

Spruis Iocshlaint

by

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Mick has alienated plenty of people in his life and is now living with the consequences. Can a message from above, help pull him through his darkest days?

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EXT. QUAYSIDE - DAY

Location is the harbour quayside in a small fishing village . Very early morning and not yet bright. A number of fishing boats are unloading crates.

There is a variety of freezer trucks, cranes and fishing boats and fishermen, causing a jingle jangle of sounds in the early morning fog. There is plenty of jostling and shouting going on.

EXT. QUAYSIDE - DAY

It is brighter now, but dreary. A light rain is falling. We see Mick (60's) on-board one boat, dressed in fisherman gear of oilskins and Aron jumper and woolly hat. He is carrying a large lunchbox and flask.

He climbs off a fishing boat and onto the quayside. He walks away towards parked cars, dodging other people on the quays.

THREE FISHERMEN remain on the boat/quayside and ONE shouts to Mick as he leaves.

FISHERMAN ON BOAT  
Good Luck Mick.

Mick ignores him, grunting as he walks away.

INT. MICKS CAR - SHORTLY AFTER

We are in the car with Mick, as he is driving. He is tired. He rubs his eyes in distraction.

As he approaches the village, a young boy steps out into the zebra crossing, but Mick does not react until the last second. The car breaks suddenly and the boy is jumps out of the way. Mick rolls down the window and shouts out.

MICK  
Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Get off the road, would ya.

The boy is shaken, and runs away.

MICK  
(to himself)  
(grunts)  
Good enough for ya.

EXT. FRONT DOOR OF FLATS - SHORTLY AFTER

This is a communal entrance of a house converted to flats, located on the main street of the village.

Mick lets himself in through the door. As he does, an older lady, (70's) exits, brushing past him in the open doorway.

LADY

Morning Mr Gallagher. Was it a good catch?

Mick grunts at the question, and carries on into the hallway, ignoring the lady.

INT. MICKS STUDIO FLAT - DAY

Mick busies himself, putting on the kettle. Making toast. Sitting down to eat toast, with a cup of tea. A radio is playing in the background, announcing the 9am news.

RADIO NEWSREADER (VO)

There have been an additional 49 of the Covid 19 Virus reported in the Republic of Ireland. The government are due to meet later today to decide what action, if any they are going to take.

As the segment of news finishes, Mick exits the room. (to the bathroom)

INT MICKS STUDIO FLAT - IMMEDIATELY AFTER

We see Mick getting into bed, then setting the alarm clock for 2pm. He falls asleep.

EXT - STREET OUTSIDE FRONT DOOR OF FLAT - DAY

Mick exits the door, onto a busy street. There are a large number of people milling around, some carrying 2-3 bags of shopping. Mick is unaware of the chaos.

He makes his way towards the town center. There are long queues of people queuing outside the convenience shop, the butcher, the off license. Mick stops abruptly as we see a queue of people outside a small supermarket.

Muttering to himself, Mick joins the back of a queue. The lady in front of him turns and speaks.

LADY

Isn't it mad altogether? Its like the  
beast from the east all over again.

Mick ignores her, and she turns back around.

INT. SMALL SUPERMARKET - LATER

Mick is walking around the busy shop. There are a number of  
people with trolleys piled high with groceries. A lot of the  
shelves are empty.

Mick makes his way to the bread aisle. It's empty except for  
some discarded multi-seed loaves which have been partly  
opened and three packets of burger buns.

Mick walks to the Dairy aisle. He grabs one of the last  
cartons of milk.

MICK

For Gods sake. Slim-line.

There is a lot of jostling around in the aisles with trolleys  
being bashed into one another and food being robbed out of  
overfull baskets. One man is carrying 2 large packets of  
toilet rolls under each arm.

Mick makes his way towards the tinned goods, and picks up  
what he can. Baked beans and some tinned sardines.

We see Mick in the queue for the check out. It is halfway  
down an aisle.

