

Lady Gregory, *Spreading the News* (1904)

Persons

Bartley Fallon.
Mrs. Fallon.
Jack Smith.
Shawn Early.
Tim Casey.
James Ryan.
Mrs. Tarpey.
Mrs. Tully.
A Policeman (Jo Muldoon).
A Removable Magistrate.

Scene: The outskirts of a Fair. An Apple Stall, Mrs. Tarpey sitting at it. Magistrate and Policeman enter.

Magistrate: So that is the Fair Green. Cattle and sheep and mud. No system. What a repulsive sight!

Policeman: That is so, indeed.

Magistrate: I suppose there is a good deal of disorder in this place?

Policeman: There is.

Magistrate: Common assault?

Policeman: It's common enough.

Magistrate: Agrarian crime, no doubt?

Policeman: That is so.

Magistrate: Boycotting? Maiming of cattle? Firing into houses?

Policeman: There was one time, and there might be again.

Magistrate: That is bad. Does it go any farther than that?

Policeman: Far enough, indeed.[Pg 4]

Magistrate: Homicide, then! This district has been shamefully neglected! I will change all that. When I was in the Andaman Islands, my system never failed. Yes, yes, I will change all that. What has that woman on her stall?

Policeman: Apples mostly—and sweets.

Magistrate: Just see if there are any unlicensed goods underneath—spirits or the like. We had evasions of the salt tax in the Andaman Islands.

Policeman: (Sniffing cautiously and upsetting a heap of apples.) I see no spirits here—or salt.

Magistrate: (To Mrs. Tarpey.) Do you know this town well, my good woman?

Mrs. Tarpey: (Holding out some apples.) A penny the half-dozen, your honour.

Policeman: (Shouting.) The gentleman is asking do you know the town! He's the new magistrate!

Mrs. Tarpey: (Rising and ducking.) Do I know the town? I do, to be sure.

Magistrate: (Shouting.) What is its chief business?

Mrs. Tarpey: Business, is it? What business would the people here have but to be minding one another's business?

Magistrate: I mean what trade have they?

Mrs. Tarpey: Not a trade. No trade at all but to be talking.[Pg 5]

Magistrate: I shall learn nothing here.

(James Ryan comes in, pipe in mouth. Seeing Magistrate he retreats quickly, taking pipe from mouth.)

Magistrate: The smoke from that man's pipe had a greenish look; he may be growing unlicensed tobacco at home. I wish I had brought my telescope to this district. Come to the post-office, I will telegraph for it. I found it very useful in the Andaman Islands.

(Magistrate and Policeman go out left.)

Mrs. Tarpey: Bad luck to Jo Muldoon, knocking my apples this way and that way. (Begins arranging them.) Showing off he was to the new magistrate.

(Enter Bartley Fallon and Mrs. Fallon.)

Bartley: Indeed it's a poor country and a scarce country to be living in. But I'm thinking if I went to America it's long ago the day I'd be dead!

Mrs. Fallon: So you might, indeed.

(She puts her basket on a barrel and begins putting parcels in it, taking them from under her cloak.)

Bartley: And it's a great expense for a poor man to be buried in America.

Mrs. Fallon: Never fear, Bartley Fallon, but I'll give you a good burying the day you'll die.

Bartley: Maybe it's yourself will be buried in [Pg 6] the graveyard of Cloonmara before me, Mary Fallon, and I myself that will be dying unbeknownst some night, and no one a-near me. And the cat itself may be gone straying through the country, and the mice squealing over the quilt.

Mrs. Fallon: Leave off talking of dying. It might be twenty years you'll be living yet.

Bartley: (With a deep sigh.) I'm thinking if I'll be living at the end of twenty years, it's a very old man I'll be then!

Mrs. Tarpey: (Turns and sees them.) Good morrow, Bartley Fallon; good morrow, Mrs. Fallon. Well, Bartley, you'll find no cause for complaining to-day; they are all saying it was a good fair.

Bartley: (Raising his voice.) It was not a good fair, Mrs. Tarpey. It was a scattered sort of a fair. If we didn't expect more, we got less. That's the way with me always; whatever I have to sell

goes down and whatever I have to buy goes up. If there's ever any misfortune coming to this world, it's on myself it pitches, like a flock of crows on seed potatoes.

