

DARIAN'S POINT

An Original Screenplay
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FADE IN:

EXT. INISH CIUIN, IRELAND (1910) - DAY

A small, harsh, beautiful island within sight of the massive Cliffs of Moher on the West coast of Ireland. Its surface is covered by patches of green turf lined by stone fences attached to low, narrow, thatched-roof huts. Each fenced area encloses thick woolly sheep or cattle and chickens roost in tiny sheds near each house.

EXT. DARIAN'S POINT - DAY

A small peninsula on the southern part of Inish Ciuin. Castle ruins sit atop it, a tall well-preserved "round tower" beside the broken walls still guarding the island. The wind is brisk; waves pound against the rocks.

EXT. ROUND TOWER - DAY

Built of thick stones in a corbled fashion. The tower is thicker at the base than the top, with no windows in its side, and almost seems impregnable. The only entrance is ten feet from the ground and must be reached by ladder.

CHILDREN play around the base of the tower. Their shrieks and squeals of delight follow after some boys who toss and hit at a stocking filled with straw in a rough form of "hurling."

RHUARI, a chubby boy, watches from the sidelines, left out. Finally, he shoves a girl named MAIREAD to the ground, grabs her doll and races away, laughing. Mairead chases after him.

EXT. CASTLE RUINS - DAY

Rhuari scrambles over a collapsed portion of the castle's walls to hide, breathlessly holding the doll. Mairead appears and searches for him.

MAIREAD

Rhuari, th' divil take ya, I'm
after wantin' me Shelagh back!
Rhuari! 'Tis yer soul t' th' divil
if I'm findin' ya!

She runs to the other side of the tower, screaming his name. Neither of them notices a fog approaching from the direction of the Moher Cliffs.

Rhuari peeks over the fence...and the fog surrounds him.

RHUARI

Th' divil...

He HEARS the light rustle of wings and soft, echoing laughter and turns to see the figure of what could be a TRIO OF WOMEN towering over him!

The other children stop playing as the fog surrounds them! An older GIRL notices the three women, not far away --

GIRL

(deep brogue)

Oh, dear Jay-sus. All of ya's come here t' me! Come here t' me, now!

-- and gathers the other children to her, both boys and girls!

GIRL (CONT'D)

Rhuari! Rhuari! Where are ya's?

The fog just grows thicker, hiding everything!

Rhuari is frozen with fear as the form nearest him reaches for the doll. He stares at her...lets her beautiful hand take it. Her talon-like nails caress his face...then she grabs his coat and yanks him to her! He SCREAMS!

The doll drops to the turf and is splashed with blood! His SCREAM CUTS OFF! We HEAR more soft laughter and then the sound of wings flapping as the fog vanishes...leaving the doll behind.

EXT. ROUND TOWER - LATE IN THE DAY

A man's hand grabs the doll with a painful SHRIEK! He holds it up and we see A SEARCH PARTY made up of men and women in the woolly clothing of the Aran Islanders. They race towards the man, a big solid sort named KINSELLA, horror on their faces.

KINSELLA

It's Mairead's "Shelagh!" And it's blood on it! Blood!

The men freeze. The women cross themselves.

Sea gulls MEW in the air as a well-dressed middle-aged woman strides up to Kinsella. She is MRS. O'BRIEN and her eyes glitter with intelligence.

KINSELLA (CONT'D)

'Tis th' blood of my son!

MRS. O'BRIEN

Ya can't say that with certainty,
Kinsella!

KINSELLA

Th' devil, I can't! And d'ya know
th' meanin' of it?! Th' "Old
Women" have come back, th' devil
take them!

FIRST WOMAN

It can't be!

FIRST MAN

'Tis much too soon!

SECOND MAN

You're mad, Kinsella!

KINSELLA

But haven't we seen the signs?
Chickens gone! Lambs vanished!
Gulls flying mad through the air!

The people glance at each other in agreement.

MRS. O'BRIEN

Will ya be still, man!? There's
terror enough without you addin'
hysteria to it!

FIRST MAN

But 'tis truth in his words, Mrs.
O'Brien! I've lost three ewes in
the past fortnight!

SECOND WOMAN

And me daughter, herself, tells me
of three women close t' here just
as Rhuari was hidin'!

FIRST WOMAN

And then th' mist hid 'em all!

ANNAGH -- an old woman with wild eyes -- bursts forward.

ANNAGH

I told ya! I told ya! Amn't I
after seein' the banshees gathered
here at Darian's Point but two
nights back!?

