up the beach. But fortunately the gardaí showed up then.'

'What did they do?'

'They knelt over the guy for a minute—then talked into their radios. Then one of them, a Sergeant Farrell, took me back to the steps and we sat in the sand while he asked me some questions and wrote up some notes.'

'What kind of questions?'

'Like what time I arrived at the beach—how far I ran—why I didn't have any shoes on.'

'You took off your shoes?'

'Yeah, when I run on the beach I like to run barefoot. It feels good. I think it's easier on my feet and ankles sometimes.'

'So, the dead man—was he young? Old?'

'Maybe thirties or so. White with darkish hair.'

'So, how did he die? Did he go over the cliff onto the rocks? Or did he, yeh know, fall off a boat, drown, then wash ashore?'

Cary shook his head. 'I don't know, Ma. It looked like he hit—like something hit his—his head—I didn't look too closely.'

He paused and closed his eyes, as if trying to banish the image from his memory.

'What was he wearing?'

'He was mostly covered with seaweed, but he had on a black t-shirt, grey trousers, and red runners. Oh, and one hand was stretched out on the sand. He was wearing a ring.'

He paused, thinking about the ring.

'I almost forgot, I snapped a photo with my mobile.' He sighed. 'I don't know why—as soon as I took it I felt kinda weird,

yeh know? Like a voyeur or something. Maybe I should delete it. I don't really wanna look at it.'

'May I see it, Car?'

Cary shook his head. 'Trust me, Ma, you don't wanna see it.'

'Did you show it to the garda?'

Cary thought for a moment. 'Nah. I forgot all about it. But what does it matter, anyway? Six or eight gardaí were there when I left—they've probably taken a million pictures.'

Back at 1 Upton Road, Cary climbed the stairs to his flat, then sat on his bed for several minutes thinking. Finally he dropped his shoes to the floor, flopped down on the bed, and pulled the covers up over his head.



3 YOUR WORST NIGHTMARE

Barely twenty kilometres from Dublin, the town of Glenkerry nestles among the verdant pasturelands of County Wicklow, its single main thoroughfare lined with modest buildings of granite, brick, and slate. To the casual visitor Glenkerry appears frozen in time, much like the agricultural centre it was a century ago. But a closer look reveals a subtle transformation. The shops on the High Street now include a day spa, an espresso stand, and a frozen yogurt vendor. Several of the many stone farmhouses scattered along narrow farm lanes outside of the village have been replaced by sprawling vacation homes belonging to wealthy urbanites, many of whom spend only a few days here a month.

And the people of Glenkerry bespeak change as well. On this September morning two women in flowing, brightly-coloured saris stroll along the footpath in the morning sun, then pause to greet an elderly gentleman in a turban just opening his shop. Further along the High Street three children with caramel skin and hair in delicate corn rows make their way along the footpath, their eyes wide in anticipation of the first day of the new school year.

Less than a kilometre down the road, the doors of *Coláiste Gaeilge*, Glenkerry's secondary school, have just opened for the first day of the new term. Students are shuffling into the art studio for the first lesson dressed in their school uniforms, blue-collared shirts, navy blue ties, and grey trousers for the boys, blue blouses

and pleated tartan skirts for the girls. Most look bleary-eyed, unceremoniously dropping their bookbags onto desks, slumping into seats, and groaning loud enough to be heard by one and all.

But there are a few exceptions. Two sixth year girls are bright-eyed and enthusiastic as they enter. Both have taken Visual Arts previously. They were particularly fond of Ms Brogan, their art teacher, and are looking forward to seeing her once again.

Their teacher is standing with her back to the class writing on the white board: *Visual Arts, MWF 8:30-10:05*. She is just starting to write her name when the pair step up behind her.

'Hello, Ms Brogan. We're back!' says Gráinne Phinney cheerily.

'Did you miss us over the summer?' asks Eileen Keough.

The teacher turns and smiles at the pair. Their jaws drop simultaneously. 'Rosie?' they say in unison.

'Uh, it's Ms O'Malley now, I'm afraid,' replies their teacher with a wink.

'You gotta be kiddin', what are you doin' here?' asks Gráinne, her green eyes wide with amazement, her freckled face framed by long reddish-brown curls.

'Ms Brogan is on maternity leave. I'm her replacement, for three months.'

'I don't believe it, you're gonna be our art teacher?' giggles Gráinne, her eyes shining. She turns to Eileen. 'This is gonna be a hoot.'

'Oh, is that what you think?' replies Rosie. 'Beware, girls,' she says, casting an exaggerated stern glare at the pair, the same look she practised on Cary the previous evening. 'I may look like a softy, but I could turn out to be *your worst nightmare*,' the last three words spoken with a ghoulish vibrato.

Gráinne shoots an impish grin at Eileen. ‘Soft-ee,’ she mouths long and slow, making certain that Rosie can see.

