

To the Moon and Back

by

L. Chambers

(c) 2021 All rights reserved. This screenplay may not be used or reproduced for any purpose including educational purposes without the expressed written permission of the author.

libbych@hotmail.com

EXT. COUNCIL ESTATE - DAY

A depressing gun-metal grey high-rise complex. Relentless rain drizzles.

SUPERIMPOSE: CHRISTMAS EVE

Somewhere outside of Dublin, Ireland.

*'Otherwise known as the arse-end of nowhere'...*

We zero in on a ground-floor flat, a sad and deflated toy Santa Claus by the front door.

INT. CLAIRE'S FLAT - LIVING ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Grungy and grimy. Rising damp, peeling paint - the type of place where headboards rattle against bedroom walls, footfalls clomp overhead, and you can smell the grease from your neighbour's fry-up.

A Christmas tree stands in one corner of the room, tinsel carelessly thrown on its lower branches.

A box marked *Christmas Decorations* sits off to one side.

One solitary ornament hangs in the centre of the tree. Beautifully ornate, it glints in the fading light.

CLAIRE, 30, looks over at a photograph of her husband on the mantelpiece, then gazes back at the Christmas bauble, puzzled. Anger flares on her face.

CLAIRE

(sharp tone)

Molly, can you come in here,  
please...?

MOLLY, 5, curly mop of hair, dark inquisitive eyes, pokes her head around the corner.

CLAIRE

(pointing to the ornament)

Did you put that up?

Molly shakes her head, shrugs.

CLAIRE

It just magically appeared there  
then, did it? All on its own?

MOLLY

I found it this morning, Mammy.

CLAIRE  
Did yer now?

Molly solemnly nods.

MOLLY  
It was on my pillow when I woke up.

CLAIRE  
Really? Santa give you an early  
Christmas present did he?

Molly bites her lip, casts her eyes down self-consciously.

Claire takes Molly into her arms, sits her on her lap.

CLAIRE  
Now, I put that away a long time  
ago, darlin', and it stays put  
away.

Molly sniffles, tears threaten.

CLAIRE  
Okay, okay, just for tonight, but  
then it goes back in the cupboard,  
alright?

Molly's face lights up.

MOLLY  
Can you tell me the story again,  
Mammy?

CLAIRE  
What...? Again?

A faraway look comes over Claire's face -

EXT. PARK - DAY - FLASHBACK

Overcast, but occasionally the sun peeps through the clouds.  
SEAN, late 20s, and Claire enjoy a picnic in the park.

SUPERIMPOSE: SIX YEARS EARLIER

SEAN  
Do you ever dream of just escaping?

CLAIRE

Before I met you I did, but not now.

SEAN

Yeah, all my women say that, until they get sick of me and -

CLAIRE

Oh, do *they*, now? Lined up outside your door are they?

SEAN

Yep, I have to bat them away. Seriously though, if you could go anywhere what's your dream destination?

CLAIRE

Seriously though, *I don't care*. As long as I'm with you...

Sean leans back, looks up as cloud drifts float by.

SEAN

Australia it is then.

CLAIRE

Australia?

SEAN

Why not. Blue skies, white sandy beaches. We'll swim naked, get brown as berries and have lots of babies.

CLAIRE

They eat their national emblem, you know? Plus I burn badly.

Sean laughs, Claire laughs along with him. She nestles into the crook of his shoulder.

SEAN

I got a great job comin' up, darlin' and then... everything you ever dreamed of is yours.

CLAIRE

'Things' don't matter to me, Sean.

SEAN

Can't live on cuddles alone, love.

Sean suddenly sits up, pulls a box from inside his jacket - gift-wrapped with a fancy bow.

SEAN

Speaking of, here's a sneak preview. To our first Christmas together...

Unexpected delight on Claire's face as she unties the ribbon. Wrapped in tissue paper an antique Christmas bauble intricately ornate and engraved sparkles in the sunlight.

On one side in Gaelic the words: *Mo Cuishie* 'my darling' is written. On the other: *All my love, to the moon and back.*

CLAIRE

It's beautiful.

SEAN

Yep, none of that plastic shite.

Sean leans in and kisses Claire deeply.

SEAN

Be careful with it though. It's fragile just like me.

He winks at her. She playfully swats his arm.

