

Alyssa Schwarz

An
Irish
Detour

A Flash Fiction Short
Story

An American tourist and
a roadside rescue from
a dashing Irishman



PRAISE FOR

An Irish Detour

“The Mary Poppins of flash fiction stories – practically perfect in every way.”

—5 Star Review

“I was so sad it wasn’t a whole book!”

—5 Star Review

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“May the road rise up to meet you.”

—AN IRISH PROVERB

An Irish Detour

Maggie Keane eased on the clutch and instinctively reached with her right hand for the gearshift, banging her knuckles against the car door.

Ouch. “You’re not in America anymore, Maggie.” It was bad enough driving on the wrong side of the road, but the wrong side of the car as well? At least her grandpa had taught her how to drive a manual, otherwise she’d be completely sunk.

“Come on, Fiona. Almost there.” She patted the dash of her tiny rental car, which she’d affectionately named after her grandpa’s old cat.

Slowing at the next curve, she gave the car enough gas to reach the small overlook at the top, then parked in the nearly empty lot. A cool sea

breeze greeted her as she opened her door and leaned against the stone wall looking out over the glen.

“I finally made it, Grandpa.” The stress of the past few days melted away. “You were right, it is beautiful.” A few rays of sunshine broke through the low clouds, making the hills seem even greener than the photographs.

“Yer not thinkin’ of jumpn’, I hope.”

Maggie spun toward the voice. A man in an emerald knit sweater stood watching her from beneath the brim of his tweed flatcap, a curious expression tugging at his mouth.

“I was admiring the view.” She frowned. What kind of man walked around ruining people’s perfectly wonderful moments?

“I’d be careful. Those rocks aren’t as stable as they might look. Had to rescue another tourist like yeurself just last week.”

She couldn’t tell if he was being serious or messing with her when something soft brushed against her leg. She looked down at the carpet of black and white fur wriggling beside her as its tail thumped against the soft ground.

“Fiona, leave the nice woman be.”

“That’s okay, I don’t mind. I actually love dogs.” She dug her fingers into the silky fur as the dog’s pink tongue lolled to the side. “My name’s Maggie, by the way.”

The man dipped his head as if polite conversation itched like wet wool. “Sean Casey, and this is—.”

“Fiona.” Maggie couldn’t help but chuckle at the coincidence. “Nice name.”

His icy demeanor seemed to melt a little as he bent to tossle the dog’s topknot. “It was my Nan’s. Good woman. Too bad I can’t say the same about this one. Spends more time chasing after strangers than sheep.” He said it as a reprimand, but she heard the affection in his voice.

“So, if yer not here to... well, you know.” He tipped his head toward the stone wall. No wonder the man hated small talk. He was absolutely terrible at it.

“I’m looking for Glenview Cottage. It’s where my grandpa grew up before immigrating to America.”

“Up here?”

“Of course not. It’s—”

He raised a hand to stop her. “Wind yer neck in. I’m only joking with you.”

Hmph, hard to tell. “So, you know it, then?”

“Aye.” He dipped his head. “But you don’t want to go that way, though.”

“Actually, I do.”

His chuckle was deep and inviting, far warmer than his earlier greeting. “What I meant to say is the pass can be tricky. You might be more comfortable drivin’ back to Dingle and goin’ round the mountain instead.”

“Well, Google Maps says otherwise.”

The man shrugged. “Suit yerself.” His sharp whistle cut through the damp air as abruptly as his personality. “C’mon, girl.” The dog whined in protest, but finally trotted after him into the mist at his second whistle.

“And people say Americans are rude.” Climbing back into her car, Maggie rechecked the directions on her phone and turned left out of the parking lot down the backside of the pass.

What had been a two-lane road on the way up quickly turned into one.

The mist transformed to rain, and soon, Maggie could hardly see the narrow road in front of her.

“Should’ve listened to the grumpy Irishman, after all.” Not that she’d admit to him as much. She’d driven in worse weather before. And at least there was a nice stone wall protecting her from the sharp drop at the edge of the road.

Everything was fine. *She* was fine.

Foot hovered over the brakes, she eased around the corner as two yellow headlights loomed ahead, honking for her to get over.

“My car is literally the width of the road!” The only other option would be for her to reverse back up the pass, and there was absolutely no way she was doing that.

She flashed her lights to say as much, but the other car didn’t budge.

“God, please help me.”

Another honk had her eyes opening to a black and white dog yipping outside her window.

“Fiona?”

Maggie blinked, and then her door flew open. Rain pelted her as a gruff voice barked for her to move over. Doing as he said, she scrambled over the stick shift as the man and his dog piled in.

“Sean! What are you doing?”

“Rescuing you, of course.” The car jerked under his control as he threw them in reverse up the road.

Maggie buried her face into Fiona’s fur, praying no other cars came up behind them.

“You can open yer eyes now, Maggie.” Sean’s calm voice coaxed her to look up once they’d finally stopped. He pushed back his cap and smiled, revealing eyes the color of the hills.

“So, Glenview Cottage, was it?” His relaxed tone loosened the knot in her stomach. “Wonder if yer granda knew my Nan. She grew up not far from there.”

“Fiona?”

“One and the same.”

She thought of her grandpa’s cat, “named after a friend from the old country,” he’d always said. If Sean’s grandma was anything like him, she could see why her grandpa had wanted to remember her.

And why she was about to let him drive her down memory lane.

“I’d say it’s a good possibility.”

About the Author



Alyssa is a Colorado native who attended the Colorado School of Mines, got her masters in Geological Engineering, and promptly became a watercolor artist and author (as one does). She loves writing heartfelt romances with happy endings, a bit of mystery, faith, humor, and second chances. When she's not writing, you can find her cooking, quilting, painting, or doing any number of crafty activities.

Visit her website to learn more and receive a free novella when you subscribe to her newsletter.

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