

## IN THE SHADOW OF THE GLEN

J.M Synge

- NORA: It's in a lonesome place you do have to be talking with someone, and looking for someone, In the evening of the day, and if it's a power of men I'm after knowing they were fine men, for I was a hard child to please and a hard girl to please (*she looks at him a little sternly*), and it's a hard woman I am to please this day, Michael Dara, and it's no lie I'm telling you.
- MICHAEL: *Looking over to see that the tramp is asleep, and then point-ing to the dead man.* Was it a hard woman to please you were when you took himself for your man?
- NORA: What way would I live, and I an old woman, if I didn't marry a man with a bit of a farm, and cows on it, and sheep on the back hills?
- MICHAEL: That's true, Nora, and maybe it's no fool you were, for there's good grazing on it, if it is a lonesome place, and I'm thinking it's a good sum he's left behind.
- NORA: *Taking the stocking with the money from her pocket, and putting it on the table.* I do be thinking in the long nights it was a big fool I was that time, Michael Dara; for what good is a bit of a farm with cows on it, and sheep on the back hills, when you do be sitting looking out from a door the like of that door, and seeing nothing but the mists rolling down the bog, and the mists again and they rolling up the bog, and hearing nothing but the wind crying out in the bits of broken trees were left from the great storm, and the streams roaring with the rain.
- MICHAEL: *Looking at her uneasily.* What is it ails you this night, Nora Burke? I've heard tell it's the like of that talk you do hear from men, and they after being a great while on the back hills.
- NORA: *Putting out the money on the table.* It's a bad night, and a wild night, Michael Dara, and isn't it a great while I am at the foot of the back hills, sitting up here boiling food for himself, and food for the brood sow, and baking a cake when the night falls? Isn't it a long while I am sitting here in the winter and the summer, and the fine spring, with the young growing behind me and the old passing, saying to myself one time to look on Mary Brien, who wasn't that height (*holding out her hand*) and I a fine girl growing up, and there she is now with two children, and another coming on her in three months or four. She pauses. And saying to myself another time, to look on Peggy Cavanagh, who had the lightest hand at milking a cow that wouldn't be easy; or turning a cake, and there she is now walking round on the roads, or sitting in a dirty old house with no teeth in her mouth, and no sense, and no more hair than you'd see on a bit of hill and they after burning the furze from it.
- MICHAEL: That's five pounds and ten notes, a good sum, surely! ... It's not that way you'll be talking when you marry a young man, Nora Burke, and they were saying in the fair my lambs were the best lambs, and I got a grand price, for I'm no fool now at

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making a bargain when my lambs are good.

NORA: What was it you got?

MICHAEL: Twenty pounds for the lot, Nora Burke... We'd do right to wait now till himself will be quiet awhile in the Seven Churches, and then you'll marry me in the chapel of Rathvanna, and I'll bring the sheep up on the bit of a hill you have on the back mountain, and we won't have anything we'd be afeard to let our minds on when the mist is down.

NORA: Why would I marry you, Mike Dara? You'll be getting old and I'll be getting old, and in a little while, I'm telling you, you'll be sitting up in your bed - the way himself was sitting - with a shake in your face, and your teeth falling, and the white hair sticking out round you like an old bush where sheep do be leaping a gap.