



STUDIO OCHENTA ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT

CULTUREVERSE – EPISODE 5: DAGDA’S HARP

[0:06]

*NARRATOR: This is **Cultureverse**... a place where myths and legends come alive in the modern world. I'm your host, Kelly Marie Tran. Episode 5: Dagda's Harp*

(Voices enter with a slight echo - they are in a garage)

[0:56]

NARRATOR: Sean and his best friend Zoe are rehearsing in Sean's garage in Boston, Massachusetts. They're getting ready for the big show at Grover Cleveland Middle School. Zoe and Sean have been inseparable since the 1st grade.

(SFX: REHEARSALSOUNDS)

NARRATOR: It's Sean's 13th birthday today, but instead of laughing and celebrating, he's bummed. You see, after the show, Zoe---is moving to Minneapolis...

[1:24]

ZOE (humming a rock song)

(Microphone until the microphone screeches).

ZOE: Ladies and Gentlemen, We are SHAM Rox!

(Sean starts strumming an old guitar) (A cell phone vibrates)

ZOE: Hold on, Sean. (Guitar stops suddenly) (excited) Hi! Yeah! (A pause) (happy) Day after tomorrow, yeah, sounds awesome. Okay, call you back. Bye. (Hangs up the phone) (casually) My phone has been blowing up! It's like people think I'm moving to another planet! (LAUGHING)

[1:47]

SEAN: It is really far away from Boston.

(Door knocks on one side of the garage. Door opens)

GRANNY: Hello Hello!

NARRATOR: An older woman with sparkling blue eyes enters the garage and sets down her luggage.

[1:57]

GRANNY: Ah, Sean, love!

SEAN: Granny! You're back?!

GRANNY: Oh, were you expecting someone else?

ZOE: Mrs. O'Keeffe, hi! How was your trip to Ireland?

[2:07]

GRANNY (good-tempered): Hello Zoe, love! Lovely to see you again. We are going to miss you! (Pause) Now let's make some tea and get warm; (laughing then yawning). Here, help me with my things.

SEAN: Sure thing, Granny. (Simultaneously)

[2:25]

(SOUND TRANSITION TO A LIVING ROOM WITH A LOW FIREPLACE)

(Maybe here insert cracking fire and tea noises and cups)

GRANNY: Now that I am warmed up a bit, let me tell you about my trip. Going back home always lifts the spirit. As you land, all you see is the green fields stretched out below you; it's like a welcoming quilt. I already miss it. (Pause) Oh Sean, love, I almost forgot! I have a surprise for you in that big black bag!

[2:54]

SEAN: What did you bring me, Granny??

*GRANNY: Nonono, hold on there, Seannie, I need to tell you a **very important** story about this first.*

SEAN: Awwwww come onnn Grannyyyyyy

GRANNY: Patience is a virtue, my love. You know, I was thinking of buying you a harp, but the baggage fee would have been more than the airfare. Zoe, you may not know this, but harps are a big deal in Ireland, and they also have a magical history! My own Granny used to tell me fantastic stories about harps, you know?

[3:30]

ZOE: Oh I didn't know that!

GRANNY: Yeeeeees, she told me this one story about Dagda, a god in Celtic mythology -, and only he could get music from its strings-- and when he played the instrument he could make anyone who heard it laugh for joy, or weep with sorrow... He harnessed its power so deeply, he used the harp to actually control the seasons.

GRANNY: Anyway, instead of a harp I brought you a----- guitar!!!

[4:12]

SEAN: Woooow, thanks Granny!

GRANNY (to Sean): You'll understand how **very special this guitar is soon enough...** (TO ZOE whispers) And he'll still have a bit of that Irish magic. (laughing knowingly)

NARRATOR: Sean pulls a beautiful antique red oak guitar from the bag. It's a bit weathered and you can tell it has been played **a lot...**

[4:33]

(SFX strums and then he plays the into to a beautiful melody)

SEAN: Amazing! Thanks for this granny!! (Strums the new acoustic guitar again) Where'd you find it??

GRANNY: This **is my sacred guitar and well it has its own special power...** I found it in an antique store in Dublin, and I've had it with me for ages (laughs knowingly)...

(SEAN strums the guitar)

SEAN: This ROX!

ZOE: Lemme see!

