

PEGEEN: -- imperiously. -- Fling out that rubbish and put them cups away. (Christy tidies away in great haste) . Shove in the bench by the wall. (He does so.) And hang that glass on the nail. What disturbed it at all?

CHRISTY: -- very meekly. -- I was making myself decent only, and this a fine country for young lovely girls.

*PEGEEN: -- sharply. -- Whisht your talking of girls.
[Goes to counter -- right.]*

CHRISTY: Wouldn't any wish to be decent in a place . . .

PEGEEN: Whisht I'm saying.

CHRISTY: -- looks at her face for a moment with great misgivings, then as a last effort, takes up a loy, and goes towards her, with feigned assurance) -- . It was with a loy the like of that I killed my father.

PEGEEN: -- still sharply. -- You've told me that story six times since the dawn of day.

CHRISTY: -- reproachfully. -- It's a queer thing you wouldn't care to be hearing it and them girls after walking four miles to be listening to me now.

PEGEEN:-- turning round astonished. -- Four miles.

CHRISTY: -- apologetically. Didn't himself say there were only four bona fides living in the place?

PEGEEN: It's bona fides by the road they are, but that lot came over the river lepping the stones. It's not three perches when you go like that, and I was down this morning looking on the papers the post-boy does have in his bag. (With meaning and emphasis.) For there was great news this day, Christopher Mahon. [She goes into room left.]

CHRISTY: -- suspiciously. Is it news of my murder?

PEGEEN: -- inside. -- Murder, indeed.

CHRISTY: -- loudly. -- A murdered da?

PEGEEN: -- coming in again and crossing right. -- There was not, but a story filled half a page of the hanging of a man. Ah, that should be a fearful end, young fellow, and it worst of all for a man who destroyed his da, for the like of him would get small mercies, and when it's dead he is, they'd put him in a narrow grave, with cheap sacking wrapping him round, and pour down quicklime on his head, the way you'd see a woman pouring any frish-frash from a cup.

CHRISTY: -- very miserably. -- Oh, God help me. Are you thinking I'm safe? You were saying at the fall of night, I was shut of jeopardy and I here with yourselves.

PEGEEN: -- severely. -- You'll be shut of jeopardy no place if you go talking with a pack of wild girls the like of them do be walking abroad with the peelers, talking whispers at the fall of night.

CHRISTY: -- with terror. -- And you're thinking they'd tell?

PEGEEN: -- with mock sympathy. -- Who knows, God help you.

CHRISTY: -- loudly. -- What joy would they have to bring hanging to the likes of me?

PEGEEN: -- It's queer joys they have, and who knows the thing they'd do, if it'd make the green stones cry itself to think of you swaying and swiggling at the butt of a rope, and you with a fine, stout neck, God bless you! the way you'd be a half an hour, in great anguish, getting your death.

CHRISTY: -- getting his boots and putting them on. -- If there's that terror of them, it'd be best, maybe, I went on wandering like Esau or Cain and Abel on the sides of Neifin or the Erris plain.

PEGEEN: -- beginning to play with him. -- It would, maybe, for I've heard the Circuit Judges this place is a heartless crew.

CHRISTY: -- bitterly. -- It's more than Judges this place is a heartless crew. (*Looking up at her.*) And isn't it a poor thing to be starting again and I a lonesome fellow will be looking out on women and girls the way the needy fallen spirits do be looking on the Lord?

PEGEEN: -- What call have you to be that lonesome when there's poor girls walking Mayo in their thousands now?

CHRISTY: -- grimly. -- It's well you know what call I have. It's well you know it's a lonesome thing to be passing small towns with the lights shining sideways when the night is down, or going in strange places with a dog nosing before you and a dog nosing behind, or drawn to the cities where you'd hear a voice kissing and talking deep love in every shadow of the ditch, and you passing on with an empty, hungry stomach failing from your heart.

PEGEEN: -- I'm thinking you're an odd man, Christy Mahon. The oddest walking fellow I ever set my eyes on to this hour to-day.

CHRISTY: -- What would any be but odd men and they living lonesome in the world?

PEGEEN: I'm not odd, and I'm my whole life with my father only.

CHRISTY: -- *with infinite admiration.* -- How would a lovely handsome woman the like of you be lonesome when all men should be thronging around to hear the sweetness of your voice, and the little infant children should be pestering your steps I'm thinking, and you walking the roads.

PEGEEN: I'm hard set to know what way a coaxing fellow the like of yourself should be lonesome either.

CHRISTY: Coaxing?

PEGEEN: Would you have me think a man never talked with the girls would have the words you've spoken to-day? It's only letting on you are to be lonesome, the way you'd get around me now.

CHRISTY: I wish to God I was letting on; but I was lonesome all times, and born lonesome, I'm thinking, as the moon of dawn. [*Going to door.*]

PEGEEN: -- *puzzled by his talk.* -- Well, it's a story I'm not understanding at all why you'd be worse than another, Christy Mahon, and you a fine lad with the great savagery to destroy your da.

CHRISTY: It's little I'm understanding myself, saving only that my heart's scalded this day, and I going off stretching out the earth between us, the way I'll not be waking near you another dawn of the year till the two of us do arise to hope or judgment with the saints of God, and now I'd best be going with my wattle in my hand, for hanging is a poor thing (*turning to go*), and it's little welcome only is left me in this house to-day.

PEGEEN: -- *sharply.* -- Christy! [*He turns round.*] Come here to me. (*He goes towards her.*) Lay down that switch and throw some sods on the fire. You're pot-boy in this place, and I'll not have you mitch off from us now.

CHRISTY: You were saying I'd be hanged if I stay.

PEGEEN: -- *quite kindly at last.* -- I'm after going down and reading the fearful crimes of Ireland for two weeks or three, and there wasn't a word of your murder. (*Getting up and going over to the counter.*) They've likely not found the body. You're safe so with ourselves.

CHRISTY: -- *astonished, slowly.* -- It's making game of me you were (*following her with fearful joy*), and I can stay so, working at your side, and I not lonesome from this mortal day.

PEGEEN: What's to hinder you from staying, except the widow woman or the young girls would inveigle you off?

CHRISTY: -- with rapture. -- And I'll have your words from this day filling my ears, and that look is come upon you meeting my two eyes, and I watching you loafing around in the warm sun, or rinsing your ankles when the night is come.