

**FREE PREVIEW*****Prologue***

*Southwestern Ireland — 1500 BCE*

This was not Aibheall's first time sneaking out of the roundhouse in the middle of the night, but it would be the last. She was meeting Conor in their special place, a secluded glen deep in the forest. From there, they would travel to the eastern shore, then hire a boat to take them to Albion, where they would start a new life for themselves.

Aibheall's parents, the King and Queen of the Luceni, and her brother and sister were still fast asleep. She slipped from the roundhouse and darted from building to building on her way to the main gates. She kept to the shadows and moved only when she was certain she was

clear. The sentry on duty in the watchtower was a friend of Conor's and had agreed to let Aibheall through without blowing the alarm horn.

She still had to worry about the other people that lived within the ringfort, such as the servants, craftsmen, and her father's warriors. All it took was one person stepping outside to take a piss, and she was at risk of being caught. If caught, she would have to face her father's wrath and knew for certain she would never see Conor again.

Aibheall made it to the ringfort's inner gate, which the sentry had left unlatched for her. He had left the outer gate unlatched as well. She slipped through and, with an excited smile, jogged down the path that took her from the ringfort. As she ran past her father's fields, towards the forest, her smile became bittersweet.

She gazed back at the only home she had ever known so far. She would miss this place, where she had grown up and had so many fond memories. She would miss her family too, especially her precious sister, Emer. She was only a couple of years younger than Aibheall and was an excellent playmate and confidante.

But Aibheall had no choice. Her parents had arranged for her to marry the king of the neighboring Concani tribe. For anyone else, he would have made a fine husband, but Aibheall was deeply in love with Conor and could not imagine a life without him.

Aibheall wore a plain hooded cloak and dress with simple leather sandals. She had packed light, carrying only a small satchel slung over her shoulder filled with the barest of necessities. A smaller pouch on her belt held her jewelry, which would pay for anything she and Conor needed on their journey and help them get settled in Albion.

Aibheall's breath shuddered when she reached the forest's edge. She could barely keep her hands steady as she lit her torch. It would not be long until she would be at Conor's side, and the two of them would be together forever. She tread down the worn path that led to the glen. The bright full moon and equally bright stars helped light her way.

Aibheall spotted glimmering torches up ahead. She smiled and breathed Conor's name. She hurried the rest of the way and bounded into the glen.

Conor was there. Only he was on his knees. With one of her father's warriors standing on either side of him. A third stood in front of him. Two more warriors appeared behind Aibheall and seized her by the arms. Conor tried to spring to Aibheall's defense, but his captors held him at bay.

A figure stepped into view. It was Emer. "How touching."

"Sister. What is the meaning of this?" asked Aibheall.

Emer strode toward her. "This is what you have forced me to do, dear sister." She looked her up and down with a sneer. "Beautiful and talented Aibheall. You had such a bright future ahead of you, father arranging for you to marry the king of the Concani. What a powerful alliance that would be, the union of our two great tribes. And you would have been at the seat of that power. But you wanted to give it up for *love* and a life with a simple warrior?"

"Emer, please," said Aibheall. "If you wish to take my place and marry the Concani king, that is fine by me. All you have to do is let Conor and I go, father will have to offer your hand in place of mine in order to save face."

Emer laughed out loud. "You do not think that once father found you gone, he would not scour the lands, reach out to every ally, pay any price, to get his favorite daughter back? Yes, I will take your place. I will marry the Concani king. But you need to be gone for good in order for that to happen."

She nodded to the warrior standing in front of Conor. He drew a dagger from his belt. Conor struggled. The two warriors holding him tightened their grip on his arms. The warrior with the dagger moved behind Conor and yanked his head back by his hair.

"Aibheall!" he screamed her name.

She cried out and tried to burst from her captors. Her cry turned to a full-bodied scream as the warrior with the dagger slit Conor's throat. His body jerked and spasmed as it bled out. The warriors holding Conor let his body fall lifelessly into the grass.

"Bring her to him," Emer ordered.

Aibheall was dragged closer to Conor. Tears stung her cheeks. She stared deep into Conor's eyes, but they had already gone cloudy and lifeless. Aibheall turned to face Emer. Her sorrow had been swept away by rage. Emer held out her hand. The warrior who had slit Conor's throat passed his dagger to her. The blade was still wet with Conor's blood.

Aibheall did not turn away. She locked eyes with her sister as Emer raised the weapon over her head. Emer stopped, unable to follow through. She handed the dagger back to Conor's killer, who had no problem plunging it into Aibheall's heart.

He yanked the dagger out of her chest. The other warriors arranged Aibheall and Conor's bodies so they were side-by-side. Aibheall struggled to hold on to life. She could not move. She could only watch as the dagger was placed in Conor's hand. She took a long look at her sister then shifted her gaze to study the faces of the warriors with her. She also summoned the image of the sentry who had let her through the gate. He had to have been a part of this plan as well.

Aibheall clung to thoughts of revenge even as life continued slipping away from her. In her final moments, a breeze shook the branches of the nearby hawthorn trees, and in that sound, Aibheall heard a voice that promised her and Conor's deaths would not go unavenged.

## *Chapter One*

*Scottsdale, Arizona - Present*

My alarm went off, but I was already awake and had been for over an hour. Damn, I'd never had such a vivid dream like that before. It was like I was there, watching it all. I could still feel the night air and smell the forest. And that girl. That poor girl. What was her name again? Aibheall.

I sniffed back a tear. I was still shaking, sitting on the edge of my bed. I was a wreck when I first woke up — right after Aibheall had been killed by that guy with the dagger and as she lay there dying but still vowed to get revenge somehow, some way.

Aibheall, Emer, Conor. Nana would love all those old Celtic names, and that I'd had a dream that took place in ancient Ireland. And how did I know it was ancient Ireland? I don't know. I just did. I *felt* it.

As I stayed seated, I started having flashes of special moments Aibheall and Conor had shared together, the first time they saw each other, the first time they spoke, secret walks in the forest, and late night rendezvous in the barn. Where were these images coming from? This wasn't something I remembered reading or seeing on TV. It was all brand new to me..

I tried to think about something else, anything, even about school. But my mind quickly went back to Aibheall every time. She was the epitome of a Celtic woman of that day. Not just beautiful but smart. She could fight and ride. She wrote poetry and crafted silver jewelry too. When her father promised her to the king of the Concani, Aibheall and Conor were heartbroken.

That was when they planned to escape together and make a new life for themselves in Albion, which I knew was an old name for England.

