

THE GOD STICK

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FADE IN:

EXT. BALLYDOOGAN CEMETERY - EVENING

SEAN ROARKE, 17, stands in front of a headstone. His green eyes well with tears until they spill down his cheeks.

ADAM ROARKE, 67, wipes away his own tears, lays a gentle hand on Sean's shoulder.

The headstone reads: "Kevin John Roarke - September 8, 1964 - April 28, 2011. Beloved Son and Father. Inár gcroí go deo." Below the words, a Celtic cross.

SEAN

Can't believe it's already been six months.

ADAM

I know, Sean. Your da' will...Kevin will always live in our hearts. Know that.

A light mist falls. Adam looks at his watch.

ADAM

Come now, we have to be goin.'

Adam leans heavily on his shillelagh as he turns. He puts an arm around Sean's back and they walk away from the headstone.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Sean drives along a suburban street. Adam points to some kids on the sidewalk dressed as witches, ghosts and vampires.

ADAM

Halloween's really catchin' on, huh? Not in my day, boyo.

Sean, lost in thought, keeps his eyes on the wet road.

ADAM

To me, October thirty-first will always be Samhain.

EXT. N17 MOTORWAY - NIGHT

The car veers onto an exit marked: "Rathcarrick Forest."

SEAN (V.O.)

Can you tell me where we're going, Granda'?

ADAM (V.O.)
Just keep drivin.'

EXT. RATHCARRICK FOREST - NIGHT

The car rolls to a stop on a dirt road that cuts through a thick forest. Sean and Adam get out.

SEAN
Why are we here?

Adam gazes at the dark trees.

ADAM
Family tradition.
(beat)
No. Family obligation.

Adam grabs an electric lantern from the trunk, then sets off into the forest. Sean hesitates, then follows.

EXT. BOG - NIGHT

The forest has given way to a sprawling peat bog. A thin fog hangs in the air.

Adam's shillelagh impales the soft peat as he trudges on. Sean carries the glowing lantern, shakes the sludge off his shoes.

ADAM
This is Kinnemaugh bog. A haunted place, alive with spirits. Step lively, boyo.

SEAN
I'm trying.

ADAM
My great, great, great grandda' Kieran used to live near here. He was a priest. Did you know that?

SEAN
No, I didn't. And I think we need to turn back--

ADAM
He was a great man. A protector.

Adam stops, turns to Sean.

ADAM
There's no turnin' back, Sean.

Adam checks his watch.

ADAM
We should hurry. Come now.

Adam picks up his pace. Sean grits his teeth, follows.

EXT. HILL - NIGHT

Adam breathes heavily as he lumbers up a grassy hill. Sean helps him to the crest. Adam points to the land below.

ADAM
There.

Nestled along the edge of the forest stands an ancient stone cottage.

ADAM
'Twas the home of Sorcha, the bog witch. The Devil's own, she was.

SEAN
Bog witch?

ADAM
Aye. Around 1806 or so, the young children from Duncliffe, a village near here, began to disappear.

EXT. HILL - DAY - (FLASHBACK)

The same hill where Sean and Adam stand. A woman cloaked in black holds the hand of a little girl as they ascend the hill.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. HILL - NIGHT

Adam stares at the cottage, checks his watch.

ADAM
They all knew it was Sorcha. Sacrificin' these children to Satan himself. But the villagers were too terrified to do anythin', such was her power. Only Father Kieran Roarke had the backbone.

EXT. COTTAGE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

FATHER KIERAN ROARKE, 30s, burly, stands about fifty feet from Sorcha's cottage. He wears the vestments of an Episcopal priest. A stiff wind blows through the trees.

From the cottage, a steady stream of high pitched cackling.

ADAM (V.O.)
Sorcha taunted him.

Father Kieran takes off his jacket, lays it on the ground. He rolls up the sleeves of his black clerical shirt.

ADAM (V.O.)
Father Kieran was fearless. But,
he knew Sorcha was powerful. He
needed somethin.' A weapon.

Father Kieran looks to his left, sees a well. A pile of scrap wood lies next to the well. He bends down, picks up a stout four foot long branch.

ADAM (V.O.)
He found what he needed. Irish
oak. He asked the Lord to bless
that cudgel.

He removes a vial of holy water from his shirt and saturates the wood. He looks to the heavens, whispers a prayer, makes the sign of the cross, walks for the cottage.

ADAM (V.O.)
What followed was a donnybrook for
the ages.

Father Kieran enters, disappears into the cottage. Moments later, Sorcha's cackling turns into ferocious roaring.

The walls of the cottage shake as bodies slam into them.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. COTTAGE - NIGHT

Sean and Adam stand next to the remains of the well. Sean looks around, shakes his head.

SEAN
Why are you telling me all this?

ADAM
Father Kieran killed Sorcha.
Buried her right in there.

He points his shillelagh toward the cottage.

ADAM

But before she died, she uttered a plea to Satan. To let her rise from the grave on every Samhain. And so she does.

Sean lets out a laugh, sits on the decrepit well wall.

SEAN

I've heard you spin a few in my time, Grandda.' But this one takes the bloody cake.

ADAM

What do you know of Samhain?

SEAN

Uh, October thirty-first. Tonight. Something about spirits...

