

Dear Hilda,

Your most recent letter was a wonder. I've copied most of it and run it up into a column. However I left out the parts describing the different characteristics of your children. I wasn't sure you'd want that (or that they'd want it) published, though it's very enjoyable. If it's allright to call them by name and describe them that way - you can let me know and I can use it some other time in another column. I love that ~~xxx~~ about babies being so adorable in honor of the Infant Saviour. idea

Your letters and your books too go right to my heart. I wish I could meet you in person sometime because I would like to ~~xxxxxx~~ ask you many questions but haven't the patience to take them through letters. I would ask you all about your family and the Bantry Bay characters - just to get everybody straight in my mind. If you are the Brigid of Bantry Bay and the age then that Brigid was in the book - (the date on the cave 1930) then you and I must be the same age or close to it. But then your oldest has nine-years on my oldest - so you would have had to marry very young. Maybe you are Brigid with a few alterations. The castle incident in Francie on the Run has me going and coming. The lines Francie speaks and in fact the old lady described sound as though they must have been real life incidents because I couldn't have dreamed of anyone creating such terrific characters in fiction! Did it really happen like that? If you just "made up" that situation, characterizations and dialogue then you're even more wonderful than I first supposed. And believe me, the first supposition had you somewhere up in the sky.

My children love the stories. The other day Jeey asked me, "Mother, are we Irish too?" and I said, "Yes we are." And Joseph grinned and said - "Wow! Then we have to gith the English!" and he seemed to relish the thought. Must be in his blood! My mother never spoke much of her parent's background. I think she just took it all for granted and never realized that it might be fascinating tous. One time we visited the cemetery at her father's grave. And then I noticed for the first time, that his father and mother were buried there too. Well I knew that my grandmother had come over all alone at the age of sixteen - the only one of her family to come here - and I had somehow supposed that my Grandfather had come alone too - so I asked mother: How come Grandpa ~~Boyan~~ Boyan brought his father and mother along?" And she said, "He didn't bring them. They brought him. His father had to come and had to take his whole family with him because he was a revolutionary - and wanted by the English - there was a price on his head." It seems odd that they took all that for granted. I think they were living too close to history to sense it. They were a part of it. My mother was one of four girls and one boy. The only boy was named "William Jerome Sarsfield ..." and I don't know how many other patriotic names before you came to the Boyan.

The children play Bantry Bay all day long now. Billy will only answer to the name "Francie O'Sullivan" and Joseph is Liam. They have it sort of mixed up. In the book Brigid and Michael are the older ones. But home here Margaret Mary (4) is Brigid and Mark (3) is Michael. They are all "O'Sullivans" at the present time. They loved the bookmarks you sent. They like to look at the portrait of the whole family. Joseph had another cry for himself when he found out the story of that long walk home from Farmer Flynn's really happened. He cried several times during the reading of it. He was so upset at the plight of Michael and Brigid. And everyone in a while he'd ask, "But it's only make believe. Just a story, isn't it?" So I said yes otherwise I don't know how we'd have read it with him weeping all over the place. Well when your letter came that said it was true - ...! Joey has a very sympathetic nature. And this "Francie on the Run" is almost too

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much for him. He's so bothered because Francie left the hospital and as read the chapters he's not only horrified at Francie's doings (Like getting off the Galway bus, etc." but he's dismayed at the whole procedure. He keeps saying, "Mother, Francie should not have done that. He should have stayed in the hospital. " And he worries so! "Mother, when is Francie ever going to get home? Does his mother know he's scrambling all over Ireland? etc. etc. " But Billy is taking it all in his stride.

Most sequels are never quite up to the first book. Your writings are the exception. Francie on the Run is even better (I thought) than the Cottage at Bantry Bay. And I've already read Pegeen (though I don't dare tell the children) and it's even better than Francie! Or so it seems. The books are so good. I stayed up one night and read all of Francie and the next night read Pegeen. Though I read only a chapter or two a night out loud to the children.

I'd better stop and get back to the column. Please forgive me for not using a second sheet of paper. I didn't realize what I was doing when I turned this sheet over and ran it through the typewriter again.

By the way - I'm not quite sure about your suggestion - for getting rid of the tiredness. Get whole grain and grind it? Would that be the same as the whole wheat flour that we use for whole wheat bread? I mean could I use that and soak it overnight, etc. ?

Still get letters from readers commenting on your letter and promising prayers. The Winks are keeping you in theirs too.

Sincerely,

*Peggy Wink*

*PS Missed this*

*please use*

*etc*

*etc*

*etc*