Mrs. Fallon: Leave off talking of misfortunes, and listen to Jack Smith that is coming the way, and he singing.

(Voice of Jack Smith heard singing:)

I thought, my first love,
There'd be but one house between you and me,
And I thought I would find
[Pg 7]Yourself coaxing my child on your knee.
Over the tide
I would leap with the leap of a swan,
Till I came to the side
Of the wife of the Red-haired man!

(Jack Smith comes in; he is a red-haired man, and is carrying a hayfork.)

Mrs. Tarpey: That should be a good song if I had my hearing.

Mrs. Fallon: (Shouting.) It's "The Red-haired Man's Wife."

Mrs. Tarpey: I know it well. That's the song that has a skin on it!

(She turns her back to them and goes on arranging her apples.)

Mrs. Fallon: Where's herself, Jack Smith?

Jack Smith: She was delayed with her washing; bleaching the clothes on the hedge she is, and she daren't leave them, with all the tinkers that do be passing to the fair. It isn't to the fair I came myself, but up to the Five Acre Meadow I'm going, where I have a contract for the hay. We'll get a share of it into tramps to-day. (He lays down hayfork and lights his pipe.)

Bartley: You will not get it into tramps to-day. The rain will be down on it by evening, and on myself too. It's seldom I ever started on a journey but the rain would come down on me before I'd find any place of shelter.

[Pg 8]Jack Smith: If it didn't itself, Bartley, it is my belief you would carry a leaky pail on your head in place of a hat, the way you'd not be without some cause of complaining.

(A voice heard, "Go on, now, go on out o' that. Go on I say.")

Jack Smith: Look at that young mare of Pat Ryan's that is backing into Shaughnessy's bullocks with the dint of the crowd! Don't be daunted, Pat, I'll give you a hand with her.

(He goes out, leaving his hayfork.)

Mrs. Fallon: It's time for ourselves to be going home. I have all I bought put in the basket. Look at there, Jack Smith's hayfork he left after him! He'll be wanting it. (Calls.) Jack Smith! Jack Smith!—He's gone through the crowd—hurry after him, Bartley, he'll be wanting it.

Bartley: I'll do that. This is no safe place to be leaving it. (He takes up fork awkwardly and upsets the basket.) Look at that now! If there is any basket in the fair upset, it must be our own basket! (He goes out to right.)

Mrs. Fallon: Get out of that! It is your own fault, it is. Talk of misfortunes and misfortunes will come. Glory be! Look at my new egg-cups rolling in every part—and my two pound of sugar with the paper broke——

Mrs. Tarpey: (Turning from stall.) God help us, Mrs. Fallon, what happened to your basket?[Pg 9]

Mrs. Fallon: It's himself that knocked it down, bad manners to him. (Putting things up.) My grand sugar that's destroyed, and he'll not drink his tea without it. I had best go back to the shop for more, much good may it do him!

(Enter Tim Casey.)

Tim Casey: Where is Bartley Fallon, Mrs. Fallon? I want a word with him before he'll leave the fair. I was afraid he might have gone home by this, for he's a temperate man.

Mrs. Fallon: I wish he did go home! It'd be best for me if he went home straight from the fair green, or if he never came with me at all! Where is he, is it? He's gone up the road (jerks elbow) following Jack Smith with a hayfork.

(She goes out to left.)

Tim Casey: Following Jack Smith with a hayfork! Did ever any one hear the like of that. (Shouts.) Did you hear that news, Mrs. Tarpey?

Mrs. Tarpey: I heard no news at all.

Tim Casey: Some dispute I suppose it was that rose between Jack Smith and Bartley Fallon, and it seems Jack made off, and Bartley is following him with a hayfork!

Mrs. Tarpey: Is he now? Well, that was quick work! It's not ten minutes since the two of them were here, Bartley going home and Jack going to the Five Acre Meadow; and I had my apples to settle up, that Jo Muldoon of the police had [Pg 10] scattered, and when I looked round again Jack Smith was gone, and Bartley Fallon was gone, and Mrs. Fallon's basket upset, and all in it strewed upon the ground—the tea here—the two pound of sugar there—the egg-cups there—Look, now, what a great hardship the deafness puts upon me, that I didn't hear the commencement of the fight! Wait till I tell James Ryan that I see below; he is a neighbour of Bartley's, it would be a pity if he wouldn't hear the news!