NARRATOR: As Zoe checks out the guitar, Granny calls over Sean to come close and she pulls him in tightly.

[5:02]

GRANNY: Now Seannie, some melodies played on this instrument will have a certain power, Seannie. Be very careful with it...

SEAN: What like, magic? What do you mean?

GRANNY: You'll find out in time dear... You must figure that out on your own. Just use your music to inspire goodness and you will be fine.

[5:26]

SEAN: Okay Granny, challenge accepted.

(SFX SEAN STARTS PLAYING RANDOM NOTES)

NARRATOR: Granny sighs and watches him shredding away on his guitar wondering whether Sean is truly ready for the power it possesses.

(Music transition)

NARRATOR: That night, Sean practices with his new guitar in his room.

[5:47]

SEAN: One, two, three, four... (SFX: He starts to play some chords in the guitar)

NARRATOR: Nothing happens.

SEAN: Pfff, doesn't sound magical to me...

(SFX: MIAU MIAU MIAU MIAU)

NARRATOR: His cat Lucky, suddenly runs into the room, jumps up on the bed and drops something heavy. (SFX of a book dropping onto a soft bed)

[6:09]

SEAN: Where did you get this? Wow... Is this songbook made of leather?

(SFX: MIAOU)

NARRATOR: Sean opens the book which has a golden harp on the cover and sees a post it with a note from Granny:

SEAN: "ON THIS YOUR BLESSED BIRTHDAY I GIVE YOU..."

GRANNY: "SEANIE, ON THIS YOUR BLESSED BIRTHDAY I GIVE YOU THE GIFT OF DAGDA'S MAGIC, PLAY THESE SONGS WITH GOOD INTENTIONS AND GOOD THINGS WILL HAPPEN."

[6:34]

SEAN: COOL! Alright let's see... Song for running, Song for Bravery, Song for Farewell, Song

for Sleep... Let's go with that.

NARRATOR: Sean picks up the guitar and plays the song.....until the sound of Lucky purring heavily distracts him.

(SFX: He starts to play some chords in the new guitar,) (SFX heavy purring sounds)

SEAN: Whoa. Lucky, are you okay? He is KNOCKED OUT...

(heavy purring sounds)

[7:09]

SEAN: NO... WAY! This can't be real.

NARRATOR: Sean is intrigued. He knows that like most cats, Lucky sleeps all day every day. But just to be sure---

(SONG STOPS ABRUPTLY)

NARRATOR:...he stops playing the song abruptly. And then, suddenly, Lucky wakes up.

(SFX miaou) (Sfx cat hisses angrily)

[7:33]

Sean: Whoa... Sorry, Lucky... (To himself) That was weird....

(SFX MUFFLED DISCUSSION SOUNDS FROM PARENTS START FROM AFAR)

NARRATOR: Lucky runs off. (SFX SOUNDS FROM PARENTS ARGUMENT ABOUT DISHES GETS LOUDER) Then Sean hears his parents arguing in the kitchen.

SEAN: Ughhhh, they're always arguing about the dishes!

[7:48]

NARRATOR: Sean turns to the "Song for Laughter." He wonders---what if this guitar really does have power? (SFX parents arguing louder) He walks down the hall and begins to strum the song quietly outside of the kitchen.

SEAN (under his breath): Why don't you guys just buy a dishwasher?

(SFX strumming intensifies)

NARRATOR: All of a sudden his parents stop arguing... and start laughing.

(SFX parents LAUGHTER)

NARRATOR: The laughter builds until they're almost hysterical.

SEAN: Whoaaaaaaa! This is absolutely insane! What... what is this guitar?

[8:34]

(SFX: Music and laughter fades out - Scene transition)

NARRATOR: The next day, Sean and Zoe meet at the garage for the last rehearsal before the show. It's the final concert they'll ever perform together before Zoe moves away from Boston.

(Music transition. A house garage in which Zoe is trying out a microphone)

ZOE: One, two, one-two. I think we're good.

SEAN: Yeah

[8:51]

ZOE: You alright, Sean?

SEAN: Yeah... It's just that well... This is our last show ever!

ZOE (casually, cheerful): Awwwwww, I told you I'm not moving to another planet. I am staying right here on Earth.

[9:05]

SEAN: You sure about that?

