

Riders to the Sea Literary Devices

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Literary Terms

Tragedy:

A sad story where people suffer or die. Maurya loses all her sons to the sea.

One-Act Play: A one-act play is a drama with only one act. It has no long breaks or many different scenes. "Riders to the Sea" is a one-act play. It shows one sad story in a very short time. The play happens in one place without any change. It is short, simple, and full of deep sorrow. A one-act play has a single scene, short duration, and focuses on a single story or conflict.

Figures of Speech

Irony:

When the opposite of what we expect happens. Bartley wants to earn money, but he dies instead.

Imagery: Words that help us see, hear, or feel something. "White boards for a coffin" – helps us imagine death.

Symbols/ Symbolism

The Sea:

Power, death, and fate. It gives life (fish) but also takes life (men).

All of Maurya's sons died in the sea.

White Boards: A coffin or death. The girls bring whiteboards before they even know Bartley is dead.

Rope/String: Burial or preparation for death. The rope is used to make Bartley's horse halter, but it also reminds of a coffin rope.

Clothes of Michael: A sign that Michael is dead. The priest sends Michael's clothes from Donegal.

The Spinning Wheel: Women's work, waiting, and time passing. The girls spin thread while waiting and talking.

Horse/Pony: A journey and also danger. Bartley's ride to Galway Fair leads to his death.

The Stick (Maurya's stick): Old age, weakness, and support. Maurya uses a stick to walk, and also when she goes to bless Bartley.

LxNotes