Somehow, Emer found out. Someone must have given Aibheall and Conor up. Or maybe Aibheall told her, thinking she could trust her sister not to betray her. The way Emer's men set up the scene, it would look like Conor had killed Aibheall in some sort of lovers' quarrel then killed himself in shame.

I wiped more tears away and checked my phone. Damn, it was time to get ready for school. I pushed myself up from the edge of my bed, cleaned up, got dressed, and headed downstairs. I passed my little sister Anna's room and could hear her singing along to some lame pop song.

She was always up earlier than me. That's because getting ready for school was always such a calculated process for Anna. First, she had to search her closet and dresser drawers, over and over, in order to put together that day's cutest outfit. Then there was deciding on what makeup look to go for. And then, of course, was her hair. Poor thing.

The sun was just rising. I saw Mom through the patio door doing her yoga. That meant Dad was in his home gym at the other end of the house. I made my coffee and an everything-bagel smothered in cream cheese. I ate it standing at the counter. I chewed and sipped absentmindedly, my mind still on Aibheall and Conor. Well, mostly on Aibheall.

"Tommy?" Mom tapped my shoulder. I just about jumped. She giggled. "Wow, someone has a lot on his mind. Care to share?"

"Not really," I said.

Mom made her disappointed face then ran her fingers through my hair, which I'd just recently dyed. It was light purple, almost lavender. Before that, it had been dark blue.

"You probably use better dye than my colorist," she said.

"I kind of doubt that."

“You know, if you keep dying your hair like that, it’s going to start falling out before you’re thirty.”

“Then I’ll shave it.” I washed the last bite of my bagel down with the last swallow of my coffee. “I have to go.”

Mom turned her cheek toward me for a kiss. I gave her a tiny peck.

“Have a good day at school,” she said.

I shrugged. “Stranger things have happened.”

I felt Mom’s eyes on me, as I headed to the front door. She didn’t like my hair or the way I dressed, but that was because she worried about people harassing me. We did live in a pretty conservative town, where public opinion mattered and all things shallow and superficial reigned supreme.

Dad had a problem with the way I looked too, most likely because he’d rather have a son who looked more “manly” and who liked sports instead of music and poetry and art. Speak of the devil, I passed Dad on my way to the front door. He’d just finished his workout and was dabbing his sweaty face with a towel. We both avoided eye contact and mumbled to each other. That passed as a normal conversation between us.

I slung my backpack over my shoulder and started walking. I was seventeen. I’d had my driver’s license for a year but was in no hurry to get a car. Mom and Dad said they’d loan me the money, but I could only imagine what strings would come attached with that.

Besides, my friends, Dave and Chris, had their own car. They’d pick me up at the park. It was a bit of a walk from my house, so I’d listen to music on my phone with my Air Pods. The three of us had a garage band. We liked bands like The Cure and Morrissey and wanted to play music like theirs.

I wrote songs or at least tried to. It always felt like I was whining on paper. Dave and Chris said I was good and encouraged me to keep writing. I was still thinking about Aibheall.

I could see her clearly in my head and tried to put words to what I saw. *Hair like fire. Fiery hair.* No, too cheesy. What if I flipped it? *Eyes like blue fire. Hair like red rain.* Yeah, that didn't suck too much.

A shiny convertible zoomed past me. I heard the shouting over the music in my Air Pods.

“Fag!”

“Queer!”

I stopped short, barely avoiding the almost empty Starbucks cup that was chucked at me. Then there was the laughter. There was always laughter. Two boys sat up front, and three girls were crammed in the back of the convertible. All of them were looking back, laughing at me. My little sister, Anna, was one of them.

She'd always been popular growing up. She'd always been pretty too, and during eighth grade let's just say she “fully blossomed” into her womanhood. But she was still as big of a brat as ever. She'd started high school this year, and she and her friends got absorbed into the same popular clique her friends' older sisters belonged to.

If that wasn't bad enough, those girls associated with a clique of boys who called themselves Alpha Squad, as in each of them considered themselves an *alpha male*, and I suppose they were. They all looked like models and played multiple school sports. On top of all that, each of them came from rich and influential families. They were used to getting whatever they wanted whenever they wanted it.

I was one of Alpha Squad's usual targets. I wasn't gay. If I was, I'd have no problem admitting it. This was supposed to be the 21<sup>st</sup> century, wasn't it? Yeah, try telling Alpha Squad that.

I was really tall but super skinny and could never put on weight no matter how much I ate. I also had what beauty experts called “delicate features” and liked to color my hair. Then



there was the way I dressed. I liked skinny jeans and Chucks, and today, I had on a Mohair sweater that looked like the one Johnny Rotten wore when he was in the Sex Pistols. I wore jewelry too. I liked silver, even though everyone said that was for girls. Oh yeah, and I painted my fingernails black. Can't forget about that.

I could have changed my look, but I doubted it would make much of a difference, or at least enough for people like Alpha Squad to leave me alone. But why should I change? I liked myself, and I wasn't going to let anyone take that away from me.

Dave and Chris were waiting for me at the park. Earlier this year, they'd bought an old hearse to drive around in. It was great. I loved the look of it.

"It can hold our gear when we start playing gigs," said Dave the first day he showed it off to me. Chris agreed. I played along but couldn't imagine us ever being ready to perform in front of people.

Dave and Chris were fraternal twins. I'd known them since freshman year. We'd bonded over our love of music and our disdain for Alpha Squad and all the people at our school who kissed their entitled asses.

Dave drove. Chris played DJ, scrolling through the music on his phone and picking whatever caught his eye. I'd sent them a track with some guitar chords and vocals a few days ago. The other day, they sent me a track of a bassline and drum beat they'd come up with to go with it. It was good. I just tweaked it a little bit then mixed it with the track I'd made, using my laptop.

I didn't touch the vocals. There was no way I could make them sound good. I hated the way I sang and kept telling Dave to get ready to sing lead vocals if we were ever to perform in front of people.

Dave parked near the school's auto shop. That was his last class of the day. We would meet him there for a speedy getaway. The first bell rang. We didn't come to school early to

hang out like other people did. We wanted to spend as little time at Hellansfield High — or Hellhole High, as we liked to call it — as much as possible.

We weren't alone either. There were all sorts of freaks and geeks at our school that we called friends, and we gathered together as often as we could, in classes, in the hallways, and at lunch. You know, strength in numbers. That kind of thing. When we were in groups, Alpha Squad just shouted verbal abuse at us. If they caught one of us on our own, they'd get more "hands-on."

