



## A Mysterious Letter With A Coded Message August 1932

*A mysterious coded letter in English about a tale written in Old Irish by an anonymous author and Published over three weeks in a local newspaper containing a story that should concern you or may refer to you personally .*

*The Letter was delivered by hand to Thomas B Cleary and appears to offer some authoritative insight and assistance in the event that the "culprit" may be identifiable .*

See below:

The Letter

The Printed Story

The translated Story

# The Letter:

Justin  
Woodlawn  
Aug 7<sup>th</sup> 32

Mr Thomas O'Clery

Dear Tom

Did you ever know  
a place named "Cairn" or  
"Ban Kioina" or a family  
named "O Driscoll" in  
that town. If you look

up the Irish column  
in the Tribune, <sup>this issue</sup> there  
is an account of them  
& as there is a Thomas  
O'Clery mentioned as  
being a figure & thought



You might know. I see  
the tale will be continued  
next week also.

Apparently the writer  
will not have his  
identity revealed if  
you suspect who he is

You will only tell  
myself — no other

Yours as ever

H. K. Kinnerty











Connacht Tribune August 6, 1932

In Queenstown

Stories/adventures of the O'Driscoll Clan

One family living in this town (or townland/place) long ago were of the O'Driscoll Clan's progeny/line. The neighbours had many accounts of them. Where there are public houses and commerce now there were only little cabins under shelter and scollop/thatch sixty years ago.

Ceataí/Kathy was the name of the mother of the O'Driscoll Clan, and God left her three sons and only one daughter. After her poor husband's death, God's blessing upon his soul, she was left a young widow without property or wealth, with a weak family who weren't able to earn money or make a living for themselves or for their mother. Nonetheless, Ceataí was a courageous woman and as the neighbours said God raised a hand against her and she fought life trying to rear her family to keep their bodies and souls together. It's no lie that the poor woman soldiered on well until her family was reared in Queenstown and making their own way and living with their mother.

They were decent and earned their neighbours' respect. After the years, the poor widow had comfort, her family earning, work available for them, and with few broken days. Seán and Tomás were as good as any workmen as you'd find in a day's walk – strong men and diligent workers. As for today's young men, they are only asleep compared to the toilers who used be rending and digging from morning to evening in the way of old times.

The third son was emaciated without much good but for doing ill. That was his reputation and if a castle were knocked at night or during the day Peatín Cheataí would be to blame; and certain people said, wherever the devil would sleep in the day that he would sleep in Queenstown at night.

In this town/place the widow and her family had the reputation for being quarrelsome sometimes and that they used be heard all over the little place with their noise and strife. At other times the little house was like Kingscourt/Dunaree. Sometimes there was noise and sport there; sometimes noise and strife and the story would change before half an hour. Perhaps Peatín Cheataí wasn't half as guilty as his reputation suggested, but he was probably an arrogant, vaunting, little lad – and that sort in his mind tends to stiffen at (?) every worthless little person of that kind (?) and to let everyone know that he was a man.

He used go out through the town/place in the morning, a gun on his shoulder, letting on that he was a clever fowler. He used have a plover under his coat according to the mocking local people – a plover he has found dead a week before – he used come now and it in his hand letting on that he knocked it with a bullet but that was not the opinion of the shrewd local people because they thought he wouldn't be capable of shooting it if it were as big as a heap of turf.

Peatín used to occasionally give the priest a helping hand and Fr. Seághan had confidence in him. In any case, Peatín like wandering in and out of the parish house. One morning while the priest was eating breakfast Peatín called into Fr. Seághan's room with an armful of turf for the fire. "Would you eat a piece of a loaf," says the priest. That's what he wanted, and Peatín answered 'why wouldn't I?'

The priest was cutting a piece of the loaf nice and thin as he would for himself but that wouldn't be much good for someone with a voracious hunger.

In his own mind he said "eight of those on top of each other would be needed for a hungry person to get a good bite." He swiped the loaf from the priest's hand, and took another knife. "Oh you fairy of a priest" he says "cut it like this" and he halved the loaf so that he could get a good bite.

Peatín's brother used work about a mile from the town/place and Peatín used be going to him every day. This particular day he met Tomás Ó Cléirigh (Thomas Cleary) on the road, as Peatín was going with his brother's dinner as usual. "Where are you going" says Peatín to Tomás Ó Cléirigh. "I'm going fishing" says the other man. "Good enough" says Peatín, "I'll go along with you".

