

*Acting Edition*

# Reykjavík

by Steve Yockey

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|| SAMUEL FRENCH ||

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### **IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS**

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*REYKJAVÍK* opened October 27, 2018, at Actor's Express (Freddie Ashley, Artistic Director) in Atlanta, GA, as a part of a National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere. The production was directed by Melissa Foulger, with set and projection design by Seamus M. Bourne, costumes by Abby Parker, lighting by Ben Rawson, sound by Dan Bauman, and props by Melisa A. Dubois. The Production Stage Manager was Jude Futral. The cast was as follows:

**JAMES**..... Gil Eplan-Frankle  
**DEBBIE**..... Stephanie Friedman  
**GRIGOR**..... Ben Thorpe  
**MARTIN** .....Michael Vine  
**PETER** ..... Joe Sykes  
**NAOMI** ..... Eliana Marianes

Subsequent Rolling World Premiere productions of *REYKJAVÍK* were at Kitchen Dog Theatre in Dallas, TX, and Rorschach Theater in Washington, D.C.

*REYKJAVÍK* was developed with assistance from the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and the National New Play Network.

## CHARACTERS

**JAMES** – A young man, pretty and carefree, but his laissez-faire attitude comes from having lost a lot in life.

**Also plays:**

**HANK** – A zealous, possibly immortal sex worker.

**EBON** – An optimistic and very romantic raven.

**DEBBIE** – A woman, probably psychic. Debbie is not her real name but she's pretty chill about the whole "identity" thing.

**Also plays:**

**LYDIA** – A pretty chill hotel employee.

**AMBIANCE SISTER** – A magic presence, half of a whole.

**INGRID** – An upbeat, pretty chill international stalker.

**And:**

**HULDUFÓLK (F)** – A "hidden person."

**GRIGOR** – A man, murderous, patient, quiet except when passionately invested in "torch song" karaoke, possibly an invention.

**Also plays:**

**LEÓ** – A very professional hotel employee.

**AARON** – Unable to express himself.

**MARTIN** – A man, solicitous and very focused. He baits the hook, in love with his "good friend" Grigor, possibly an invention.

**Also plays:**

**ROSS** – A man, a quality planner and decision maker.

**ROBERT** – A lonely customer too willing to believe.

**MAN IN THE DOWN COAT** – A mouthy drunk.

**PETER** – A man, a stoner, open-minded and that's a good thing, the kind of guy who just lets things happen.

**Also plays:**

**MIKE** – A man, Ross's boyfriend, a cocky tourist.

**DAVEY** – Deeply frustrated with his relationship.

**HULDUFÓLK (M)** – A hidden person.

**NAOMI** – A woman, James' sister, with a bright pink stripe in her thick braid, and a lot of regret. Still uneasy after dying young.

**Also plays:**

**LIL** – A hotel employee, not into her current gig.

**VALERIE** – Gun-shy about love, always on the move.

**AMBIANCE SISTER** – A magic presence, half of a whole.

## SETTING

Reykjavík, Iceland.

## TIME

Winter.

## AUTHOR'S NOTES

[ ] indicate overlapping dialogue.

Licensees should retain the doubling outlined in the Character Breakdown as the doubling is specific to the storytelling.

The entire play takes place in and around Reykjavík, Iceland. All of the locations are ephemeral places, transitory, the kind of places people pass through or stop to rest but do not stay for long.

When the “torrent of blood” arrives during “Incisor,” think more gradual dump bucket as opposed to a rain effect. It should read as a moment of abrupt violence.

### **About the Space:**

The performing space could be relatively bare, only what's necessary, or maybe it's an avalanche of various and sundry items. It's open to interpretation and exploration. The only must is a nondescript bed. No matter what, light and sound are going to do a lot of heavy lifting here. There is also signage. It can be practical or projected (onto a wall or other surface), and it displays the location of each scene. Those locations are indicated with the phrase **SIGN READS** at the top of each scene. Maybe it also includes scene titles.

The location projections/practicals are distinct from the running projected dialogue throughout “Jawbone.”

### **A Note on Songs:**

The song that the Ambiance Sisters hum in the “Bittersweet” scenes will ideally be a slowed down, harmonized version of something like Blondie's “Call Me” or Cyndi Lauper's “When You Were Mine.”

A license to produce *Reykjavík* does not include a performance license for “Call Me” or “When You Were Mine.” The publisher and author suggest that the licensee contact ASCAP or BMI to ascertain the music publisher and contact such music publisher to license or acquire permission for performance of the song. If a license or permission is unattainable for “Call Me” or “When You Were Mine,” the licensee may

not use the song in *Reykjavík* but should create an original composition in a similar style or use a similar song in the public domain. For further information, please see the Music and Third-Party Materials Use Note on page iii.



