TACHWEDD

by Jon Berry

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SAMUEL FRENCH

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NOTE

This edition reflects a rehearsal draft of the script and may differ from the final production.

Tachwedd was first produced by Phoebe Stringer Productions and Theatre503 and performed at Theatre503, London, on 15th October 2024. The cast and creative team were as follows:

IDWAL, EVANS, IOLO, ROB . . . . . Bedwyr Bowen
ELEANOR, JENI, MADLEN, JOURNALIST . . . . . Saran Morgan
ELERI, BECA, MAM, FFION . . . . . Carri Munn
HYWEL, GWYN, MORRIS, HARRY . . . . . Glyn Pritchard

Writer . . . . . Jon Berry
Director . . . . . Jac Ifan Moore
Set & Costume Designer . . . . . Rebecca Wood
Lighting Designer . . . . . James Harvey
Sound Designer & Composer . . . . . Joseff Harris
Stage Manager . . . . . Phoebe Buckland
Production Manager . . . . . Dylan Addison-Dunne
Producer . . . . . Phoebe Stringer
Marketing and Production Associate . . . . . Douglas Wood
Wardrobe Supervisor . . . . . Celia Favorite

AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

This play is a rope. It is a play all about twisting and time, the idea of lineage, you, your family, the people who share genes with you, share place and name and atoms. This is a play about the individual and wider society – how we come together, and how we fall apart. This play is a collection of resonances that suggest a fundamental, ringing together to bring out a note. This play is a series of shadows forming figures on the wall. This play is a series of multiples drawing closer together, and further apart. It would be a mistake to think of it having a core, but rather that it hangs together, constantly in motion, shimmering and catching the light in different ways. The play feels to me like a disintegration tape, or tape looping back on itself, becoming more saturated with sound until it cannot hold and music anymore and falls silent. I can imagine the earlier scenes running very quickly into one another, and as the ending approaches, spreading out, silences becoming longer, weightier maybe. At its core, the play is about history. History of a land, and of a people, and of one particular parcel of land that ties us together. It is about the subterranean ways history operates, like bindweed, slinking into your life before you ever knew it had taken root. How we realise that history enacts on us, how the past is in every way retold and re-enacted in the present, is the central conceit of the play. I have tried to make room for interpretation around playing and casting, though I've offered suggestions on the next page.

CHARACTERS

All characters are played by four actors. Suggested splits are below. All other characters should be played by the most available actor, or even by multiple actors.

ONE	TWO	THREE	FOUR
ELERI	HYWEL	ELEANOR	IDWAL
BECA	GWYN	JENI	EVANS
MAM	MORRIS	MADLEN	IOLO
FFION	HARRY	JOURNALIST	ROB

Other

RHIANNON

MR JAMES

SETTING & TIME

The action takes place across various time zones in North Wales. All of the action occurs on the same patch of land that makes up one particular house – every moment happens in that specific meterage, including the liminal scenes. The house shifts between forms, which are designated in the scene subtitles. There are no ghosts; the land itself holds the memories.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

(Italics in parentheses) indicate staging suggestions.

A dash (–) indicates an interruption.

The Hunting of The Great Boar

(Pre-history; A clearing of an ancient forest. In near darkness, **BODIES** *creep through, dressed in attire for hunting; any historical era will do.)*

VOICE. Tell me how it starts.

(The sound of ram horns, onstage at first, swelling, overcoming the audience, rattling the bones of the theatre.)

(A harsh white light as though glistening. A spirit settles.)

ONE. It begins to run.

(Lights change. A rudimentary campfire is lit, and a **GROUP** *are sat around it.)*

Stalking the beast, I followed it through undergrowth. Smelling its scent –

TWO. *(Incredulous.)* Smelling its scent!

ONE. Reading its movement through the bracken, through the unfurling tendrils of the ferns, down to the river's edge.

THREE. Where it rolled over and spoke!

FOUR. Please! An arrow right here!

ONE. Now, don't be ridiculous!