ADAM

It's the one night of the year where the wall separatin' the worlds of the livin' and the dead is at its weakest. What most don't understand is that, on the stroke of midnight, for sixty seconds, that wall can be broken through.

Adam walks to the cottage, opens the thick wooden door.

ADAM

Come now.

INT. COTTAGE - NIGHT

Sean follows Adam into the cottage. The lantern illuminates the barren interior.

Leaves and twigs litter the dirt floor. The stout granite walls have held up well, but gaping holes in the thatched roof allow shafts of moonlight to shine through.

ADAM

Every Roarke man has faced this challenge. Myself included. Your da'...he was a bull. Had some real melees with Sorcha. But that heart of his finally gave out...

Adam shudders with emotion, collects himself.

ADAM

It's your turn now, Sean. Your responsibility. It's not fair, I know. I begged your da' to start your trainin' years ago. He kept puttin' it off. Wanted to wait til you were older.

SEAN

Alright, this has gone far enough. I'm leaving.

Sean walks toward the door.

ADAM

Did you ever see your da' on the night of Samhain? Think about it.

Sean stops, turns back.

ADAM

No. In all your life, you never did. Because Kevin was here. Fulfillin' his obligation.

Adam holds up his shillelagh.

ADAM

Here it is. The God Stick. The very one Father Kieran used. Blessed by the Lord Himself.

Sean looks at the ancient piece of oak. Intricate Gaelic lettering runs the length of the weathered wood.

The surface is marred by deep scratches, smooth indentations and what looks like...teeth marks.

Adam hands it to Sean.

ADAM

It's yours now, Sean. You must come here every Samhain. To stop Sorcha from escapin' this place. Her tomb.

Adam checks his watch, walks to the door.

ADAM

Should she ever escape, Sorcha is reborn. Free to commit her atrocities all over again.

Adam stands in the doorway, looks back to Sean.

ADAM

At the stroke of midnight, sixty
seconds of Hell. Be ready.

Adam walks out and shuts the door behind him. Sean walks to the door, tries to open it. Locked.

He moves to a small hole in the wall that once served as a window.

SEAN

I've had enough of this bollocks,
Grandda'! Open the door!

Adam stares at Sean through the hole.

ADAM

Good luck, boyo.

Sean kicks the door in frustration, walks to the center of the cottage. He laughs, cradles the God Stick behind his neck, kicks a clump of dirt.

SEAN

This is bloody ridiculous.

He looks at his watch. Midnight in five seconds. It passes.

Sean grins, looks back to the door.

SEAN

Good one, Grandda'. Now let's go--

The ground explodes. SORCHA erupts from the crater. Clad in tattered black rags, she cackles in delight.

Sean screams, recoils against a wall. Sorcha runs at him, digs her gnarled claws into his neck and shoulder, tosses him across the cottage like a bag of sawdust.

The God Stick falls from his hands. Sorcha leaps across the room, straddles him. Sean looks up to see the bog witch cackling away at him.

Strips of drool flow from her black teeth. She lowers her head toward his throat.

Adam watches all this from the window.

ADAM

Use the stick!

Sean desperately reaches for the God Stick, then rams it across Sorcha's mouth. Her vile teeth crunch into the wood.

Sean kicks her away and scrambles to his feet. They circle each other.

Sorcha lunges for him, but Sean swings and connects. A muffled thud to the ribs sends Sorcha grunting in pain.

Seething, she looks to the thatched roof and leaps onto one of the oak beams.

ADAM

Don't let her get out!

Sean leaps into the air and swats at Sorcha. The God Stick makes contact with the bare, gray skin of her leg. The SOUND of SIZZLING MEAT.

Sorcha howls in pain and falls to the ground. She gets to her feet and lands a haymaker across Sean's jaw.

Sean staggers back and falls to the dirt. She jumps on top of him and they wrestle in the filth.

ADAM

Twenty seconds!

Sean manages to roll on top of her, then grabs the God Stick and presses the blessed wood into the side of her cheek.

Sorcha wails in agony as her skin scorches and smokes.

Sean stands, roars in fury and begins pounding Sorcha's face in with the God Stick. Huge, vicious swings.

The crushing impacts echo off the stone walls.

Sorcha slides toward the crater in the ground, as if pulled by an invisible hand.

She points at Sean, unspeakable hatred in her eyes. She bellows as she's swallowed up by the soil. Gone.

Sean stares silently for a few moments. Blood drips from his mouth, which hangs open. He drops to his knees.

Adam walks in, hurries to Sean's side.

ADAM

Ya done good, boyo. Like a proper Roarke.

He helps Sean to his feet, uses a handkerchief to wipe the blood from his lips and neck.

ADAM

There now. How do you feel?

Sean responds with deep, heaving breaths.

ADAM

Aye. I remember my first time.

He puts a hand on Sean's shoulder, stares into his eyes.

ADAM

Now you know. Every Samhain, Sean.
You must never fail. Understand?

Sean manages to nod.

EXT. HILL - NIGHT

Adam and Sean ascend the hill. Adam puts his arm around Sean's back.

ADAM

Tell you what, I'll buy you a pint
on the way back. Lord knows you
earned it.

SEAN

Tell me about...my da's first time
here.

ADAM

Oh, now there's a story.

They disappear over the crest of the hill.

FADE OUT.