

# Aran Ryan's Dilemma

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*This is a Fanart-Central exclusive fan fiction for the Punch-Out character [Aran Ryan](#). This is a prequel of sorts to Aran's appearance in Punch-Out for the Wii.*

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## 1 - Without a shadow of a doubt

*"Damn!"* muttered the Irish pugilist, staring up at his challenger, a 6' 9" brute by the name of Angus McFarley, a Scottish/Irish up-and-coming boxer with a mean streak that almost equaled Aran's, but only just. "Ah, ya may be part Irish," yelled Aran, "but ya don't have the guts to take me on! Yer mudder was a feckin' *jock!*" Aran was only covering up his apprehension, for Angus was not only incredibly tall, but also built like a coliseum, with a face only a fighter's mother could love. "You can come up with a better insult than *that*, ya bloody **pogue!**" Angus growled, hitting his gloves together; Aran only replied with a snarl as the bell went off, signifying the start of the first round. Angus was a prideful fighter, paying more attention to his performance than his skills, announcing his titled special attacks like "The McFarley Masher" and "Scottish Slice"; this didn't affect his power, though, for his punches were almost as powerful as a car crash to Aran. "Ha-ha!" Aran shouted maniacally, drooling a bit, "c'mon and whap me! I can take it!" It wasn't clear to the spectators, many of whom were familiar with Aran's apparent masochism, but Aran was distracted and distressed; something on his mind was keeping the Irishman from keeping his guard up effectively. Soon, the round was half-over, and Aran was knocked down by Angus's "Edinburgh Eliminator", which lived up to its name. Even when out of it, it was clear that Aran was in more mental distress than usual, as the crowd and referee noticed that Aran got up on the count of 9 instead of the trademark 7 count. Nevertheless, Aran was keen to bring good luck back to him, even if it meant using his infamously devious tactics, including his elbow strike and headbutt, although neither were too effective on Angus's tremendous body.

Soon, though, the end-of-round bell sounded, and Aran retreated back to his corner, yelling to Angus, "C'mon, you git! Quit kissin' your clovers and *gimme the works!*" Aran's coach, a Northern Irish gentleman and almost perfect contrast to Aran's apparent insanity, saw through Aran's caustic attitude and went to talk to him. "Aran?" said the coach in a fatherly tone, "What's up? You seem a little more disturbed than usual." "Whadarya talkin' about?!!?" Aran shouted at his coach sharply, "I'm *damn fine!* Don't look at me like that! I'm damn fine and there's nothin' you need to do, dammit." Aran twitched like a cold, wet, frightened dog as he stared surlily at his opponent, Angus, as his British coach massaged his large shoulders. "Gaddammit..." spat Aran, giving Angus nasty looks. Aran's coach looked right through Aran's anger and saw his pain and predicament. "*Aran*," the coach remarked, "this isn't about the newcomer, is it? You wouldn't have been so sloppy with those moves of yours if it weren't for something else on your mind. Maybe if you talked to me about it, you'd feel better." Aran would not let his shell of insanity and anger be broken for the sake of imperative therapy; "Shut your gob!" he yelled at his coach, "He's nothin' but an overinflated balloon, and I intend to *give him the pin!*" Aran's coach was wise enough to know when to back off from his irate apprentice, but he still felt troubled as the bell sounded and the opponents fought again. It didn't seem too long before the fight was over. Angus won by decision; Aran was knocked down once each round, while Angus wasn't even knocked down at all.

In the locker room, Aran was just putting on his jacket when his coach approached him. "Aran?" said the coach softly, "What's the matter, boy?" "Don't you feckin' call me a boy, Darrel." spat Aran, "I'm 22 years old." "Fair enough," joked Darrel, the coach, "but when you're my age, 22 will seem like kindergarten!" Aran dented one of the lockers in anger, shocking Darrel. "**Leave me the feck alone!**" shouted Aran, "You're not my Da, and *don't get to thinkin' that you're anything near that!*" Darrel spoke

