

Derek Switzer

### The Story of William Plaxton

“So, Mr. Forsythe... I take it you’ve got me humble abode still in one piece then?”

“Yessir, I’ve got the place nice an’ tidy fer your return, an’ did so without burnin’ the place down!”

“Aye, ‘s a good start to a splendid evenin’ then. I’ve got a present for ya’ Mr. Forsythe.”

“Ohh, an’ what is this fer then, Will?”

“D’ya remember the time Mary an’ I let ye’ stay for a nigh’? I know what you did, and I know why she didn’t awake the next morn’. I know what happened an’ why I had to have you watch my home while I was incarcerated...” says Will, as he hands the man his present.

“Will... Will... what in the name of the good lord are you talking about?” He slowly draws the lid from the small box, hands trembling as if a leprechaun just kicked him in the delicates. “Oh, sweet mother a’ Marry...” Forsythe drops to his knees. In shock he falls to his side and continues to shake. William reaches for his pistol, for living in the middle of nowhere-Ireland, if anyone heard, it would be as if to execute a sheep or cow, and disregarded as such.

### 8 Years Prior

Finding himself in a peculiar position, a Mr. Marcus Forsythe wanders unto the farmland of William Plaxton, a man known to be laid back and otherwise unknown to many, and for good reason. This is the day William’s life goes from peaceful and nearly care-free, to seemingly far, far darker realms of conscious. Or this may be a gross misconception of William Plaxton.

Following the muddy dirt road to the cottage, Forsythe hugs his coat and bag tightly to him. It’s late and he can no longer see much of the road. He finally arrives at his cousin’s home and pounds on the door several times. Over the noise of the downpour it was difficult to hear the shuffling of tired feet inside the humble little home, through the solid wooden door. It crept open slowly, shining with the dim light emanating from the candle held by Mary Plaxton.

“Oh, why good evenin’ ma’am, is Will in tonight? My car broke down an’ I just got in from town, there’s nobody for miles and your, may I say quite homey place, was the only one that I knew the residents of.”

Mary gestured to Forsythe to come in. She took his coat and sat him by the fire without saying a word. She went to the kitchen to put the kettle on. When the water came to a boil, she grabbed three half-pints and poured the water in

with some of her locally renowned, family secret, herbal tea mixture; a little is all you need. As she walked into the room, she was humming an old tune. "Would ye' like sugar or cream with yer' tea? Most say its best without it, but if you want some, I can go get some."

"Ah, thanks but no ma'am, I'll trust the popular vote. Will William be in soon?"

William slinks down the stairs stealthily and –appears- behind Marcus. "Nah, my friend, I'm right behind ye'!" Marcus jumps and nearly spills his tea all over the rug by the fireplace. "Sorry Marc, old habit, you know that. How's the country treatin' ya'? I guess not too well if you ended up here at whatever hour this be..."

"No sir, this road undid my car an' I walked the past 5 hours out t'ere--"

"Wait, wait," said Will in a shocked voice, "You, puttin' effort into somethin'? Ye'v got to be yankin' me chain 'ere? Well, I guess the absurdly and completely drenched clothes on my mantle tell that tale, but tha' still doesn't make me any less shocked. Marcus the slow of foot, an' foot in mouth, walkin' 'bout 6 klicks up a cold, wet, muddy road in the middle-o-nowhere, headed to some place within nowhere, for a chance that there may be room an' board, with your older cousin an' his wife, at 'bout 1 in the mornin'. Does that sound about right Marcus?"

Marcus continues to catch his breath and stutters out a quick "Yessir, an' it'd bb-be mm-much app-appreciated... as well in if ye' dd-don' do that again. Nearly killed me, aye."

Marc's shimmering yet short blond hair, seemed to be dancing with the fire as it's stage behind him. His clothes were nearly dry, though his boots were caked in mud. "Sorry about that aye, you know I don't do tha' intentionally. Anyway, how are ye'? It's been so long, how's yer' folks back in Dublin? Is that where ye' were headed?"

"Yea, I was on me way inte'r town when me car broke down, an' I figured your place was the closest between here an' Dublin, so 'ere I am." He begins to look around the room. Many of the fine furnishings were built by hand, only he wasn't sure if Will was the type to be that crafty.

"So, need a room then? We've got a cot in the other room, we could bring it out to near the fire for ye'." He begins to scratch near the tattoo on his side.

"That I do, and would be much appreciated. May I ask, when'd you get tha' done, an' where? I been lookin' to get somethin' that means loyalty, maybe latin? The miss would love it, an' I think it'd be appropriate."

"Well, last time I went to town with the boys, bein' a few months ago, I had it done. I've always loved the Celtic arts, an' as you can see, to the extent I'd make it a part of me. Ye' know tha' bar we used to follow the girls to? – Sorry

Mary, but this was years ago – it's in the back o' that place. This particular piece means," as he outlines the trinity on the lower left side of his back,"body, mind, soul an' the power of the three actin' as one., where as you'd want the dog, fer that's the one tha' fits loyalty. How's the tea?"

"Well, you really know your symbolism my friend," says Forsythe as he sips at the still steaming tea that Mrs. Plaxton handed him, "an' I must say, that'd be quite neat, I may drop in there some time soon then. The tea is delicious, thanks, now if you don' mind the intrusion too much, it has been a long day, and I've got a longer one commin' up tomorrow, getting my car back an' all. If ye' don' mind showin' me to my cot, I'll be right up an' out before sunrise."

