



The Playboy of the Western World and Riders to the Sea

J.M. Synge

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Two dramas set among the folk of the Aran Islands and western Irish coastlands. *The Playboy of the Western World* deals with a hero's progress, from timid weakling to paragon of bravery. *Riders to the Sea* is an elegy to those who live at the mercy of the sea. Includes Synge's preface to *The Playboy of the Western World*.

The Playboy of the Western World and Riders to the Sea Details

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From Reader Review The Playboy of the Western World and Riders to the Sea for online ebook

Jack Hrkach says

I gave this four stars because, while I know it's an important play, *Riders to the Sea* gets only a 3 rating in my view, while *Playboy* gets if not 5, just short of it. As I write frequently when I review plays I think vital to the theatre, if you haven't read these yet, or better SEEN a good production of *Playboy*, specifically, you simply must. Okay?

Amber Tucker says

Initial / temporary review: Three stars, or four? I'm not sure, but have decided to be generous for the time being, since there is much that I enjoyed in this play. The dialect is brilliantly transporting; I amused myself for the first Act reading aloud in a pathetic excuse for an Irish brogue – but nobody was around to hear me, so it was all good. The characters: over-realistically wrought, if you get my drift. Which means they're classic. Hopeless as people, but excellent as characters. (The Widow Quin is such an astute schemer, and I think she's the only one I could say I like.) And the circumstances are generally hilarious. Still, toward the end I found myself wondering, if nothing was going to 'tie up,' plot-wise – which it didn't – what alternative *point* was being made? Basically, I was left hanging on a rather disappointed thread of What the Heck? Thus, I'm relieved that we're studying this one first in my drama course. Maybe my prof can take the heck out of the what.

Sitara Kashif says

its a nerve tearing effort that these islanders make , the sea is their life they are supposed to depend upon it for their survival , but its their enemy as well they lose their lives in the struggle to live.
i found Synge an amazing writer he depicts the lives of his characters very realistically.especially in 'riders to the sea'
the mother who has lost all of male members to the sea keeps on praying for the life of the only living son of hers and says
' what is the price of ten thousand horses in front of a son and only one living son'..... i loved the sisters they bravely hide truth of the death of their brother just because they do not want to hurt their mother and there remains reality they remain unable to change....
but reality is known and the mother's reaction is completely opposite to the reader's expectations, she remains calm and thanks god that she is left with nothing..... as she had to wake up to say her prayers for the life of her son but since he is dead she will sleep a calm sleep now.
the play is about the stoic resignation of a mother.

Korri says

Playboy of the Western World is a satirical look at Catholicism and Irish 'peasantry' that apparently sparked a

riot when it was first performed in 1907 Dublin. Christy Mahon wanders into town, claiming he killed his father. Instead of finding his actions immoral or his character lacking, the townspeople enjoy his story of patricide and sort of deify him for his strength, vigor, and boldness. Synge is quite adept at capturing rhythms and idioms of speech, playing on folk culture and myths to give life to his characters.

Riders to the Sea is a one-act play about how the sea gives livelihood but takes away life on the Irish coast.

These plays were more interesting to me for their history than anything else.

Miles McCoy says

Had to read this for my Irish Literature class. Definitely not a bad read at all. Plays really aren't my thing, and I went into this small collection thinking that it was going to be difficult to understand the characters as far as dialogue, but it actually was not hard to interpret at all. "Playboy" was definitely my favorite out of the two, if I had to pick one.

Zan says

I love both of these plays (playboy and riders to the sea). I first encountered them as a freshman in college. This time around I found even more to love. In class we discussed the play in terms of the three main offenses of the play, why it got such a strong reaction from its initial audience: sex, geography, and violence. Of course, as a modern reader it seems like such a mellow play, but in a nationalist theatre, where patrons expected either a nationalist allegory or a traditional comedy, this play doesn't fit either mold. We discussed how this play may have parodied Yeats' Cathleen Ni Houlihan (Christy's father), how the Catholic church comes in for a fair amount of critique, and even the presentation of a perversion of the Cuchulain myth. And those are just a few things we touched. There is still the language of the play and the dreaded "shifts" to contend with. And yet the play is still nationalistic in so many ways. How brilliant is J.M. Synge, right? Much love.