INT. MICKS FLAT - LATER

Mick is getting dressed for work. The radio is on. It is 7pm.

RADIO NEWSREADER (VO)

The government have advised that as of  
tomorrow the country will be in a  
state of lockdown. You are being asked  
to stay inside your house, except for  
essential travel or essential work. A  
2k limit has been imposed for fresh  
air and exercise. you are urged to  
stay at least 2 meters away from  
another person not in your immediate  
family.

we see Mick looking at a picture on the sideboards. A younger  
version of himself with his wife. He then goes and checks his

cupboards. They are full of tinned food. He opens the freezer. It is full of frozen fish. If we can see into the bathroom we would see a stack of toilet rolls.

EXT. QUAYSIDE - MORNING

As it was in first scene. Busy quayside. Mick leaves the boat and walks to his car. The same fisherman from before, who is polish, shouts after him.

FISHERMAN

Be careful Mick. You need to stay indoor and away from other people.

Mick ignores him.

MICK

(To himself)

Aye, as if you bloody well care.

INT. MICKS FLAT - DAY

It is evening time and the radio is on.

RADIO PRESENTER (VO)

Its eerily quiet on the roads out there folks. The normal heavy traffic for drive time is, unbelievably, non existent.

Looks like for once, people are heeding government advise and staying indoors.

Mick is getting ready for work. His mobile phone rings. He answer it.

MICK

Alright?

VOICE ON PHONE (VO)

(We can hear the voice coming through the phone.)

I'm sorry Mick. There's a positive case in the crew. We'll not be going out tonight, or for Friday and Saturday neither. Depending on how many come down with this infection, we could be quayside for two weeks.

MICK

Right, so.

VOICE ON PHONE (VO)

Look Mick, keep an eye on yourself.  
This bloody thing is highly  
contagious. With Victor having it, we  
could all be up shites creek by this  
time next week.

Mick grunts in response.

VOICE ON PHONE (CONTD.)(VO)

Right. Away with you, and ring the  
doctor if ya start the cough or  
anything. Ill be in touch.

MICK

Right, G'Luck.

Mick goes to the window and pulls back the net curtain. The street below is deserted.

Mick turns off the radio and picks up a newspaper which is lying on the sideboard. He makes himself comfy in an armchair and starts to read.

INT. MICKS FLAT - DAY

A church bell rings indicating that it is Sunday, and at least 3 days have past.

Mick has not been able to leave his flat for a number of days, and clean empty bean tins, and empty egg boxes are piled neatly by the door, waiting to be recycled.

Mick has not shaved and the beginning of a beard is on his chin.

Mick is bored, and is pacing around the flat looking for something to do. He switches on the radio. It plays a covid updated. He switches it back off.

He adjusts the already straight pictures on the walls, and plumps the already plump cushions on the sofa.

He cleans the already clean windows, stopping midway to stares out towards the harbor which is just visible over rooftops.

Suddenly the sound of a tin whistle being played badly

interrupts his thoughts. Mick looks up towards the ceiling of his flat.

MICK  
(to himself)  
Oh for the love of God. Brutal.  
(Shouting towards the ceiling)  
Its brutal. Shut up will ya.

He grabs a brush and bangs on the ceiling with it.

MICK  
Will ya go and strangle that poor cat  
somewhere else?

VOICE FROM ABOVE (VO)  
Im only learning, mister.

Mick goes to leave the flat in a fury, but then stops. He cant go out. He is in lockdown.

He gets into his bed and pulls the pillow over his head to drown out the noise.

INT. MICKS FLAT - DAY

Mick is making breakfast. He looks slightly rougher than the previous day. The tin whistle starts up again. Mick ties a tea towel around his head to block out the noise. He continues to eat his breakfast.

INT. MICKS FLAT - DAY

Next day and Mick is sleeping on the couch, with the TV on and volume turned up. He is wearing pajamas, covered by a dressing gown and slippers on his feet.

The tin whistle music from upstairs starts playing.

