

The WAFE

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St Patrick's Day, Dublin, Ireland 2001

Erskine's daughter had been killed just a few hours earlier. The killers, Culkin and Desmond, were Erskine's old mates. The three blokes had served in the Irish Military together and had even been ushers — (groomsmen as those Americans called it)—in each others' weddings, but that was all in the past. Erskine stood in the kitchen of his house, his arms folded in front of his chest, as he stared down Culkin and Desmond, who were now casually standing in his kitchen, as if they hadn't just made Erskine's daughter disappear just a few hours prior.

'You bastards! Get the bloody hell out of my house!' Erskine uttered raising his voice in Irish Gaelic, as he flipped them off and grabbed a knife, ready to pounce on them if they didn't leave.

'Now, now, Erskine, that's not any way to greet old friends now is it? Can't we just pay our dear friend a visit?' replied Culkin in Irish, mocking hurt as he helped himself and handed them each a beer. 'We just want to have a beer and talk - that's all. Calm down. No one needs to get hurt. Now put the knife down before you do something you

regret.'

Erskine did not want to put the knife down. He wanted to lunge right at the two men, slit their throats and beat them senseless. Suddenly, however, an overwhelming feeling of calm washed over him. No, he shouldn't be calm. But he was. Culkin was controlling his emotions.

'Fine,' he said setting the knife down. 'Now what do you want?'

'You know exactly what we want. And you're going to give it to us,' replied Culkin.

'And why would I do that? I'm not stupid,' replied Erskine.

'Don't you want to expose the truth? We could put the WAFE on the control panel and become immortal,' said Culkin. 'Those stupid gandraoidhals would want to know the truth and we could give it to them. Remember? Like we used to talk about in the good old days?'

'How could they forget that only the folks with magic, ledraoidhals (pronounced lay-dr-I-duals,) could know about nAirm Eiliminteach or WAFE? Uisce, Aeir, Dóiteáin agus Earth or WAFE. The Elemental Weapons; Water, Air, Fire and Earth.'



'Good times, Remember?' said Desmond backing him up.

'I remember,' said Erskine chuckling.

'So do we got our mate back? Will you help us?' Culkin asked laughing.

'Please,' asked Desmond backing him up again.

'I won't help,' said Erskine. 'We're not stupid like we used to be. The gandraoidhals can't know the truth, and the WAFE can't be kept together on the control panel.'

'Oh, come on mate,' said Culkin as he stood up to grab another beer. 'Just because Alois Eliáš was the last one to put them on the control panel doesn't mean it would go bad if we did it.'

'And besides,' Desmond added 'he wanted to protect the truth. If he hadn't of poisoned those sandwiches then maybe things would've been different.'

'Are you off your rocker? It backfired anyway, only killing that one Nazi Czech journalist, Karel Lažnovsky and then got him executed,' said Erskine.

'Served him right too for betraying his own country,' said Culkin.

'He was a hero,' said Erskine

'He wasn't. That stupid Nazi Leader trusted him and he let him down. The bloody Prime Minister of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Alois Eliáš, had been trusted with control of the WAFE. If Chamberlain, Daladier, Mussolini and Hitler had never signed the Munich Betrayal, then they wouldn't've given Sudetenland to Nazi Germany, and delayed war. They let the Czech part of Czechoslovakia keep their control of the WAFE, which they had had since the bloody First World War and that's the thanks they got?' said Culkin.

'Well, it did delay war -' Erskine argued.

'Look. I'm not saying Hitler was right,' Culkin interrupted 'But he shouldn't've betrayed his own country. Which is why we need your help. We could make Ireland a very powerful country and you mate can help us. We could find the other three families that have the rest of the WAFE and put them on the control panel.'

'Please. We could rule, the world. Make those pathetic gandraoidhals our slaves,' said Desmond.