Rosie smiles, then turns to Eileen. ‘Your friend here seems to have forgotten that I was her babysitter when she was in nappies. But I would never embarrass her in front of her classmates by telling stories about little Gráinne now, would I?’ Her gaze pivots back to Gráinne. ‘And how she loved to run around the house naked?’

Gráinne’s cheeks turn beet red. ‘You wouldn’t dare, Rosie—I mean Ms O’Malley.’

‘Don’t count on it, Gran, don’t count on it.’ They all laugh. ‘Well, find seats you two. Class is about to start.’

* * *

Rosie distributed a course syllabus, then read the attendance roll, trying in this first class to attach a name to each unfamiliar face of the fifteen or so students seated before her. She was not entirely new to teaching; she taught several workshops for children at the arts centre in Wicklow one summer as well as a series of art classes for adults. But teaching a group of teens in a secondary school like *Coláiste Gaeilge*, this was a new challenge for her. She took a deep breath, then addressed the class slowly and clearly.

‘My name is Ms O’Malley. I’m filling in for Ms Brogan until she returns from maternity leave.’

‘Has she had her baby yet?’ asked Eileen.

‘No,’ replied Rosie. ‘But any day now.’

She reminded her students of the importance of being on time for class and about paying strict attention to her instructions. She discussed the school’s policies—showing respect for one another

and teachers—zero-tolerance for bullying and harassment, and all. Then she reviewed the new rules regarding mobiles. Students will be permitted to bring them to school, but they must remain turned off and out of sight while anywhere on school property, inside or out of doors. She heard some grumbling from several students.

‘Listen, you lot, I know some of you may not like it, but it is school policy now. You know it, and your parents know it. And I will strictly enforce it in this room. Is that clear?’ Again she put on that practised glare.

Next Rosie distributed pads of drawing paper, reminding her students that starting the following week they would need to bring their own art supplies to class. She had placed three tables near the windows. On one she had arranged four pieces of fruit—a pear, an apple, a banana, and a pomegranate—on another a vase with red, white, and yellow roses picked fresh from her garden that morning. On the third rested a pine bough with clusters of bright green needles and several cones with brown scales.

‘Okay, well, for the first few weeks you’ll have a chance to try out all sorts of media and techniques—drawing, painting, pen-and-ink, sculpting, printing. Later in the term you’ll get to do a project using whichever medium you wish.’ She pointed to the bulletin boards on two sides of the room. ‘Those are examples of the final projects of some of Ms Brogan’s students from last year.’

‘Here’s what I want you to do today. Just pick whichever subject interests you.’ She walked along the row of tables by the windows gesturing to the different objects placed there. ‘Fruit, flowers, or pine bough. Look them all over first before choosing. You’ll find drawing pencils of different weights plus a few charcoal markers—take your pick. You can use more than one if you like. And before you start you should think about your point of view,

the orientation of your subject on the paper, size, direction of light, shadow, texture, and so on. I'll come round to see how you're doing.'

After a few minutes of walking about and considering their choices, the students moved their chairs, then settled into their assignment.

Just then another student appeared at the classroom door, a short, slight girl with long, dark brown hair that partially hid her face. She stood warily as Rosie approached her, looking like a frightened deer that might turn and flee at any moment.

'And you are?' asked Rosie with a smile.

'Molly, Molly Boyle, miss.' She looked into Rosie's eyes only briefly, then averted her gaze.

'I don't see you on my printed roster, Molly.'

'I just registered yesterday,' explained the girl. 'The principal, Mr Forster, signed me up for Visual Arts.'

Rosie was looking at the updated class list on her tablet. 'Yep, yes, there you are. Well, Molly, my name is Ms O'Malley—welcome to *Coláiste Gaeilge*. You've just moved to Glenkerry, then?'

The girl nodded without looking up.

'Where'd you move from?' she asked, anxious to draw her out a little more.

'Cork.'

Rosie sensed that this particular student was not going to be easily engaged.

'Well, Molly, why don't you put your backpack on the table there, then grab a chair? I'll show you what we're doing this morning. Class, this is Molly Boyle. She's new. I hope you will make her feel welcome.'

For the next hour students worked at their drawings, some intently, others half-heartedly. Rosie walked among them, looking over shoulders, trying to find things about each drawing to praise while offering some advice about shading, texture, and technique.

At one point when Rosie was shuffling through the supply cupboard for more materials, two of the boys, Brendan and Noah, were leering at Gráinne and snickering.

‘Hey, Gran,’ whispered Brendan, ‘I hear next week we’ll be drawin’ nudes. Why don’t you volunteer to model?’

Gráinne had worked in her father’s pub since she was thirteen and was experienced at putting rude young men in their places. She shot the boy a dismissive look: ‘In your dreams, perv.’