BACK TO SCENE

The tree is now fully decorated. Claire has a wistful look on her face as the last of Sean's words echo in her head.

SEAN (V.O.)

I ask just two things of you, my love: don't break my heart, and -

Claire drapes the tree with fairy-lights. She flips a switch at the wall and lights refracts from all angles onto the Christmas bauble hanging front and centre.

SEAN (V.O.)

- Promise you won't die before me.

Claire and Molly step back to admire the tree.

MOLLY

You kept your promise, Mammy.

Claire looks nonplussed.

CLAIRE  
What? How can you possibly know...?

MOLLY  
And you've still got me.

Claire still looks puzzled but plays along.

CLAIRE  
Indeed I do.

She kisses the top of Molly's head.

INT. CLAIRE'S FLAT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Claire half-heartedly watches T.V. Flipping past schmaltzy Christmas movies she stops on a news report.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)  
...and in other news, bank robber,  
Michael 'Spike' Flannagan has been  
given an early Christmas present...

A sharp intake of breath as a close up of mean looking thug appears on screen. Claire leans forward, turns the volume up.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)  
... His release comes after having  
served only six years of a ten year  
sentence for bank robbery...

Another mug-shot fills the screen.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)  
... Partner in crime, Sean Eamon  
Brennan... at the time on the run  
for two days died in a bloody shoot-  
out... To this day, no-one knows  
what happened to the stolen cash -  
a haul estimated to be worth around  
two-million euro.

Claire switches the television off. A quick glance at Sean's photo then back at the Christmas tree. She walks up close to examine it -

The bauble has disappeared. Flummoxed, she searches under and around the tree, then around the room for it. Finally giving up she switches the lights off, walks out of the room.

INT. CLAIRE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Claire sleeps soundly, the room in complete darkness.

CLOSE ON A GLOVED HAND clamped over her mouth.

Claire's eyes blink wide open, she struggles against her assailant's grip, muffled moans, she kicks her legs out.

MICHAEL 'Spike' FLANNAGAN looms over the top of her.

MICHAEL

Scream, I slit your throat!

A knife blade glints in the darkness.

MICHAEL

Now, I'm going to take my hand away  
and you're going to keep your trap  
shut, okay?

Claire nods her head up and down emphatically.

INT. CLAIRE'S FLAT - LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

The room is a mess, every surface has been rummaged through. Stuffing spills from cushions, tables and chairs upturned.

Michael spots the photo of Sean on the mantelpiece. Face lit up he snatches it. Smashing the frame over his knee, he rips away the mounting, shards of glass spilling onto the floor.

CLAIRE

Do yer' think I never looked?

MICHAEL

It's gotta be here, you just don't  
know where to look.

From the second bedroom Molly cries out in distress.

MICHAEL

Feck! You got a kid?

Claire nods.

MICHAEL

His kid?

A siren sounds outside, red and blue flashing lights.

MICHAEL

Fuckin' feck! You called the  
guards? How'd you do that?

Molly steps out into the living room. In her hands the  
Christmas bauble, a halo of light glowing from within.

Eyes locked on each other Molly and Michael face off until  
finally Michael shoves past her headed for the window - but  
Claire's fast, she throws her foot out and he goes down hard.

Swooping Molly up into her arms the Christmas bauble falls to  
the ground, miraculously bouncing off the floor it rolls  
towards one side of the room, then comes to a halt.

MICHAEL

(enraged)

You think this is over?

Michael hauls himself out of the window, hesitates one last  
time. In a final act of rage he stomps his steel-capped boot  
down onto the Christmas bauble -

MICHAEL

Merry feckin Christmas!

- and then he's gone.

Claire, shaking and distraught surveys the shattered ornament  
scattered over the floor. And then... amidst the shards of  
glass a folded piece of paper glints like a beacon.

Claire unfolds the tiny piece of paper. In faded black ink -  
compass coordinates. She turns the piece of paper over. On  
the back: *Our love is unbreakable. To the Moon and Back.*

A tear of happiness slides down her cheek.

MOLLY

What is it Mammy? What's wrong?

As the clock strikes midnight Claire takes Molly into her  
arms, smothers her with kisses.

CLAIRE

Nothing is wrong, darlin'. In fact,  
for the first time in a long time,  
you and I are going to be just  
fine. Merry Christmas, baby!

She whirls the little girl around the room, and we...

FADE OUT.