(She goes out. Enter Shawn Early and Mrs. Tully.)

Tim Casey: Listen, Shawn Early! Listen, Mrs. Tully, to the news! Jack Smith and Bartley Fallon had a falling out, and Jack knocked Mrs. Fallon's basket into the road, and Bartley made an attack on him with a hayfork, and away with Jack, and Bartley after him. Look at the sugar here yet on the road!

Shawn Early: Do you tell me so? Well, that's a queer thing, and Bartley Fallon so quiet a man!

Mrs. Tully: I wouldn't wonder at all. I would never think well of a man that would have that sort of a mouldering look. It's likely he has overtaken Jack by this.

(Enter James Ryan and Mrs. Tarpey.)

James Ryan: That is great news Mrs. Tarpey was telling me! I suppose that's what brought [Pg 11] the police and the magistrate up this way. I was wondering to see them in it a while ago.

Shawn Early: The police after them? Bartley Fallon must have injured Jack so. They wouldn't meddle in a fight that was only for show!

Mrs. Tully: Why wouldn't he injure him? There was many a man killed with no more of a weapon than a hayfork.

James Ryan: Wait till I run north as far as Kelly's bar to spread the news! (He goes out.)

Tim Casey: I'll go tell Jack Smith's first cousin that is standing there south of the church after selling his lambs. (Goes out.)

Mrs. Tully: I'll go telling a few of the neighbours I see beyond to the west. (Goes out.)

Shawn Early: I'll give word of it beyond at the east of the green.

(Is going out when Mrs. Tarpey seizes hold of him.)

Mrs. Tarpey: Stop a minute, Shawn Early, and tell me did you see red Jack Smith's wife, Kitty Keary, in any place?

Shawn Early: I did. At her own house she was, drying clothes on the hedge as I passed.

Mrs. Tarpey: What did you say she was doing?

Shawn Early: (Breaking away.) Laying out a sheet on the hedge. (He goes.)

Mrs. Tarpey: Laying out a sheet for the dead! [Pg 12] The Lord have mercy on us! Jack Smith dead, and his wife laying out a sheet for his burying! (Calls out.) Why didn't you tell me that before, Shawn Early? Isn't the deafness the great hardship? Half the world might be dead without me knowing of it or getting word of it at all! (She sits down and rocks herself.) O my poor Jack Smith! To be going to his work so nice and so hearty, and to be left stretched on the ground in the full light of the day!

(Enter Tim Casey.)

Tim Casey: What is it, Mrs. Tarpey? What happened since?

Mrs. Tarpey: O my poor Jack Smith!

Tim Casey: Did Bartley overtake him?

Mrs. Tarpey: O the poor man!

Tim Casey: Is it killed he is?

Mrs. Tarpey: Stretched in the Five Acre Meadow!

Tim Casey: The Lord have mercy on us! Is that a fact?

Mrs. Tarpey: Without the rites of the Church or a ha'porth!

Tim Casey: Who was telling you?

Mrs. Tarpey: And the wife laying out a sheet for his corpse. (Sits up and wipes her eyes.) I suppose they'll wake him the same as another?

(Enter Mrs. Tully, Shawn Early, and James Ryan.)[Pg 13]

Mrs. Tully: There is great talk about this work in every quarter of the fair.

Mrs. Tarpey: Ochone! cold and dead. And myself maybe the last he was speaking to!

James Ryan: The Lord save us! Is it dead he is?

Tim Casey: Dead surely, and the wife getting provision for the wake.

Shawn Early: Well, now, hadn't Bartley Fallon great venom in him?

Mrs. Tully: You may be sure he had some cause. Why would he have made an end of him if he had not? (To Mrs. Tarpey, raising her voice.) What was it rose the dispute at all, Mrs. Tarpey?

Mrs. Tarpey: Not a one of me knows. The last I saw of them, Jack Smith was standing there, and Bartley Fallon was standing there, quiet and easy, and he listening to "The Red-haired Man's Wife."