A begger woman was coming up the road. Peatín called her. "Come here my poor woman" he says, "are you thirsty?" "If so, you can have a drink of tea." The poor woman was thirsty and hungry and she ate Peatín's brother's dinner agus she drank the tea, and off with Peatín with Tomás Ó Cléirigh fishing without thinking of his poor brother who had been working hard since early morning without a bite to eat, and who needed his dinner badly. Peatín didn't mind since he had his own dinner in his belly, but the prosperous man doesn't notice the fasting person.(?)

The evening was fine – the sun was shining on the river and on the stream and Peatín thought of nothing else but the beauty of the evening and the fish before him. They stayed like that until the end of the evening and Peatín then could... the tea and bread that he gave... [last line missing]... if he had it. They made for home heavy with tiredness, himself and Ó Cléirigh and when Peatín put his head in over the lintel the mother began to scold (?) and swear. "You tourist ('oh lad of the visits') sí says, "where were you since dinner time? Bad cess to you (approximation!) who stayed visiting since dinner time. There has been no day since you were born that you haven't put \_\_\_\_? on my mind." Ceataí continued her insults and you'd think she wouldn't stop till death. She grabbed the pot handle (?) agus knocked Peatín with it, but Peatín got up again.

When some peace came Peatín looked around for some sort of a bite of food to eat. He looked on the dresser and he saw the half-crown an the shelf. "Dear mother" says Peatín, "don't be \_\_\_\_? your mind. Isn't a half-crown a good earning since dinner time? I was working hard and earning money for you from the time I took his dinner to my poor brother down on the beech(?). Isn't a half-crown a good and worthwhile earning in today's world, and dear mother as this is the first pay I earned, and I hope that I'll have little trouble earning more I am bestowing this half-crown on you and I'll never ask for it back. And now that you have it I would like for you to drink a couple of glasses and to call on Peig (a neighbour) and to have a pleasant evening." The poor mother didn't know that it was her own half-crown that she got but the change from fighting to peace again was nice.

Although poor Ceataí wasn't given to that magic drop, sometimes when she got an invitation to a public house from a friend, she wouldn't refuse a half-glass or two. Her voice changed and there was a change of tune. Ceataí began clapping and laughing. "Oh, musha! My own dear little fair boy" she says, "Wasn't I judging my own darling in the wrong, oh little son of my heart. Many's a time did you own father say that you might be the best son I ever reared and he was right, god bless his soul. Oh! Peig! Wasn't he discerning. Wasn't he far-sighted. And now, Peig, and Peatín oh light-of-my-life, seeing as this is the first half-crown you earned we'll go out and we'll drink to your health.

They went out to the nearest public house, and Ceataí called for two half-glasses; one for herself, and another half-glass for Peig. "To you health, Peig, and to Peatín's and them all at home," says Ceataí. "To your health, Ceataí, and to poor Peatín's it would be a shame not to drink the poor fellow's health." "You're right there, Peg and seeing we have our health and that we saw this day



we'll have another two half-ones and we'll drink to his health again." "I always thought Peatín would still do the business," says Peig, "and Ceataí the big men are not always the best men." They drank the other two half-glasses and they toasted Peatín againn and off home with the two of them in a friendly, tipsy state.

It wasn't long at all before the story changed. It wasn't long before Ceataí changed her tune. Now two groats of the half-crown were spent and she wanted to leave the change on the dresser with the other half-crown, as she thought. When she reached the kitchen and searched the dresser her own half-crown wasn't there. It then occurred to her that the Peatín had given her her own half-crown. "Where is the half-crown I left here?" says the poor mother to Peatín. "I never saw any half-crown" says the lying traitor. "Perhaps" says Peig "that the little devil gave you your own half-crown a while ago." "Alas! Alas!" says Ceataí, "you're right you're right, Peig. It was my own half-crown that that nasty bag-of-bones (?) found on the dresser and it's certain that it was my own half-crown he gave me. Wasn't it bad enough for him to be visiting cabins with no regard for his mother or the house, but it's worse – seven times worse than that – his nasty cheating of me. It's a pity he wasn't swept away in the great flood the first night I saw him."

Coming to the end of the evening the people of this place heard the usual din and quarrelling and in the middle of the quarrelling Tomás, the other son, came in from his work and of course, however angry the mother was Tomás was angrier. [The last line doesn't make sense:] first night he saw him.

(Not the end)