to Aran, "I may not be a part of your family, but I'm here for your needs in the ring! So I'm not your Da, but I'm as *damn close* as you're going to find in the world of video boxing, so *you better count your blessings!*" Darrel knew that Aran was angrier than usual, but at what he did not know, for as soon as Aran left the building, Darrel was no longer a part of Aran's life. Aran returned to his apartment, looking rather incensed as he carried his items in his duffel bag. "What the hell is this??" exclaimed Aran's sister, Sharon, a sharp-featured, sharp-tempered woman known for being one of the only people able to keep Aran effectively in check, "You're not entering this household with *that damn look* on your face!" Aran's face was nicked with a terrible sneer as his right lower eyelid flickered involuntarily. Sharon smacked Aran's cheek, causing Aran to snap out of his surly look. "That's better," said Sharon, "now get inside; it about time for dinner."

The Ryan family dinner was a quaint yet wonderful affair as the family ate their share of bird and fish. "So then he said to the bastard 'it's a fair cop, but if only he could keep his knickers straight!'" said Father Ryan, concluding a funny joke and making the family laugh, except for Aran, who only stirred his stew. Sharon hit Aran forcefully in the elbow, "Aran!" she said, "What's with you today?! You haven't been this sour since you were beaten by that whacked-out ladylike Japanese fella, and even then, you still laughed at the dinner table! What gives?!" Aran sighed acridly, "It's nothing, really. I just lost another boxing match to some overgrown Scottish-Irish bastard, but it's none of your business." Sharon grabbed Aran's jaw and turned his head to look at her. "Excuse me, but *I'm your god-given sister!*" she announced, "Your business *is our* business whether you like it or not, and so you better stop acting like we're just *any* old people you can **spit on** all day, and unless you stop acting so goddamn miserable—!" Aran gave Sharon a good shove out of the way and stormed off to his room. Mother Ryan grew worried, "Shar," said Ma Ryan, "I wish I knew what was up with our boy." Sharon stared at the door to Aran's room and sighed, "Me too, ma... Me too..."

Aran opened the door to his closet and found some of his old stuffed toys that he decided to throw around and rip apart like a rabid Doberman. "Grrr! That stupid Scotch-Irish eejit!" growled Aran as he held a teddy bear in his hands and teeth, "He's nothin' but an overgrown dog with bad fleas! Isn't that right, Dillon?" Aran threw the worn bear at his Irish setter, Dillon, who obediently tore the toy to shreds and presented the remaining stuffing to Aran like successfully killed prey. "Ah, good dog!" said Aran as he gave Dillon vigorous belly rubs, "Yer a chip of the ol' block, ain't ya, Dillon? Who's a good boy? *Who's a good boy??*" Aran continued to pet his dog happily, but suddenly Darrel's voice entered Aran's mind. "I may not be a part of your family, but I'm as *damn close* as you're going to find in the world of boxing, so *you better count your blessings!*" Aran hit his head to try and silence the echoes of Darrel's words in his head, but to no avail. Dillon whimpered as Aran growled and yelled. "That eejit Darrel's too damn soft! He wants to help me be normal, but *I ain't damn normal!* I never have been, I never will be, and I definitely don't want any coach o' mine to think that I need therapy!!" Aran pummeled the wall, sending Dillon whining under the bed to hide. "Aran?" the voice seemed to call, infuriating Aran, "What's the matter, Aran? *Aran?? Aran!!*"

It turned out that that voice came from Da Ryan who just opened the door after hearing the racket. "What the *hell* is going on here?" remarked Da Ryan sharply, noticing the pulverized stuffed animals and the dented walls of Aran's room, as well as the frightened Dillon whining under Aran's bed. "You know we were hoping to save those toys for the homeless children." Said Da Ryan coldly, but Aran couldn't care less about any children's needs at the moment. "Da," said Aran, "why'd ya pick that eejit Darrel to be my boxing coach??" Da Ryan nodded, "Darrel was an old friend of mine, and, believe it or not, a spectacular boxer in his heyday." Aran rolled his eyes derisively. "Have you ever even asked

Darrel about his boxing days?" said Da Ryan, but Aran only hit his head to the wall, sending Dillon whimpering out of the room. "Some boxer!" said Aran, "He couldn't even land a decent punch, let alone win himself anything if the fool knew anything about it!" Da Ryan gradually saw what was going on within Aran's mind, but he too backed away, allowing Aran to stew in his own flashback...

