

TWO ON THE AISLE: "WAKING NED DEVINE" - Review

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By Joe Kirkish



FOR MARCH, AN IRISH FILM TO ENJOY HILARIOUSLY

There are plenty of stereotypical Irish movies to watch during St. Paddy's month. "The Quiet Man" is one that we've shown in the past (and likely will again in the near future), but there's also something newer, like "Waking Ned Devine," that reeks with the kind of quaint Gaelic folk and the rugged landscapes in which they live - ripe for Irish celebration.

Written and directed by Kirk Jones and starring a whole town full of interesting characters (the most being two main elderly gentlemen, lifelong buddies), the film also includes a hilarious basketful of country folk that endlessly add to the fun and quaintness of their land.

"Waking Ned Devine" opens with the news that someone in the Irish hamlet of Tullymore (population about 50) has won the National Lottery - a huge bundle of money. Who could it be? The locals, who have lived in one another's pockets for years, snoop & gossip, and seize upon the slightest deviation from habit as proof that someone expects a windfall. But there are no leads, and finally in desperation a chicken supper is held, at which the winner will perhaps be revealed. No luck. But one person doesn't attend the dinner. Ned Devine. He is found seated in front of his TV set, clutching the winning ticket - and dead.

Alas, since the winner is dead, the money will be recycled back into the kitty for next's week's drawing. Right? Not on your life. Not in a community like Tullymore, populated by people like the lady who tools around on her battery-powered chair, scowling & spreading ill will. Or the village priest who has highly speculative beliefs regarding certain details in his faith. Or the old geezer with twinkling eyes & turkey neck, who is engaging, conspiratorial & delighted by all things, not too wicked and more.

The two old buddies hatch a plan to fool the visiting official from Dublin, who after all has never laid eyes on Ned. One of them will impersonate Ned. The whole town will of course have to be in on the scheme, and what happens after that is a series of incidents that escalate to uproarious chaos, until...

That's the premise of another one of those delightful village comedies that seem to spin out of the British Isles annually, along with "Local Hero" and "The Full Monty." Where else can a family film include a scene in which a 70-year-old man must speed down country lanes on a motorcycle while completely naked and leave us with a sight that inspires endless laughter?

One reason we like village comedies from Ireland and the U.K. is, of course, that they're funny. An evening spent with countryside Irish locals can't be anything but a merry one. And March's Club Indigo brings it to you.

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