

Document Citation

Title	The quiet man
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Sheldon Film Theater</i>
Date	1980 Spr
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	2
Subjects	
Film Subjects	The quiet man, Ford, John, 1952



is a story to *The Quiet Man*—and a strange one it is. Sean Thornton, the quiet man, is a prize fighter who returns to his native Inisfree after killing a man in the ring. He wants nothing more than to marry and settle down in the cottage he was born in. But by buying the cottage he has invoked the wrath of “Red” Danaher, a great brute of a man who had wanted the property for himself. And Danaher’s sister is the girl that Sean wants to marry. Thornton reluctantly settles their differences in a battle royal that covers miles and lasts for hours. A good fight, the picture says, makes everybody friends.

Actually, it is just as well that someone of Irish blood made this film. Had it come from anyone else there might have been protests. The Irish are shown as brawling, drinking, and dishonest. Even the priests will blink at the truth if they can argue some greater good. Ford, in his great affection for these people, has covered it all with the saving grace of

good humor. But even so, the scene in which Sean drags his truant wife five miles through brush and pasture to fling her at the feet of her brother will seem crude and brutal to many sensibilities.

For his film, John Ford has assembled virtually the entire John Ford stock company. Frank S. Nugent wrote the script. John Wayne plays Thornton in the dead-pan, tight-lipped style that has made him so incredibly popular. Maureen O’Hara, beautiful in Technicolor, is the wife and Victor McLaglen her brother, while Mildred Natwick contributes a neat bit as a wealthy but aging widow. The prize role, however, falls to Barry Fitzgerald. As a drink-cadging local busybody, he gets all the best lines and most of the best scenes. “The Quiet Man” runs long—well over two hours—but Ford has managed everything so well that it seems scarcely half that length.

—*Saturday Review*,
August 23, 1952.



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