‘Oh, you are, Gran, ev’ry night, fer sure,’ replied Brendan with a self-satisfied smirk. The two boys chuckled, but just then Rosie returned with additional supplies, finding everyone hard at work.

Eileen was struggling in an effort to capture the entire arrangement of roses. ‘I suck at drawing,’ she groaned. She looked up at Molly who was seated next to her, then down at the new girl’s paper.

‘Man, that is so good. How do you *do* that?’

Rosie heard Eileen’s exclamation and came over to have a look. Molly had chosen to draw just one rose blossom and several unopened buds. She had used a sharp pencil to define the edges of the flowers, then added shading with a broader point on its side so that the blossoms appeared to rise right off the page.

‘Oh, Molly, that is wonderful,’ noted Rosie. ‘Your shading is exquisite.’

Molly shrugged her shoulders. Several other students gathered around to admire Molly’s work.

‘Where did you learn to draw like that, Molly?’ asked Gráinne.

‘My mom mostly,’ she replied softly.

When the class ended, Rosie reminded her students that they would be using coloured pencils and pastels on Wednesday. She invited anyone who wished to do so to bring a bouquet or a single flower or any other colourful object that they would like to draw.

As the other students were leaving Gráinne and Eileen hung back and spoke again to Rosie.

‘You used ta play camogie, didn’t you, Rosie—I mean Ms O’Malley?’ asked Gráinne.

‘Yup. I was on the Glenkerry community team for three years, but I wasn’t very good. I guess I was never aggressive enough,’ she said, remembering how many of her teammates approached the game with bloodlust. ‘Why?’

‘There’s a new school camogie team this year,’ replied Gráinne, her eyes shining. ‘Eileen and me are both on it.’

‘We’re callin’ ourselves the Hurley Girlies,’ added Eileen with a chuckle.

‘But we need a coach,’ explained Gráinne. ‘Hey, why don’t you volunteer? It’d be brilliant having you as our coach.’

Rosie laughed. ‘Eh, I don’t think so. I really don’t know much about the game, I mean, tactics—strategy—all that.’

‘It’s easy. We could teach you,’ said Gráinne wide-eyed.

Rosie smiled. ‘I don’t think so. But thank you.’

‘Well, at least come to our first practice after school—*please?*’ begged Gráinne. ‘Eileen’s our captain so she’s in charge until we have a proper coach. Mr Forster said it’d be okay, just for today.’ She paused. ‘Just so’s we don’t break any bones or anything,’ she added, flashing a sheepish grin at Eileen.

Rosie smiled. 'I'll see if I can make it. I'm supposed to be at a meeting for new teachers, but maybe if I get out soon enough, I'll come by the pitch.'

Just then she noticed Molly standing in the hallway watching them through the open door.

'Hey, guys, that new girl, Molly, she probably doesn't know anyone in the school. Why don't you try to help her out—yeh know, show her round?'

'Oh, yeah, totally,' replied Gráinne.

'Who knows, maybe you can recruit her for the Hurley Girlies.'

The two girls exited while Rosie continued to rearrange the tables for the next class. But truthfully, she thought to herself, Molly Boyle—that timid wisp of a thing with a reluctant, almost fearful look in her eyes—she hardly seemed a likely candidate for the Hurley Girlies.





4 A DAY WITHOUT CAMOGIE

That afternoon as Rosie left school, she rode her bike past the camogie pitch. The players were seated around a young woman wearing a bright red t-shirt emblazoned with the words, *'A day without Camogie is like-just kidding-I HAVE NO IDEA!'*

Camogie is a Gaelic team sport for girls, much like men's hurling. And while camogie is a non-contact sport, it is lightning fast and very demanding on its players both physically and mentally. Nearly every Irish schoolgirl grows up with a hurley—a wooden camogie stick—in her hand and visions of greatness, of rising to the professional leagues, in her head.

Rosie couldn't see the woman's face, but she heard her voice. It was strong, authoritative—and strangely familiar. Just then a cheer rose up from the team. Rosie moved to where she could see the speaker's face—and immediately recognised her. It was Sabrina Selkirk.

Sabrina was a garda, formerly the Family Liaison Officer for Glenskerry. She had worked with Rosie and her brother Buddy when their mother went missing last spring. But she had recently been reassigned to the Wicklow garda station. She was tall with broad shoulders, sinewy arms and legs, olive brown skin, jet-black hair cut short, and eyes that were deep set and intense.

Rosie watched and listened as Sabrina addressed her team.

'The first thing I want you to understand is that camogie is all about the f-word. That's right, the f-word: *fundamentals*. Dribbling, lifting, passing, striking, hooking, blocking—those are the fundamentals of the sport. To be successful at camogie you have to focus on the fundamentals.'