English Literature was my first class. It was the one I enjoyed the most, so it was safe to say the rest of my day went downhill. My notebook was open, and my pen moved like it had a mind of its own. But I wasn't taking notes. I never did. Most of the time, I worked on lyrics. The teacher, Ms. Barker, was well aware and didn't mind. She knew I was still listening and could come up with a good answer to any of her questions if she chose to call on me.

That morning, she read a poem by William Butler Yeats called "The Wanderings of Oisín."

"Oisín (Ush-een). Sad to remember, sick with years," she read.

I nodded, very pleased. She'd pronounced his name correctly. The other day, she'd told me we'd be reading the poem as part of our study of Yeats and asked if I could translate the names that were in Gaelic, like Oisín, ahead of time. I was happy to do it. Yeats was one of my favorites, and I hated hearing his words get butchered.

Ms. Barker kept reading. I finished off some lyrics and then started on a sketch of Aibheall. I tried so hard to capture her looking happy, like when she was planning on running away with Conor and being with him forever. But her smile kept fading.

I had to settle for giving her a slight grin and tried to compensate for it by making her happiness show in her eyes. Only no matter how hard I tried, I couldn't make her eyes shine

very bright. They remained sad but tinged with ferocity, like when she wished revenge on her sister and her men even as she lay dying.

But somehow it was perfect. I loved it. It was her.

I let out a soft groan.

How could someone who appeared in my imagination seem so real to me?

That question haunted me for the rest of the day. The more I thought about her, the more real Aibheall became to me. I joked that if I thought about her hard enough, I could will her into existence. Wouldn't that be something?

My last class of the day was the horror that was P.E. Luckily, we were playing basketball. That meant all I had to do was run up and down the court and wait for no one to pass the ball to me. Everyone on my team knew I most likely wouldn't catch it, and if I did there was no way I'd actually make a basket. So they left me alone.

Players on the other team shot me evil looks. They were probably tempted to hurl the ball at me just for the hell of it but didn't want to risk the intentional foul and the penalty shot that would follow.

The whistle blew. Class was over. A half hour later, another day of school would be over too. God, I couldn't wait to graduate and get out of this place for good.

Each day, I made it a mission to get in and out of the locker room as quickly as possible. A lot of guys took their time. You'd think it was the highlight of their day. Those were the jocks of course, and that included the members of Alpha Squad who were in this class with me. I swear, they tossed words like *gay* and *fag* around as insults but had no problem complimenting each other's physiques and describing in great detail how tiny or misshapen certain people's dicks were. Did they not see the irony?

The air was already thick with steam and reeked of sweat and body spray. Then there was the testosterone soaked banter. Most of it was provided by Alpha Squad. Their leader,

Tucker Vance, was in this class along with two guys who would probably be considered his lieutenants — I wondered if they could even spell the word *lieutenants* — Bobby Kincaid and Cooper Aldridge.

They were the ones who'd picked up Anna and her friends that morning. The three were just changing out of their PE uniforms. I already had on my jeans and sweater.

"We took this little bitch into one of the upstairs bedrooms. Tossed her on the bed," said Cooper. "We made her airtight. We all got to bust a nut. And when we left her, she was so out of it, she probably didn't even know her own name."

The three laughed and fist bumped.

"What about those little freshman chicks you've been working on?" Tucker asked. "Are they good to go or what?"

"They're getting there," said Bobby. "That one, Anna Kennedy, her body's slamming. You see the way her ass looks in those leggings she wears? I just want to stick my dick right in there."

I bristled. Anna may have been a total bitch to me, but on some primal level, as her big brother, I still felt a protective instinct.

"That's her brother over there," Cooper laughed.

All three were looking at me now.

"Her brother or her sister?" Tucker called out to me. "Hey, baby, we know you can hear us."

I hurried to tie my Chucks.

"You ever notice how he changes his clothes before any of us?" said Bobby.

"He never showers either," added Cooper.

"Probably doesn't want us to see his tiny dick," said Bobby.

"Maybe he's got a clit," said Tucker.

All three of them laughed, so did a bunch of the other boys standing around them. I pulled my last shoe on but didn't bother tying it. I grabbed my backpack, ready to run, but Tucker was standing in front of me in just his gym shorts. He was all chiseled and handsome like some young god. One of the evil ones.

"So what is it?" he asked. "Do you have an actual dick or are you rocking something else down there?"

"Leave me alone," I murmured.

"Come on. Show us the goods."

I glanced around. No one looked like they had the slightest interest in helping me. Most just laughed. Others just ignored the whole situation. They were probably relieved Tucker hadn't targeted them.

"No!" I tried to run, but Bobby and Cooper were behind me. Bobby grabbed my arms while Cooper went around to help Tucker. They hoisted my legs in the air.

"Alright. If you're not going to show us voluntarily," said Tucker.

Cooper laughed so hard he was on the verge of hyperventilating.

I kicked and thrashed. "Stop it! No."

They had my belt off. Tucker unbuttoned and unzipped my jeans. Tears stung my eyes. He and Cooper both had a grip on my jeans and boxers and started tugging. I threw everything I had into one final kick.

My foot caught Tucker in his pretty face. He staggered and let me go. Bobby and Cooper were so shocked, they loosened their hold on me. I bolted. Everyone around me stood stunned and silent.

I pulled up my pants as I ran and ended up tripping and falling. I landed right outside the door of the P.E. teacher's office. Coach McDermott stood over me.

"What the hell's going on here?" He stared at me, demanding an answer.

I sniffed and zipped and buttoned my jeans. Coach then glanced past me.

“Jesus Christ, Tucker. What the hell happened to you?” He ran over to check on Tucker whose nose was red. Blood ran all the way down to his chin.

“I don’t know, Coach,” said Tucker. “We were just horsing around, and he freaked out. Kicked me.”

I cried out, “Bullshit.”

Coach glared at me. “You want to tell me what happened then?”

Tucker, Bobby, and Cooper flashed me almost identical smug grins, daring me to say something. As much as I wanted to, I knew Coach wouldn’t believe me. Either that or he’d just call it “horsing around” like Tucker had done and say I was too sensitive or some shit like that.

“That’s what I thought. Go to the office,” he told me. “Tucker, you go to the nurse. Get that checked out, make sure it isn’t broken.”