'Had they not learned anything? Surely they couldn't be that stupid? Just because the gandraoidhals, (gan-dr-I-duals), didn't have magic, didn't mean they were meant to serve the ledraoidhal, (lay-dr-I-duals), the folks with magic. It just meant they didn't have magic and couldn't know about the WAFE or anything else ledraoidhal for that matter. That would expose our world to the gandraoidhals and



nothing good could ever come of that." Erskine took a deep breath and said, "The WAFE is split across Europe on purpose. You'd never -"

'But we could,' Culkin whined. 'If they hadn't've split the WAFE amongst four families instead of between a married couple, like Franz Ferdinand and his wife before

World War I, then maybe -'

'If the WAFE is united, it could cause World War III,' said Erskine.

'It's worth the risk though. For Ireland. Please?' Desmond said jumping back in the argument.

'Absolutely not. Never in a million years,' said Erskine. His anger crept back to him, as he finally broke out of Culkin's mind control.

Erskine grabbed his knife, stuffing it in his back jeans pocket, before he jumped on Culkin's back knocking him to the ground. The two wrestled around the kitchen floor as Culkin tried to push Erskine off of him but wasn't strong enough. Erskine managed to roll him over on his back and then pinned him down. He pulled the knife out of his back pocket and stabbed Culkin in the chest, leaving the knife in his body.

Erskine then stood up and tackled Desmond to the ground as he was trying to flee out the garage door. Desmond hit his head on a closet door on the way down, making it easy for Erskine to put him in a headlock with his right arm. He balled his left hand in a fist before punching Desmond in the stomach and then the face before making eye contact with him. Straight through Erskine's thick glasses, his hazel eyes concentrated hard on Desmond as Erskine used his eyes to cause immense pain to Desmond.

Desmond let out blood curdling screams of pain, as the bones in his body ached. The pain was about ten times worse than being kicked in the balls. He grabbed onto a kitchen chair for support as he fought to stay upright and fight back.

'Go to hell you bastard!' said Erskine before grabbing a handgun and aiming it right at Desmond's chest. He pulled the trigger and watched as the bullet flew through the air and entered Desmond's chest. Instantly, Desmond's body physically disappeared while his clothes, with nothing to support them fell to the ground in a heap. Suddenly, loud cries came from one of the bedrooms. He was about to go to them, but he looked over to see Culkin hanging on for dear life. He must have just missed his heart. He was barely breathing but miraculously still alive with the knife still in his chest. Erskine walked over to him before shooting Culkin to put him out of his misery. Culkin's body disappeared just like Desmond's had. The knife laid on top of the clothes with blood covering the blade. Erskine picked up the clothes before throwing them in a pile together on the kitchen floor. The clothes were both covered in a red and blue sticky substance, thicker than syrup and smelled like a strong mix of wine and grapes.

Erskine cleaned the blood off the knife before inspecting the kitchen, making sure that the only signs of the bad guys were their clothes. The cries from the bedroom had stopped. Once the kitchen was cleaned, he knew what he had to do. He finished



his beer before strolling into the first bedroom and pushing the trundle bed out of the way. He lifted the quilted duvets on the daybed to reveal his grandchildren. 'OK, you can come on out now. It's safe,' he said slipping to German granddaughter, Nicole, was only nine months old. Garrett slowly and hesitantly crawled out from under the bed as he looked around for his mother and the bad guys. Erskine picked up Nicole off the floor.

'Shh. It's OK. Look, here's your dummy,' he said calming down enough to finally revert to English as he gently rocked her, wiping the dummy on his pants before giving it back to her. "It's a dummy, not a--what do those Americans call it? Soother, binky, pacifier?" He shook his head. It didn't matter. He sang her a song in Irish, causing her to fall asleep as he put her down for a much needed nap.

Erskine picked up his grandson and carried him to the kitchen table, giving him a late lunch.

'Papa? Where the bad guys go?' asked Garrett pointing to the pile of clothes that were still on the kitchen floor. It was still covered in the red and blue sticky substance.

The bad guys were nowhere to be seen.

'To live with the devil,' he said, forcing himself to stay calm. He didn't want to scare his grandson by sounding angry.

'Mummy live with devil too?' asked Garrett.

'No. Mummy is with God,' Erskine replied as Conall, Garrett's father, stumbled in plastered from the pub. No doubt he had been trying to drink away his grief.

'Ya know what's funny?' Conall asked laughing as he slurred his words together.

'No,' replied Erskine humouring him.

