

The Irish Maid

written by

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INT. MARY FRANCES IS GETTING DRIVEN TO SCHOOL ON HER FIRST DAY. SHE IS SITTING IN THE BACKSEAT - MORNING

MARY FRANCES

My parents enjoy seeing me suffer.
They hate me.

DRIVER

Just go in with an open mind, your
parents do not hate you. What is
the worst that could happen?

Mary Frances rolls her eyes while looking out the window of
the car

MARY FRANCES

I am meant for greater things than
this school or these people. I told
mother and father that I wanted to
go away for school, but they will
not listen. When John said he
wanted to go away, he got what he
wanted. He has done nothing to
deserve to go away.

DRIVER

Your brother will be busy when he
takes over the business in a few
years-

MARY FRANCES

HA! Take over the family
business...

Driver parks car in front of the school

DRIVER

Here we are, Miss. Larkin.

MARY FRANCES

Fabulous.

DRIVER

I will pick you up for lunch at
11:45. Any requests for lunch to
give to the chef?

MARY FRANCES

Nothing specific, something light.
I am sure I won't be hungry.

EXT. DRIVER GETS OUT OF THE CAR TO OPEN THE DOOR FOR MF. AS MF GETS OUT OF THE CAR, SHE SEES MISS. ANGEL FOR THE FIRST TIME. MISS ANGEL IS ON THE FRONT STEPS IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL, SHAKING THE HANDS FOR THE STUDENTS ENTERING THE SCHOOL.

Mary Frances' EYES WIDEN IN FEAR, SHE FREEZES. MF WALKS SLOWLY UP THE FRONT STEPS TOWARDS MISS. ANGEL.

MISS ANGEL

Mary Frances Larkin, welcome. I am Miss. Angel, Headmistress.

Mary Frances shakes Miss Angel's hand

MARY FRANCES

Thank you.

SHE PROCEEDS UP THE STAIRS, BARELY STOPPING TO LOOK AT MISS.ANGEL

MISS ANGEL

Please walk up the stairs and head into the chapel to prepare for our morning meeting.

MISS. ANGEL TILTS AND SHAKES HER HEAD AS SHE CONTINUES TO WELCOME OTHER STUDENTS

MARY FRANCES STANDS IN THE DOORWAY AND LOOKS BACK BEFORE ENTERING THE SCHOOL BUILDING TO WAVE GOODBYE TO THE DRIVER BUT HE IS ALREADY GONE

INT. SCHOOL CHAPEL. FIRST MORNING MEETING. MISS. ANGEL IS ON THE STAGE AT THE LECTERN. THE PIANO BEGINS TO PLAY AND THE STUDENT BODY STANDS AND THE CHAPEL ERUPTS IN SONG. THEY SING JERUSALEM. MARY FRANCES LOOKS AROUND CONFUSED AND NERVOUS. SHE DOESN'T KNOW THE LYRICS.

The singing ends.

MISS ANGEL

You may be seated. Today marks the beginning of a new school year. We have a brand new class that I am sure our upperclassmen will welcome with open arms.

Mary Frances turns to the girl sitting next to her. The girl smiles.

MARY FRANCES

Did we have homework I missed or is the singing just some creepy thing people do here?

GIRL 1

(Puzzled and slightly angry)

Excuse me? It's a school tradition. We always start the day with singing.

MARY FRANCES

How am I suppo--

TEACHER

Ladies, shhhhh..

Mary Frances looks around the school chapel embarrassed. She stares at the sun shining through the stain glass windows to her right.

Miss Angel completes her commencement speech.

MISS ANGEL

Again, welcome back to those returning and welcome to our new students, you may go to class.

EVERYONE IN THE CHAPEL GETS UP AND AN ERUPTION OF VOICES AND STEPS/ STUDENTS HEAD out of the chapel

INT. CLASSROOM. MARY FRANCES' FIRST CLASS.

MARY FRANCES

Excuse me, is this geometry with Dr. Shea?

Everyone in the classroom looks up at her and stop their conversations

DR.SHEA

Yes. Name?

MARY FRANCES

Mary Frances Larkin.

DR.SHEA

Welcome Miss. Larkin, find a seat quickly.