She paused briefly, then continued. 'Don't worry about winning or losing—don't bother about championships, trophies, and all that. Focus on the fundamentals and the rest will take care of itself. Understand?'

She had the rapt attention of the group and they all nodded in unison. Then her serious expression turned into an impish grin.

'And, when you focus on the *fundamentals*, you also have *fun*. Right? *Fun* goes right along with *fundamentals*. See what I mean?' The girls all chuckled.

'So every day when you come to practice, whatta you gonna do?' She held a hand to her ear.

'*Focus on the fundamentals,*' came the unanimous and enthusiastic response.

She nodded her approval, then looked around at the crowd of shining faces, meeting the eyes of every single girl seated before her.

'Now, whatever else is on your mind today—family—friends—fellas...' She paused on the word 'fellas' for dramatic effect, then continued. 'Forget 'em all, at least for the next ninety minutes. Forget 'em all—and what?' Again she held her hand to her ear.

'*Focus on the fundamentals,*' they repeated in unison.

'Yeah,' shouted Sabrina, clapping her hands. 'So, let's get started, shall we?'

The girls jumped to their feet cheering.

‘First I want you to do a few stretches, then take a lap around the pitch.’

The players stood and began stretching. Sabrina looked up at her visitor and smiled.

‘Hey, Rosie.’

Rosie exhaled loudly. ‘Wow, Sabrina, that was some peptalk. I was almost ready to sign up. So you’re the coach of the Hurley Girlies?’

Sabrina nodded. ‘Looks like it, yeah.’

Rosie gestured toward two of the players who were doing their stretches nearby. ‘Gráinne and Eileen were talking to me in class this morning, saying they had no coach.’

‘Yeah, well, Mr Forster rang me over the weekend. I talked to my super and he approved—said it would be good for community relations—so long as I can fit it into my schedule. And have my radio with me at all times,’ she added, tapping the device secured to her belt.

‘Are you a serious hurler?’ asked Rosie.

‘Well, I played for my college team, yeah. Not a star player, not by half—but I really love the game.’

‘That’s great. The only ones I know are those two,’ said Rosie, nodding again toward Gráinne and Eileen. ‘They’re real sports, believe me. I watched ‘em playin’ footie a few weeks ago and they were brilliant. They ran circles around Del, Cary, and the other blokes.’

‘Yeah, I was there, remember? They *were* brilliant.’

The occasion was a friendly football match on the Glenskerry GAA grounds in July. Two uni mates of Cary’s were visiting and he had managed to enlist enough friends from around town for a match. Among them were several of the local gardaí including

Sabrina Selkirk and Delbert Samuels, an old schoolmate of Cary and Rosie's.

'So what're you doin' at *Coláiste*?'

Rosie told her about her new teaching post.

'That's grand, Rosie. Hey, maybe you can help us with recruiting. We need a few more players for the team. Can you talk up camogie in class?'

Rosie chuckled. 'With a peptalk like that you should have no trouble attracting players. But yeah, for sure, I'll talk it up.' Rosie paused, thinking. 'Oh, yeh know, there is this new girl, Molly Boyle. She doesn't seem to know anyone yet.'

'Well, camogie could be just the ticket for 'er. Maybe you could speak to 'er-tell 'er to come see me.'

Rosie nodded. 'I'll see what I can do.' Although the more she thought about it, the more she doubted whether the shy and retiring Molly Boyle would take to camogie.

By now the players were rounding the far end of the pitch.

'Well, I gotta get with my girls, so I'll see yeh. Say hi to Cary fer me.'

* * *

On her short bike trip home, Rosie stopped at the offices of the *Glenkerry Gazette* at the corner of the High Street and Upton Road.

'Cary?' she called as she entered. No reply.

'Cary?' she called again, standing at the foot of the stairs. She heard a grunt from above and started up.

'Rosie?' came a groggy reply as she appeared at his bedroom door. 'What time is it?'

She chuckled as she stepped into the room and smiled down at him. 'Almost four. Slow day at the *Glenkerry Gazette*, eh?'

Cary groaned, then sat up. She reached down and tousled his brown hair that, as usual, needed cutting. 'Time to get up and face the world, young man.'

Cary nodded.

'How was your early morning run?'

He looked up at her and smiled. Then he took her hand and tried to urge her down onto the bed next to him.

'I can't stay, Car. Gotta get home—chores to do. Buddy and Danielle are coming to supper tomorrow, so I have to do some tidying.'

Cary sat up and stretched. 'So how was your first day of school? Did those rugrats walk all over you?'

'Not really. A few smart arses, you know the type. But mostly good kids. And I was impressed with the artistic ability of some of them.' She sighed. 'But I been on my feet all day and I'm kinda exhausted, so I betta go.'

'Before you go, I have to tell you something, Rose.'

She sat down on the bed next to him. 'What's up? Somethin' wrong?'