Mrs. Tully: Do you hear that, Tim Casey? Do you hear that, Shawn Early and James Ryan? Bartley Fallon was here this morning listening to red Jack Smith's wife, Kitty Keary that was! Listening to her and whispering with her! It was she started the fight so!

Shawn Early: She must have followed him from her own house. It is likely some person roused him.

Tim Casey: I never knew, before, Bartley Fallon was great with Jack Smith's wife.

[Pg 14] Mrs. Tully: How would you know it? Sure it's not in the streets they would be calling it. If Mrs. Fallon didn't know of it, and if I that have the next house to them didn't know of it, and if Jack Smith himself didn't know of it, it is not likely you would know of it, Tim Casey.

Shawn Early: Let Bartley Fallon take charge of her from this out so, and let him provide for her. It is little pity she will get from any person in this parish.

Tim Casey: How can he take charge of her? Sure he has a wife of his own. Sure you don't think he'd turn souper and marry her in a Protestant church?

James Ryan: It would be easy for him to marry her if he brought her to America.

Shawn Early: With or without Kitty Keary, believe me it is for America he's making at this minute. I saw the new magistrate and Jo Muldoon of the police going into the post-office as I came up—there was hurry on them—you may be sure it was to telegraph they went, the way he'll be stopped in the docks at Queenstown!

Mrs. Tully: It's likely Kitty Keary is gone with him, and not minding a sheet or a wake at all. The poor man, to be deserted by his own wife, and the breath hardly gone out yet from his body that is lying bloody in the field!

(Enter Mrs. Fallon.)

[Pg 15] Mrs. Fallon: What is it the whole of the town is talking about? And what is it you yourselves are talking about? Is it about my man Bartley Fallon you are talking? Is it lies about him you are telling, saying that he went killing Jack Smith? My grief that ever he came into this place at all!

James Ryan: Be easy now, Mrs. Fallon. Sure there is no one at all in the whole fair but is sorry for you!

Mrs. Fallon: Sorry for me, is it? Why would any one be sorry for me? Let you be sorry for yourselves, and that there may be shame on you for ever and at the day of judgment, for the words you are saying and the lies you are telling to take away the character of my poor man, and to take the good name off of him, and to drive him to destruction! That is what you are doing!

Shawn Early: Take comfort now, Mrs. Fallon. The police are not so smart as they think. Sure he might give them the slip yet, the same as Lynchehaun.

Mrs. Tully: If they do get him, and if they do put a rope around his neck, there is no one can say he does not deserve it!

Mrs. Fallon: Is that what you are saying, Bridget Tully, and is that what you think? I tell you it's too much talk you have, making yourself out to be such a great one, and to be running down every respectable person! A rope, is it?[Pg 16] It isn't much of a rope was needed to tie up your own furniture the day you came into Martin Tully's house, and you never bringing as much as a blanket, or a penny, or a suit of clothes with you and I myself bringing seventy pounds and two feather beds. And now you are stiffer than a woman would have a hundred pounds! It is too much talk the whole of you have. A rope is it? I tell you the whole of this town is full of liars and schemers that would hang you up for half a glass of whiskey. (Turning to go.) People they are you wouldn't believe as much as daylight from without you'd get up to have a look at it yourself. Killing Jack Smith indeed! Where are you at all, Bartley, till I bring you out of this? My nice quiet little man! My decent comrade! He that is as kind and as harmless as an innocent beast of the field! He'll be doing no harm at all if he'll shed the blood of some of you after this day's work! That much would be no harm at all. (Calls out.) Bartley! Bartley Fallon! Where are you? (Going out.) Did any one see Bartley Fallon?

(All turn to look after her.)

James Ryan: It is hard for her to believe any such a thing, God help her!

(Enter Bartley Fallon from right, carrying hayfork.)

Bartley: It is what I often said to myself, if[Pg 17] there is ever any misfortune coming to this world it is on myself it is sure to come!

(All turn round and face him.)

Bartley: To be going about with this fork and to find no one to take it, and no place to leave it down, and I wanting to be gone out of this—Is that you, Shawn Early? (Holds out fork.) It's well I met you. You have no call to be leaving the fair for a while the way I have, and how can I go till I'm rid of this fork? Will you take it and keep it until such time as Jack Smith——

Shawn Early: (Backing.) I will not take it, Bartley Fallon, I'm very thankful to you!