MF looks around anxiously trying to find a seat. She picks a desk near the window, on the wall farthest from the door. She looks out the window, turning her body away from the rest of the classroom.

GIRL 1
 (speaking to Mary Frances)
 Are you nervous to take this class?
 I heard Dr. Shea is a tough grader.

MARY FRANCES
 (still looking out the window, body facing away from the rest of the classroom)
 No.

GIRL 1
 Why?

MARY FRANCES
 I already learned geometry.

GIRL 2
 You already learned geometry?

MARY FRANCES
 (turns her head toward the girls, body still facing the window)
 I did not misspeak.

GIRL 1
 (taken a back)
 Then shouldn't you be taking a higher level course?

MARY FRANCES
 I suppose I could ask, but--

DR.SHEA
 Ladies! End your conversations.

CLASS BEGINS

DR.SHEA (CONT'D)
 Welcome to a new school and welcome to our new students. I will keep my introduction short. I am Dr. Shea and I expect the utmost dedication to the subject of geometry from my students. This means your quality of work should be your best work.
 (MORE)

DR.SHEA (CONT'D)

You will not pass this course without dedication to the content. Most, if not all, of the pupils in this class will not receive the grade that they wish to receive.

Students look at Dr. Shea nervously. Some look at each other to see if others are also nervous, others are so nervous they do not dare take their eyes off Dr. Shea. Mary Frances remains calm and unfazed. She turns her head to look out the window again.

DR.SHEA (CONT'D)

You may feel that you deserve a different grade than you receive, but do not be mistaken, I do not make mistakes. Your final grade is just that, final. Okay, enough with that, let us begin class.

Half of the class time is over. There is writing and numbers on the chalk board. The students look mentally exhausted. Mary Frances looks at ease, she looks at a family walking outside who she believes she recognizes.

DR.SHEA (CONT'D)

Miss. Larkin

Mary Frances slowly turns her head towards Dr. Shea, her eyes trailing so she can get a final look at the family walking outside

DR.SHEA (CONT'D)

May I suggest you take notes or, at the very least, keep your head in the classroom rather than out the window?

MARY FRANCES

Dr. Shea, I appreciate the concern, but I learned this concept over the summer with my tutor. If I hear you teaching a lesson I have not learned before, I will take notes.

Mary Frances turns her head to look out the window again.

All of the students look at Mary Frances in disbelief. One student has her hand over her mouth because she is laughing. Dr. Shea takes off his glasses and leans forward slightly at the hips in disbelief. He is speechless.

DR.SHEA

I--

Bell rings to signify the changing of classes. All of the students grab their things and exit the classroom. Mary Frances and the two girls walk out of class together and GIRL 2 tries to continue the conversation

GIRL 2

Mary Frances, what are your plans for lunch? We are going to sit in the courtyard, do you want to join us?

MARY FRANCES

I am going home for lunch. Our chef is making lunch for my mother and me.

GIRL 1

Oh, how are you getting home? Do you live near school?

MARY FRANCES

My driver is picking me up.

GIRL 2

You have a driver?

MARY FRANCES

Yes.

The two girls stop and look at each other. Mary Frances keeps walking to find her next class.

INT. SCHOOL FRONT HALL. CLOCK RINGS AND VOICES FILL THE HALLS AS LUNCH BREAK BEGINS. - NOON

MARY FRANCES WALKS DOWN THE FRONT STAIRCASE. MISS. ANGEL'S OFFICE DOOR OPENS AND MARY FRANCES' FATHER WALKS OUT OF THE OFFICE WITH MISS. ANGEL. JOHN LOOKS UP AND SMILES AT MARY FRANCES. SHE WALKS UP TO HER FATHER.

JOHN

Mary Frances, have you met Miss. Angel yet...formally?

They shake hands. Miss Angel's handshake is very firm

MARY FRANCES

Pleasure to meet you, Dad why--

JOHN
Frisk, walk with me.

John motions for Mary Frances to walk towards the front door. There are many other students walking and talking in various groups as they prepare for lunch.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Have a good day Gertrude.

Miss. Angel nods and stares intently at Mary Frances.

MISS. ANGEL
You too, Mr. Larkin. Mary Frances, stop by my office after classes today so we can talk. I want to give you a personal and formal welcome to the school.

