



EPIPHANY

BY BRIAN WATKINS



DPS

DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE

EPIPHANY
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NOTE ON EXCERPT

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The world premiere of EPIPHANY was produced by Druid Theatre Company (Garry Hynes, Artistic Director; Feargal Hynes, Executive Director), Galway, Ireland, in July 2019. It was directed by Garry Hynes, the set design was by Francis O'Connor, the costume design was by Francis O'Connor and Doreen McKenna, the lighting design was by Sinead McKenna, the sound design was by Ivan Birthistle, the movement was by David Bolger, the music was by Conor Linehan, and the deputy stage manager was Sophie Flynn. The cast was as follows:

MORKAN Marie Mullen
KELLY Marty Rea
TAYLOR Rory Nolan
LOREN Julia McDermott
CHARLIE Jude Akuwudike
AMES Bill Irwin
FREDDY Aaron Monaghan
SAM Kate Kennedy
ARAN Grace Byers

EPIPHANY was produced by Lincoln Center Theater (André Bishop, Producing Artistic Director), New York City, in June 2022. It was directed by Tyne Rafaeli, the set design was by John Lee Beatty, the costume design was by Montana Levi Blanco, the lighting design was by Isabella Byrd, the original music and sound design were by Daniel Kluger, and the stage manager was Roxana Khan. The cast was as follows:

MORKAN Marylouise Burke
KELLY Heather Burns
TAYLOR David Ryan Smith
LOREN Colby Minifie
CHARLIE Francois Battiste
AMES Jonathan Hadary
FREDDY C.J. Wilson
SAM Omar Metwally
ARAN Carmen Zilles

CHARACTERS

MORKAN, 70s or 80s

KELLY, 40s

TAYLOR, 50s

LOREN, 20s

CHARLIE, 40s

AMES, 70s or 80s

FREDDY, 50s

SAM, 40s

ARAN, 30s

TIME

Now, for the most part.

SETTING

A very old house, on the banks of a large river, just north of a big city. The parlor floor is in full view. Tall ceilings. Double doors to an unseen room. A piano. A fireplace. Some old, worn furniture. Scuffed wood floors. Scattered wood tables and chairs, which eventually come together to form a large, long, collective dining area. Large vertical windows look out into a bleak winter night, where white snow falls throughout.

It is unclear if the home has been a victim of disrepair, or whether it's been intentionally designed to harken back to its traditional roots. However, it certainly does not scream "wealth."

There are two prominent staircases. One ascends out of an unseen lower level. This is where guests arrive. We should always hear them

before we see them. This staircase is oddly dim, so that each new arrival appears as a spectral silhouette until they've fully manifested into the light of the main room. The other staircase lives directly above the lower one, and climbs into an unseen higher floor. Both staircases should bear the spatial advantage of people's heads or bodies popping in and out of sight.

There is a floppy door to the kitchen, the other side of which we barely see. It swings open with a dangerously big whoosh. Behind this door is a spot of hiding, a spot of solitude, which characters will occasionally occupy when they can't quite bear the company of others.

NOTES

Each character can be played by an actor of any gender or race. The director and company are empowered to let the makeup of their ensemble inform the notions of the piece. The gender pronouns used herein, then, can be altered according to the cast.

A slash (/) indicates the point of interruption from the following character.

PRESHOW

We see the silhouettes of two individuals scamper about the space, speedily setting what looks to be an elaborate dining table. In their hurried arrangements, we hear plates and glasses and silverware clank, as the shadows bounce about.

“The tears gathered more thickly in his eyes and in the partial darkness he imagined he saw the form of a young man standing under a dripping tree. Other forms were near. His soul had approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead. He was conscious of, but could not apprehend, their wayward and flickering existence. His own identity was fading out into a grey impalpable world: the solid world itself, which these dead had reared and lived in, was dissolving and dwindling.”