ZOE (Laughing): Yesssss and we can text and Facetime literally every dayyy!

SEAN: You get service on Mars?

ZOE: Stop! (Pause) Look, I'm sad too but let's make this last show the best show ever

SEAN: Brian, you good on drums?

(Brian expresses himself as a couple of beats from drums broomsticks)

[9:26]

SEAN: One, two, three...

NARRATOR: Sean starts playing the first song of their set list, Brian starts on the drums (SFX Brian being drums) and Zoe hums along while swaying to the music. Watching her, Sean remembers how they used to have dance parties that would last for hours.

Narrator: He suddenly remembers a song in his new songbook that caught his eye last night... He flips through the book quickly.

(Musical pause)

[9:56]

NARRATOR: And finds it: The Song for Dancing. Hesitantly, he starts to change the chords... He wants to try his guitar out on Zoe.

(Music plays)

NARRATOR: As he starts playing the song, Zoe and Brian go into a trance, and start dancing, uncontrollably.

SEAN (laughing): Oh God what are you guys doing?! (Keeps laughing) Zoe look at Brian!

[10:32]

NARRATOR: Zoe acts like she can't hear him.

ZOE: Go Brian, Go Brian...

SEAN: (Keeps laughing) (Then his laugh fades) (To himself): Oh, wait.

NARRATOR: As Zoe keeps dancing to the music Sean starts to imagine not being able to dance

with her again... so he stops playing.

(SFX: MUSIC STOPS)

NARRATOR: And Brian and Zoe snap out of the trance and stare at each other and at Sean...

[10:58]

SEAN (to himself, under his breath): I... I don't know... what did I just do?...

NARRATOR: Sean sets down the guitar and stares at his friends. He realizes he needs a minute to think about what just happened and starts packing up.

ZOE: Where are you going??

[11:13]

SEAN: I... just need a minute...

ZOE: Okay, are you alright?

SEAN: Just go home! Get something to eat or somethin' I'll meet you at the show.

ZOE: Oh my god, is this about me moving away again?

SEAN: No... just... it's fine, I'll talk to you later.

[11:32]

ZOE: Alright come on Brian lets get out of here... (SFX BRIAN DRUMS) Sean seems to be having a moment...

(Low acoustic guitar in the background)

NARRATOR: Later that night Sean tosses and turns in bed, he can't sleep. The sadness about Zoe leaving is weighing on him and he's freaking out about what happens every time he plays something from Granny's songbook.

(SFX Rock music songs in the background)

SEAN: This is crazy, Granny was right I really need to be careful... (SFX Flipping through the songbook)

[12:03]

NARRATOR: But Sean is also curious.

*SEAN: I wonder what else this thing can do... hmmm (SFX FLIPPING THROUGH BOOK)...
Song for Stopping Time...*

(SFX ROOM TONE AND SONG IN THE BACKGROUND CONTINUES PLAYING)

SEAN: Can this song... could this song keep Zoe from... from leaving?

NARRATOR: He begins practicing the song right up until he needs to leave...

[12:28]

SEAN: OH no! I gotta go!

NARRATOR: He grabs his things and runs out the door, determined. He arrives late to the concert.

(Acoustic guitar gets slower to generate tension) (People murmuring in a concert hall)

SEAN: Sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry!

ZOE: Well, I'm glad you made it. I'm so nervous.

NARRATOR: Sean opens up the songbook to the page again. He becomes lost in thought thinking about all the good times he and Zoe will have if she stays as he starts walking up onstage...

[12:53]

GRANNY: Now go on yah boy yah! Make me proud!

(SFX CROWD SOUNDS ENTER - TRANSITION)

*A WOMAN IN A SPEAKER: And now let's give a big round of applause for Sham Rox!
(applause from the crowd) (Mic screeches a little bit)*

*ZOE: Hello everyone! We are SHAM Rox. I'm Zoe, that's Sean on the guitar (SEANS SAYS HI!)
and Brian on drums (BRIAN DOES DRUM SOUNDS). And we'll be playing an original song...*

[13:16]

*NARRATOR: Sean looks at granny in the audience, and then looks back at Zoe. He makes a
choice.*

SEAN: I can't let her go. I've got to at least try..