I needed my backpack. A kid named Monty brought it over. He was fat, to the point where he had man-boobs. A couple weeks ago, Tucker, Bobby, and Cooper once took turns feeling him up. I knew he could sympathize. I thanked him and headed to the office, wiping fresh tears from my eyes.

Mom came and got me. We sat in the assistant principal’s office. I had a chance to tell my side of the story but was too embarrassed. I ended up getting suspended for three days. His secretary printed out the paperwork. Mom signed it and walked me out of the office without saying a word.

Halfway through the parking lot, Mom finally decided to speak. “You know your father’s going to flip out about this.”

“Maybe he’ll be proud,” I said. “I bloodied a kid’s face. That’s manly, right?”

“Do not joke! Your father does a lot of business with Tucker Vance’s father. It’s going to take a lot for him to smooth this over.”

“I’m sure he’ll find a way. They don’t call him ‘Slick Rick’ for nothing.”

Mom fumed and looked ready to yell, but she held back. “Honey, don’t you think you’d have less trouble if, you know, you changed the way you look?”

There. She finally said it out loud.

“I like the way I look,” I told her.

Mom sighed. “Let’s just go home.”

“I was planning on seeing Nana.”

Mom let out another sigh. “Fine. But you take the bus home.”

She dropped me off at Vista Village. That was the retirement home or senior living community or assisted-living facility or whatever you wanted to call it where Nana lived. Nana liked to call it Heaven’s Waiting Room.

She was my great-grandma on Mom’s side. Ninety-six years young and still spry and sharp as a pin. She once said the secret of her longevity was drinking a pint of Guinness and a glass of Tullamore D.E.W. Irish whiskey every day. Of course, Vista Village didn’t allow that sort of thing, but Nana had her ways. A little Irish charm and a bit of cash, and her favorite staff members were happy to act as her booze mules.

Without Nana, I wouldn’t have any connection at all with my Irish roots. She came to the U.S. with her parents when she was little, and they settled into the Irish community in Phoenix. She tried to keep the old traditions alive with her family, but that got diluted over the years as her kids and grandkids became more and more “Americanized.”

I loved hearing about Irish history and folklore from Nana. We’d listen to music and read William Butler Yeats’ poetry. She was even teaching me how to speak Gaelic — although she just called it Irish.

I found Nana in the rec’ room sitting in a big, comfy chair sipping tea and reading Yeats. I smiled and let out a big sigh the moment I saw her. All of the bullshit I’d gone through

that day just fell right off me. I greeted her with a hug and kiss then pulled over a chair and sat next to her.

“Dia dhuit,” she said. That was Irish for *hello*.

“Dia is Muire dhuit,” I answered. That was like *hello back* to whoever’d just greeted you.

“Conas ata tu?” Nana asked. *How are you?*

“Ta me go maith. Agus to fein?” *I’m fine. How are you?*

“Ta me go maith. Go raibth maith agat,” *I’m fine. Thank you.* “You’re almost sounding like a native,” said Nana. “I remember when we were still living in Sligo, my parents made sure we never lost touch with our native tongue, so we’d spend two weeks each summer in a little village in Donegal, where they spoke only Irish.”

“Cool.”

Nana and I both noticed a couple of women playing cards at a nearby table, staring at us. They looked me up and down, chuckled, and made comments to each other.

My gaze dropped toward the floor. Nana had a different response.

“Why hello, Susan. How are you today?” she asked one of the women, nice and loud. “Have you heard from your granddaughter lately? Is she still in rehab? What is this, her second or third visit? I’ll say a prayer for her. Maybe this time it’ll finally stick.”

One of the women, Susan I assumed, made a shocked face and became suddenly flustered. I hid my laughter behind my hand. Nana then turned her sights on Susan’s card partner.

“Oh, and Rebecca,” she started. “I saw your son was here yesterday. How lovely. I hope you had a wonderful visit, and he didn’t show up just because he wanted money like he normally does.”



Now both women were flustered and the center of attention in the rec' room. They gathered their belongings in a hurry and retreated, looking thoroughly humiliated.

"You're so mean," I giggled.

Nana dropped her book in her bag. "They had it coming. Let's go back to my suite. I've hung around these old farts for long enough today."

I helped her out of the chair. We walked arm-in-arm down the hallway back to her suite. I sat her down in her easy chair, poured two glasses of Tully and popped open two bottles of Guinness. I may not have been legal drinking age, but Nana never liked to drink alone.

"Slainte," we each said. It was Irish for *cheers* or more specifically it meant *good health*.

Nana had me dig through her record collection. I put on an album by The Chieftains. They were considered one of the greatest Irish folk bands and for good reason. Each member was a virtuoso. Their sound was timeless and almost ethereal. I only wished I could play music half as beautiful someday.

After that, Nana had me put on an album by The Dubliners, who played a lot of the old standards. We sang along to each one. I loved how a lot of the old songs told a story, and a lot of them were about specific periods in Irish history like the Great Famine or the Easter Rising.

Before we knew it, it was dinner time. One of the staff wheeled Nana's meal in on a cart. She was one of Nana's favorites, so she turned a blind eye to our empty Guinness bottles and glasses of whisky. The food at Vista Village actually looked really good. Nana insisted I stay for dinner some time, and I would have if Dad didn't have a thing about having family dinner every night. He liked to pretend we were a happy family. He was big on that. Image over reality. That was probably why he was a major player in the advertising world.

Those family dinners were always a joke. I would be forced to recount the details of my day at school like they actually mattered then I'd have to hear about Mom and Dad's day

at work. Anna of course loved it, because she got to talk in depth about her favorite subject. Herself.

I took the city bus home. It stopped just blocks from my house. I walked through the front door. Anna and a bunch of her friends had taken over the living room.

“Okay.” Her friend Vanessa snapped her gum. “I’d fuck Bobby Kincaid. Marry Tucker Vance.” That was met with a chorus of *oooo*’s. “Then I’d definitely kill Anna’s brother.”

Another one of Anna’s friends spotted me. She made a silly, shocked face then alerted everyone else to my presence. They all laughed out loud, red-faced and pointing at me. Whatever. I shook my head and climbed the stairs. They were still laughing and going on about it, not even trying to keep their voices down.

“Oh my God, did you see the look on his face?”

“I thought he was going to cry.”

“I’m totally posting this.”

I met Mom coming out of her room.

“Well, I told your father about your scuffle with Tucker Vance at school today,” she said. “He was not happy. You’re spending the rest of the night in your room for starters.”

“No family dinner?” I grinned.

“I’ll bring you a plate.”