—James Joyce,
“The Dead”

EPIPHANY

House lights fall as we hear a slow-growing, low rumble, a great spinning and whooshing elemental din, as if a planet were being woven into form from the center out. The noise takes us into full black. Out of the immense sound we hear a small crackle begin to develop before we see small tongues of flame within the fireplace dance into life. As they ignite and grow, the rumble falls away, and lights illuminate the whole house.

Loren stands, peering down into the dark of the lower stairs. From upstairs we hear Morkan call out.

MORKAN. (*Off.*) Anyone?

LOREN. No...! Still no one...! I'm sure we'll hear the doorbell.

MORKAN. (*Off.*) Gabriel will be first, I'll put money on it.

LOREN. Well should I... I'm a little nervous to talk to him if I'm being honest, / I don't know what I should do with him if you're not around—

MORKAN. (*Off.*) Just get him a drink, tell him about your painting or your love life / or—I dunno.

LOREN. Well maybe you should come down, I didn't think / I'd be greeting strangers.

MORKAN. (*Off.*) I can't come down, I'm *making the guest bed* / so I can—

LOREN. Why are you making the guest bed?

MORKAN. (*Off.*) Just in case things get—in case someone needs to *lie down* or wants to stay or—

Morkan drops something; it clatters.

Was that the doorbell?

LOREN. No!

MORKAN. (*Off.*) What time is it?

LOREN. Six forty-five.

MORKAN. (*Off.*) Well where are they?!

LOREN. You told them seven.

MORKAN. (*Off.*) Yes but wouldn't you want to get here early?!

The doorbell rings. Morkan rushes halfway down the upper staircase and peeks over.

Tell me who it is.

LOREN. I will once I've answered it.

Loren rushes down the lower stairs.

Morkan rushes up the upper stairs.

MORKAN. (*Off.*) If it's Gabriel say it twice.

LOREN. (*Off.*) What?!

MORKAN. (*Off.*) If it's Gabriel / say it twice and I'll rush down and greet him.

LOREN. (*Off.*) I heard what you said but what do you mean say it twice? / His name? Say his name twice?

MORKAN. (*Off.*) Say his name twice. Yes! Say Gabriel Gabriel!

LOREN. (*Off.*) Why?

MORKAN. (*Off.*) In case I mishear you!

Loren answers the door and we hear Freddy enter.

LOREN. (*Off.*) Hello!

FREDDY. (*Off.*) Oh my God, you don't age! / Look at you—

LOREN. (*Off.*) Oh no we've actually never met!

FREDDY. (*Off.*) Oh really?! You're Mary Jane, / you're Morkan's niece that I—

LOREN. (*Off, smiling/laughing.*) Oh! No! Nooooo! I'm Loren. Mary Jane is off in another country I think.

FREDDY. (*Off.*) Oh my God, I'm so sorry / I'm Freddy!

LOREN. (*Off.*) Morkan asked if I could come and help out but I think I'm really more of like a butler maybe?

MORKAN. (*Off.*) Who's there?!

LOREN. (*Off.*) Teddy Teddy!

MORKAN. (*Off.*) Who?!

FREDDY. (*Off, to Loren.*) No, Freddy.

LOREN. (*Off.*) Oh sorry: / Freddy Freddy!

FREDDY. (*Off.*) Morkan, it's Te—It's Freddy!

Freddy and Loren ascend the stairs out of the dark. Morkan enters from above with...

MORKAN. Freddy?!

FREDDY. Yes!

MORKAN. Agh! Come up, come up! Who is with you?!

FREDDY. No, it's just me! I'm alone!

MORKAN. Oh... Okay. Well... Okay.

FREDDY. Should I have brought a—? / I wasn't sure if I was meant to—oh I'd love some *gin* thanks.

MORKAN. Well you'll just have to eat for two then. Now. What'll you drink. Gin? Wonderful.

FREDDY. (*Pulling out a flask, a bad joke.*) And would ya fill this up for my train back? / Kidding. I kid, (unless ya know). No just kidding.