*NARRATOR: He begins strumming the "Song for Stopping Time." Zoe looks over at Sean and
mouths, "What are you doing" and then she suddenly freezes.*

[13:43]

*NARRATOR: Seans turns to the audience and suddenly the ushers stop mid walk, the
audience stops mid-applause, Granny stops mid-snack and beside him Zoe is still frozen too.
Even after he stops playing, the notes echo and reverberate afterwards, keeping the spell
alive... (SFX The song is reverberating in the concert hall)*

*SEAN: Hello? Hello? Is anybody there? (PAUSE). Oh my god, what did I... what did I do? I need
to reverse this. I have to find another song that...*

(Sfx flipping pages echoing in a quiet auditorium)

[14:21]

SEAN: No! No! No! No good! No! Nope! Oh, man, why won't it stop!? Even Granny is frozen....

SEAN: Please stop. I want everything to just go on to just... go on.

*NARRATOR: Slowly the echo of the music fades out and everyone begins to move again. (Sfx
audience crowd) Zoe continues her announcement as if nothing ever happened.*

[14:49]

ZOE: ...an original song about friendship...

SEAN: Zoe, wait!

(Microphone screeches. Pause. Everything is silent)

ZOE (in a low voice): Sean what's up with you??

SEAN: I want to play another song first. For you. I know I've not been cool about you moving and all but-- well--- let me just play you this song!

NARRATOR: That's when Sean begins to strum "Song For Farewell." (SFX: FIRST CHORDS OF SONG FOR FAREWELL) In the first row, Granny is the first one to join in, a big smile on her face

(SFX: GRANNY HUMMING THE SONG WHILE IT PLAYS)

(SFX: The whole audience joins by humming the tune along)

[15:33]

NARRATOR: The melody fills the room. A wave of joy, sadness, and love overcomes everyone in the entire concert hall and even a few passerbys outside on the street. Strangers soon become friends and begin to sing with a blissful familiarity, as if the song has lived inside their hearts their entire lives. (SFX: Song continues as lots of people join in to hum the song together)

NARRATOR: At the end of the song, Zoe and Sean look at each other. The hall is completely silent. And then... They run towards each other and meet in a big hug.

(SFX: the audience explodes into thunderous applause and cheers)

[16:17]

SEAN: I'm gonna miss you soooooo much, Zoe, but you'll always have a home here, you know.

ZOE: I know, Sean O'Keefe. I know.

- **STORY ENDS** -

- **CREDITS** -

[16:39]

NARRATOR: This story was inspired by Dagda's harp, a mystical object in Celtic mythology. Dagda is one of the most important Celtic gods. He owns objects with magical powers, including a cauldron and a club... But his most famous and iconic instrument is his magical harp. It's made of oak and richly decorated, and this instrument allowed him to control the coming and going of the seasons, the weather, and also the might of warriors during battle and the emotions of entire towns.

[17:12]

*NARRATOR: If you want to learn more about Irish mythology and folklore, check out the books *Harp, Club and Cauldron*, by Lora O'Brien and *Celtic Tales: Fairy Tales and Stories of Enchantment*, by Kate Forrester.*

[17:25]

NARRATOR: This podcast was produced by Studio Ochenta for TRAX on PRX. Sean was voiced by Elliot Gindi. Zoe was voiced by Lina Goggins-Rendón. And the voice of Granny was brought to you by Sarah Golding.

[17:38]

NARRATOR: Special thanks to our Cultureverse editorial team for this episode, Rita McNiff and Ciara McNally, who brought their Irish experiences to this story.

NARRATOR: The Creative Director and Executive Producer for this series is Lory Martínez, founder of Studio Ochenta. Dr. Kiona is our consulting producer for all things culture. Our Senior Fiction Producer is Maru Lombardo. All original opening songs for this series were composed by Gabriel Dalmasso. Sound design by Maru Lombardo and Luis Raúl López Levi. Music by Valiesse, Mid-Air Machine, Jason Shaw and Prodbymafio. And our art is by Steve Aparicio.

[18:17]

NARRATOR: The Executive Producer for TRAX is Michelle Smawley and our scripts were edited by Nathan Youngerberg. Follow us on TikTok & IG @cultureversepod. Transcripts are available at ochentastudio.com.

NARRATOR:

And I'm Kelly Marie Tran, your host. Thanks for listening!

END OF EPISODE