## 2 - A friend in need

Aran was remembering his 22nd birthday on a particularly misty St. Patrick's Day some months ago...

"Ah, it's good to be alive!" said Aran as his family and friends were enjoying themselves, eating, drinking, and singing merrily. Sharon gave her brother a tight, strong hug as Ma Ryan handed her son a present. "Happy birthday, son." Said Da Ryan, "C'mon and open it up." Aran unwrapped and opened his present. It was a new pair of boxing gloves, shorts, and boots. "And don't you be ruinin' these as fast as those last ones!" said Sharon. Aran experimentally tried on his gloves and punched the air rapidly and maniacally. "That's my boy!" said Da Ryan, but soon he was punched in the head by Aran's careless fervor. "*Gaddammi*—! Sorry, Da." Said Aran as his father tried to regain his senses. "A-a-a-a-h-h-h..." said Da Ryan dizzily, "You're just like your ol' Da, son... Ch-chip off the ol' block, y'are..." Ma Ryan tended to her husband as Sharon presented a 1-year-old Irish setter with a ribbon collar. "You better not give this fella any lashes!" said Sharon, "This fella was this close to being euthanized, you know!" "A *shelter dog*?" said Aran, "It's not even a **wolfhound**!" "Yeah, but beggars can't be choosers." Sharon replied, "It's an *Irish setter*, anyway, or at least it looks like one. Maybe it's a lookalike mutt, but anyway, the poor little fella looked at me and I couldn't just let him be put down!" Aran looked at the dog's eyes, which despite their air of despair showed a wild side within. "Ha-ha! I like this dog!" said Aran, "I think I'll call 'im 'Dillon'." Aran gave Dillon a vigorous petting, which cheered up the setter.

Aran remembered the times that he and Dillon had together, from fetching sticks across the countryside, to hunting wild game. He also remembered practicing with his new boxing outfit at the WVBA gym, giving a rapid pummeling to a punching bag...

"Boy, you're going to *wear out* those gloves if you keep doing that!" said a voice just outside the gym. Aran thought the voice belonged to his father, but it also sounded deeper with a slightly different accent. "Dad?!" said Aran, "What the hell are you doing at the stadium?!" It wasn't his dad at all, but Aran's new coach, Darrel. "I'm not your Da, Aran, but I know him rather well." said Darrel as he approached Aran, "The name's Darrel, Darrel O'Riley. I'm your new coach." Aran was apprehensive, knowing that the only reason why Darrel was here was because he scared his old coach away as he became less of a brute and more of a maniac. "You're giving me the creeps, Darrel!" said Aran, "What's with the voice?" "What's wrong with it?" remarked Darrel, "I'm Irish, just like you, but I'm from the Northern end, so I'm not all shillelaghs and shamrocks. I heard that you're a little *nasty* towards any British blokes, so as a fair warning, I might be considered **one of them**!" Aran gave a chuckle, "Yer alright, Darrel." Darrel bowed a little and removed his cap. Aran soon removed his gloves and sat down with Darrel, running his fingers through his untamed mullet. "Nice hair," said Darrel, "you thinkin' of joinin' a Rock 'N' Roll band with that wild haircut?" Aran and Darrel shared a good laugh. "I like ya, Darrel." said Aran, "You may be a Brit, but you still got that Irish cunning in ya, and I *like that*." "Thanks." said Darrel, running his fingers through his own short black hair.