Bartley: (Turning to apple stall.) Look at it now, Mrs. Tarpey, it was here I got it; let me thrust it in under the stall. It will lie there safe enough, and no one will take notice of it until such time as Jack Smith——

Mrs. Tarpey: Take your fork out of that! Is it to put trouble on me and to destroy me you want? Putting it there for the police to be rooting it out maybe. (Thrusts him back.)

Bartley: That is a very unneighbourly thing for you to do, Mrs. Tarpey. Hadn't I enough care on me with that fork before this, running up and down with it like the swinging of a clock, and afeard to lay it down in any place! I wish I never touched it or meddled with it at all![Pg 18]

James Ryan: It is a pity, indeed, you ever did.

Bartley: Will you yourself take it, James Ryan? You were always a neighbourly man.

James Ryan: (Backing.) There is many a thing I would do for you, Bartley Fallon, but I won't do that!

Shawn Early: I tell you there is no man will give you any help or any encouragement for this day's work. If it was something agrarian now——

Bartley: If no one at all will take it, maybe it's best to give it up to the police.

Tim Casey: There'd be a welcome for it with them surely! (Laughter.)

Mrs. Tully: And it is to the police Kitty Keary herself will be brought.

Mrs. Tarpey: (Rocking to and fro.) I wonder now who will take the expense of the wake for poor Jack Smith?

Bartley: The wake for Jack Smith!

Tim Casey: Why wouldn't he get a wake as well as another? Would you begrudge him that much?

Bartley: Red Jack Smith dead! Who was telling you?

Shawn Early: The whole town knows of it by this.

Bartley: Do they say what way did he die?

James Ryan: You don't know that yourself, I suppose, Bartley Fallon? You don't know he was followed and that he was laid dead with the stab of a hayfork?[Pg 19]

Bartley: The stab of a hayfork!

Shawn Early: You don't know, I suppose, that the body was found in the Five Acre Meadow?

Bartley: The Five Acre Meadow!

Tim Casey: It is likely you don't know that the police are after the man that did it?

Bartley: The man that did it!

Mrs. Tully: You don't know, maybe, that he was made away with for the sake of Kitty Keary, his wife?

Bartley: Kitty Keary, his wife!

(Sits down bewildered.)

Mrs. Tully: And what have you to say now, Bartley Fallon?

Bartley: (Crossing himself.) I to bring that fork here, and to find that news before me! It is much if I can ever stir from this place at all, or reach as far as the road!

Tim Casey: Look, boys, at the new magistrate, and Jo Muldoon along with him! It's best for us to quit this.

Shawn Early: That is so. It is best not to be mixed in this business at all.

James Ryan: Bad as he is, I wouldn't like to be an informer against any man.

(All hurry away except Mrs. Tarpey, who remains behind her stall. Enter magistrate and policeman.)

Magistrate: I knew the district was in a bad[Pg 20] state, but I did not expect to be confronted with a murder at the first fair I came to.

Policeman: I am sure you did not, indeed.

Magistrate: It was well I had not gone home. I caught a few words here and there that roused my suspicions.

Policeman: So they would, too.

Magistrate: You heard the same story from everyone you asked?

Policeman: The same story—or if it was not altogether the same, anyway it was no less than the first story.

Magistrate: What is that man doing? He is sitting alone with a hayfork. He has a guilty look. The murder was done with a hayfork!

Policeman: (In a whisper.) That's the very man they say did the act; Bartley Fallon himself!

Magistrate: He must have found escape difficult—he is trying to brazen it out. A convict in the Andaman Islands tried the same game, but he could not escape my system! Stand aside—Don't go far—have the handcuffs ready. (He walks up to Bartley, folds his arms, and stands before him.) Here, my man, do you know anything of John Smith?

Bartley: Of John Smith! Who is he, now?

Policeman: Jack Smith, sir—Red Jack Smith!

Magistrate: (Coming a step nearer and tapping him on the shoulder.) Where is Jack Smith?[Pg 21]

Bartley: (With a deep sigh, and shaking his head slowly.) Where is he, indeed?

Magistrate: What have you to tell?

