



# THE NIGHT ALIVE

BY CONOR McPHERSON



DRAMATISTS  
PLAY SERVICE  
INC.

THE NIGHT ALIVE  
Copyright © 2014, Conor McPherson

All Rights Reserved

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that performance of THE NIGHT ALIVE is subject to payment of a royalty. It is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and of all countries covered by the International Copyright Union (including the Dominion of Canada and the rest of the British Commonwealth), and of all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, the Berne Convention, and of all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations. All rights, including without limitation professional/amateur stage rights, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all other forms of mechanical, electronic and digital reproduction, transmission and distribution, such as CD, DVD, the Internet, private and file-sharing networks, information storage and retrieval systems, photocopying, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved. Particular emphasis is placed upon the matter of readings, permission for which must be secured from the Author's agent in writing.

The English language stock and amateur stage performance rights in the United States, its territories, possessions and Canada for THE NIGHT ALIVE are controlled exclusively by DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., 440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016. No professional or nonprofessional performance of the Play may be given without obtaining in advance the written permission of DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC., and paying the requisite fee.

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to Curtis Brown, Ltd. Haymarket House, 28-29 Haymarket, 5th Floor, London SW1Y 4SP, England. Attn: Nick Marston.

**SPECIAL NOTE**

Anyone receiving permission to produce THE NIGHT ALIVE is required to give credit to the Author(s) as sole and exclusive Author(s) of the Play on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the Play and in all instances in which the title of the Play appears, including printed or digital materials for advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. Please see your production license for font size and typeface requirements.

Be advised that there may be additional credits required in all programs and promotional material. Such language will be listed under the "Additional Billing" section of production licenses. It is the licensee's responsibility to ensure any and all required billing is included in the requisite places, per the terms of the license.

**SPECIAL NOTE ON SONGS AND RECORDINGS**

For performances of copyrighted songs, arrangements or recordings mentioned in these Plays, the permission of the copyright owner(s) must be obtained. Other songs, arrangements or recordings may be substituted provided permission from the copyright owner(s) of such songs, arrangements or recordings is obtained; or songs, arrangements or recordings in the public domain may be substituted.

The world premiere of THE NIGHT ALIVE was presented at the Donmar Warehouse, London, England, on June 13, 2013.

The American premiere of THE NIGHT ALIVE was presented by Atlantic Theater Company (Neil Pepe, Artistic Director; Jeffory Lawson, Managing Director) at the Linda Gross Theater in New York City, opening on December 12, 2014. It was directed by Conor McPherson; the set and costume design were by Soutra Gilmour; the lighting design was by Neil Austin; the sound design was by Gregory Clarke; and the production stage manager was Mary Kathryn Flynt. The cast was as follows:

|               |                    |
|---------------|--------------------|
| MAURICE ..... | Jim Norton         |
| TOMMY .....   | Ciaran Hinds       |
| AIMEE .....   | Caoilfhionn Dunne  |
| DOC .....     | Michael McElhatton |
| KENNETH ..... | Brian Gleeson      |

## **CHARACTERS**

MAURICE, seventies

TOMMY, fifties

AIMEE, late twenties

DOC, forties

KENNETH, late thirties

## **PLACE**

An Edwardian house near the Phoenix Park in Dublin.

## **TIME**

Autumn. The present.

# THE NIGHT ALIVE

*The first-floor drawing room of an Edwardian house near the Phoenix Park in Dublin. High double doors lead to a small metal balcony with steps down to the rear garden. The room is now a bed-sit. It is cluttered and messy. Boxes of knick-knacks and old newspapers and magazines are piled into corners, spilling out onto a single bed on one side of the room and a camp bed on the other. There is a battered old armchair and a fold-away chair or two. A door leads to a little toilet that has been built in one corner.*

*Another door leads to the landing and the rest of the house.*

*There is a little gas hob and a sink with dirty dishes and saucepans piled into it. There is a framed poster of Steve McQueen on his motorbike from the movie *The Great Escape*, a framed poster of the cover of Marvin Gaye's album *What's Goin' On?* and two posters advertising Finland as a holiday destination.*

*As the play begins, moonlight pours in through the double doors from the balcony. The door to the hallway is open and electric light spills in from the landing. An elderly gentleman, Maurice, is standing in the room looking out at the garden. He wears pyjamas and a dressing gown and carries a walking stick. He stands still for a moment, until distant church bells and a dog barking somewhere stir him from his reverie. He looks about the room in disgust. He lifts a garment or two with his stick, wondering how anyone can live like this. We hear Tommy's voice coming up the stairs to the balcony from the garden. As Maurice hears voices approaching, he hurries quietly off through the landing.*