MARY FRANCES
Thank you but that won't be necess-

John glares at Mary Frances and shakes his head

MARY FRANCES (CONT'D)
I will see you after my last class of the day, thank you Miss. Angel.

John and Mary Frances walk out the big wooden front doors and down the front marble steps of the school. It is early Fall in Buffalo, it is warm, but there is a slight breeze. Leaves are blowing on the trees. They turn to the right and walk down the parkway towards their home.

MARY FRANCES (CONT'D)
Where is my driver?

JOHN
I wanted to see how you were doing your first day at your new school. Have you met anyone nice yet? How are the teachers? If you want to, you can invite some of your new friends over for lunch. Chef is making your favorite!

MARY FRANCES
Ew.

JOHN
(taken aback)
Ew? The chef thought you would be excited that he was making one of your favorite--

MARY FRANCES

(interrupting)

Dad, I am saying ew to that school, teachers and students included, of course.

JOHN

It is your first day, you haven't even been there for a full day of classes...anyway, how is it besides "ew"? Tell me about the classes you are taking.

MARY FRANCES

I am taking geometry and I already know everything from this summer with Dr. Darcey. I don't foresee French being difficult either. Shouldn't you be at the factory?

JOHN

Well you are prepared and very bright. I am not worried about your grades. You are lucky to live the life you do. So have you made any interesting?

MARY FRANCES

No. I don't need to, I won't be there for long. No need for friends at this school. Shouldn't you be at wor--

John stops walking.

JOHN

Hmmm. Why haven't you made any friends yet? And "this school"? It is your school now.

MARY FRANCES

Ugh. I don't plan on going there for long. I am going to go to boarding school, remember? This school is just a stepping stone for greater things to come.

JOHN

Mary Frances, take your nose out of the air. All of the girls there are from similar backgrounds to you and they are also very bright. They're so many girls your age that will never experience higher education.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)
What is wrong with the girls you
met?

They arrive at the front gate of the home. There are gardeners working in the front yard. John points to a bunch of flowers being planted.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(speaking to one of the
gardeners)
Those are lovely. Get more of those
for the backyard and while you are
at it, get some for Lochevan.

The gardener nods their head. John focuses his attention back to his daughter.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Sorry, so tell me what you think is
wrong with the girls at school.

MARY FRANCES
They are dull.

JOHN
(shocked)
Dull?

MARY FRANCES
Yes. And boring, honestly.
There are no other girls that know
geometry and only one other girl in
my French class could carry a
conversation in the language.

JOHN
You just met them? How can you make
judgements about someone you just
met, you probably don't even know
their names. Give me two names and
what part of the city they are
from.

MARY FRANCES
Ummmmmm, I didn't ask anyone for
their name.

They get to the front steps. The door is opened by the butler, Robert. They walk up the steps. John's attention is taken away from the his conversation with Mary Frances.

JOHN
Ahhh, thank you Robert.

Mary Frances and John enter the house and stop in the front hall.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Is lunch almost ready?

Robert nods his head

JOHN (CONT'D)
Perfect, thank you, Robert. Mary Frances, go clean up for lunch and I will meet you at the table. John is home from school so he will be joining us.

MARY FRANCES
Johnny is home from school? Why?

JOHN
Yes, John has some things he needs to take care of at home before he returns back to school.

MARY FRANCES
(clearly confused and slightly upset that no one told her brother was coming home from school)
He was home three weeks ago. I thought he wouldn't be back home until Thanksgiving.

JOHN
Things happen, your brother is not the most responsible, as you know. We will all talk at lunch. Now go get cleaned up. The meal will be ready in ten minutes.

Mary Frances nods her head and walks up the stairs to her room to prepare for lunch.

INT. LARKIN HOME, SECOND FLOOR- NOON

The girls walk upstairs to the secret staircase entrance. They stare at the wall.

HELEN
This is it? I don't understand why you would have an extra, secret, room. Seems excessive. Do you know how to open it?
(MORE)

HELEN (CONT'D)

(beings to ramble, the other girls are clearly annoyed)

Oh! A secret password? Or maybe we need to break a centuries old spell, or worse, a curse! I thought you were protestant? Do you think I will have to go to church after this? Oh GOD please forgive me--
Hail Mary full of grace

HELEN quietly recites Hail Mary prayer

ABIGAIL

(annoyed)

Why would there be a secr--?
Whatever.