'Mario won't grow. I threw the mushrooms, but he won't grow,' he slurred laughing. Erskine followed him as he stumbled into the living room before passing out upright on the sofa.

What was supposed to be a happy day had turned out to be a straight up terrible day. Erskine's wife, Izabela, had disappeared of cancer a few years back, so it had just been him, his three grandkids Gabe, Garrett, and Nicole and their parents that had gone into town to celebrate the holiday. They were going to go to the St. Patrick's Day Festival Parade like they had done every year, but it had been cancelled due to the Foot-andMouth outbreak. Without the parade, they had spent the day in town, trying to make the best of it. However, the day had taken a wrong turn when the bad guys had found them there and had killed or made the Garrett and Nicole's mother disappear. And what's even worse is that Garrett had seen his mother's disappearance.

A couple hours later, the grandpa and the dad heard Nicole's high pitched cries coming from the other room. She had woken up from her nap with a diarrhea filled



nappy and was covered in puke. Conall, now somewhat sober and awake, picked her up and carried her to the bathroom to give her a cold bath as he tried to soothe her cries, barely even looking at his daughter the entire time. He was trying to stay strong; he was after all, her father, but before he could even fill the tub, he took one good look at his daughter's piercing green eyes and instantly broke down.

'Y--you do it! I—Ich kann nicht,' he said breaking down and slipping into German: I can't. 'I look at them and I see her. They look like Bridget too much. I need a drink. Like really bad,' he said handing Erskine the baby and walking out the door. He stood there for a minute trying to just process what had happened. Realisation of what had just happened quickly hit him. He looked down at Nicole who was still crying. Erskine tried to shush her while he calmed himself. It was common for ledraoidhals to slip into German when they were angry or upset, regardless of their nationality. Erskine had also gotten so worked up that he had slipped into German.

He was upset about his daughter's disappearance and he could see the resemblance too, but that didn't mean he'd just get up and leave. 'Haven't these kids been through enough?' Erskine finished giving her the bath, before he changed her into a new nappy and cleaner and warmer clothes. If his son-in-law was coming back, he wasn't coming back any time soon. He had just lost his wife earlier that day. Erskine retrieved his grandson and led him and Nicole outside.

The air was thick from the rain. It could rain again anytime soon. In the opposite corner of the yard was a small grey and white wooden shed complete with a wooden ramp and next to it, was a run-down tomato garden that ran along the back fence. He let Garrett play with the footballs while he went to the shed and grabbed a box filled with needles, syringes, and two deep matching silver locket with an F inscriptured on the front.

The showers from that day had soaked the small table outside. Erskine set the supplies on the table, and he dried off the chairs before scooping up Garrett, despite protests of wanting to continue playing football, and sitting down with both of his grandkids.

He picked up a needle and tried to prick Garrett's left pointer finger despite Garrett's cries of fear. After a few minutes of struggling, he finally managed to prick his finger before doing the same thing to Nicole, without protests. She was too sick to care and the only thing that kept her quiet was her rapid sucking on her dummy and being held. Steadily, he held his grandchildren's bloody fingers over the lockets. Their blood spilt on the lockets, drenching them in blood. The grandpa picked up one of the lockets and tried to open it. He set it down and tried again with the other locket, but failed. The blood sealing recognition magic had worked. It was an uncommon magic. He had worked with it before, but not for ages. Satisfied, he handed a locket to each of them as Garrett's cries ceased.

Garrett traced his small fingers around it while Nicole just played with it, but didn't trace her fingers around it. The grandpa had Garrett help Nicole trace her small fingers around it and the lockets opened. The grandpa went to take a closer look, but it



snapped shut within seconds. The children traded lockets. Garrett traced his before helping his sister trace hers. Garrett smiled in victory, proud he was able to do something his grandpa couldn't. Garrett and Nicole's matching piercing green eyes widened in amusement as salty seawater gushed out of both lockets like a hose. The water's current cleaned the blood off the lockets, as it soaked them and the backyard as a small weapon fell out of Nicole's locket before instantly growing to its regular size.

