

# DUPLICITY by Shawn Wilson

## EXCERPT

*“The plans of the righteous are just, but the advice of the wicked is deceitful.”*

Proverbs 12:5

*September 2013 Inishmore, Ireland*

Brick Kavanagh stepped to the edge of the cliff and watched the waves crash against the rocks. He closed his eyes, hoping this sight would be seared in his brain the same way his mind tended to store images from twenty years of being a cop.

During all those years with the Metropolitan Police Department in Washington, D.C., he didn't recognize the emotional toll the job was taking. But there was no denying the price he paid after the devastating conclusion of his last homicide case. How to deal with the aftermath of a case that became so personal? The sage advice of bar owner Eamonn Boland provided the answer—a one-way ticket to Ireland. He figured he'd probably be there for a week, maybe two. Now, with his stay closing in on ninety days, he needed to leave or be in violation of the country's visa-free travel regulations.

Brick fumbled in his pocket for the slip of paper Eamonn had given to him before he left D.C. It was wrinkled and the ink was smudged but it didn't matter; he almost knew the quote by heart.

*“We are tied to the ocean. And when we go back to the sea, whether to sail or to watch it—we are going back from whence we came.”*

When Brick first arrived, the words John F. Kennedy delivered to the America's Cup crew didn't have much significance for him. But the longer he stayed, the more they resonated. Spending time in a place surrounded by the ocean had a cleansing and calming effect he hadn't expected. He was grateful he would be leaving in a much healthier state of mind than when he had arrived.

Brick checked his watch. He still had time to take in one last view from Dun Aengus. He made his way to the prehistoric fort, being careful not to photobomb any of the selfie-taking tourists along the way. He didn't feel like a tourist himself anymore as he stood on the highest point of the cliffs. He

looked in every direction absorbing the breathtaking panorama before he fell in step with the others making their way in the direction back to the boat dock.

Dark clouds were now blocking the sun and the wind had picked up. In the three months Brick had been here, he had gotten used to the weather changing quickly. Part of the charm, although it would probably mean a choppy ferry ride back to Rossaveal. For the sense of tranquility he had experienced, forty minutes of rocking and rolling was a small price to pay. Standing on the upper deck of the boat, Brick watched as Inishmore became shrouded in fog.

\* \* \*

It was after six o'clock when Brick arrived back in Galway. He was starving and knew where he wanted to have his farewell dinner. He headed to Gaffney's, a small pub that served the best lamb stew he had ever eaten. Tonight, he would be dining alone, but when he was here previously, he had had dinner with a woman he met earlier in the week at Charlie Byrne's Bookshop on Middle Street. Nora Breslin introduced herself after a brief conversation in which they discussed a book of poetry by Seamus Heaney. Upon hearing her name, Brick jokingly asked if she was related to Jimmy Breslin. Surprisingly, he was a distant cousin and the well-timed question led to more conversation about the legendary American journalist and his connection to Son of Sam. With the bookstore about to close, the nearby pub provided the perfect place to continue talking over a pint of Guinness and a view of the swans on the River Corrib.

Two nights later, they met again for dinner at Gaffney's. Unfortunately, plans for a trip together to Dublin got derailed when Nora, a flight attendant with Aer Lingus, had to unexpectedly fill in for a colleague. Before leaving, she suggested getting together on the other side of the Atlantic since her regular assignment was the Shannon-to-O'Hare route. Would it happen? Brick wasn't sure, but he had enjoyed the brief time they had spent together. One thing he had learned recently was that it's far better to appreciate what was, than anticipate what might be.

Brick seated himself at a small table with his back to the wall so that he could have an unobstructed view of the restaurant. Some habits die hard; some never do. When the waitress approached with silverware and a menu, he placed his order. She returned shortly with a pint of Guinness. Brick would never mention this to Eamonn or his nephew Rory when he got back home, but the Guinness seemed to taste better here than what they served at Boland's Mill. Then again,

maybe it was his imagination. He'd chalk it up to that. Boland's Mill. As long as tomorrow's flight wasn't delayed, Brick figured he'd probably be having dinner there and thanking Eamonn for suggesting—well, insisting—that time away from D.C. wasn't an option, it was a necessity. The old man knew what he was talking about, but now it was up to Brick to figure out what to do next. He was young, forty-two, owned his condo, and his pension from the police department would be enough to pay the bills and keep food on his table, but Brick was a live-to-work, not a work-to-live kind of guy. Aside from an email he had received from the Assistant Director of the School of Public Affairs at Abraham Lincoln University, regarding a project involving graduate students attempting to solve a cold case, he didn't have any other employment prospects. He would check it out, but it didn't sound like his forte. Working a cold case was right in his wheelhouse but teaching a group of college kids would be a whole lot different than mentoring a detective newly assigned to the Homicide Squad.

One thing was for sure—he wasn't going to figure it out tonight so he might as well just savor the stew the waitress placed in front of him. Maybe he would suggest to Eamonn that the chef at Boland's should consider adding barley to their lamb stew recipe. Maybe he should consider an entirely new career and enroll in culinary school. On second thought, for the sake of the dining public, probably not a good idea. Best to leave cooking to the pros. That's why he frequented Boland's Mill far more often than the Giant or Safeway.

Brick wasn't about to waste a slice of brown bread. He used it to soak up the last of the herb gravy on his plate.

"Another Guinness?" the waitress asked as she cleared the table. "No thanks, just the check when you get a chance."

Brick took the long way back to his airbnb. Most of the shops were closed, but the bookstore was open for another half hour and he needed something to read for tomorrow's flight back to Washington. After browsing for a few minutes at a shelf displaying a number of books by contemporary Irish authors, he chose an autographed copy of *The Guards* by Galway-born Ken Bruen. Even though he had to leave the west coast of Ireland, at least he could be there vicariously by reading about it.