Cary sighed. 'Yeah, kinda.'

He proceeded to tell her about the beach and his run. Then he told her about the body.

'Oh, my god, Car. How awful. Well, what did yeh do?'

He looked at her sheepishly. 'Well, first I boked, right into the water.'

'Oh, poor thing.' She took his hand. He had brown eyes that always looked a little sad, like a puppy's, but on this occasion his expression was particularly dour.

'It—he looked like a ghost or something, yeh know? Pasty, sort of spongy. But what really turned my stomach was a crab crawling over him—and a seaworm.' A bilious expression crept across his face. 'All I have to do is think of it and I start feeling sick again.'

'So, you called for help?'

'Oh, yeah, right away. But then I had to wait. And I looked at him again, and decided I should take a picture—with my mobile. I don't know why I thought of that. As soon as I did, I felt bad, like one a them paparazzi—yeh know?'

'So did you?'

Cary sighed and nodded. 'Yeah. But when I got home I deleted it. It just didn't seem right, yeh know?' He hesitated for a moment, as if still pondering the decision. 'Anyway, a few minutes later the gardaí came and I sat on the beach while this one garda asked me lots of questions.'

'What kind of questions?'

'Yeh know, when did I get there? What was I doin' on the beach that early? When did I first see the body? What did I do? That sort.'

'So who was it—the dead man? Someone from Wicklow?'

'No one I know. Taller than me, dark hair.'

'How old was he?'

'I really couldn't say. Mid-thirties, maybe.'

'And how did he die, Car? Did he drown?'

'I don't know. But he had a head injury of some sort. I suppose he might've fallen, yeh know, from the cliff, from the Black Castle. But I couldn't say for sure.'

'So what happens next?'

'The garda said they would issue a press release soon with more information, maybe an ID if they have it.'

‘Gee, I’m sorry, Car. Sorry for the guy, and for you. That’s gotta be upsetting.’

He stood reluctantly and followed Rosie down the steep stairway to the ground floor office.

‘By the looks of things you been working,’ she noted, pointing to his desk that was covered with stacks of papers and half a dozen empty coffee cups.

‘Yeah, I was up most of the night. I wrote a bunch of stuff for next week’s edition. But it’s mostly filler, yeh know? Hen parties–club meetings–that sort. Nobody’s gonna read the *Gazette* if that’s the best I can do.’ He sighed and looked dejected.

Rosie said, ‘Don’t let it get you down, Car. It takes time to build up a newspaper, like anything yeh know? You’ll get there, I’m sure of it. Anyway, maybe now you got a story, eh?’

‘Yeah, well, the gardaí don’t want anything in the news yet. I suppose they have to contact the family first.’

‘Yeah, of course. How awful.’ They both paused contemplating that thought until Rosie spoke up.

‘Oh, by the way, guess who’s the new camogie coach at *Coláiste*? Sabrina Selkirk.’

‘Really?’

‘Yeah, I talked to her at practice after school. I guess her super approved the idea–he thinks it will be good for community relations.’

‘Wow, that is great. She’ll whip those girls into shape for sure.’

‘Oh, Car,’ she began, her eyes wide. ‘I listened to her talkin’ to the team for a few minutes. She was brilliant. She had those girls in the palm of her hand.’

‘Really.’

'Maybe you should write a story about Sabrina, a profile, yeh know? Wasn't she born in Africa? Her family eventually came to the UK. Plus she's a marathoner. She won a race in Belfast a couple years ago. It'd make a great story.'

'Yeah, maybe so. Oh, about the camogie team, do you think you could take a team photo?'

'Oh, yeah, for sure. I'll ask Sabrina when would be best.'

Cary nodded. 'I think I'll have another little lie-in.'

'Okay, well, I'll see yeh later.'

* * *

As Rosie walked up the lane, she passed Cary's mother's house. Catherine was in her garden.

'Hi, Mrs M. How're you today?'

Catherine stood, wiping her hands on her overalls. 'I'm fine, Rosie, bless yeh. Have yeh seen that son a mine?'

'Yeah, I just called round at the *Gazette*. He told you, right, about the—the body?'

'Aye. He came by as soon as he got back to Glenkerry. Didn't want me to go hearin' about it on the radio or the telly—or the internet, he said. He was a bit out a sorts, understandably.'

Rosie nodded. 'Yeah, I think it's affected him a lot more than he's willin' to own. He was in bed, buried under the covers, when I got there.'

'Oh, dear. I wish I—well—I know he doesn't want his mother fussin' over 'im. But maybe I'll bring him an iced finger or two.' She put both hands on her hips. 'I have never known that boy to turn down iced fingers.' They both laughed. 'How sad for that man. Have they identified the body?'

‘No. Not that Cary’s heard, anyway. Well, I gotta get goin’.’