TWO. Friend, the ridiculous one is you, telling such a tall story.

FOUR. *(Imitating.)* I, nay only with a dagger of flint, did slice through to the otherworld –

ONE. It certainly seemed to be the otherworld to me!

*(***ALL BUT ONE** *laugh.)*

No no no, really it did happen!

THREE. Yes and I have healed wounds with the power of my piss.

(More chuckles.)

ONE. Brothers, listen. As I stalked the great beast –

TWO. Not from the beginning!

Ffion – House, 2024

ROB. And this is the kitchen.

FFION. It's nice.

ROB. The beams are original. Good couple of hundred years old. That's fire damage, from before we moved in. Only cosmetic. We were going to have it sorted but we never really got round to it.

FFION. We all have good intentions right?

ROB. Yeah. I'd offer you a cuppa but it's all packed away.

FFION. It's alright, I'm fine. I'll order something in.

ROB. Sure.

(Pause.)

I suppose that's it then.

(Pause.)

FFION. Yeah. Look I appreciate this must be difficult for you. I don't want to rush you out.

ROB. I know, I'm. I've taken enough time already.

FFION. Rob.

ROB. It's like having stitches removed. Got to just grin and bear it.

FFION. I wouldn't be able to tell you.

(Pause.)

ROB. You know I hardly recognised you, Ffion.

FFION. It's been a moment, hasn't it.

(Beat.)

ROB. It's funny. You would never have seen it furnished.

FFION. No.

(Pause.)

ROB. We don't have to talk about it now.

FFION. It's alright. I understand.

ROB. You two had a strained relationship.

FFION. She was my sister.

ROB. You wouldn't –

(Silence.)

FFION. I haven't got much to say that I haven't already said.

ROB. I can always read about it in your new book I suppose.

FFION. That isn't fair.

(Beat.)

ROB. Sorry. I am sorry.

FFION. Emotions are high.

ROB. Emotions are high.

FFION. I promise I'll take care of it for you.

ROB. It's yours now. You can do what you like.

(Pause.)

I'll get the last of the boxes and head out.

FFION. OK. Do you want a hand?

ROB. No. No it's alright. I sort of want to have a final you know, sendoff walk.

FFION. You go for it. Please.

ROB. Thanks.

(Pause.)

She loved this kitchen.

FFION. I'm sure she did.

(This hurts more than **ROB** *lets on – he doesn't respond.)*

Idwal – Farm House, 1758

IDWAL. Your father wants to build houses.

ELEANOR. For the quarrymen. Father says it's important to give them something to call their own.

IDWAL. He plans to sell them?

ELEANOR. No.

IDWAL. Oh.

ELEANOR. I'm not sure.

*(***IDWAL** *continues with his work.* **ELEANOR** *sits on a hay bale.)*

It's fun.

IDWAL. What is.

ELEANOR. Watching you work.

IDWAL. *(Stopping.)* I'm sure it is.

ELEANOR. Seeing you move.

IDWAL. Where has your father got in mind?

ELEANOR. I haven't asked.

(Pause.)

IDWAL. *(Back to the fork.)* Maybe you should.

ELEANOR. I'm not interested in father's business ventures. If he wants to build houses he can build houses. It isn't like he would want my opinion on things.

IDWAL. I'm sure he would.

ELEANOR. He would not. He would rather me married, in England somewhere. Oxford. Surrey.

IDWAL. Is that what you want?

(Moment.)

ELEANOR. I feel sick just thinking about it.

IDWAL. I'm sure you do.

ELEANOR. I prefer it here on the farm.

IDWAL. How so?

ELEANOR. People in the village talk about me. I can hear them, mocking me. They forget I grew up here much as they did. They look at me, peer at me from the shop windows. I can see them. And even when I can't see them, I can feel them.

IDWAL. The sheep don't stare?

ELEANOR. No. You treat me differently.

IDWAL. I treat you the same as everybody else.

ELEANOR. That is what I mean.

