

MARYPATCHEEN MUST DIE

An Original Script

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10'

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FADE IN:

EXT. CLIFF TOP - DAY

SUPER: LISAVAN, IRELAND. 1936

A panorama of swooping green hills and a glittering sea laid out below. MARYPATCHEEN (83 and looking every day of it), stands alone near the edge of the cliff, leaning on a gnarled old walking stick and gazing out over the waves. The tassels of her tightly wrapped shawl blow softly in the wind.

MARYPATCHEEN

(over, in Irish, subtitled)
If I'd only known how miserable my
life was going to be, sure I'd never
have set out on it at all.

Suddenly, with the sound of a needle scratching across a record, the scene freezes.

CUT TO:

EXT. LISAVAN PUB - EVENING

SUPER: LISAVAN, IRELAND. PRESENT DAY

A proper old-school Irish pub, but nicely painted for the tourists, as you do.

INT. LISAVAN PUB - EVENING

Inside is dark wood, dimly lit, warm murmuring. The door opens and an AMERICAN (35), wearing an expensive suit and tie, stumbles through the door visibly upset. He pauses then goes straight to the bar.

AMERICAN

Sco-- whiskey. Please.

A glass of whiskey is put on the bar in front of him and he knocks it back in one. He feels its heat for a moment.

AMERICAN

Another.

Another glass of whiskey is put in front of him. He knocks this one back too, then slumps down on the nearest bar stool. He raises his empty glass to signal for another.

A figure looms out of the shadows at the bar beside him - an IRISHMAN (45), bearded, with unkempt hair and a fresh cut on his cheekbone. He gestures to the American with his near-empty pint of Guinness.

IRISHMAN

Rough day?

AMERICAN

You could say that. My wife just left me.

IRISHMAN

Mmmm.

AMERICAN

I brought her here on a dream vacation. The best hotels, the best restaurants, the best of everything. And tonight, after the most romantic dinner anyone's ever eaten, she just tells me she's leaving me.

IRISHMAN

That's rough.

AMERICAN

She's obviously having an affair. Even though she denies it. It must be her tennis coach.

IRISHMAN

Mmm. I got shafted by a woman too. Twenty-seven years ago.

AMERICAN

Yeah?

IRISHMAN

I was eighteen. And nineteen. She shafted me twice.

AMERICAN

You must have loved her a lot too.

IRISHMAN

Hated her from the off. And she ruined my whole life.

AMERICAN

What did she do?

IRISHMAN

I'm dying o' thirst here.

A BEAT.

AMERICAN

Oh, right.

He signals for two more drinks.

AMERICAN

Did she cheat on you too? Even though you loved her more than anybody ever could? And you worked all the hours God sent to give her everything she could ever want?

IRISHMAN

She did this.

He slides a book across the bar, the title written in large letters over a sepia-toned picture of the author herself - "Marypatcheen".

IRISHMAN

It's about this woman who lived on an island and had the most boring, miserable, depressing, tedious life and then wrote a boring, miserable, depressing, tedious book about it.

EXT. CLIFF TOP - DAY

Marypatcheen turns to camera, shrugs and nods agreement.

INT. LISAVAN PUB - EVENING

The American flicks through the book.

AMERICAN

It this Gaelic?

IRISHMAN

"Irish", we call it.

AMERICAN

Are you saying your girlfriend ruined your life by giving you a book? 'Cos my wife dumped me! For her lover! Probably.

IRISHMAN

It wasn't my girlfriend who ruined my life, it was this old hag, Marypatcheen. She wrote this book. And for sixty odd years every Irish schoolkid had to study it if they wanted to go to college. You had to pass Irish to get into all the colleges except one. And to pass Irish you had to pass Marypatcheen.

AMERICAN

This book.

IRISHMAN

Your wife might have ruined your life.
But Marypatcheen ruined thousands of
lives, tens of thousands of lives,
over generations!

EXT. CLIFF TOP - DAY

Marypatcheen turns to the camera and grins an evil grin.

INT. LISAVAN PUB - EVENING

The American takes a slug of his whiskey.

AMERICAN

Tens of thousands? Really?

IRISHMAN

I'm one of those ruined lives. I
failed Irish. Twice.

AMERICAN

So you couldn't go to college.

The Irishman shakes his head.

IRISHMAN

I coulda been somebody. I was top of
the class at nearly all the other
subjects. Had loads of friends. Had a
beautiful girlfriend! She met somebody
else in college.

AMERICAN

I met my wife in college.

IRISHMAN

Who could I meet? Stuck at home while
all my friends went off. Just like
that, the potential of my life was
snuffed out. By one woman.

AMERICAN

By Marypatcheen?

The Irishman slams his palm on the face on the book.

IRISHMAN

By Marypatcheen.

He leans closer.

IRISHMAN

D'you ever think, if you could go back
in time, you could set everything
right again? If you could, let's say,

push someone off a cliff before they
did something?

EXT. CLIFF TOP - DAY

A handsome TENNIS COACH (30), dressed in whites and holding a tennis racket turns to the camera with a cheerful expression. What he sees terrifies him and he throws up his arm and racket to defend himself.

INT. LISAVAN PUB - EVENING

The American likes this picture.

AMERICAN

Yeah...

IRISHMAN

I spent the last twenty-seven years
driven by just one thought.
Marypatcheen. Must. Die.

AMERICAN

That's a lot of years.

IRISHMAN

Enough years to learn how to build a
time machine.

AMERICAN

A time machine??

IRISHMAN

My life's work. Taught myself from
books, and later the internet. Tracked
down crazy inventors and learned from
them. Spent years perfecting the
design in my mother's garage.