Rosie went on her way. Her house was just a short distance up Anglesey Lane. The O’Malleys and the McGurks had been neighbours for decades. After Patrick McGurk passed away, Rosie called on the McGurks almost daily, if only to say a quick hello. Now that she and Cary were a couple again, she felt especially close to Catherine, and the feeling was mutual. True, Catherine had once hoped that Cary and Siobhan Sullivan, a friend from uni, would bond, but Siobhan moved to London, and, after all, Cary and Siobhan were ‘just mates,’ as Cary insisted again and again. Plus Siobhan was an American, and she had too much drive, too much ambition, to dawdle about in tiny Glenskerry, or even in Dublin, for that matter—or so Catherine believed. But now that it was Cary and Rosie, Catherine couldn’t be happier. Rosie was a Glenskerry girl, through and through, which she hoped meant that as long as the two were together, at least one of her sons would remain close by.

* * *

That evening Catherine walked the short distance down the lane to 1 Upton Road. The ‘Closed’ sign hung in the window, but the door was unlocked. Catherine let herself in.

‘Cary? It’s Mother. You up?’ she called up the stairs.

She heard a groan. ‘I brought you some sweets, love. Iced fingers.’

She heard bare feet hit the floor above her and in a few moments Cary descended the stairs in a t-shirt and pyjama bottoms. She wanted to tell him that he looked a mess and ought to get cleaned up. But she knew better.

'I'll just leave these here,' she said, placing a plate with several of the sweet pastries on the desk.

'Oh, thanks, Ma. Yeah, well, I could use a little pick-me-up.'

'Of course, you've had a traumatic experience. Anybody would need time to recover. So, there yeh go then, and I'll be on my way, so.' Before she left she added, 'Rosie called round earlier, while I was in the garden. Oh, my goodness, I forgot to ask her how her first day of school went.'

'Pretty good, I guess,' replied Cary, then added with a chuckle, 'Well, at least she survived, anyway.'



5 CONTACT US

Cary slept fitfully that night, unsettling images of bodies floating in and out of his dreams, glistening strands of seaweed writhing and undulating like sea snakes around bare arms and legs. When he finally woke shortly after dawn, he was tempted to pull the covers over his head and go back to sleep. But other worries soon began to resurface: the *Gazette* and his personal finances.

Finally he rose, slumped into his tiny kitchen, brewed some coffee, and sat eating one of the iced fingers his mother had brought him. Then, slowly and somewhat reluctantly, he made his way down the stairs and settled in at his desk.

The 'Contact Us' inbox on the *Gazette* dashboard was lit up with several new messages. 'Any information on the body found on the beach?' read one. 'Death in Wicklow town?' read another. Word was spreading, that was clear. No doubt onlookers in Wicklow had seen all the garda activity at Travelhawk Beach—perhaps some had watched the gurney being carried to the waiting ambulance.

Then he checked his mobile. There were two new texts, both from friends inquiring about the death. One was from an old classmate from *Coláiste* who heard he was the one who discovered

the body. Another was from Gloria Hennessy, estate agent and a friend of his mother, asking how he was doing.

So much for keeping quiet about the dead man, thought Cary. Everyone knows already—or will soon. And they *should* know, after all. For one thing, someone somewhere might be missing a loved one. At least they'd like to be reassured that it was not the unfortunate fellow lying in the sand below the Black Castle. And what if that guy was a victim of foul play? That could mean there was a murderer on the loose, lurking in the quiet lanes or hiding in the deep, dark forests of County Wicklow. Shouldn't the public be warned?

They need to know, thought Cary. *They have a right to know.*

Just then a familiar face appeared at the door. He waved him in.

'Hey, mate,' said Del Samuels with a smile. Cary and Del were old friends, having attended *Coláiste* together and played on the school's football team. Del's family had emigrated to Ireland from Jamaica many years ago. Del was a member of *An Garda Síochána*, the Irish national police force, and had helped a great deal in the search for Rosie's mother.

'So, I hear you made some news yesterday, lad,' he said, wide-eyed.

Cary nodded and sighed. 'But journalists aren't supposed to *make* the news, yeh know—just *report* it. How'd you hear about it?'

'They sent around an internal memo to all gardaí, late morning. So what happened, you were runnin'?''

'Yeah, I got out real early and ran down the beach past the lighthouse, an hour or so. The sun was just comin' up. Thought it'd clear my head, which it did. But when I got back I could see

around the headland below the Black Castle. And there he was, on the sand.'

'That musta been a jolt, eh?'

'Yeah, well, it wasn't a real nice way to finish my run.' He sighed. 'The guy was dead, no question—there was nothing to be done. So I called 9-9-9. Then I had to wait for donkey's years for them to come.' He was about to tell Del about taking the photo, then thought better of the idea.