(Notices Mary Frances is deep in thought)

Frisk? You don't look well, are you okay?

MARY FRANCES

I don't know if I am sure I want to know what is up there. What if it is nothing? What if we are wasting our time? I'm just not sure...

Mary Frances exhales audibly

ABIGAIL

How bad could it be? Your mother hasn't been back to the city in three months and you haven't talked to her in over a month. Clearly this secret is big enough to keep her in Derby, but not bad enough to tell you.

HELEN

Abigail is right. The more you know, the more likely you are able to see your mother again. Right?

MARY FRANCES

I guess you are right, let's just do it and get it over with. I mean, how bad could it be? Johnny is a good person and my father would never do anything to purposely hurt me...I think.

ABIGAIL

It is now or never. We have to go back to school soon or we will miss class.

MARY FRANCES

(Brings pointer finger up to her mouth to motion silence)

Okay shhhhhh, we can't make any noise. Lets go.

Mary Frances gets to the secret door and opens it. Revealing a staircase. They start to walk up the stairs.

HELEN

Did you hear that?

ABIGAIL

(sarcastically)

Oh my God!

(serious tone)

No.

MARY FRANCES:

(visibly irritated)

Stop, seriously.

They make it to the top of the stairs and all of their eyes widen and jaws drop. The secret room is a nursery. Fully furnished with a crib, clothes etc.

HELEN

HOLY sh---

ABIGAIL AND MARY FRANCES

(interrupting)

SHHHHHHH

All walk and look around the room.

ABIGAIL

Is this what I think it is? No, this has to be storage, things from when you were a child. This is weird...really weird.

HELEN

(confused)

I think its cute up here. I think I had this crib when I was younger.

(MORE)

HELEN (CONT'D)

Was this room yours when you were young, Frisk? Maybe thats why you don't remember it. Because you were sooo young...

ABIGAIL

Helen, why would her parents have a nursery just for Mary Frances, in the attic, without an obvious entryway or a doorknob?

Helen and Abigail pause staring at each other

HELEN

Oh...good point.

Mary Frances is still walking around the room aimlessly, picking different things up. Helen and Abigail notice this and react.

ABIGAIL

Frisk? Mary Frances. What are you thinking?

Mary Frances does not respond

ABIGAIL AND HELEN

Say something!

MARY FRANCES
(shaking voice)

I--

Two male voices are heard from outside the door. All three girls look at each other.

ALL

Hide!

The three girls run to hide behind a large dresser

John and John III walk upstairs. The girls are hidden.

JOHN

(visibly upset)

It has been three months since she left John. You have not gone to Derby once or seen her since she left. You are so incredibly reckless and now you are just irresponsible. Your mother and I are trying to take care of this, shall we say...entanglement you have gotten yourself into.

JOHN III

I understand that, but it is difficult for me to deal with. I do not want people to think I am spending too much time with her either and I have a life, friends to see, people to meet, you know. It could send the wrong message to-

JOHN

(interrupting)

Send the wrong message to who? You are lucky this has not been written in the papers yet. Have you told anyone besides your mother and myself?

JOHN III

No. At least, I do not think so. I went shooting with Peter and Howard the other day and we had a few drinks after and I have been to the club and I did go to--

JOHN

(interpreting)

John! No more going to social events, no more going to the club. No more going shooting with Peter and Howard. Enough is enough. And when do you plan to go back to school? Are you just going to drop out? (under his breath) Jesus Christ John. where did your mother and I go wrong? Your irresponsibility got you into this situation in the first place. She will be having this baby in a matter of a month and ---

Helen gasps

John III freezes, moves his eyes and then his head.

JOHN III

Did you hear that?

Both men pause. John III looks around the room frantically, but does not see the girls. Abigail puts her hand over Helen's mouth. Mary Frances is frozen.

JOHN

(irritated)

What? John, the only thing you are hearing is your own delusion. You will leave for Derby tonight and stay there until she has the baby. James will drive you. Be ready after dinner, after Mary Frances goes to sleep.