TOMMY. *(Off.)* Now, that's it. Yeah. This is it. Up the stairs. Are you alright? That's it. Head back. Nice and easy. Around here now. This is us. *(We see Tommy leading Aimee in. He is in his fifties, well-built but well-worn. She is in her twenties, skinny and also well-worn. She holds her head back, pressing Tommy's Dublin Gaelic football tracksuit top to her face. It is covered in blood. She stands there while Tommy goes and switches on a little lamp.)* Come in, we'll sit you down and we can have a look. *(The lamp blinks off again.)* Ah, balls! Hold on. You don't have a euro? Er, that's alright. I'll jimmy the lock. Out she pops and back in the slot. *(He goes to a few drawers and roots noisily around unsuccessfully in the gloom before he finally finds a knife amid the detritus in the sink. He takes a chair and stands on it to reach an electric coin meter. He jimmies the lock and pulls out the coin drawer. He takes a coin from the drawer and sticks it back in the slot. He turns the dial and the lamp pops back on again. At the same time, the stereo bursts into life with loud music and voices. Tommy quickly switches it off.)* This place is a fucking madhouse. Now. That's it. *(He climbs down off the chair.)* Now come here till we have a look at you. Sit down here. There we go. Show me. Show me. *(He shifts a pile of crap off the armchair and sits Aimee down.)*

AIMEE. Your jacket is wrecked.

TOMMY. Don't mind that, I'll bang that in the washing machine. *(Aimee lets Tommy gently pull the tracksuit top away from her face. Her nose has bled down her chin and onto her clothes. Tommy adjusts her head so he can see.)* Well, the bleeding has stopped.

AIMEE. Is it broken?

TOMMY. I don't know, love — it looks swollen.

AIMEE. I have a big nose anyway.

TOMMY. Like very big?

AIMEE. Big enough.

TOMMY. Was it always crooked?

AIMEE. Yeah, a bit.

TOMMY. Crooked to the left or the right?

AIMEE. The left.

TOMMY. To my left?

AIMEE. Yeah.

TOMMY. Okay. Then I don't think he broke it. *(Tommy goes rooting through a cupboard near the sink. He finds a little plastic bowl and a tea towel.)* Do you think you might get sick again?

AIMEE. No. *(He runs some water and wets the towel, bringing the bowl to Aimee.)*

TOMMY. You can use this if you are.

AIMEE. Thanks. *(She holds the bowl on her lap.)*

TOMMY. Up to me, love, we wipe this up a bit. *(She raises her face to him and winces while he wipes her with it.)* Wup, sorry, too hard. That alright? *(Aimee gives a tiny nod. Tommy cleans her face. She watches him from time to time.)* God, I wonder should we ring an ambulance.

AIMEE. No.

TOMMY. No?

AIMEE. No, it'll be alright.

TOMMY. I could run you down to the hospital.

AIMEE. No, they'll ring the Guards.

TOMMY. The police?

AIMEE. Yeah, they'll think it was you.

TOMMY. They'd think it was me?!

AIMEE. Probably.

TOMMY. Probably?! Well, look ... I certainly don't need that, so ...

AIMEE. I don't want the Guards.

TOMMY. No, you don't want the bleeding Guards in all over it. *(He looks at her face.)* Well now, I'm not an expert, but in my ... *(Unsaid: "opinion.")* I would say that it's probably going to be ... *(Unsaid: "alright.")* You see, I've no ice! I've no fridge! *(He throws his eye ineffectually around the room for something that might substitute for ice.)*

AIMEE. Can I use your bathroom?

TOMMY. Yeah! *(Indicating the door in the corner of the room.)* There's a little toilet in there, or there's a bigger, proper bathroom down the landing out there.

AIMEE. No that's fine. *(Aimee gets up.)*

TOMMY. Wait, hold on. *(Tommy bolts towards the little loo. He switches the light on and goes in. We hear the toilet flush. Tommy bangs around, trying to make it presentable. Aimee stands waiting, gingerly touching her nose. She goes to a little mirror above the sink and has a look. Tommy comes out, grabs a two-pack of toilet rolls, smiles apologetically at Aimee, holding them up, and disappears inside the loo again, and emerges, wiping his hands.)* There you go.

AIMEE. Thanks.

TOMMY. Do you want a cup of tea?

AIMEE. *(Uncertainly.)* Em ...

TOMMY. It's no problem. I'm having one.

AIMEE. Okay. Thanks. *(She goes into the loo and shuts the door. Tommy checks the kettle and flicks the switch. He looks for some mugs. There are no clean ones. He picks one up from the floor and sniffs it. It seems acceptable. He rinses their mugs in the sink and throws two teabags into them. He quickly shoves some used take-away containers and dirty work clothes away. He tidies up to make some space as best he can. He piles some newspapers on top of others, mostly copies of the Evening Herald, but they cascade onto the floor again. At a loss, he kicks them in under the bed. Aimee comes out.)*

TOMMY. Okay? *(Aimee nods.)* I'm sorry about that loo. It's just one that I use. The one on the landing is for the whole house but it's always freezing.

AIMEE. Is there many people?

