

Devoir pour le 8 décembre

In Tubberlick Vester McCarthy's chief concern was not the forthcoming cattle drive, for which his plans were well advanced, but the dazzling ten-horse power Vauxhall de Luxe which had done so much to enhance the image of his only daughter across the summer and early autumn. The liquor business in the McCarthy's licensed premises had picked up considerably since the disastrous quarterly cattle and pig fair of July. Old suitors surfaced from every side and Sally fond herself being pursued by several young and not so young bachelors of unquestionable eligibility. Many were rejects from former, short-lived liaisons. Then there were those whose attentions had never been more than lukewarm and a chosen few for whom Vester's only daughter had cast her amorous nets in vain. All had returned and in various ways, direct and indirect, had intimated their availability. Sally most definitely cut a dramatic and dashing figure as she sped with driving window open through the leafy highways and byways of the countryside. Her rich fair hair swept loosely behind, her clear skinned pleasant face was always advantageously highlighted by a selection of fresh white blouses. Often she applied the brakes in order to pass the time of day with one of her many suitors. She never dallied long. This, she discovered, was the secret. Let them savour her fragrance, catch glimpses of her infectious smile, laugh at their commonplace and often crude jests but never totally reject. Her time was running out. Most of all she took to calling on a regular basis at Mark Doran's. Oddly enough he was rarely in. He was always out in the meadows or the pastures or the garden, a fact that did not escape the notice of his mother. Sally McCarthey was a welcome visitor. She always brought news. The real reason behind her visits did not dawn on Nonie Doran at once. This happened when the older woman noted the younger's movements to and from the kitchen windows and door. Then the smiling young face would turn serious as her perplexed eyes sought the whereabouts of the object of her visit.

John B. KEANE, *Durango*, 1991