MORKAN. Of course. Oh! LOREN. Are you serious? Oh!
Well you— Ha... Haha.

FREDDY. —But boy I cannot resist a drink on a train / ya know?

MORKAN. You took the train!

FREDDY. I took a car, then the train, then another car.

MORKAN. Was the train okay?

FREDDY. Oh it was great, I love the train. Where's Julia?

MORKAN. Ah, she's not here, she's not coming, but let me get you that—Loren, would you—

The doorbell rings.

Oh my God. Okay. Loren, do a drink for Freddy if you would. If it's Gabriel say it twice.

Morkan runs away into the kitchen.

FREDDY. Why say it twice? LOREN. Why say it twice though?!

MORKAN. (*Off.*) Because he's the most important guest!

Pause; Freddy awkwardly holds his coat.

He's the only one that knows what this whole—He has the speech!

LOREN. Oh. Let me take your—

The doorbell rings again.

FREDDY. The speech for what?

LOREN. Oh. For the celebration, apparently. For the epiphany. She asked Gabriel to prepare some special words for the evening. / Let me take your...

Loren takes Freddy's coat and runs to the large double doors, opens them, and chucks the coat inside, as:

FREDDY. Wow. That's wonderful, I didn't know he—he has quite a mind, ya know his writing is this like—I read two things of his in the whatever *Review* and I kept going “Wait, what?” cuz I *thought* I knew what he was saying, but I had to read each sentence like four times, it was so rich, it was so ya know it was so *difficult*. But fun! I'm sure everyone's gonna be thrilled.

LOREN. Well between you and me it sounds like he's the main reason some of these people are coming. We're all gonna have one giant starfuck!

FREDDY. HAH...! What is that, what's a starfuck, I've never / heard that.

LOREN. Really, you've never heard that?

FREDDY. No, I've never—And what is the epiphany by the way? What are we celebrating?

LOREN. That, I actually don't know. I'm not—

The doorbell, again.

Oh God—I have to get the door.

FREDDY. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'll just...

Loren rushes down the stairs, into the dark. We hear the door open, then voices.

LOREN. (*Off.*) I'm so sorry I'm scrambling to / —here, come on in.

CHARLIE. (*Off.*) Mary Jane!
My God, you're—

KELLY. (*Off.*) Oh! Hiiiiii I was sure
that we—

LOREN. (*Off.*) Oh no no no, I'm Loren.

CHARLIE. (*Off.*) Oh, you're a stranger! You're a stranger! I'm Charlie. We're early I think.

KELLY. (*Off.*) You are *not* Morkan's niece! Oh! Kelly. We're too early! I kept—

LOREN. (*Off.*) Wonderful to meet you both. Just right up / the stairs there.

KELLY. (*Off.*) We're happy to be here but ya know / no one wants to be too early—

CHARLIE. (*Off.*) Where should I put my coat? / Just here?

LOREN. (*Off.*) Oh no, bring it up. No bring it up.

CHARLIE. (*Off.*) So you're a friend. Is this a—

LOREN. (*Off.*) Yes, just *all* the way up / there...

KELLY. (*Off.*) I said: let's just wait in the car until—

CHARLIE. (*Off.*) She said again and again: stop ringing the bell!

LOREN. (*Off.*) Oh! No, you're fine. Keep going up, / keep going up.

CHARLIE. (*Off.*) *Are* we the first, is this the, we're not the first ones / here are we?

KELLY. (*Off.*) Is Gabriel here yet?

LOREN. (*Off.*) No he's not here yet but let me—

They reach the top of the stairs and see Freddy.

KELLY. Oh look! Another person!

FREDDY. Hel-lo!

CHARLIE. Hi. Charlie.

KELLY. Kelly.

FREDDY. Right, I think we met / at the—

LOREN. Give me your coats.

She takes the coats and runs them into the other room.