Darrel and Aran were about to embrace, but they heard the titters of a young Canadian boxer who was peering into the gym. "**Gaddammit, it's a brat!!**" Aran shouted as the kid tried to run across the gym but ended up tripping and falling into a padded mat. Aran laughed uproariously at the boy's plight, but

Darrel was concerned for the boy's safety as he moaned in pain. Darrel went over to the boy and helped him up from the mat. "Thank you, sir." said the young boxer to Darrel. Aran stopped laughing to see Darrel and the boy talking. "The name's Dan McCrea," said the boy, "but most call me 'Little Danny' after that American newcomer with the chocoholic coach, Doc Louis, I think." "Newcomer?" said Darrel, "I knew Little Mac since the late 80s while I was visiting in America; he's hardly a newcomer in the world of boxing..." Darrel and Dan continued to talk about Little Mac and his history as Aran eavesdropped on the conversation. Aran never heard of Little Mac before, but from what he heard, he was no better than the Canadian boy he called a brat, and he chuckled hearing that Mac could plow through the champions, the dream fighter, and even Iron Mike, winning many titles and belts while still in his teens. "Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha!" Aran laughed and remarked to himself, "This Little Mac fella is just another American brat, and from the United *feckin'* States, no less!"

Aran just stopped laughing as Darrel led Dan out of the gym and gave him his best wishes. "I hope to see you in the big leagues, boy." said Darrel, "You got the makings of greatness in ya." Dan smiled and ran happily out of the gym. Darrel turned to the smirking Aran with a sour look, which Aran mirrored, "Aran, you're more twisted than I first thought." "*What's it to ya??*" Aran replied sharply. Darrel only cocked his head to the side and smirked, "I suppose I should've thought better, after all, they don't call you 'The Maniac' for nothin', do they?" Aran stood up and went to Darrel, smirking, "What gave ya the first impression: the wild hair or the wild moves??" Darrel knew that Aran was joking, but he was quite serious, "It's the way you laughed at the boy when he fell; he could've been seriously hurt!" Aran let out a sharp breath, almost spitting. "All the better for me," Aran remarked caustically, "we don't need *any more brats* in the boxing rings!" Darrel only nodded in an odd half-yes-half-no fashion and neared the punching bag. "Aran..." said Darrel, "I just wanted to make sure the boy was all right; I would've done the same to you if you got hurt." Aran gave another sharp breath and turned away. "Don't you worry about *me*," said Aran, "everyone knows that whatever doesn't kill me only makes me **stronger!**" "...And more jaded!" Aran heard Darrel remark, but he was not there. As Aran spun around trying to locate Darrel, the last words he heard from him that day were "*See you tomorrow, Aran...*"

Back in the present, Sharon peeked into Aran's room to see him and Dillon napping in the bed together. "Aran, if you lie down with dogs—!" Sharon joked, but Aran threw a disembodied stuffed doll's arm at Sharon's head. Sharon dodged and went to shove her brother out of the bed. "Get up!" shouted Sharon, and while Dillon complied and jumped out of the room, Aran didn't budge. "Aran, dammit, get up!" yelled Sharon, "Don't you know what time it is?!" "Time is not... Time is..." Aran mumbled, trying to keep himself on the bed. "It's *September 2nd*, you git, and morning's almost over!" Aran kept mumbling, clinging to the mattress, "It's not... It's Sebemmer 17th... Seventh of the saints be praised..." Sharon, now quite inflamed, cracked her knuckles and used all her strength to lift the side of the mattress, rolling Aran onto the floor, finally rousing him. "Dammit, Sharon!" yelled Aran as he tried to stand up and recover from the shock. "Mornin', Aran." Said Sharon, "Late morning, actually." "Late morning!?" Aran exclaimed in shock, "Gaddammit, Sharon! I gotta get going!" "Don't you worry," said Sharon, "You got 10 minutes before you'll be late." "I already am late, dammit!" Aran yelled as he frantically searched for his duffel bag. "I was only trying to help you out," sneered Sharon, "but you were eager to sleep until sunset!" "Well, don't just *stand there!*" Aran shouted, "Help me find my bag!" Sharon grinned and brushed off a mound of stuffing and doll parts, revealing Aran's bag. Aran grabbed it swiftly and mumbled rapidly, "Thanks, Sharon, well, I gotta run, everyone, I'll just grab something to eat on the way there, don't worry about me! *Farewell!*" Aran hopped onto his motorcycle and drove off as his family waved goodbye.