(MORE)

ANNAGH (CONT'D)

And with God's own markin' in the sky but a few weeks past?! Ain't that always the sign!?

SECOND MAN

'Tis th' old women!

FIRST WOMAN

Th' divils, themselves, God save us!

Mrs. O'Brien spins on the crowd, furious.

MRS. O'BRIEN

And why would they return?! 'Tis been but thirty years! Why should they be breakin' their vow?!

SECOND WOMAN

Och, by th' divil's body, but what else could it be?

FIRST MAN

'Tis God's own warning!

FIRST WOMAN

It's cursed, we are!

SECOND MAN

Your soul t' th' devil, 'tis th' island is cursed!

MRS. O'BRIEN

Will ya listen t' yourselves?! Goin' on like lost babes when we've yet t' know th' truth of it all!

KINSELLA

We know th' truth, Mrs. O'Brien! Now I'm after findin' them whores of Satan! I'm after findin' what they did t' my son! He took th' doll, and now he's gone and...and that's his blood. I'm after findin' my Rhuari.

(near tears)

Findin' his body, if need be, if only t' give him a fully decent Christian burial. And then I'm after tearin' them whores limb from limb!

MRS. O'BRIEN

Th' devil take ya, Kinsella, ya
know such a thing is impossible!

He raises his fist...but she glares at him and he collapses into weeping. Some women finally lead him away, followed by most of the rest.

Mrs. O'Brien watches them leave then gazes at the cliffs across the water. The wind whips at her. Sadness fills her eyes.

MRS. O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

Musha, but there is th' ring of
truth in his words. I knew, but I
couldn't let myself know...and now
there's but one thing t' do.

The few people remaining back away...all but SEAN McNAMARA, a tall and powerfully built young man. He stands directly behind her as she braces against the wind, unwavering.

MRS. O'BRIEN (CONT'D)

'Tis an act of savages...but it's
all that will end this before it
carries further. God forgive me,
but it's all we have.

The gulls hover between her and the Cliffs of Moher.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. CLIFFS OF MOHER - DAY

The seven-hundred foot tall cliffs loom over the surf, with squat square observation towers adding to their foreboding aura.

EXT. THE BURREN, WESTERN IRELAND - DAY

Brutal. Beautiful. Extensive rock formations and wild patches of greenery...and absolutely no trees for miles in every direction. There are long stone fences but few houses and the sky is cloudy with bright splotches of sunshine and an eerie silence...until a huge SQUAWKING white swan bursts over a fence lining the one road.

A 1910 ROLLS ROYCE TOURING CAR races past, HONKING BACK. At the wheel is PATRICK THOMAS O'BRIEN -- a good-looking Irishman, well-dressed, in good shape and with an exuberance for living not often seen. Beside him sits MARION VAN HEUTEN O'BRIEN -- his wife.

She has "Gibson Girl" looks and the strict breeding of a "Boston Brahmin." Both wear driving costumes and goggles. Marion's hand clenches her hat to her head.

MARION
(Bostonian)
Dear God, Thomas!

THOMAS
(light brogue)
Oh, this is a fine machine, Marion!
A damned fine machine! I'm after
buying myself one when we're back
to Boston!

MARION
If you don't slow down, we'll own
this one! In pieces!

THOMAS
Now there you go, again -- being a
nervous fainting thing.

MARION
I have never been "nervous" and
"fainting" is the least of my
concerns. When you own a vehicle
such as this, and should you then
choose to race about like a child,
I'll say nothing. But we have
borrowed this automobile, and I do
not believe one should toy with
another person's property!

THOMAS
Oh, me. When your grammar gets
that stiff, I know you're rarin'.

He slows down...a bit.

THOMAS (CONT'D)
Better?
(no response)
So, tell me -- what're you thinking
of the place? Marion?

MARION
I am being asked to judge from the
few glimpses I've caught?

Contrite, he slows down, some more.

THOMAS

I'm sorry. I've been acting the part of a wild boy. But I've not been home in near twenty years, and being back...dear God, the feelings it brings.

(looks about)

The Burren. "Not water enough to drown a man, nor trees enough to hang him." Or so said the bastard, Cromwell, when he first saw it, may his soul rot with the devil.

She glances at him, melting.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

At least it's the same, thank God, when so much else has changed. And changes not for the better, I might add.

MARION

Thomas, you of all people must admit -- without change, one grows stagnant and sterile.

THOMAS

That from a woman who hates even the thought of leaving Boston?

MARION

I came with you, did I not?

THOMAS

I was merely jokin', Marion. Any harm to it?