*(***IDWAL** *continues mucking out.* **ELEANOR** *paces about the area.)*

I would like to live here one day.

IDWAL. Maybe you should ask your father to buy it. That's what he does, doesn't he.

ELEANOR. Would you stay?

IDWAL. My family have been here a long time.

ELEANOR. You would be rich.

(Beat.)

IDWAL. My father would be rich. I would be a rich man's son.

ELEANOR. Just as I am a rich man's daughter.

IDWAL. I guess.

ELEANOR. Is that what you thought of me?

IDWAL. What do you mean?

ELEANOR. When you first saw me.

IDWAL. I don't remember.

ELEANOR. At chapel. The first time you saw me, after father had bought Hen Hafan Werdd and moved us here. I remember it as though it were yesterday.

IDWAL. I can't recall.

ELEANOR. You were sat about three rows down, with a cap on too small for your head.

IDWAL. It wasn't too small.

ELEANOR. You do remember.

IDWAL. I remember the cap.

ELEANOR. What did you think of me?

IDWAL. Eleanor we were children –

ELERI. *(Offstage.)* Idwal!

IDWAL. Here, Mam.

ELERI. *(Entering.)* Idwal, can you fetch this message into the doctor your father –

*(***ELERI** *notices* **ELEANOR**.*)*

ELEANOR. Good morning, Mrs. Vaughn.

ELERI. Morning, Eleanor.

(She dusts herself down unconsciously.)

I didn't know you were here.

ELEANOR. I had come to check on Idwal.

ELERI. That is thoughtful.

ELEANOR. How are you keeping?

ELERI. Yes. Yes fine, thank you. Idwal could you take this into town?

IDWAL. Yes, Mam.

ELERI. As soon as you can.

IDWAL. I won't be long.

ELEANOR. Is Mr Vaughn unwell?

(Silence.)

ELERI. He's. Frail, Eleanor.

(Moment.)

IDWAL. Shall I take that down Mam?

ELERI. Yes, please. Thank you love.

ELEANOR. I will come with you.

ELERI. Oh. Oh yes, you can take a horse, if you like, Idwal will set the trap for you. Llamrei likes an outing.

ELEANOR. That would be lovely.

ELERI. Will you be back for supper?

IDWAL. Another time perhaps.

ELEANOR. I would love to stay for supper.

ELERI. Yes, that would be lovely.

IDWAL. Shall we go?

ELERI. Don't be too long.

IDWAL. I won't.

ELEANOR. Goodbye, Mrs Vaughn.

Rooftop, 2007

(The roof of the house. Nothing but the sound of the town from a distance, the sound you only get in places people do not normally go.)

(Alone, on the edge, **RHIANNON***.)*

(She looks down to the pavement.)

(This has been coming for years.)

(This has been arriving her whole life.)

Gwyn – Terraced House, 1975

(Gwyn and Becca's house. **EVANS** *is snorting a daytime line of speed from a coaster, sat in an armchair.* **GWYN** *is having a can. On the TV, football. They're not watching it.)*

EVANS. So he calls me into his office, all smiles and all that, I'm thinking "this bastard really does think the sun shines out his arsehole." He calls me in, the boys are giving me that look, and he shuts the door.

GWYN. Who's this now?

EVANS. Matthews, big boy, wears those pointy shoes, likes to think he's executive cause he's a "manager".

GWYN. No clue.

EVANS. Well he shuts this door and I say to him, "Listen, before you start, I want you to know that my union are onto this already and I'll be sharing this conversation with them."

GWYN. Got to let them know where they stand.

EVANS. Exactly, so I say that and he just smiles at me like I'm fucking stupid or something, like I'm fucking daft, and he comes out with "We're restructuring the team and unfortunately you are not part of that new structure."

(Pause.)

GWYN. And that's it?

EVANS. That's all he said. Not even been here two minutes and he's saying shit like that to me.

GWYN. Didn't even bother bringing me in, just put a notice up on the wall.

EVANS. Fuck off.

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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