“I could have had dinner with Nana,” I said, thoroughly disappointed.

I went on to my room and shut the door behind me. I scrolled through my phone, looking for some music. I grabbed my Beats studio headphones instead of my Air Pods. I just wanted to get lost in some music, and those did the best job of shutting out the rest of the world.

I put on some Morrissey. I loved his album, *Maladjusted*. It ranked up there as one of my all-time favorites. I only hoped I could write lyrics half as good as his someday.

I stretched out on my bed. I don't know when, but at some point I drifted off to sleep. I saw her again. Aibheall. Only she wasn't in the glen where she'd been murdered. She hovered over me, dressed in a shimmering black gown. Her hair was silver and flowing behind her. She cried black tears.

Next thing I knew, Mom was jostling me awake. It was nighttime now. Man, how long had I been asleep? I sat up and turned on the lamp on my nightstand.

“What?” I asked all groggy.

Mom's eyes were puffy. She sniffled. “That was Vista Village. It's Nana.”

## *Chapter Two*

Mom confirmed what I'd already feared. Nana was dying.

"A staff member was getting her ready for bed," she started as I followed her downstairs. "She helped Nana off with her mittens and found her hands had gone black. Her feet had gone black too. That's a sign that end-of-life is near."

I went numb. I was surprised I made it the rest of the way down the stairs without falling. This was all so sudden. Or was it? Thinking back, the signs were there. She was bundling up more and more and complaining about the cold. She was getting tired much easier too and was eating less and sleeping more.

But she still had such a great attitude. I'd go as far as to say she was still "full of life." It was easy to forget she was ninety-six, and that it was always just a matter of time — but I wasn't ready for it to finally happen. I just wasn't ready.

We joined Dad and Anna in the living room. They sat on the couch, and it sounded like Dad was pretty much telling her the same thing Mom had already told me.

Anna let out a little whimper. Dad met her with a hug. I joined them on the couch. Dad gave me a smile full of real emotion, not the forced one I'd gotten so used to seeing. He patted me on the leg then stood up, next to Mom.

The two of them kept talking, but I was still so numb it all sounded like they were talking through plastic. I got the important points, such as since I was suspended, I'd help Mom get Nana moved into the hospice tomorrow.

"I would do it, but I've got a lot of meetings lined up tomorrow," he said. "It's too late to reschedule them."

Jesus, it didn't even sound like he was going to try. And he thought I was a wimp?

"Nana is going to need all of our support during this time," Dad added. "It's important that we be strong for her and not fall apart."

I knew that last bit was meant especially for me. *No tears. No crying. Be tough. Act like a man for once in your life.* Dad's eyes locked on mine. I knew he wasn't going to turn away either until I'd at least nodded. So I did.

None of us really felt like eating dinner. Mom and Dad stayed downstairs while Anna and I headed up to our rooms. As we left, Mom made sure to let us know there was plenty of food in the fridge if we got hungry later on.

Part way up the stairs, I felt Anna's hand reach for mine.

"Are you okay?" she asked.

"Why?" I asked back, a little snippier than I should have.

"You and Nana are really close. I mean, I love her too, but I know what you two have is really special."

I paused for a moment, wondering who was this mature and thoughtful person in front of me and what had she done with my bratty sister.

"Thanks," I said.

Anna cracked a tiny smile.

"So does this mean I'm off your 'fuck-marry-kill' list?" I asked.

“That wasn’t my list. Ew. That was Vanessa’s. But I’ll — I’ll talk to them, get them to back off.”

“You really think they will?”

“Of course. They’re not monsters, you know.”

I bit back my response. As much as I really wanted to dive into a conversation about how toxic her so-called friends were, I decided to quit while I was ahead.

“Thanks,” was all I ended up saying.

Anna and I hugged at the top of the stairs then split off into our rooms. Lying in bed again, I put my headphones back on and tried to lose myself in some music.

That was when I finally broke down. I burst into tears, sobbing and weeping, my whole body shaking. I clenched a pillow over my face to cover the sounds. It was so tight I was surprised I didn’t smother myself to death.

I don’t remember falling asleep, but when I woke up the sun was right outside my window. I wandered downstairs and into the kitchen. Mom was still at the table, reading the news off her phone and drinking coffee. She smiled, and we exchanged *good-mornings*. There was a box of donuts on the table, the good ones, not from the grocery store but from the bakery.

“Dad already left for work. Anna decided to go to school today.” Mom nudged the box toward me. “We got you your favorites.”

There was a chocolate creme-filled and a lemon filled. She was right. They were my favorite. Was it she or Dad who remembered? Probably her.

Mom poured me some coffee. I had two cups while I finished my donuts.

“Are you ready?” she asked.

It was time for us to go see Nana. But was I really ready? I told myself I was, that I’d gotten all my crying out of my system last night, and today I’d be able to hold it all together.

I kept repeating this to myself as I followed Mom into the garage and climbed into the passenger seat of her Lexus. She let me connect my phone to the stereo with a cord she kept in the glove compartment.

“You really want me to choose what music we listen to?” I warned.

Mom nodded. “I can take it.”

I decided to go easy on her and chose some David Bowie, back in his Ziggy Stardust days. I liked Bowie. I knew Mom liked him too. She turned up her favorite songs and sang along to them. I bit my lip, trying not to laugh. Damn, she sang worse than I did.

We arrived at Vista Village. A van from the hospice was parked out front. As soon as I spotted it, my knees buckled a little, but I pushed myself forward and kept walking. Part way down the hall to Nana's room, I had to remind myself to breathe. Mom's hand landed on my back. She gave me a smile of encouragement.

Nana's door was open a crack. Mom knocked on it then opened it all the way.

“Hello?” she called.

“Come on in, love,” said Nana.

I followed Mom inside. Nana sat in her recliner with the TV on. She gave me a bright smile and looked like she still had so much life in her. There had to be some mistake. She couldn't be dying.

The closer I got to her, the harder it got to hold it together. It was a losing battle. My face fell in my hands. I burst out crying.

Mom wrapped her arm around me. “Tommy, come on. We talked about it. We need to stay strong.”

“Oh for fuck's sake, Janine. Let the boy feel what he's feeling,” Nana told her.

Mom immediately backed off. I bent down and sank into Nana's arms.

“I don't think I've ever heard you cuss before,” I said.

“I figure at this point I’ve got nothing to lose,” she said.

