

Plot Synopsis of Tide of Hope

By Ed Schroeter

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Time: Early spring, 1825

Setting: The road to Mitchelstown, the Blackwater River district, County Cork, Munster Province, Ireland

Scene 1: Near the Ryans' Cottage:

David Nagle helps his friend Patrick Ryan and his daughter Elizabeth corral Ryan's escaped cattle. Mary Shea arrives bearing a letter for David Nagle from "Big George," Lord George Kingston, the wealthy local English lord and landowner. It is an invitation to Nagle to become Kingston's new land agent (rent collector). Patrick Ryan warns Nagle that if he accepts the job he will be attacked by Whiteboy vigilantes.

Scene 2: At Lord Kingston's "Castle"

Nagle accepts the position of rent collector at Mary Shea's urging, whereupon Lord George orders Nagle to confiscate the "rented" cattle of his friend Ryan, a tenant grazier, for being in arrears in rent. After the meeting, Mary and David argue about whether David should keep the job.

Scene 3: At Lord Kingston's Castle

Peter Robinson arrives at Lord Kingston's Castle to ask his blessing for his latest project, transporting 2,000 Irish emigrants to Upper Canada. Kingston agrees, but hopes that Robinson will take the most destitute and the worst trouble-makers with him.

Scene 4: At the Ryans' Pasture

Nagle, under escort by a local magistrate, Sergeant Lloyd, secretly breaks down Patrick Ryan's enclosure and drives the Ryans' cattle onto Lord Kingston's land. Elizabeth Ryan catches Nagle in the act, but is unable to stop him from driving the cattle off. Summoning her father, the friendship of the three is severed. But this is just the beginning of Nagle's difficulties. Upon Nagle's departure, Sergeant Lloyd reveals his Irish heritage and his secret alias, Captain Midnight, an Irish rebel and member of the outlawed Whiteboy group. Lloyd promises to punish Nagle for his action, and recruits Ryan to the Whiteboy cause. Ryan resists until Elizabeth and Lloyd point out that those who refuse an invitation to join the Whiteboys do so at great peril to their lives.

Scene 5: At Nagle's Cottage

Lloyd, Ryan, Elizabeth, and some Whiteboys raid Nagle's cottage. They drive off Nagle's own cattle and set the cottage ablaze, but owing to Patrick Ryan's inept attempt at being a rebel, Nagle escapes with his life. Lloyd is disappointed in Patrick. Patrick is tired of the violence. Elizabeth is radicalized and wants to join the Whiteboys, but Patrick decides the violence and harsh living conditions are hurting his family and they must flee to Upper Canada. Elizabeth thinks it's an English plan to ship the Irish to a penal colony.

Scene 6:

Lloyd gets help from Father Jones, the priest of Mallow, to arrange free passage to and land in Upper Canada for the Ryan family so that they may begin a new life there, but entrusts Elizabeth with the job of cultivating a Whiteboy protection detail for fellow colonists.

Scene 7: Lord Kingston's Castle

Nagle arrives at Lord Kingston's Castle for help. Kingston fires Nagle and tells him to leave his castle and land. Mary determines that their only hope is to flee to Canada aboard one of the Peter Robinson emigration ships. Nagle worries that they won't survive the harsh Canadian winters, "wild beasts," and getting lost in the woods.

Scene 8: At Peter Robinson's Room, Lord Kingston's Castle

Mary takes David Nagle to see Peter Robinson, who listens to their plight and invites them to take free passage to Upper Canada, revealing himself to be an open-minded and compassionate individual.

Scene 9: The Docks of Cobh Harbor

David and Mary arrive safely but secretly at Cobh Harbour. They are received by Peter Robinson. Robinson grants Nagle and Mary passage aboard the John Barry. But they are spotted by Elizabeth Ryan, who has arrived with her father to claim their passage to Upper Canada. Elizabeth seeks vengeance upon David and Mary. Patrick Ryan, her father, prevents a tragedy from occurring. Robinson puts both families on the same ship!

The End.