'Who came?'

'Two guys, Sergeant Farrell and Garda Hughes. You must know 'em?'

'Oh, yeah, Mitch and Declan. Sabrina's worked with both of 'em at Wicklow. Mitch Farrell's a rugger. I played on a gardaí team with 'im for a while.'

'So what do you hear? Have they identified the dead man—I mean, the deceased?'

'Yeah, they have. He had some kinda ID card in his wallet. All in Arabic.'

'Arabic—really?'

'Yup. Luckily one of the Wicklow gardaí was able to translate it. The dead man's name is Kristoff Rahmannn. Syrian.'

'A refugee?' replied an astonished Cary.

'Well, they don't know anything more about him as yet. And that's not for public release, not yet anyway, right?'

'Oh, sure, right. But the sergeant told me there'd be a public announcement within a day.'

'Yeah, well, they still haven't located the guy's next of kin. And they don't normally release the identity of a victim until the family is notified. They usually need a family member to make a positive ID—but in a case like this, I don't know.'

'Syrian,' repeated Cary, shaking his head. 'So, what do they think, did he fall off the rocks?'

'Maybe—possibly. Forensics are still working on it. But he definitely suffered a severe blow to the head, possibly more than one—could be he fell and struck his head on the rocks several times before hitting the beach. There was no water in his lungs—that rules out drowning.'

'Do you think he was there long?' inquired Cary.

'I don't know, mate. I'm sure they'll know pretty soon—when the medical examiner makes her report. Why?'

Cary shrugged. 'I—I just felt bad for the bloke. I mean, the water was nearly up to him. If I hadn't come along, he might've been swept out to sea. And there were crabs and things.' He shuddered at the memory.

Del was watching his friend closely. He leaned down and spoke softly. 'Hey, mate, maybe yeh wanna talk to someone about it.'

'I did—the garda on the beach, Sergeant Farrell.'

'Yeah—no, I mean a counsellor—to help you process...'

Cary shook his head. 'I'm okay, Del—really. At the time I got sick, just for a minute, but I'm okay now.'

'No offence, Car, but you look like shite.'

'Thanks, Del—you're a true friend,' said Cary with a chuckle.

'Okay, so I didn't sleep too well. But I'm fine now.'

'And how's your lass doin' at *Coláiste*? They run her out yet?'

'No, nothing like that. She likes it, she says. And she came upon Sabrina out on the camogie pitch.'

Del and Sabrina Selkirk were a couple, although their relationship was strictly 'on the downlow,' as Del liked to say, for

fear it might not meet with the approval of their supervisors should they find out about it.

'Yeah, she's coachin' those girls now—really crackin' the whip over 'em, I'll bet. Well, hey, I gotta get to the station now. Just wanted to be sure you're okay.'

'Listen, Del, if you hear any more about the victim, you'll let me know?'

'Will do, mate—will do. But remember, just between you, me, and these four walls—right?'

He looked down at the remainder of Cary's breakfast. 'Ooh, iced fingers. Need help finishin' them?'

'Yeah, sure,' replied Cary, holding the plate up for his friend.

Del grabbed one finger. 'Ta.' Then he shot his friend a doleful gaze.

Cary shrugged his shoulders and nodded. 'Go ahead.'

Del picked up a second finger and waved it at Cary. 'Later, mate.'

* * *

Cary sat at his desk thinking: a man from Syria—lying dead—on a beach in Wicklow. Even though the official public statement on the death had not yet been released, word was getting out, people were curious, perhaps even uneasy. And they would be looking to their local newspaper for the latest information.

No pressure, mate, thought Cary.

Today, Tuesday, 6:00 pm—that was his deadline—he had to send each week's issue of the *Gazette* to the printer by then if it was to be ready for distribution on Thursday morning. The deadline for advertising copy was noon, and Cary had already learned to be

prepared for a flurry of last-minute submissions and revisions as the deadline approached.

Over the next few hours several dozen adverts arrived, most of them digital files sent to the *Gazette* inbox, but several in person: a home renovation business on the Arklow road, two local restaurants—the Fishmonger and the Grenadine—the Day Spa on Upton Road, and an automotive repair shop in Rathnew. Each drop-in client wanted to chat, and Cary did his best to be hospitable, even as he watched the in-box on his laptop swelling and the clock ticking.

The noon hour passed and Cary was still busy reworking the layout of several pages to accommodate new adverts. Plus he had three local news stories that he needed to fact-check: the church news section, the schools page, and of course sport, including the busy schedule of matches sponsored by the local Gaelic Athletic Association chapter, the GAA.

It was after one o'clock when he phoned in an order for a curried chicken wrap from Phinney's, then ran down the street to retrieve the sandwich and return to his office.