We both laughed. I took Nana’s hand in mine. It seemed so tiny and frail now. She reached up and stroked my cheek. “You have no idea how lucky I am to have lived this long, to get to have spent so much time with you and watch you grow into such a fine young man. You’re a special one, Tommy. I knew that the moment I first held you when you were just a baby.”

I glanced back at Mom. She retreated towards the door, looking like she was on the verge of tears herself.

“I don’t know what I’m going to do without you,” I told Nana.

“Oh, love.” She pulled me in for another hug.

“Excuse me,” Mom spoke up. “I’m sorry to interrupt, but there’s someone from the hospice here.”

I stood up but then was almost immediately knocked over by what or *who* I saw to be specific. Standing next to Mom — it couldn’t be — it was Aibheall. I mean, there was no way it could actually be her. But it looked exactly like her. Like she’d stepped right out of my imagination.

*Eyes like blue fire. Hair like red rain.*

“This is Eve McCarthy,” said Mom, introducing her. “She was sent to escort you to the center and begin your intake.”

Aibheall — Eve. I looked her up and down. She was dressed in purple medical scrubs and a white coat. She carried a clipboard and leather-bound notepad with the hospice center’s logo printed on it.

“Hello, Katie,” she said. Her voice was the same as it was in my dream. She spoke with the same melodic Irish brogue. “It’s lovely to meet you.”



I checked Nana, and I swore there was a flash of recognition in her eyes when she got a good look at Eve.

“Yes, it’s lovely to meet you too, dear,” she said with a twinkle in her eyes.

Eve smiled back at Nana. Looking at them, how comfortable they appeared with each other, you’d swear they’d known each other for years. They carried on that way as Eve asked Nana questions and filled out some paperwork. A couple of male hospice workers arrived with moving boxes. I helped them pack up Nana’s books and records very carefully along with her record player. Mom found some suitcases in the closet and packed Nana’s clothes.

We started bringing them to the hospice van outside. Eve was still sitting with Nana.

“Go on ahead,” she told me. “We just need a few minutes.”

I nodded and carried Nana’s record collection myself. I didn’t trust anyone else with it, and I knew she wouldn’t either. The whole time I was still so bewildered about Eve’s presence and her resemblance to Aibheall — and how she and Nana seemed to have some sort of connection.

We finished packing the van. Eve and Nana were still inside. I decided to go back and let them know we were ready to leave. Nana’s door was slightly open. I heard her and Eve trade a giggle. I stopped and leaned in, trying to hear more.

They talked in Irish, and I mean fluently. I couldn’t make out everything they were saying. It sounded like they were talking about Nana’s husband, Big Jack, as well her brothers and sisters and parents who had all passed on.

My name came up a couple times. It almost sounded like Nana was asking Eve to look after me. What did she mean by that?

A Vista Village staff member arrived with a wheelchair for Nana. I let him inside. By the looks of it, Eve and Nana had finished their little talk. Both greeted me with warm smiles. Eve’s smile made me blush and forced me to look away.

We helped Nana into the wheelchair. I pushed her. Eve walked beside me. She smelled nice, like fresh-cut roses. There was a lift that loaded Nana and her chair into the back of the hospice van. I sat with her. There was room for Mom and Eve in the row of seats in front of us. Eve handed Mom some paperwork and went over it with her.

Mom nodded. "It seems like you've been doing this for years. But you're so young."

Eve chuckled. "I'm an intern of sorts. I'm still in school, but the hospice administrator insists I'm some sort of natural so he's allowing me to do Katie's admission and orientation on my own."

"Well, you handle yourself like a pro."

Eve blushed a little and thanked her. I looked to Nana. I'd been holding her hand the whole time. She seemed so at peace with what was happening. I caught her glance at Eve then at me with a rather sly, knowing smile. What was that about?

We arrived at the hospice. An orderly met us at the door and wheeled Nana inside. It was really nice. There were lots of plants and bright pictures, and the walls were painted with warm colors.

The orderly handed Nana off to a nurse who needed to check her vitals. She would then see one of the doctors on staff. Mom went with her. Eve helped me and a couple staff members take Nana's stuff to her room.

That was also really nice. There was a big comfy bed, a TV, a radio on the nightstand, a small table with chairs, a wardrobe, and a chest of drawers. It was painted in the same warm colors I'd seen all throughout the building

Eve unpacked Nana's clothes with delicate care, like she was handling her own relative's belongings. I hooked up her record player and speakers. There was enough shelf space for her records and her books. I put a couple of her favorite volumes of Yeats on her

nightstand in case she was up to doing some reading. Or I could read to her when I visited. Which I planned on doing a lot.

We finished. The staff members left. It was just me and Eve. We sat at the little table. I had to force myself not to stare at her. I still couldn't get over how much she looked like Aibheall. My eyes wandered around the room. My leg started to bounce. That only happened when I was nervous.

Eve cast a smile my way. She then began humming a soft tune as she thumbed through some paperwork. All of a sudden, I started to relax. My leg went still, and as I exhaled my shoulders went slack like a giant weight had fallen off of them.

Eve smiled at me, looking rather satisfied. "So how are you?"

"I'm good," I told her.

"It's okay not to be."

I trembled a little. My eyes began to water. "This sucks. This really sucks. I wasn't ready for this."

"No one ever is. Even those who are passing, they might accept what's happening and say they're ready, but they still wish they had more time. Just like we wish we had more time with them."

I was about to wipe my eyes with the sleeve of my sweater when Eve handed me the box of tissue that was on the table. "Thanks."

"Katie talks very fondly of you. You're very special to her, and I can tell she means just as much to you."

I sniffed. "I don't know what I'm going to do without her."

"In a way, she'll never truly be gone. The people we love become a part of us. And you've got your memories of her. You can think of it as sort of time-travel when you go back and relive those experiences."

I managed a smile. "I like that. Thank you."

Eve reached across the table for my hand and gave it a tiny squeeze. A wave of comfort pass through me.

"Thank you for sharing with me," said Eve. "From this point on, just be with Katie as much as you can until the end."

I nodded. That was exactly what I had planned. We stood up as Mom returned with Nana. An orderly was wheeling her in. Nana said she was tired. Mom and Eve stayed behind to help her change into a nightgown. I went ahead and said goodbye to Nana now, giving her a hug and a kiss, but told her I'd be back as soon as I could.

"Thank you, love." Nana stroked my cheek. "You mean the world to me."

"So do you," I said, my voice catching in my throat.

I waited in the hallway. Mom and Eve came out a few minutes later. Mom gave me a genuine warm smile, something I hadn't seen from her in quite a while and wrapped her arm around me.

