

# RIDERS TO THE SEA

J. M. Synge

**Presented by:**

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# Riders to the Sea

A gloomy play by Irish Playwright – J.M Synge about the death and danger to life at Sea and how the family has to cope up with the loss of loved ones.

Play set on Aran Islands – West coast of Ireland on the lives of peasant and fisher Irish folk. Full of Irish cultural references

# Characters

Maurya, an Old Woman who has lost her 6 sons to the  
Sea

Bartley, Her Son presently going to the Sea

Cathleen, Her Daughter

Nora, a younger daughter

Men and Women

# Plot – One Act Play (I)

- Play begins with the 2 sisters discussing about the death of Michael – also their brother
- The Sisters have come across a bundle of clothes to confirm the identity of Michael whose body has been washed upon the shore in Donegal
- Mother does not know about the bundle and is very concerned about Michael's disappearance since 9 days

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# Plot Synopsis (II)

- Maurya is very upset at Bartley's leaving since the sea is very rough.
- Bartley is adamant on going to the Sea, supported by Cathleen & Nora
- Cathleen and Nora identify the clothing & mourn over the death of their brother
- News of Bartley's death also arrives followed by his body
- Maurya is told of Michael's death and is soul shaken

# Themes

- Conflict between the Youthful Spirit of Adventure (Bartley) and Wisdom of Age & Experience (Maurya).
- Choice between the life of binding and that of living freely
- Death – The ultimate reality of life and which no one can escape.
- Philosophical acceptance of death/ destiny as an inevitable truth
- The minuteness of human entity against vastness of sea and nature

# Questions

- 1) What is the importance of the Title
- 2) Discuss the 'Sea' as a living presence in the Play
- 3) Explain Dramatic Irony in the Play with reference to Prophetic Dialogues & Incidences
- 4) How does the Play highlight the predicament of human destiny

# About J.M Synge

John Millington Synge (1871-1909) is part of the Celtic group of Irish Playwrights who believed in reviving the Irish culture and folklore.

His plays are realistic and modern in their depiction of life situations.

Other famous works are: *The Playboy of the Western World*, *The Tinker's Wedding*, *The Well of the Saints*



**Thank you!**