

## A Synopsis of **The View from Gleninagh North** by K.D. Norris

“Mr. Maybourn, I’m guessin’, down from the shoulder of Gleninagh,” the bartender said, moving from his roosting spot and approaching. “What ya drinkin’ sir?”

“Smithwick’s?”

“You got it,” he replied, stepping smoothly toward a bank of back-wall beer taps.

“And how did you know my name, Mr. Cassidy?” I asked as he returned, snatched up a Guinness paper coaster, tossed it casually onto the bar near enough to my vicinity, and set the pint in front of me — all with the skill of a task done a thousand times.

“Cassidy, if you will,” he said, settling in to a leaning spot across his bar from me. “And how do I know your name? Well, Matty, that’s a story.”

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Matthew “Matty” Maybourn is a successful writer of contemporary pulp crime novels that sometimes find homes in modern-day Hollywood. His middle-age doldrums have left him stranded between love and loss, between reluctant fame and desired solitude after the death of his wife. Aimless Matty is convinced by a friend and filmmaker to write a sequel to *The Quiet Man* — the classic Irish short story and American film of idyllic fiction — and takes up residence in Ireland in the first chapter of the 125,000 word novel.

Matty struggles to write, struggles to visualize any future for himself and his Irish book. He drinks as much as he mourns, so a Galway Bay countryside pub provides introduction to the rural community surrounding his temporary Irish home: a house on atop the hill called Gleninagh North. Initially, he is the object of curiosity, and derision, by the denizens of the pub and his only neighbor on the hill, the “Widow O’Brian”, especially when they learn he is writing a novel set in a country and culture he knows little about, based on a movie most despise as being little more than a “Feekin’ fairytale”.

As the story unfolds, Matty travels the country, explores its history and modern cultural landscape, and forms relationships that humorously and dramatically shape his Irish experience: Cathleen, the middle-aged “widower” with whom he eventually shares new love; Jennifer/Sinéad, a 20-something modern-Irish fireball with whom he is initially infatuated; Mulligan, a curmudgeonly seafarer with adventure to share and an IRA secret to reveal; Kenny, a young man with a tragic past and fatal future; and then there is Seimus, an ex-Irish Army soldier with a crippled body, an insolent temperament and a romantic history with Cathleen. The central relationship triangle leads to confusion, conflict and confrontation, including a near comedic fight between Matty and Seimus which pays *homage* to a similar scene in *The Quiet Man*.

Other passages in the story arc have Matty taking breaks from his Quiet Man project, and from his personal relationship dilemmas, to accept book tour dates across Ireland on which he is

exposed to, among other travelogue experiences, Dublin's drug- and alcohol-driven youth culture, and Belfast's Northern Ireland/IRA battleground where conflict remains and cultural scars are painted as murals on buildings.

But it is with Cathleen, on tours of the ocean of stone that is The Burren, and other actual and metaphoric features of the Irish landscape, where Matty finds not only inspiration to take a chance on writing something more than pulp but to once again take a chance on love.

A marriage and a happy ending ensues.