Bartley: It is where he was this morning, standing in this spot, singing his share of songs—no, but lighting his pipe—scraping a match on the sole of his shoe——

Magistrate: I ask you, for the third time, where is he?

Bartley: I wouldn't like to say that. It is a great mystery, and it is hard to say of any man, did he earn hatred or love.

Magistrate: Tell me all you know.

Bartley: All that I know—Well, there are the three estates; there is Limbo, and there is Purgatory, and there is——

Magistrate: Nonsense! This is trifling! Get to the point.

Bartley: Maybe you don't hold with the clergy so? That is the teaching of the clergy. Maybe you hold with the old people. It is what they do be saying, that the shadow goes wandering, and the soul is tired, and the body is taking a rest—The shadow! (Starts up.) I was nearly sure I saw Jack Smith not ten minutes ago at the corner of the forge, and I lost him again—Was it his ghost I saw, do you think?

Magistrate: (To policeman.) Conscience-struck! He will confess all now![Pg 22]

Bartley: His ghost to come before me! It is likely it was on account of the fork! I to have it and he to have no way to defend himself the time he met with his death!

Magistrate: (To policeman.) I must note down his words. (Takes out notebook.) (To Bartley:) I warn you that your words are being noted.

Bartley: If I had ha' run faster in the beginning, this terror would not be on me at the latter end! Maybe he will cast it up against me at the day of judgment—I wouldn't wonder at all at that.

Magistrate: (Writing.) At the day of judgment——

Bartley: It was soon for his ghost to appear to me—is it coming after me always by day it will be, and stripping the clothes off in the night time?—I wouldn't wonder at all at that, being as I am an unfortunate man!

Magistrate: (Sternly.) Tell me this truly. What was the motive of this crime?

Bartley: The motive, is it?

Magistrate: Yes; the motive; the cause.

Bartley: I'd sooner not say that.

Magistrate: You had better tell me truly. Was it money?

Bartley: Not at all! What did poor Jack Smith ever have in his pockets unless it might be his hands that would be in them?

Magistrate: Any dispute about land?[Pg 23]

Bartley: (Indignantly.) Not at all! He never was a grabber or grabbed from any one!

Magistrate: You will find it better for you if you tell me at once.

Bartley: I tell you I wouldn't for the whole world wish to say what it was—it is a thing I would not like to be talking about.

Magistrate: There is no use in hiding it. It will be discovered in the end.

Bartley: Well, I suppose it will, seeing that mostly everybody knows it before. Whisper here now. I will tell no lie; where would be the use? (Puts his hand to his mouth, and Magistrate stoops.) Don't be putting the blame on the parish, for such a thing was never done in the parish before—it was done for the sake of Kitty Keary, Jack Smith's wife.

Magistrate: (To policeman.) Put on the handcuffs. We have been saved some trouble. I knew he would confess if taken in the right way.

(Policeman puts on handcuffs.)

Bartley: Handcuffs now! Glory be! I always said, if there was ever any misfortune coming to this place it was on myself it would fall. I to be in handcuffs! There's no wonder at all in that.

(Enter Mrs. Fallon, followed by the rest. She is looking back at them as she speaks.)

Mrs. Fallon: Telling lies the whole of the people of this town are; telling lies, telling lies as fast as a dog will trot! Speaking against my poor respectable [Pg 24] man! Saying he made an end of Jack Smith! My decent comrade! There is no better man and no kinder man in the whole of the five parishes! It's little annoyance he ever gave to any one! (Turns and sees him.) What in the earthly world do I see before me? Bartley Fallon in charge of the police! Handcuffs on him! O Bartley, what did you do at all at all?

Bartley: O Mary, there has a great misfortune come upon me! It is what I always said, that if there is ever any misfortune——

Mrs. Fallon: What did he do at all, or is it bewitched I am?

Magistrate: This man has been arrested on a charge of murder.

Mrs. Fallon: Whose charge is that? Don't believe them! They are all liars in this place! Give me back my man!

Magistrate: It is natural you should take his part, but you have no cause of complaint against your neighbours. He has been arrested for the murder of John Smith, on his own confession.

Mrs. Fallon: The saints of heaven protect us! And what did he want killing Jack Smith?

Magistrate: It is best you should know all. He did it on account of a love affair with the murdered man's wife.