KELLY. (*To Freddy.*) Now, do you know Gabriel?

FREDDY. No, I know Morkan.

KELLY. Ah.

FREDDY. Do you know Gabriel?!

CHARLIE. No we know Morkan.

FREDDY. Ah.

KELLY. Are we the first ones?

FREDDY. As far as I know. Now, I think we met at the—what was that *weird wedding*—I think / you wore a green, I think a green flowy thing, and we talked for so long about *avocados*...

KELLY. (*Not recalling.*)

CHARLIE. (*Not recalling.*)

Uh-huh... Uh-huh... Maybe a...

Okay... Okay... Okay... Huh.

Uh-huh... Okay... Okay...

Hmmm... I think—was it...
Okay...

FREDDY. ...and *you're* the lawyer and *you're* the pianist.

KELLY. Yes! Excellent memory / my God.

CHARLIE. Is there—how many people are coming / to this thing?

LOREN. I think she said ten or eleven? So it's us and Morkan and someone called something I'm forgetting and then there's—oh, Ames maybe?—and then Gabriel, and Gabriel is bringing someone.

CHARLIE. Ohhhh. Okay.

FREDDY. Was I supposed to—?

KELLY. I wonder who Gabriel is bringing.

CHARLIE. I'm sure he's spoken for dear, don't get any—

FREDDY. Was I supposed to bring someone? I thought / it was just a...

KELLY. We brought each other I suppose, so...

LOREN. I think she was planning on you bringing a guest, but I'm sure it's... I'm sure it's fine.

Pause as Freddy nods his head.

MORKAN. (*Off.*) Gabriel?!

CHARLIE. No no, it's us!

KELLY. Ugh I wish!

The kitchen door flies open as Morkan rushes out with:

MORKAN. Oh, it's been ages! How was the trip?

KELLY. Agh the river is beautiful in the snow.

MORKAN. You're saints for coming up here.

CHARLIE. I love the idea.

MORKAN. Oh good!

CHARLIE. I have no idea what we're doing or celebrating but I love the idea.

LOREN. We were just saying the same / thing.

MORKAN. Okay, you all met, you've done the—

CHARLIE.

FREDDY.

KELLY.

Yes we've done all that. ...WE HAVE! Intros are done, yes!

MORKAN. Wonderful. What are you drinking?! There's *every-*thing, you can have *anything* really, anyone can have *anything*.

CHARLIE. (*Clapping on each word.*) I'd-love-some-scotch.

MORKAN. Ah. Well we don't have scotch, but there's— / what is there, Loren?

LOREN.

FREDDY.

Uh there's gin? Do you want gin? I'm having gin!

CHARLIE. Okay, gin is fine. Oh my God. I totally forgot about this place—that's a *cart*, you have a *cart*, there's a *bar* cart!

MORKAN. I know, I'm a *dinosaur* but it's / *what. I. like!* Kelly?

CHARLIE/KELLY.

FREDDY.

Nooooooooo...

If anyone's a dinosaur it's me.

KELLY. I'm going to have water for a bit. I'd like / to keep my mind sharp.

CHARLIE. She wants to stay sharp for Gabriel.

KELLY. Okay now don't / embarrass me...

CHARLIE. We talked about it all the way up here. "What do we discuss?" "What's the best subject to bring up to Gabriel?" I said, / don't even worry about that!

MORKAN. Oh don't even worry about that! The other activities will fill up our time, I'm sure. I can't wait to see what everyone prepared. Now I have to check—Loren, what time did I / put the bird in? Six?

LOREN. Six. Six o'clock. Yes.

MORKAN. (*Rushing through the kitchen door.*) Okay, I've gotta do kitchen stuff but you all chat and Loren / has all the whatever.

LOREN. Yep. Yeah. I've got it.

Morkan exits. Pause. A little quieter:

CHARLIE. What did she mean "prepare." Were we supposed to prepare something?

The play doesn't end here...

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