TOMMY. No, only my Uncle Maurice. It's his house. He lives upstairs. *(Pause. Tommy goes to pour hot water in their cups. Aimee looks down at some books on the camp bed.)* Do you like cowboy books? You can have all of them. *(Short pause.)* I've been meaning to donate them to a charitable institution but I'm just so busy. Do you take sugar?

AIMEE. Thanks.

TOMMY. Sit down, there. *(Tommy brings Aimee's tea and a bag of sugar to her, finding something to put it down on.)* Spoon's in the bag. Bag's in the cup.

AIMEE. Thanks.

TOMMY. *(Indicating a bag of single UHT milk servings.)* There's milks there. *(Tommy gets his tea and watches her spoon a few spoonfuls of sugar into her cup. They are silent for a moment.)* I'll tell you one thing. You were extremely lucky.

AIMEE. Yeah?

TOMMY. I was starving. I'd been promising myself a bag of chips, so ... *(He signals with his thumb: "I left.")* Only for that I wouldn't even have seen what happened to you.

AIMEE. Yeah, well ...

TOMMY. Yeah! Split-second timing. *(Pause.)* And I dropped my bleeding chips. In the end. *(Short pause.)* Somewhere.

AIMEE. I'm sorry.

TOMMY. Who was he? Boyfriend?

AIMEE. No.

TOMMY. *(Unconvinced.)* Yeah?

AIMEE. Just someone giving me a lift.

TOMMY. Do you know him well?

AIMEE. No.

TOMMY. Well, this is it. There you go. You can't just get in a car with fellas you don't know. You know? I mean, unfortunately, that's ... but there you are.

AIMEE. I don't know you and I'm in your flat. (*Short pause.*)

TOMMY. But that's different.

AIMEE. How is it different?

TOMMY. It's different because I'm different.

AIMEE. Different to what?

TOMMY. What do you mean, different to what? Different to fellas like him.

AIMEE. Yeah?

TOMMY. Yeah! Listen. I've never hit a woman in my whole life — ever. And listen, believe me, there was times I had good reason to. Very good reason to. And maybe I fucking should've.

AIMEE. Okay. (*Pause.*)

TOMMY. Yeah. (*Short pause.*) I can't believe you'd compare me to someone like him.

AIMEE. I never said that. (*Pause.*)

TOMMY. Do you want a biscuit?

AIMEE. No thanks.

TOMMY. I'm starving. (*Tommy takes out a box of dog biscuits. He takes one and starts munching on it.*) Why did he hit you?

AIMEE. I don't know, 'cause I was trying to make a phone call, I think.

TOMMY. A phone call?

AIMEE. Yeah, he grabbed my phone and he pulled over. I thought he was just gonna let me out but ...

TOMMY. Yeah, I saw him! Only he heard me shouting ... I mean ... (*He shakes his head, indicating how much worse it could have been.*) I got his reg. 09-D something something.

AIMEE. It's just a phone.

TOMMY. Yeah, I suppose. Do you need to call anyone? Unfortunately I have no credit, but Uncle Maurice would probably let us use his landline, if you want me to wake him.

AIMEE. No, it's alright.

TOMMY. Are you sure?

AIMEE. Yeah, it's okay, really. Thanks.

TOMMY. He might only go mad if I woke him up now, anyway.

# THE NIGHT ALIVE

by Conor McPherson

WINNER OF THE 2013–2014  
NEW YORK DRAMA CRITICS' CIRCLE AWARD  
FOR BEST PLAY

4M, 1W

Tommy's not a bad man; he's getting by. Renting a run-down room in his Uncle Maurice's house, just about keeping his ex-wife and kids at arm's length, and rolling from one get-rich-quick scheme to the other with his pal Doc. Then one day he comes to the aid of Aimee, who's not had it easy herself, struggling through life the only way she knows how. Their past won't let go easily, but together there's a glimmer of hope that they could make something more of their lives. Something extraordinary. Perhaps. With inimitable warmth, style, and craft, Conor McPherson's *THE NIGHT ALIVE* deftly mines the humanity to be found in the most unlikely of situations.

*"Extraordinary ... The play can only be called transcendent ... a heaven-sent vision."*  
—**The New York Times**

*"THE NIGHT ALIVE is a stunner ... so fresh and full of vital poetry that you'll cling to every word."*  
—**The Wall Street Journal**

*"A captivating play ... jolting drama with visceral energy."*  
—**The Hollywood Reporter**

*"... dialogue that makes the story feel fully alive."* —**New York Daily News**

*"Conor McPherson's wonderful [THE NIGHT ALIVE is] spellbinding and gorgeous [and] by one of the true poets of the theater."* —**Time Out (New York)**

**Also by Conor McPherson**

DUBLIN CAROL

THE SEAFARER

THE WEIR

and many others

**DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE, INC.**

ISBN 978-0-8222-3086-1



9 780822 230861