"Fair enough, follow me, I'll get it set right up for ye', an' if ye' like, you can stay for breakfast, it's not like we're a motel or anything, we're friendly, an' you're family." Will begins to walk towards a back room, gesturing for Marc to join him.

Mary begins to laugh, "Hahaha, have a good night boys, see ye' in the mornin'!"

### Dawn

The horizon slowly breaks into a cloud streaked, foggy morning and Mary is nowhere to be seen, last heard getting up for the washroom, and then assumed to have gone for a cigarette. Will is out with Marcus to help him move his car through the slick, muddy hills towards the farm before continuing his morning routine. This being to wander about, looking for farm equipment in need of upkeep.

Marcus yells from the back porch of the house to Will, "so where's tha' breakfast aye?" Will walks over, towards the house, cleaning his hands with a gasoline saturated rag. "Mary went to town fer some cigg's? or still sleepin', either way, I'm hungry."

"Mary got up this mornin' an' I haven't seen her since. Do me a favor an' check the ashtray out front; she smokes twice a day, every day, empties it on Fridays, so there ought to be 'bout 6 in there. I know I heard the door last night, ain't sure if I heard 'er come back in though." Will walks around to the barn to clean his rag off, while Marc goes out front. Will stops outside the barn door, noticing it's slightly ajar; he learned from his late father not to leave doors half open, it's a good way to get robbed. After the hesitation, and grabbing his sickle from the side of the barn, he walks in cautiously. The place is silent, too silent. Even the animals sense something is wrong. Will hears a tense rope above him, as if something was gently swinging by it; he fears the worst, and rightfully so.

The family crest by the mantle of the fireplace was missing. It was embroidered with 300-year-old silk, and that was where it was patched; the gemstones in the lettering, one fell to the floor and glistened in the light from the remaining fire; the solid gold emblem that lived behind the crest and wrapped in cloth was missing as well, this being far older than behind which it hid, Plaxton being one of the older names in Ireland; the two daggers intersecting in the middle of the crest, one remained on the farm, or more accurately, in the back of which was dangling from the rafters in the barn. When the scientists in the morgue were looking at the cadaver, they managed to conclude that the dagger was the fatal wound, and then she was strung up.

Following court sessions further concluded that it was likely the disgruntled husband had done it considering his prints were on the knife and his rope was used, and so on. The jury had decided upon the possibility that the person staying with him had not done it because he was taking his sleeping pills as prescribed, and considered the possibility of someone having followed Mr. Forsythe to the farm, or having been there before him, and taking her from her porch during her smoke break, before dawn, too far-fetched and that there were no foot prints in the mud. There could never have been any foot prints, or any chance of finding her dropped cigarette considering the mass downpour.

The knife showed only Will's finger prints on it, while it was dismissed that the unknown perpetrator could have been wearing gloves. So needless to say, William Plaxton was booked for manslaughter. Due to insufficient evidence that it was, would have been, could have been, or anything to the contrary of both Will's and Marc's statements that they were a happy couple, there would have been a charge for murder. Very confusing, how they could have thought it to have been Will, when there was a better chance that it was one of their cats. Following the court, and the spotty – at best – charges and evidence with more holes than Swiss cheese, Will was sacked for 8 years in prison.

With this time, Will spent brooding as to how, why, when, and most importantly, who killed his wife. He drew the conclusion, at first, that Marcus may have awakened suddenly and done it, but found there was no motive, and he could never see him carry something like this through, or even theft in the case of Will's family heirlooms over the fireplace. Will realized that it wasn't just a dark figure over the fence when he was watching Marcus walk up to the door that fateful night, considering it stood still until he left for downstairs, for it was gone when he went back to bed. Whoever the twisted person it was, it was not Marcus Forsythe, he watched Marc take his sleeping pills while he was setting up the cot in the other room, and he knew Marc's father took the same ones last time that he saw him.

He decided to wait out his sentence, and go back to his home, and hunt the animal down that did it. And this is where our story began.

### At the House

Taking after Will giving Marc the “gift”

“So Marc, what d’ya say to it? This being, likely, the greatest adventure in your life. Brothers in arms so ta’ speak, we go hunt the man down, you’ve got tha’ friend in CSI an’ I’ve got a block of wood with blood on it, as well as some rope.” Inside the box laid a handgun, a divider, and Will’s living will. Marc, being a city boy, was squeamish at best around firearms. “See, I’m thinkin’, this guy can’t live too far away, this is the middle a’ nowhere after all aye? So either take the gun an’ get your friend to give me a name, and we’ll track him down, or take my house an’ all I own. My wife is gone, so I have nothin’ left really. I don’t like this place, we both know why, and I’ll get him on my own.”

Marc hesitates, a reasonable reaction to someone just propositioned to a man-hunt. “Look, Marc, we’ve seen how far the ‘justice’ system out her gets ye’, do you think I’ll allow for my life, an’ that of my wife be wasted to someone who just went 8 years free on a murder sentence that I had to pay out of my life. Just for a slight chance that he might get what I got, which in all reality was a slap on the wrist?” Marc settles himself.

“All right, I’ll join in. On one condition, I do this, and I ‘took no part’ in this. Fair?”

With a smirk, looking like something out of a bad crime movie on cable, “Let’s get started then.”