"Thank you, Eve. For everything," said Mom.

"You're welcome," said Eve. "And count on me being around until the end."

"Thank you. That means so much." Mom turned to me. "Ready to go?"

"Actually, Tommy and I were having a lovely conversation earlier," said Eve. "I was about to ask if he wanted to pick up where we left off over a cup of coffee and some scones. There's a lovely cafe down the street, and I do have a break."

Mom looked just as surprised as me. "Tommy?"

"Yeah. I'd like that."

"You'll have to take the bus home," Mom told her.

"I'll be happy to drive him," said Eve.

The three of us headed back to the reception area. I said goodbye to Mom and waited for Eve to get her purse from her locker. She came back, still in her scrubs, but with a gray hoodie on over them.

She slipped on her sunglasses and shouldered her purse. "Ready?"

I followed her to the staff parking lot. Her car was a silver Honda. It looked like it had just been washed and was impeccably clean inside. The coffee shop was only minutes away. It wasn't some Starbuck's either. It was a little independent place called Elemental Café. Signs out front bragged about how they served all organic, locally sourced foods, and everything was made in-house.

I ordered a large cup of dark roast. Eve did the same. When it came time to pay, I reached for my wallet, but Eve held out her hand stopping me. "I asked you out, I pay. That's the rule."

"So if I ask you out, then I pay?" I asked.

Eve gave me a teasing smile. "Sounds fair, doesn't it?"

She ordered an assortment of mini scones. We took our coffees from the counter. Eve grabbed the plate of scones, which was a good thing. My hands were shaking. I could barely hold my coffee steady. I was trying to figure Eve out. Not that I had a lot of experience with the opposite sex, but I swore it felt like she was flirting with me.

But that was crazy, right? Why would this beautiful, slightly older woman be interested in a wimpy freak still in high school? This must have had to do with what she and Nana had talked about earlier, when Nana asked Eve to "look after me." That had to be it. She was just being nice. Maybe a little playful.

I took a sip of my coffee then bit into a scone. A big smile slid across my face.

"Now I know why you like this place so much," I told her.

"It has become one of my favorite haunts," Eve answered.

I built up the nerve and asked, "Do you always take your patients' family members here?"

"I have to admit this is a unique circumstance."

"Does this have to do with Nana asking you to 'look after me?'"

Eve's eyes widened a bit. "You heard us?"

"Nana's been teaching me Irish," I said. "I'm not as fluent as you and her, but I was able to make out little bits of your conversation."

"Like what?"

"She asked you to look after me. She also talked about her husband, Big Jack, her parents, brothers, sisters, friends who have all passed away now. I suppose that's normal, right?"

"It is. And Katie expected you to take her death rather hard. She also said you're not very close to the rest of the family."

I sighed. "That's for sure. I don't know. I had an interesting moment with my little sister yesterday. She seemed pretty supportive."

"That's nice," said Eve. "Are you two close in age?"

"Three years. I'm a senior. She's a freshman. She was a sweet, little kid — until she hit puberty. Then she became all about clothes, make-up, boys, and parties. She's part of the popular crowd at school. For a long time, she's acted ashamed and embarrassed by her freak of a brother."

"I really hope you don't think of yourself that way. As a freak."

"Oh, I do. But I use that word with pride. I like who I am. And could care less what others think."

"Good for you."

I took another sip of coffee and ate the last of my mini scone. "I think I got that from Nana. She was into art when she was younger. She liked to paint, write poetry, and play music, but she gave all that up when she got married and had her first kid. She tried to pass her love of the arts on to her kids and her grandkids, but it never took."

"But then you came along."

I chuckled. "She once said she always wished she could've gotten involved in the hippy movement during the Sixties but thought she was too old, and that other people would judge her. That's why she always encouraged me to be myself and follow my passions."

I barely got those last few words out. Tears were coming.

Eve handed me a tissue.

"Sorry," I said.

"Don't be." Eve raised her coffee cup. "To Katie."

I managed a smile and tapped my cup against hers. "To Katie — Nana."

"You said your sister's coming around," Eve continued. "It seems like your mother might be too."

"I love my mom. I know she loves me. She doesn't like my look, but that's because people judge me and give me a hard time."

"And your father?"

I scoffed. "My dad's a *manly man*. In other words, he's embarrassed of me."

Eve frowned. "Hopefully, he'll come around. If he doesn't, fuck him."

I laughed. We kept the conversation casual after that. She told me how she was from County Clare in Ireland and came to Arizona, because she got a full ride to ASU.

"Do you have any family out here?" I asked.

"My sister pops in." Eve rolled her eyes. "Whether I want her to or not."

I chuckled. "I get it."

Our talk shifted to music. Nana had apparently told Eve I played guitar and fancied myself a songwriter.

"I would love to hear something," she said.

"I don't know. Maybe."

I asked Eve what kind of music she liked. She loved the old stuff, like The Chieftains and The Dubliners, just like Nana. But she said one of her absolute favorite bands was a group from Ireland called The Cranberries.

She played a couple of their songs she had on her phone. They were great. One was kind of a catchy pop song called "Dreams," and another was a rocker called "Zombie." They were great. The lead singer's voice was amazing. I was sad when Eve told me she died a few years ago. She was only 46.

I played some music off my phone for Eve. Some of my favorites from The Cure and Morrissey.

"I haven't heard these in years," she said. "Thank you."

We kept on talking. I could have sat there forever, listening to Eve's amazing accent. But Mom ended up texting. She'd picked up Anna from school and was heading home, and Dad was bringing home take-out from Chen's. I was expected to come home ASAP.

I explained this to Eve. I was so embarrassed. I must have sounded like such a little kid, but Eve didn't make anything of it. She drove me home, and we listened to some more of The Cranberries on the way. We got to my house. Eve pulled into the driveway and insisted on trading phone numbers before she let me go.

Anna actually delivered on her promise to ask her friends to go easy on me, even Alpha Squad stopped messing with me. I even got the occasional look of sympathy from them. For a moment, I actually thought they might be decent people after all. But then I saw them harassing



other people they considered “losers.” Business as usual. I also noticed Anna was starting to get pretty cozy with Tucker Vance. I didn't like that. Not one bit.

I visited Nana every day after school. Eve was always there, whether she was working a shift or not. That seemed to please Nana. She called us “her two favorite people.” The three of us would listen to The Chieftains and sing along with The Dubliners. Man, Eve had an amazing voice, so sultry and haunting. She'd sneak in a small bottle of Tully and some cold bottles of Guinness every time she visited.. Nana soon needed to drink hers through a straw, but that didn't stop her.