Meanwhile he kept checking his mobile, hoping to receive that promised public information statement from the gardaí regarding the death at Travelhawk Beach, but nothing appeared. It was without a doubt the biggest story in the county right now, and he had nothing to write—nothing, that is, that he was permitted to publish on the incident.

Finally, about ninety minutes before his deadline, the public statement appeared in his in-box:

The body of a middle-aged Caucasian male with black hair was found on a beach in Wicklow town on the morning of Monday 4

September. The identity of the deceased is being withheld pending notification of next of kin. An investigation into the circumstances of the death is ongoing and further details will be released when available. Any persons having information on the death are asked to contact the Wicklow garda station.

He quickly rearranged the front page, creating a box for the short item. He quoted the garda statement, then followed it with, 'For additional details on this breaking news story, please visit the *Gazette* website.'

Not much, thought Cary, but at least it's something.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Robert T. McMaster grew up in Southbridge, Massachusetts. He holds a B.A. from Clark University and graduate degrees from Boston College, Smith College, and the University of Massachusetts. He taught biology at Holyoke Community College in Massachusetts from 1994 to 2014. His parents' reminiscences of growing up in early 20th century America were the inspiration for four novels, *Trolley Days* (2012), *The Dyeing Room* (2014), *Noah's Raven* (2017), and *Darkest Before Dawn* (2022). He has also authored a biography, *All the Light Here Comes from Above: The Life and Legacy of Edward Hitchcock* (2021). *Fugitive from Injustice* is the second in his series of County Wicklow Mysteries; the first, *Rose of Glenkerry*, was published in 2022. He has at least two ancestral ties to Ireland: John and Katharine McMasters emigrated to America from County Antrim in about 1713; Hannah McGurk and her children lived in County Tyrone before making their journey to America in 1849.

ROSE OF GLENKERRY

Book 1 of the County Wicklow Mystery Series

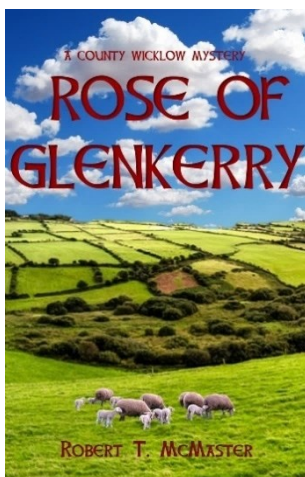
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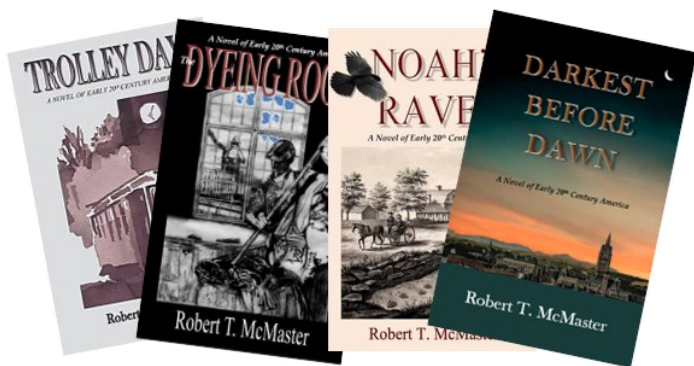


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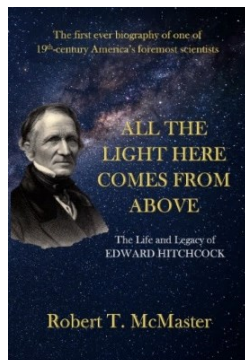
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Rose of Glenkerry (2022)

'*Rose of Glenkerry* has charm, suspense and mystery. I enjoyed being transported to the Irish countryside and actually feeling the quaintness of a small Irish town. The author has a wonderful way of describing the flora and fauna of the region and the character development is well done. I would highly recommend *Rose of Glenkerry* and am happy to hear that Mr McMaster is working on the second book of this series.' - Amy Morris, Goodreads.com

'...a page turner of a story...I was hooked with the *Trolley Days* series and *Rose of Glenkerry* has me waiting for Book 2!'

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- Mike Lydick, *Greater Springfield (MA) Reminder*

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Gerald McFarland, author of *A Scattered People* and *The Buenaventura Series*

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- Eileen Crosby, Archivist, Holyoke (MA) Public Library

Trolley Days (2012)

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All the Light Here Comes from Above: The Life and Legacy of Edward Hitchcock (2021)

'McMaster's biography brings Edward Hitchcock alive in all his facets...The book is eminently readable...I am confident in the scholarship of this work and recommend it to scholars as well as to anyone interested in history.'

- Joanne Bourgeois, Professor Emerita, University of Washington,
review in *Earth Sciences History* 41(1) 2022

'A superb book that brings to light the person and his times.'

- Stephen George, Professor Emeritus of Biology, Amherst College