



Heart of the Lonely Exile- An Emerald Ballad, **Book 2**

by B.J. Hoff

Excerpt provided courtesy of BJHoff.com

New York City, 1847

Sara felt a faint stirring of something akin to hope. Just as quickly, she shook it off....

Even if by some remote possibility Nora should happen to be out of the picture, why would the police sergeant give an uptown spinster like herself a second glance? New York was filled with younger—and prettier—Irish girls.

The man was an Irish policeman, for goodness' sake! And she was Lewis Farmington's daughter, after all. Farmingtons didn't carry on over Irish policemen, even foolish, old-maid Farmingtons like herself!

Watching Sara Farmington and Michael Burke make their way out of Paradise Square, Jess Dalton attempted to carry on a disjointed conversation with his wife. There were frequent interruptions from the worshipers still filing past, but by now he and Kerry had grown skilled at communicating in fragments.

“What do you make of Sara and her policeman?” he asked in a low voice. Jess had seen the two together on other occasions, chatting after services usually, both looking somewhat stiff and uncomfortable in each other's company.

“What I think is that they're trying awfully hard to ignore their feelings for each other,” Kerry replied, smiling cheerfully as she greeted the Widow Ransom.

Surprised, Jess continued to smile as he said goodnight to Willie Toothman and his pretty wife, Sally, who was very much in the family way. “So you believe there are feelings there?”

“Faith, Jess, only a blind man could not see the sparks flying between those two!”

Kerry paused to give poor Vida Ransom a hug. “And why are you looking so amused?” she said after the widow and her daughter went on by.

“I was considering the implications of a millionaire’s daughter being paired with an Irish policeman,” Jess murmured. Turning back to the worshipers, he gripped the dry, gnarled hand of Cletus Denvers, intoxicated as usual. Putting a hand to the man’s shoulder, he said, “It’s good to see you here, Cletus. You’ll come back again next Sunday, I hope?”

Kerry looked up at him. “Sara’s not all that clever at disguising her feelings, is she?”

Jess shook his head, both in answer to her question and as a greeting to a young woman who refused to meet his eye. Her face was garishly painted, her hair frizzed, but he had noticed her among the crowd on more than one occasion. “Good to have you. Please come again,” he said warmly, shaking her hand. She hurried from the tent, still avoiding his gaze.

Kerry’s eyes softened as she watched the woman scurry outside the tent. Keeping her voice low, she said, “Do you suppose the sergeant is aware of Sara’s...interest?”

“Not likely,” answered Jess with a tired sigh as his gaze took in several worshipers still milling about the tent. “I believe the sergeant is too busy dealing with his own feelings to notice Sara’s.”

“Oh, d’you think so, Jess?”

He didn’t miss the hopeful note in her voice.

“I recognize the signs,” he said solemnly, “having been badly smitten myself a few years back.”

Her sharp little chin snapped up. “You make it sound somewhat like hydrophobia.”

He pretended to consider her retort. “It does carry some of the same symptoms, I suppose.”

“And am I to assume from that remark, then, that you are no longer smitten, Mr. Dalton?”

He grinned at her. “Not at all, Mrs. Dalton. Just like hydrophobia, my condition has no known cure.”

She attempted a severe frown, reminding him, “We were discussing Sergeant Burke and Sara Farmington.”

“You were discussing Sergeant Burke and Sara Farmington. I was counting the shamrocks in your eyes.”

For more sample chapters, discussion guides, and details about new releases, visit www.BJHoff.com