Mick doesn't flinch and it is only after a second when he opens his eyes and removes wadded up toilet roll from his ears we realize he is masking the sound. He goes back to sleep.

INT. MICKS FLAT - DAY

We hear the church bell ringing, indicating it is Sunday again. Mick is wearing pajamas, unbuttoned to reveal a slightly stained vest. He has bare feet. He is sitting at a small kitchen table and struggling to eat beans on toast.

He picks up his phone and we see the screen is blank. No missed calls and no messages.

The flat is eerily quiet. Mick looks up to the ceiling, but it remains quiet.

INT. MICKS FLAT - NIGHT

In the dark, Mick is curled on his bed, in pajama bottoms and vest, rocking back and forth. We can see he has been crying.

INT. MICKS FLAT - DAY

Micks small bathroom. Mick is dressed as the night before. He is standing in front of the sink, staring into a mirror. His eyes are red from crying. His face is unshaven and he looks very disheveled.

We hear the sound of the tin whistle from upstairs starting to play. Mick thunders out of the bathroom, shouting abuse at the ceiling. He grabs the sweeping brush and as he goes to bang on the ceiling, he stops yelling and listens.

The tin whistle is playing a lively tune and it is clear the player has greatly improved. Mick stands to listen for a few seconds and we can see he is impressed.

He runs to the cupboard and pulls out an old fiddle case which is covered in dust.

He opens it, and gently gently wipes any dust off the strings and bow.

We see Mick looking back towards the wall, where there is a picture of a traditional band, playing in a crowded pub. A younger Mick is playing the fiddle, accompanied by his wife playing the tin whistle.

The tin whistle playing finishes. Mick lines up the fiddle under his chin and draws the bow across it. With eyes closed, settles himself on kitchen chair, curling his body inwards, trying to protect himself from painful memories.

He plays a few more notes, then suddenly we hear the tin whistle from upstairs joining in. Mick stops playing, unsure if he can continue. He closes his eyes as if a painful memory needs to play out before he can continue.

The tin whistle, bleats a few more notes. Mick hesitates.

The tin whistle, again, bleats a few notes and this time Mick



takes up the bow and slides it quickly across the strings in answer.

The two instruments begin to play cat and mouse, with one starting and the other finishing a riff. Mick slowly uncurl his body to stand up tall and proud as the music continues to seep into him. After a minute. we hear a FLUTE joining in the jam. Mick looks towards the floor where the sound of the flute is coming from and taps his foot in time to the music.

We hear a bodhran beating faintly from outside. Still playing the fiddle, Mick moves to the window, and stops playing for a second to pull back the curtain and open the window. The sound of the bodhran gets louder. Mick is delighted, and ups the tempo of the music.

As the music continues to play, we are looking out the window and see many of the houses across the street have opened windows and more musicians have joined in. We can also see through uncovered windows a number of people dancing to the music.

Tears stream down Micks face as he plays with gusto, keeping up with the rest of the ceili. Lights go on up and down the street. we can hear whoops and laughs over the music.

INT. MICKS FLAT - MORNING

Mick is clean shaven, fully dressed, and looking better than before. The flat is neat and tidy. He is cooking breakfast and singing to himself.

We hear his phone beep with an incoming message. Mick is startled by the noise.

He picks up the phone and plays the video link he has been sent.

The screen shows a recording of the impromptu ceili, taken from one of the houses across the road.

Parts of the recording zoom in to show the small boy from the 2nd scene who Mick almost ran over. He is in the flat upstairs from Micks. He is playing the tin whistle.

The flat downstairs from Mick shows the old lady he brushed passed on in scene 4. She is playing the flute.

Mick is seen playing the fiddle. The video moves to the middle of the street to capture the whole scene of various musicians and dancers enjoying the performance.

As the video ends, we see a message telling views of the video, that this is the biggest lockdown cheli in Ireland.

Mick laughs to himself, and goes to the window to look out. The street is deserted, but a few faces appear in the windows opposite and Mick smiles and waves a friendly hand towards them.

Fade out.