He offers her his most charming grin. They zip around a hilltop and suddenly GALWAY BAY is spread out before them, bright and glistening in the patches of sun. Marion cannot help but smile.

MARION

Oh, Tom...

THOMAS

That's Galway, across the water. Last stop before Inish Ciuin. We can still turn back...catch the Mauretania in Cork and scurry home.

MARION

Don't be absurd. We're here and your mother is expecting us.

THOMAS

It's your funeral.

MARION

Why this sudden concern? Did she contact you while we stopped in Dublin?

THOMAS

...Not a word.

MARION

(chiding)

Now, Thomas, has she finally let you know her feelings concerning our marriage?

THOMAS

My mother can keep her own counsel when she chooses.

MARION

For once, you have a mastery of understatement.

They speed down the hill, not noticing several sea gulls float high above the car, following them...watching over them.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. GALWAY, IRELAND - DAY

A bustling, fair-sized town at the mouth of the Corrib River. A marketplace covers the area next to the quays and a long stone promenade extends from a dirty disheveled section of town.

The Rolls Royce passes, terrifies carriage horses along the way and picks up an entourage of happy screaming children, who follow it from one end of town to the next.

EXT. CLADDACH SECTION, GALWAY - DAY

Old stone buildings with thatched roofs front the docks and the place borders on filthy. Thomas stops the car on the quay. Marion pulls out a Brownie Photographic Camera and takes a few snapshots as he waves to a CAPTAIN near a small steamboat.

THOMAS

Your pardon, sir, but are we late
for the steamer to Sraidbhaile
Ciuin?

CAPTAIN

Nay, sir, but this is herself.

He motions to the steamer. Thomas nods...then suddenly jumps from the Rolls to catch a boy sneaking off with a suitcase! He yanks it away and swats at the boy, sending him scurrying off.

THOMAS

Thievin' little devil.
(to the captain)
Then if you'll find me a hand,
we'll be joining you. I've two
trunks and some carry-bags.

CAPTAIN

Ginty, yer soul t' th' devil, get
yer lazy self over with a cart and
help th' gentleman!

GINTY -- a squat old man -- scurries from the cabin of the ship, grabs a hand-cart and scampers over to the Rolls. He barely glances at either Thomas or Marion...but Thomas looks closely at him as they lift the trunks from car to cart.

THOMAS

Was it "Ginty" he called you?

GINTY

It was, sir.

THOMAS

Not the same Ginty used to have
that fine sailing craft what took
you from Inish Ciuin to Doolin and
back, again, in the summer?

GINTY

My sorrow, but I did once, sir, and
'tis past ten years since I had it.
Was ya here then, sir?

THOMAS

Ginty, it's Paidrig. Paidrig Tomas
O'Brien. Am I not in your memory,
still?

Ginty casts him a searching glance then a flash of terror crosses his eyes. He covers it by being even more subservient.

GINTY

Och, isn't it a strange thing t' be seein' ya now? Faith, but I can tell it, plain as the saints. Paidasheen. Th' O'Brien's boy. And didn't I always say ya'd turn up as th' finest gentleman, sir? Didn't I always? And isn't it grand ya didn't forget ol' Ginty, now isn't it, sir?

THOMAS

Ginty, what's this blather? I'm still just Paidrig.

GINTY

Aye, that y'are, sir. Faith, but y'are. And 'tis God's own truth ya didn't forget ol' Ginty, now did ya, sir? 'Tis a wonder, is what it is; a wonder.

CAPTAIN

The devil take ya, Ginty! Get them bags aboard this vessel! Arra, my sorrow for keepin' ya on here, ya lazy good-for-nothin'!

Ginty jumps, balances the last bag on the cart and runs towards the steamer. Thomas watches him, shaken. Marion comes up, carefully advancing the film in her camera.

MARION

You seem disturbed.

THOMAS

It's nothing. Nothing at all.

MARION

(nods after Ginty)

What happened to his sail craft?

THOMAS

It was caught in a storm and lost, and Ginty almost with it. Ma wrote me -- when? My last year of M-I-T. But I thought it was him replaced it with the steamer. She never said a word of how he went.

MARION

She does keep her own counsel, your
mother. Shall we board?

THOMAS

There's a shed by the Spanish Arch,
for to keep the Rolls. It's just
across the river. Back in a bit.

He returns to the Rolls. Marion watches then turns back to
the steamer and snaps a photograph of Ginty loading the
trunks on board as the captain AD LIBS CURSES IN GAELIC. The
children watch from a respectful distance.