JOHN III

Dad, but I---

JOHN

(interrupting)

No. No more. You are so lucky.. you are so so lucky.

John shakes head in shame

John and John III turn and walk down the stairs. The door is shut.

Abigail takes her hand off of Helen's mouth.

HELEN

Oh my GOD, Frisk!

Mary Frances stays on the floor staring blankly into the center of the room.

ABIGAIL

Are you okay? You look sick.

HELEN

You do not look well, Mary Frances. Who do you think they were talking about? And wow you're brother is in so much trouble for whatever he did. Your father was furious and who is "she" and why does your dad care that he visits her in Derby? Who cares about a random pregnant woman. Is your brother her doctor?

Abigail rolls her eyes.

ABIGAIL

You idiot, her brother is...involved..

HELEN

What do you mean?
Involved...entanglement. Am I
missing something?

MARY FRANCES

(under her breath) baby...

HELEN

What? I could not hear you.

MARY FRANCES

That is my brother's baby.

ABIGAIL

I am sure it is just a
misunderstanding. Nothing to be
worried about.

MARY FRANCES

No. I know who SHE is too.

ABIGAIL AND HELEN

Who?

Mary Frances comes out of her state of shock.

MARY FRANCES

Think about it, who has been gone
for months?

HELEN

Yeah, I still am lost. The maid is
with your mother in Derby but that
is not suspicious because you said
your mother always has help around
the house. I would assume Lochevan
is no different. I mean who would
do all the dishes, you're mother
would never do it herself, if she
is anything like you have said
before.

ABIGAIL

Helen, please. Are you really that
naive?

MARY FRANCES

It all makes sense now.

HELEN

What do you mean?

MARY FRANCES

Well, my mother left, unexpectedly, and went to Lochevan...away from the city and she took the maid with her.

Pause to allow for Abigail and Helen to think

ABIGAIL

That does not seem that unlikely or weird, I mean, she would want to have someone there to help her. Right?

HELEN

Right, Frisk?

MARY FRANCES

We have staff that work there year round, the maid is only supposed to work here, in the city. My brother came home a few months ago, which he never does. He never comes home from school randomly, only for holidays and the summers. My parents are trying to protect John, this could ruin my father and the business.

ABIGAIL

Hmm...so what do we do now? What do you want to do?

HELEN

Are you going to confront your family?

MARY FRANCES

(stuttering)

I'm-I'm not sure. I-I just need time to think right now. I wish we had never looked into this, honestly. I feel sick.

HELEN

(attempts to be reassuring)

Just try to stay calm. Your parents have the situation under control. Plus we don't REALLY know what has happened. Everything at this point is unconfirmed. It is hearsay...probably.

ABIGAIL

I agree, just stay calm. The baby might not even be your brother's. We should go back to school now. Are you ready to leave, Mary Frances?

MARY FRANCES

Okay, you are right. We should just go back to school and act like we know nothing about this situation, but, you have to promise me that you will not tell anyone about this. I would never forgive you. Do not talk about this with your parents. Do not talk about it in public. Do not even bring it up with me, ever. I need to work this through in my own mind...alone. If I have something to say about it, I will let you know.

Both friends nod their heads in agreement.

ABIGAIL

We promise, Frisk. Right, Helen?

HELEN

Of course. You can trust us with anything.

Mary Frances turns her face away from Helen and Abigail and begins to walk towards the door to leave

MARY FRANCES

Lets go or we will be late for class. Quiet, we do not want anyone to know we are or were up here. Once we leave this room, pretend that you do not know about this room. To you two, it does not exist.

ABIGAIL

Of course, Mary Frances.

They begin to exit the room. Abigail and Helen are walking behind Mary Frances. Abigail grabs Helen's arms to stop her. Abigail and Helen look at each other.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Oh my god.

HELEN
(whispering)
I know.

Mary Frances stops and turns to face the two girls.

MARY FRANCES
Is there a reason you aren't moving
your feet? You don't know this room
exists anymore, remember?

ABIGAIL AND HELEN
Yes, Mary Frances.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)
We're sorry.

MARY FRANCES
Just remember what I said, to you
two, this afternoon never happened.

They all start walking down the stairs and leave the secret
room.