AMERICAN

You live with your mom?

IRISHMAN

My friends all went to college, got on
with their lives, forgot about me.
While I built a working time machine.

AMERICAN

So you could push an old lady off a
cliff?

EXT. CLIFF TOP - DAY

Marypatcheen looks at the camera in alarm and shakes her head rapidly.

INT. LISAVAN PUB - EVENING

The Irishman brandishes the book.

IRISHMAN

Yes! Before she writes this book! Then I'd pass Irish, then I'd go to college. Then I'd be the one married and going on holidays with my career and my kids. That'd be my life!

AMERICAN

But you can't just push an old lady off a cliff. It's... it's wrong!

IRISHMAN

Blighting the lives of hundreds of thousands of schoolkids, that's wrong!

AMERICAN

But most of them must have had happy, successful lives. Or else it would have been in Time magazine or something. You could still have been successful, been happy.

A BEAT.

IRISHMAN

Successful?

(leans closer)

This very afternoon, I climbed into my time machine. I travelled back to 1936. To the edge of a cliff. Where a certain miserable, book-writin' aul wan was standing there. Looking out to sea. Just waiting to be pushed over.

The American stares at him.

AMERICAN

No way.

IRISHMAN

Way. Big way.

He leans back and takes another drink of Guinness.

EXT. CLIFF TOP - DAY

Marypatcheen is gazing out to sea. She hears something behind her and turns curiously. She stiffens, alarmed by what she sees.

MARYPATCHEEN

(in Irish, subtitled)

Who are you? What are you doing here?

We see the Irishman is on the cliff with her, wild-eyed.

IRISHMAN

I don't know what you're saying, you
evil old hag. I failed Irish! Because
of you!

He advances on her, hands raised to push her off the edge.

IRISHMAN

You. Must. Die!

MARYPATCHEEN

(in Irish, subtitled)

Get away from me!

She raises her gnarled walking stick and, quick as a flash,
thrusts the end of it into his groin.

IRISHMAN

Oooof!

He doubles over as Marypatcheen moves in and kicks his shin,
hard.

IRISHMAN

Owww!

He clutches it, hopping on one foot. She sideswipes him with
the walking stick and he loses his balance and lands heavily
on the ground where she proceeds to rain blows on him from
above.

IRISHMAN

Ouch! Ow! Stop! Stoppit!

Suddenly he disappears. Marypatcheen is flummoxed. She looks
around. But she is alone on the cliff edge.

INT. LISAVAN PUB - EVENING

The American stares, wide-eyed. The Irishman points to the
cut on his cheek.

IRISHMAN

This cut is from her walking stick.

(parts his hair)

And this one.

(rolls up his sleeve)

And these bruises.

AMERICAN
All from this little old lady?

IRISHMAN
Evil old hag.

The American takes another slug of whiskey.

AMERICAN
But why did you disappear?

IRISHMAN
Ah, the time machine only sends you back for three minutes, then it pulls you back to the present. It's a fail-safe to stop you changing history too much.

AMERICAN
Brilliant.

The Irishman shrugs not very modestly.

IRISHMAN
But getting beaten up by the vicious old wagon wasn't the worst bit. Even that should have changed history. But only one thing in the present is different.

AMERICAN
What one thing?

A BEAT.

IRISHMAN
The bloody book is two chapters longer!

EXT. CLIFF TOP - DAY

Marypatcheen stands on the cliff, hands on hips, smirking an evil, triumphant smirk.

INT. LISAVAN PUB - EVENING

The Irishman slams the book down on the bar.

IRISHMAN
She shafted me again.

AMERICAN
No, you can't just, blame the entire state of your life on somebody else.

IRISHMAN

You blame some tennis coach for your wife leaving you. You don't even know if she is shagging him!

AMERICAN

Yeah, but, I wouldn't spend the next thirty odd years building a time machine to go back and push him off a cliff!

IRISHMAN

Like you could...

He takes a drink of Guinness.

AMERICAN

Look, maybe you failed Irish because you didn't study hard enough. And, maybe my wife isn't having sex with her tennis coach. Maybe she's just sick of me working seven days a week and never being home for dinner and saying now isn't a good time to have a baby.

He frowns.

IRISHMAN

What's your point?

The American remembers something.

AMERICAN

You said there was one college you could have gone to. Even if you failed Irish. Why didn't you just go there?

IRISHMAN

Ahh, I failed Maths as well. Had a bit of a problem with Trigonometry.

AMERICAN

You're kidding me.

IRISHMAN

Hey, I built a time machine didn't I?

The American looks at him for a second.

AMERICAN

You're wrong. You did change something else in the present.

IRISHMAN

What?

AMERICAN

You changed me. I'm going to tell my wife that I'm sorry. And I'm going to beg her not to leave me.

The Irishman goggles. The American puts money on the bar.

AMERICAN

And hey, it's not too late for you either.

IRISHMAN

Hello, built a time machine.

AMERICAN

Thanks, strange man. And good luck.

The American slaps the Irishman's arm fraternally and goes out. The Irishman watches him go. He turns back to the bar and shakes his head. He takes a slow sip of his pint.

IRISHMAN

Bloody trigonometry.

Suddenly he slaps his palm down on the bar.

IRISHMAN

Pythagoras! Pythagoras. Must. Die.

EXT. CLIFF TOP - DAY

PYTHAGORAS (55), bearded and wearing a Greek robe, stands gazing out to sea. He turns and we see he has been drawing a right-angled triangle on a clay tablet. He gasps in horror and raises his arm to protect himself.

FADE TO BLACK