John Kirwin says

Watched the play on PBS in 1979 with my father. A humorous story about a son who tries to escape the family farm after he thinks he killed his father. His father brings him back to reality after he develops an independent and strong identity, while staying in a public house and making friends with the innkeeper's daughter.

Frannie Cheska says

oh christy *face palm

Akemi says

I'd seen this play once or maybe twice before reading it in Modern Drama this semester. It's been a while since I saw it, but I remember thinking it was totally crazy and nonsensical, and my mom thinking something similar, which is saying something, so it was exciting to read it in an academic setting and find out what the hell it was supposed to be about.

So apparently, it's all about poking fun at the Catholic church, which is painfully obvious once you know (the main character's name is Christy, after all). The play is pretty amusing, considering it's about a village that glorifies a guy for supposedly killing his father. Aside from the humor, the range of language is impressive- mostly grounded in earthy peasant chatter, but also beautifully poetic at times.

Fun to think that this play provoked riots when it was first performed. Too bad people don't riot at the theater any more.

CHRISTY: What did I want crawling forward to scorch my understanding at her flaming brow?

Jozzie says

I first read these two little plays in an Irish Literature course in college. At the time, I struggled with the language and found them generally uninteresting. Although they are still not my favorite, I was able to better appreciate them this time.

The language, that I originally deemed difficult, is actually what I most appreciate about "The Playboy of the Western World." The language forces itself into an Irish accent and forms the atmosphere of the play. Playboy is a comedy and really pokes fun at the Catholic Church which is seen in the main character being named Christy. I recommend reading the play with this in mind. I struggled with Christy being celebrated for "killing his da." This strange premise is what makes this play difficult for me to enjoy.

"Riders to the Sea" is my favorite of the two plays. I prefer the characters of Riders over the characters in Playboy. In Riders, there is so much pain and loss and I appreciate the way this is reflected in the characters. This one act play is backed full of emotion and as a mother, I can't imagine the pain of Maurya.

Both of these plays by J.M. Synge are an important part of Irish Literature and I recommend taking the time to read them. I want to see them performed as I feel they are probably more captivating when performed and I want to see Synge's command of language actually spoken.

Garrett Zecker says

Short, sweet, and to the point, these plays exemplify in the simplest of terms the life of the Irish experience. Riders to the Sea is a simple examination that the nature of our existence may be predestined to a certain fate, and that cultural and professional folklores are likely to follow us through our experience no matter how hard we try to lessen the magnitude and effect. Not so fascinating, not so interesting, but entirely effective

writing.

Cat says

Somehow even though this is a seminal modern play, this modernist didn't end up reading it until this summer! It is dark, funny, and the ending surprised and fascinated me...I wish that I had gotten to see a performance of the play because the texture of the Irish dialogue really loses something (I am sure) being visual rather than aural. Also, I would love to see Stephen Rea perform Christy! (he was pictured on the cover of the edition of the play that I read)

Mike Jensen says

I seem to be reading a higher than usual amount of Irish literature this year, and this play is known as one of the best. This is perhaps the fourth time I have read it. I seem to understand it better as I get older. There is a lot to be said for being yourself, and a lot to be said for finding a community where you can, if you can. Don't want to live up to or down from a lie.

Octavia Cade says

Two and a half stars, rounding up to three. There are a couple of plays here from the Irish dramatist J.M. Synge, and one was far better than the other I thought. *The Playboy of the Western World* is Synge's most famous play, as I understand it, and it's also the one I liked least. I get the feeling it's meant to be funny, but this story of a big-talking brat who never quite manages to murder his father, and the community that falls for and spurns him on a dime, just inches too far into farce for me to take it seriously. There are some amusing bits but it's too silly for me to really enjoy, and it felt dragged out over three acts. It gets two stars from me. Far more compelling was the one-act *Riders to the Sea*, a sad little piece based on life on the Aran Islands, and the death of a family's final son by drowning. Three stars for that one, it's short and affecting and evocative.

Ayne Ray says

A richly crafted drama from one of Ireland's premier playwrights, set in the Western coast of Ireland. The play caused a riot when it was first produced in 1907 after the mention of a petticoat (no, really). According to the newspapers at the time, the mob was only prevented from storming the stage by the call-boy, who had "armed himself with a big axe...and swore by all the saints in the calendar that he would chop off the head of the first lad who came over the footlights." Gotta love it.