We always ended our singalongs with one of her favorites, “The Parting Glass.”

*Of all the money that ever I had*

*I spent it in good company*

*And of all the harm that ever I done*

*Alas it was to none but me*

*And all I've done for want of whit*

*To memory now I can't recall*

*So fill to me the parting glass*

*Goodnight and joy be with you all*

Relatives from out of town had started showing up. First up were my grandparents — Mom's parents. They flew in from Hawaii, and my aunt and uncle and their kids drove down from L.A. Mom told me more would be coming over the next few days.

Our visits with Nana became shorter and shorter as she got tired, easier and easier. I was barely holding it together. Mom and Anna were there for me, and Dad began checking on me after my visits with Nana to see how I was doing. That was nice.

But it was Eve who really helped get me through. In addition to spending time with me and Nana during my visits, we'd be up to all hours on the phone. She listened to everything I had to say, and when I was hurting she always found the right words to make me feel better.

I caught her talking to Mom and to Grandma — Nana's daughter — at the hospice more than once. There were tears, hugs, and eventually smiles. Eve definitely worked her magic on them. Our out-of-town relatives were really impressed with her. Dad expressed his appreciation of Eve one night when we all went out to dinner at this expensive steak house.

"She's sweet on Tommy, if you haven't noticed." He made sure to add. "And they've been spending a lot of time together."

"Dad." I blushed a little.

Grandpa, Uncle Ken, and my cousin Matt, who was close to my age, *oo'd* and *ah'd* and looked very impressed. They were probably surprised I had feelings for a girl — I should say, woman. They probably thought I was gay too.

"They go out for coffee all the time," Dad continued. "And don't think I haven't heard you two talking on the phone late at night."

"Nice," said Matt.

"Details, Tommy-boy," said Uncle Ken. "Give us some details."

"I don't think this is really the time and place for that," said Mom coming to my rescue.

I gave her a look of thanks. The conversation shifted to talk of funeral arrangements and Nana's will. According to the adults, my great-grandpa, Big Jack, had made a lot of money over the years in real estate and construction. He never gave the slightest hint about how much he was worth. After he passed, Nana took control of the finances, and it sounded like she was just as cagey about money as Big Jack was. Not even Grandma, her own daughter, knew how much she was worth. I doubted any of her brothers or sisters did either.

After dinner, on the way to the car, I thanked Mom for helping me out earlier.

She smiled. "Eve's amazing. I'm glad we have her — that you especially have her. And if she is, in fact, sweet on you — well, I can't blame her."

"Mom. Geez."

Yeah, like someone as amazing as Eve would be interested in me like that.

We all could tell the end was near for Nana. It was any day now. Eve confirmed it. By that time, the rest of the family had shown up. We're talking great-uncles and great-aunts along with more regular uncles and aunts and cousins. For years, these people were nothing more than faces on Christmas cards.

Mom and Dad let me and Anna stay home from school. Eve and I were there for Nana the whole time, me on one side, her on the other, and whenever Eve brought out the Tully and Guinness. All of the adults had a round too. Mom and Dad didn't say anything when they saw me drink.

Then the day came, Nana seemed delirious, confused, and even a little frightened. She didn't speak. Instead, she mumbled and shifted in her bed like she was in the middle of a dream. We all gathered around her bed. A box of tissues was passed around until it was emptied.

I wasn't afraid to cry. I didn't care what Dad thought, but then I felt his hand on my shoulder. I looked up and saw him smile. Tears rolled down his cheek.

*"Of all the money that ever I had,"* Eve started to sing. *"I spent it in good company."*

I joined in. *"And of all the harm that ever I done. Alas it was to none but me."*

Nana then joined in, her voice was just above a whisper.

*"And all I've done for want of whit,"* the three of us sang. *"To memory now I can't recall. So fill to me the parting glass. Goodnight and joy be with you all."*

Nana sighed and closed her eyes. Eve pressed her stethoscope to her chest. She moved it around a little. "She's gone."

Whimpers and sobs filled the room. I was silent, just staring at Nana. She looked so peaceful. I blinked, and I swore I could see a white light surrounding her head. It looked like a large crown. It vanished in a burst of light.

“You saw it, didn’t you?” asked Eve.

I was stunned. I didn’t know what to say. I didn’t know what it was I saw.

“You’re a special one, Tommy Kennedy,” she said.

I gazed at Eve for what seemed like the longest time. She suddenly had this aura around her, a gentle silver light. No one else seemed to see it but me.

I had to ask, “Who are you, Eve?” I whispered so no one else could hear us. “Who are you really?”

She smiled. “You’ll know. Soon enough.”

**If you want to read the rest of *Death’s Fair Maiden*, you can purchase the eBook at my online store or on paperback at Amazon.com!**

**If you enjoy the book, please leave a review on Amazon.**

**Thank you,**

**Dan O’Mahony**

## Irish Pronunciation Guide

NOTE: These are not the only Irish words in the story. They are just the ones that do not sound like how they are spelled.

Aibheall (EE-VAHL)  
Bodhran (BORE -EN)  
Cinnédidh (KENNEDY)  
Cliodhna (CLEE-O-NA)  
Clonmacnois (CLON-MAC-NWAH)  
CuChulainn (COO-CUL-AN)  
Curraghs (KER -EK)  
Diamrach (DEE-AM-RACK)  
Donal (DOO-NAHL)  
Donough (DUN-UH)  
Eabha (AY-VA)  
Emer (EE-MER)  
Fionn Mac Cumhail (FINN-MAC-COOL)  
Gaelic (GAY-LIK)  
Leitrim (LEE-TREM)  
Liscarroll (LIH-CARE-OL)  
Luceni (LOO-SEN-EE)  
Lugh (LOOG)  
Mahon (MAN)  
Padraig (PAY-DREEK)  
Seanachí (SHAWN-A-KEY)  
Slainte (SLAWN-CHA)  
Sluagh (SLOO-AH)  
Thomond (TOM-OND)  
Tuatha Dé Danann (TUA-DE-DAN-ON)

Dia dhuit (DEE-A-GWITCH)  
Dia is Muire dhuit (DEE-IS-MEER-A-GWITCH)  
Go raibth maith agat (GU-RAV-MAH-A-GUT)  
Ta me go maith (TAW-ME-GO-MAH)

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**Thank you,**

**Dan O'Mahony**