

London Nights

by Gordon Mackenzie - Outline

Kurt, 18, Irish, alternative, teeters on the edge of a four storey London. He thinks back to what life was like before London as oblivious party people dance on the roof space behind him. He wakes in his bed in Derry, a provincial youth living with his boozy quarrelsome parents while waiting to start college in London.

Evelyn runs a B&B and guests arrive: Maebh, 30s, London Irish and Carla, late 30s, Irish-Italian Dubliner. They are art students in London and know Kurt's brother, Raif also an art student in London. Chemistry ignites between Kurt and Maebh. She wants to shoot footage in Donegal for an art film she is putting together, exploring concepts of roots, death, sex and pagan ritual. Carla is her assistant.

Bruno shows the women the Derry nightlife. Next morning Carla is sick and can't go to Donegal. Maebh asks if Kurt would operate the camera. They set off to the stones at Beltany. Thus begins many hours that Kurt will share with Maebh in her car, in a coming of age story that will take them to London and back again, through Dublin.

Donegal: Kurt films Maebh stone-rubbing her father's gravestone, dancing semi-naked along country trails and singing at the megaliths. She gives him his first driving lesson. At night, parked on a slope, they watch the stars from under their sleeping bags. Maebh explains a technique from a book on dreaming written by her friend Vinny Gupta: once he is aware he is dreaming, he must bring his hands up to his face. Then he can shape his dreams and his life.

He wakes in the night and wanders around the stone circle. Maebh joins him, à la priestess and Kurt realises he is dreaming. He grabs her and wakes up rolling on the grass with her, where she had found him sleeping. Back in Derry, Maebh offers Kurt a lift to London. The journey is tense as Maebh and Carla are on bad terms. Carla gets out in Dublin and Maebh and Kurt go on alone.

A ferry trip, then driving late at night. Maebh asks Kurt to drive so that she can sleep. When she wakes they are lost. Maebh steals petrol from a parked car. When they get to London they are shattered. Maebh suggests a sleep at her place before going on to Raif. In her flat, Kurt lies down beside her, but she sleeps immediately. He has another erotic dream, scarier, and has difficulty waking up. When he does he has his first, fumbling sex.

Kurt meets Maebh at Vinny Gupta's Tantra Café. He wants his own place but doesn't have money until his loan comes through. Maebh introduces Vinny, who later opens a squat for Kurt.

At art college, Raif shows Kurt Carla's work, large collage pieces about "chaos magic". On the way to a warehouse party with Kurt, Vinny explains how Kurt can use a call card to know if he is dreaming or awake. Kurt eats "magic cake" with Maebh on the roof of the warehouse and later hallucinates about. Back at the opening scene Kurt nearly jumps from the roof, but is pulled to safety by Carla. Maebh suggests they go back to her place but Raif takes Kurt away.

Kurt has gay dreams, false awakenings. He wakes up and runs through the London night to Maebh's apartment. He sleeps there and dreams of drowning. He wakes and explores her apartment as she sleeps. He opens the LCD of Maebh's camera and views Derry, Donegal, the road to London. Carla throwing flowers on a bed, incense burners. Carla's face as she is pleased. Vinny thrusting. Maebh in between.

Kurt leaves, traumatised, without waking Maebh. Maebh pulls in as he leaves his squat. She apologises over a bagel, explains that Carla wants a baby. The threesome was a once off, as Carla was fertile that night. Johnny is remorseful, because he doesn't want to break with his wife and daughter. Unmoved, Kurt says he's going home until term starts. He accepts a lift to Victoria Station, but Maebh drives him to Derry.

They stop in Dublin with Carla's mother, Simona, go out on the town, then witness a man jumping into the river. Kurt jump in and retrieves him, but it is too late. On the final leg home Kurt dreams of reconciliation with his father and concludes that he is grateful to Maebh. He asks her to stop at some woodlands, where they have goodbye sex.

Fast forward to Maebh's exhibition. Kurt looks at footage from Donegal, the party, the threesome. The voice over suggests that he is the father. He is beckoned to a side room, where Maebh films the birth of Carla's child.