

***The Gift* - Audio Introduction Notes**

Welcome to this introduction to **The Gift** by Dave Florez. It has been directed for the Park Theatre by Adam Meggido.

The Park Theatre's audio described performance will be on Thursday 13th February at 7.30pm. There will be a touch tour at 6.30pm. The performance lasts for 2 hours and 10 minutes, including a 20 minute interval, and will be audio described by Cordi Morrison.

Please note that this performance contains strong language and scene-changes where the stage is in blackout for up to 1 minute. Scene changes are accompanied by loud rock music.

The following introduction will take about 8 minutes to listen to and includes information about, and descriptions of the set, characters and costumes. All show introductions are available as both an audio file and a text document, in the 'What's On' section of the Park Theatre website.

The story takes place over a number of weeks in the present day, in Colin Hughes' sleek, modern flat, which is open to us as we enter. A slender, rectangular arch of neat, greyish-brown

brick frames the sides and ceiling of the space, as if the building's outer wall has been cut open to reveal the flat inside.

We, the audience, surround three sides of the flat's main room: an open-plan kitchen, living room and entrance hall. On the far left of the room is a dark grey door to the bathroom, and the start of a corridor leading to the rest of the flat. On the far right of the room is the front door.

Although open-plan, the different living areas are subtly distinguished by level, with the living room positioned about 15cm lower than the kitchen and entrance hall. The elongated step which this creates between the two levels is trimmed with a slim, aluminium threshold, and the floors are a bland, grey, wood-affecting laminate. Stretching across most of the living room floor is a plush, rectangular rug, also grey, but in a slightly paler shade.

On the left-hand side of the tidy, minimalist living room is a large, taupe, L-shaped sofa. A circular, charcoal-coloured coffee table sits in front of it and is home to a few unremarkable items: a newspaper, a glass, a small trinket bowl. An identical side table holding an unfussy chrome lamp flanks the sofa's right side. In the far, right corner of the living room is a modern, slate-grey armchair and a low, dark-wood side-table.

Behind the living room area is the kitchen, which is fitted in a similarly functional style: with clean, white, built-in cupboards, a matching fridge-freezer and white kitchen units with dark grey countertops. A variety of typical kitchen appliances and utensils adorn the counters - a kettle, a toaster, a set of knives - all in shades of chrome and monochrome. Behind a black wire fruit basket is some brown paper packaging, which has recently been discarded.

Like the sofa, the kitchen counters also form an L-shape, this time on the right hand side of the room. The foot of the L-shaped counter acts as a breakfast bar, complete with a single, grey barstool. To the right of the L-shaped counter is the small entrance hall for the flat: an open, square space with a wall-mounted coat-rack and two long windows with slatted metal blinds. A leafy artificial plant resides in a black pot-stand next to the windows, and the front door is set into the flat's right-hand wall.

At present, the main room is bathed in soft, indigo light, with the notable exception of a large, square cake-box, white and wrapped with a pink ribbon, which sits on the edge of the L-shaped kitchen counter, lit by a tight, bright spotlight.

The flat's sole resident, and the recipient of the story's titular "gift", is **Colin Hughes**, a white man in his early forties. He is six foot tall, with a medium build and mid-length, pale brown hair with a side-parting, although a bald spot has started to peek through. His greying beard is trimmed close to his oval-shaped face, which alternates, along with his behaviour, from frenetic expressiveness to listless inertia. This changeable mood is conveyed most keenly through his sharp, blue eyes. When we first meet Colin, he is barefoot, rumple-haired, and dressed in a pair of stained, brown tracksuit bottoms and a threadbare navy t-shirt with the slogan "SAVE FERRIS" across the chest in grey capital letters. He later adds a vibrant red and teal flowered dressing gown to the ensemble, the back of which reveals an anime cartoon of a fox-headed warrior. When in better spirits, Colin dresses smartly, in dark blue jeans and a collared blue or navy shirt. In lower spirits, he resorts to stained blue boxer shorts and a matching t-shirt, and a beige, hooded dressing gown.

Colin's sister, **Lisa**, shares his bright blue eyes and expressive face, but with higher cheekbones and significantly lower levels of mania. In her late thirties, she is a svelte, professional woman of average height, with shining, pale brown hair pulled back in a neat, low bun. She wears delicate, gold jewellery and

loose, but chicly-cut clothing: such as smart, wide-legged, belted trousers and oversized shirts or jumpers. On her first appearance, she wears a fitted white t-shirt and loose khaki blazer over a pair of flowing, forest green suit trousers, with a tan brown belt and matching suede court shoes. She moves with calm consideration, although moments of high emotion occasionally reveal shades of her brother's more animated manner.

Lisa's partner, **Brian**, also white and in his early forties, completes the trio. He is over 6 foot and of solid build, with a tidily groomed, dark brown beard and hair, which is cut short at the back and sides. Despite a relaxed, mirthful demeanor, his deep-set, bluish-grey eyes are doleful beneath his thick, brown eyebrows. Nevertheless, he strolls around the flat with easy confidence, and dresses with the same energy: typically pairing a plain, warm-shaded jumper, jacket or hoodie with a darker-coloured jean or trouser, and smart white or brown sneakers. He first appears in black jeans, white sneakers and a light green jumper, paired with a lightweight, khaki bomber jacket.

Cast and production credits

Colin - **Nicholas Burns**

Lisa - **Laura Haddock**

Brian - **Alex Price**

Set and costume design - **Sara Perks**

Lighting design - **Dave Howe**

Composer and sound designer - **Amanda Priestley**

The Gift is written by **Dave Florez** and directed by **Adam Meggido**.

Please note that, before the start of the second half, there will be a brief description of some small changes within the set.