Mrs. Fallon: (Sitting down.) With Jack Smith's wife! With Kitty Keary!—Ochone, the traitor!

[Pg 25]The Crowd: A great shame, indeed. He is a traitor, indeed.

Mrs. Tully: To America he was bringing her, Mrs. Fallon.

Bartley: What are you saying, Mary? I tell you——

Mrs. Fallon: Don't say a word! I won't listen to any word you'll say! (Stops her ears.) O, isn't he the treacherous villain? Ohone go deo!

Bartley: Be quiet till I speak! Listen to what I say!

Mrs. Fallon: Sitting beside me on the ass car coming to the town, so quiet and so respectable, and treachery like that in his heart!

Bartley: Is it your wits you have lost or is it I myself that have lost my wits?

Mrs. Fallon: And it's hard I earned you, slaving, slaving—and you grumbling, and sighing, and coughing, and discontented, and the priest wore out anointing you, with all the times you threatened to die!

Bartley: Let you be quiet till I tell you!

Mrs. Fallon: You to bring such a disgrace into the parish. A thing that was never heard of before!

Bartley: Will you shut your mouth and hear me speaking?

Mrs. Fallon: And if it was for any sort of a fine handsome woman, but for a little fistful of a [Pg 26] woman like Kitty Keary, that's not four feet high hardly, and not three teeth in her head unless she got new ones! May God reward you, Bartley Fallon, for the black treachery in your heart and the wickedness in your mind, and the red blood of poor Jack Smith that is wet upon your hand!

(Voice of Jack Smith heard singing.)

The sea shall be dry,

The earth under mourning and ban!

Then loud shall he cry

For the wife of the red-haired man!

Bartley: It's Jack Smith's voice—I never knew a ghost to sing before—. It is after myself and the fork he is coming! (Goes back. Enter Jack Smith.) Let one of you give him the fork and I will be clear of him now and for eternity!

Mrs. Tarpey: The Lord have mercy on us! Red Jack Smith! The man that was going to be waked!

James Ryan: Is it back from the grave you are come?

Shawn Early: Is it alive you are, or is it dead you are?

Tim Casey: Is it yourself at all that's in it?

Mrs. Tully: Is it letting on you were to be dead?

Mrs. Fallon: Dead or alive, let you stop Kitty [Pg 27] Keary, your wife, from bringing my man away with her to America!

Jack Smith: It is what I think, the wits are gone astray on the whole of you. What would my wife want bringing Bartley Fallon to America?

Mrs. Fallon: To leave yourself, and to get quit of you she wants, Jack Smith, and to bring him away from myself. That's what the two of them had settled together.

Jack Smith: I'll break the head of any man that says that! Who is it says it? (To Tim Casey:) Was it you said it? (To Shawn Early:) Was it you?

All together: (Backing and shaking their heads.) It wasn't I said it!

Jack Smith: Tell me the name of any man that said it!

All together: (Pointing to Bartley.) It was him that said it!

Jack Smith: Let me at him till I break his head!

(Bartley backs in terror. Neighbours hold Jack Smith back.)

Jack Smith: (Trying to free himself.) Let me at him! Isn't he the pleasant sort of a scarecrow for any woman to be crossing the ocean with! It's back from the docks of New York he'd be turned (trying to rush at him again), with a lie in his mouth and treachery in his heart, and another [Pg 28] man's wife by his side, and he passing her off as his own! Let me at him can't you.

(Makes another rush, but is held back.)

Magistrate: (Pointing to Jack Smith.) Policeman, put the handcuffs on this man. I see it all now. A case of false impersonation, a conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice. There was a case in the Andaman Islands, a murderer of the Mopsa tribe, a religious enthusiast——

Policeman: So he might be, too.

Magistrate: We must take both these men to the scene of the murder. We must confront them with the body of the real Jack Smith.

Jack Smith: I'll break the head of any man that will find my dead body!

Magistrate: I'll call more help from the barracks. (Blows Policeman's whistle.)

Bartley: It is what I am thinking, if myself and Jack Smith are put together in the one cell for the night, the handcuffs will be taken off him, and his hands will be free, and murder will be done that time surely!

Magistrate: Come on! (They turn to the right.)