

A tragedy is one that has an unhappy ending and leads to the downfall of the main character. With riders to the sea, Synge has digressed from the norms of a generic Shakespearean play to bring back to life the ancient Greek essence of a tragedy. Synge had perfected the one act play to arouse deep emotions from the audience. The tragic part of this story revolves around the fact that fate cannot be defied as we know all the men of the family die at the end. Despite Bartley's defiance towards fate, he follows the same path of his brothers and father. In the play, the Aran islanders are dependent on the sea to provide for their families hence, the sea adopts the role of fate. The islanders are faced with the Munchausen trilemma as they will starve if not provide for their family otherwise suffer merciless death the hands of sea while trying to provide. Maurya is the victim of this tragedy and throughout the act, her character develops from a caring, worried mother to a lady who is absolved of all sorts of feeling due to the fact that she has lost all her children. "I've had a husband, and a husband's father, and six sons in this house... but they're gone now, the lot of them", Maurya says as she recounts the men of the family who sacrificed themselves at sea to aid their family. Her spirit is broken down when she realizes that her last son Bartley is about to die when she sees him on the grey horse, a sign that an unfortunate event is bound to take place, and she then loses all hope, leaving her in a worse place than before. Eventually, she gains a sense of relief and is at peace with herself after all the men in her family have died. Despite, that mere sense of relief she is left in a worse place than when she started out. This is how a perfect Greek tragedy is displayed by Synge as it revolves more around the fate set for the character and less about the character establishing the path for his/her own destiny upon which the modern Shakespearean plays are built