The weapon was a cross between a sword and a gun. It had the handle and blade of a sword, but it also had a gun trigger on one side of it. The barrel of the gun was a mere perfect 5 centimetres in diameter, and the entire thing was 74 centimetres tall with a 42 centimetre blade and was 29 centimetres wide. The handle was blue and silver, as if somebody had spray painted it blue years ago. It had an intricate carving of a coral reef scene, complete with fish and seashells.

'What's that?' asked Garrett pointing at it in awe. He had seen swords and guns before, but never together.

'The Uisce (ish-ka) Weapon. The Water Weapon. It hasn't changed since Alois Eliáš had it,' he said looking at the weapon in admiration, and remembering the weapon's history.

'Can I play with it?' asked Garrett.

'No, that's not a toy. You can hold it, but only by the blue handle,' he said. Garrett grabbed the weapon and his grandpa had him push the pearl button on the handle. The blade retracted into the barrel and the handle part of the weapon leaving it to look like a gun. The water stopped pouring out of the deep locket, and the gun shrunk back down as it pulled itself into Garrett's locket, by itself.

Wanting to see it again, Garrett opened it again, but this time no water nor gun gushed out. Instead they saw an inscription on one side, and a picture of themselves on the other. A slightly younger boy was holding a younger girl, who sat on his lap on the top of a red slide, both were smiling wide at the camera.

'Look Sissy,' said Garrett pointing to the picture in his locket. 'That's you! And that's me! What's it say Papa?' Garrett asked trying to show his grandpa only to have it snap shut again.

'It says, "Mise agus mo dheirfiúr beag,"' he explained: Me and my little sister.

'Oh,' said Garrett understanding. Does Sissy's say that too?' he asked opening the locket.

'Close, but hers says "Mise agus mo dheartháir mór,"' Erskine replied: Me and my big brother.

Garrett kept opening and closing the locket, not understanding why nothing was coming out of the locket. The lockets were magical and had extension charms on them. Erskine had set up the blood recognition magic to keep the weapon safe inside the children's lockets. For the next month, only Garrett and Nicole would be able to open



or look at the inside of the locket. However, once the month was up, anyone would be able to open it, but only Garrett and Nicole would be able to retrieve the weapon from either locket. The lockets were linked, so it didn't matter which locket the Water Weapon had shrunk back into.

'Imrímid at park?' asked Garrett: We play?, losing interest as he was giving up on the locket.

Erskine smiled but shook his head. He had been trying to teach his grandkids Irish, and Garrett sometimes blended the two languages together.

'Ní anocht,' Erskine replied: Not tonight. 'It's almost dinner,' he said. 'Let's go inside,' he said picking up Nicole and leading them inside.

Later that night, Garrett let his grandpa give him his bath and get him ready for bed.

'How come we can open them, but you can't do it Papa?' asked Garrett as his grandpa changed him into his pjs. He finished changing him before he answered him.

'Draíochta,' replied Erskine: Magic, as he put Garrett to bed. 'Your mother and your uncle had lockets like those when they were little. Geall dom that you'll look after your sister and never lose your locket. I gcónaí!'

'Geallaim. I gcónaí,' Garrett said: I promise. Always.

'Good. Now if you want to be a football player you'll need your sleep,' said Erskine as he finished tucking his grandson in bed. He left the room, turning out the light and forgetting to turn on the night-light.

'Papa!' cried Garrett.

Erskine cursed himself, remembering the night-light and scrambling to turn on the night-light.

Garrett was too young to understand most of what had happened today. Part of him wished that Garrett would be too young to remember his mother's disappearance, but the other part wanted him to have been older, so he would've had more good memories with his mother. How, he wouldn't have to possibly grow up with just an alcoholic father. The father wasn't alcoholic yet, but he had a feeling it was headed that way. Perhaps he would explain it to Garrett when he was older. How his mother had disappeared to keep the weapon safe. How the guys who had killed his mother had wanted to expose the truth. The truth behind the disappearing system, which the governments and the United Nations had fought to keep a secret. If the gandraoidhals knew the truth, society couldn't live in peace. So any attempt to expose the truth had to be put down.

Erskine calmed Garrett down, as Garrett fell asleep thinking about playing football and always keeping his sister safe. Garrett was only able to keep part of his promise.

