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Manchester by the Sea - Review

Masterfully told and beautifully acted, *Manchester by the Sea* is a **shattering** yet **graceful** story of loss and grief.

After the death of his older brother Joe, Lee Chandler (Casey Affleck) is shocked that Joe has made him **sole** guardian of his **teenage** nephew Patrick. Taking leave of his job as a **caretaker** in

Boston, Lee reluctantly returns to Manchester-by-the-Sea, the fishing village where his working-class family has lived for generations. There, he is forced to deal with a past that separated him from his wife, Randi (Michelle Williams), and the community where he was **born** and raised.

Director Lonergan's film tackles the heaviest of themes, **unbearable** personal **tragedy** and guilt, although with a notably lighter **touch**. For every moment of heartbreak, every quiet gesture of



unspeakable **sorrow**, there's a **sharply** judged **laugh** or killer put-down. It's gritty and often devastating, sure, but soulful and surprisingly funny with it.

Using **flashbacks** that bring warmer shades to the leeched-out, **wintry** frames, Lonergan introduces the past players in Lee's drama. His **smart** and sparky wife, completes a domestic idyll of playful roughhousing and happy kids. His older sibling Joe, played with **gruff** warmth by Kyle Chandler, is diagnosed with a terminal heart condition in a hilariously dysfunctional family gathering at his hospital bedside.

I left this movie wanting to find an Oscar to immediately hand over to Casey Affleck. His **restrained** but deeply moving performance has easily been one of my favourites of the year. The movie is filled with impressive acting from everyone involved, but I feel like so much of it hinges on Affleck's ability to make his character's quietest and **stillest** moments say so much.

If you've ever been to a funeral where everyone is heartbroken and stricken with grief but there are just as many laughs as **tears**, just as many moments of **wickedly** dark humor as heavy sobbing — well, there's your reference point for this film. *Manchester by the Sea* is a mustwatch and easily the best film I've seen this year.





