

from the shore, was only inhabited during the fishing season, when the boats put in there for the night. Pat Dinny was the only man whose home was on the island, and he had no one belonging to him excepting Oonah, the girl at whose bidding now the priest and doctor were seeking the old man out.

The sky was bright between the showers, and even when the quickly drifting clouds hid away the moon the island could be seen as an indistinct blot on the tossing waves of the bay. But, at the first, this was all hidden from the priest and his companion, who kept as long as they could in the shelter of the sand-hills.

As they went, the priest told what he knew about the man whom they were about to visit. He had come to Tullaroan some twelve years before, bringing the child with him, and asking for work during the short weeks of the sea-harvest.

When the other men went home from Inisghila no one grudged the stranger the shelter of one of the huts, and there he had stayed and made his home. With infinite patience he had coaxed oats and potatoes to grow in sheltered corners, in soil built up by his own labor; and thus, with a goat and a pig and a few fowls, he had supported himself and the child, leading the wildest, most unfettered lives, which, whilst keeping the girl as innocent as the white sea-birds that flocked to the island in time of storm, left her every bit as untamed as they.

What his past history was no one knew. He told no one where he came from or what the child was to him; only they had gathered that he had been a sailor, and had seen many countries besides his own.

The girl was waiting for them, a weird figure in the dim light, and at the sight of two figures in place of the one she had expected she looked apprehensively at the curragh and then out across the dashing grey water; but the priest reassured her, and, hearing that the stranger was a doctor, and no stranger to a curragh, she agreed to give him the cars, crouching herself in the prow, whence she gave her directions with wonderful precision and self-possession.

They headed out straight into the great rolling waves, and the little canvas-covered boat danced as light as a cork on their crests and then slid down, down into the grey-green trough till for a moment nothing was to be seen but the sky and the mountains of water before and behind. To the uninitiated there would have been not only danger but certain death, for one of those waves broadside on the frail curragh would have meant immediate destruction. The lives of both men were in the girl's hands, for though the priest could handle a curragh, he was not familiar, as their pilot was, with the hidden rocks and the varying currents of the bay. But duty left him no choice when the danger was not overwhelming, whilst humanity and an unwillingness to let his brother go alone into danger had prompted the doctor to accompany him.

Gloomy and forbidding at it was, the island was welcome when it rose up before them at length, and then, with the curragh drawn up upon the shingle, it did not take the occupants many minutes to reach the cabin door.

The end was not so near as the priest had expected, judging by the urgency of the summons, and the first words of the old man were not of his soul, but of the child Oonah, whose future seemed to trouble him even to the exclusion of his own needs. It was only when the priest had promised repeatedly and solemnly that, whatever happened, she should not darken the workhouse door, that he would listen to any exhortation, and then it seemed that he had forgotten the prayers that once he knew. His tongue had become dumb to them from long disuse, and only five words came back to him wherewith to greet his God: 'Lord, I am not worthy—'

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Father Healy had been right in saying that Pat Dinny would be beyond what the doctor's skill could cure, for once he was at peace, at peace with God and at peace concerning the fate of the child, his strength began to fail. The wind had fallen, and the waves, having lost their crest of foam, moved now in

groat silvery swells in the shelter of the moonlit bay. The priest could not linger, for the next day was Sunday, and he had an early Mass to say seven long miles away inland; but the doctor was tied by no duties, and he could not leave the child alone with the Angel of Death hovering over the cabin. He went with his brother to the waterside and helped him to put out the curragh, of which the priest took the sculls with the dexterity that comes with practice, and before he turned to re-enter the cabin he watched the little bubbling craft till it was swallowed up in the shadows of the mainland shore.

The doctor, re-entering, was noiseless from long familiarity with sick-rooms, but never before had he watched for death in such surroundings as these. The cabin was less dark now, for Oonah had stirred up the fire, and the light of the flames had flickered on the dingy walls. The bed on which the dying man lay was built into one corner, and, except for a great chest, a rough dresser, and a couple of creepie-stools, the room was bare. The old man had sunk into a doze, and the girl, crouching between the bedside and the fire, was just as still as he.

On the wall above the creepie-stool on which he seated himself Dr. Healy became aware of the smoke-stained picture of a ship. At the first glance he turned his head quickly away, for in the dim, uncertain light, it seemed to him to be the portrait of the ill-fated vessel which had gone down off the Welsh coast, twelve years ago, with his wife and little girl on board.

Certainly the gaily-colored poster of the *Kingfisher* had had just such a ridiculous sailing-boat in the foreground, and the funnels and smoke of the vessel herself had, in that one glance, looked to him painfully like the picture he had seen in the Montreal shipping office the day he had taken the homeward passage for his dear ones. Involuntarily he looked again, and the likeness only seemed more striking that before. He rose with a sudden premonition of what was coming. The letters under the picture were scarcely discernible, even with his eyes close to it, and, taking a twist of paper from his pocket, he bent and lit it. It was the *Kingfisher*. The line, the route, the familiar picture told him so, and the proof lay before him, in clumsy, inky characters—not only the name of the steamer, but the date on which she went down.

Gentle as he had been, the man who was dying was roused by the movement in the room and opened his eyes.

'Who's that?' he asked, addressing himself half to the child, half to the stranger himself.

'Tis a doctor he says he is,' replied the former, whilst the latter, dropping the now smoldering paper, moved to the bedside, and spoke of his brother as the best way to explain his identity.

Then, heedless for once of the sick man as a patient, he questioned him eagerly.

'How came you by that picture?' he said. 'What do you know of the *Kingfisher* and her loss?'

The old man hesitated a moment, and then a light broke upon him.

'Would it be too late now to find out about one that wasn't drowned in her?' he asked, meeting question with question. And then, with pauses, for he was very weak, he told his story.

Just as the *Kingfisher* was about to leave Montreal, on what was destined to be her last voyage, one of the hands was missing, and Pat Dinny, an oddity always and a wanderer, had been taken on in his place, but by some oversight his name had not been registered, and nearing the coast of Wales the ship went down. The boats were lowered, but no craft could live in such a sea. There was a woman with her child in the boat that Pat Dinny was put to row, and when the end came for the others he managed to save himself and the child. It was days afterwards that he presented himself before the representatives of the line, and he went to them alone. He said nothing to begin with about the child, and his story was disbelieved. His name was not down upon the roll, and he was treated merely as a clumsy imposter. Then, with sullen anger and unreasoning perversity, he had