1.

**Jawbone**

*(SIGN READS: "An after hours lounge.")*

*(JAMES sits in a round booth with a table in front of him, or it's at least an approximation of a booth. The table is covered with empty glasses. DEBBIE leans next to him. She's in a short slip dress and has a pair of large gold headphones on. She's fully unconscious. On the other side of JAMES, two men sit in the booth. MARTIN and GRIGOR. Everyone looks like they were going out to score.)*

*(It's an after hours spot. The music is very loud.\* Bass heavy. It's difficult to hear. All dialogue is projected somewhere onstage.)*

**JAMES.** Thanks for the drinks.

**MARTIN.** You're very welcome.

**JAMES.** What?

**MARTIN.** You're welcome!

**JAMES.** It's really cool of you to buy so many rounds.  
I mean, I don't even know how many. I am officially drunk.

**MARTIN.** That's okay.

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**JAMES.** And I'm not very good at math anyway.

*(JAMES and MARTIN laugh. GRIGOR just sips his drink.)*

**MARTIN.** Are you feeling good, James?

**JAMES.** What?

**MARTIN.** Your name is James, right?

**JAMES.** Yes. I'm James. Did you, did you say your name?

**MARTIN.** I'm Martin. This is my best friend, Grigor. He doesn't speak any English. He really doesn't know what's going on, so just ignore him. But he knows when something looks good. He knows that much.

*(JAMES lifts his drink to GRIGOR. The MAN lifts his drink back.)*

See, you're already friends. We're all friends.

**JAMES.** You're slick, huh? Did you, did you say where you're from?

**MARTIN.** Around here.

**JAMES.** Did you say you're from around here?

**MARTIN.** No.

**JAMES.** It is so loud.

**MARTIN.** Are you feeling good tonight?

**JAMES.** Oh! Oh, this is Debbie. I'm calling her Debbie, I don't know if that's right. She passed out for a minute.

**MARTIN.** We were hoping you'd come back to our room.

**JAMES.** What?

**MARTIN.** Grigor and I saw you over here by yourself and we hoped you'd come back to our room.

**JAMES.** I'm not by myself. I'm with Debbie.

**MARTIN.** She's your girlfriend?

**JAMES.** Oh no, no. I just met her tonight, she kind of crashed into my booth. I just mean Debbie counts as a person so I'm not alone.

**MARTIN.** And are you feeling good?

**JAMES.** You know, I am. I was kinda down earlier, but it's a fun night.

**MARTIN.** Down?

**JAMES.** Sad.

**MARTIN.** Why sad?

**JAMES.** This whole trip is a kind of, I came to see the northern lights. I promised someone I'd see the northern lights and I finally saved up the money to come here, but I haven't been able to see them. I kind of fail at things.

**MARTIN.** It's the middle of winter.

**JAMES.** What?

**MARTIN.** It's the wrong time of year.

**JAMES.** Fuck, man, that's what everyone keeps saying. And tonight's my last night here. I have to go back.

**MARTIN.** I'm afraid you won't see them.

**JAMES.** Well, I'm not gonna just stay in a bar all night.

**MARTIN.** So you are feeling good?

**JAMES.** You already, didn't you ask me that? I'm pretty fucked up but I think you asked me that.

*(Suddenly DEBBIE's eyes shoot open and she leans forward. Her voice is amplified and has reverb as she screams out...)*

**DEBBIE.** There's blood!! There's blood falling from the sky!!!

*(The **MEN** stare as she relaxes back into her seat. They all start laughing. She smiles at them. Her voice returns to normal.)*

**DEBBIE.** That was so insane!

*(And she starts laughing. She lowers the headphones from her ears so they hang around her neck.)*

**JAMES.** Debbie, you're so crazy.

**DEBBIE.** Who's Debbie?

**JAMES.** You are.

**DEBBIE.** Am I?

*(They laugh. She's basically barely conscious. **MARTIN** taps **JAMES** to get his attention again.)*

**MARTIN.** I have another question.

**JAMES.** Surprise me.

**MARTIN.** Are you feeling good?

**JAMES.** You did not surprise me.

**MARTIN.** But are you feeling good?

**JAMES.** Martin, I am feeling so much better than I was earlier! Fuck the northern lights and their cosmic game of hide and seek. They can fuck off!

**MARTIN.** You want to feel even better?

**JAMES.** I didn't hear you.

**MARTIN.** I asked if you want to feel even better?

**JAMES.** Always.

*(**JAMES** laughs. **MARTIN** smiles, but it seems predatory. He looks over at **GRIGOR** and then*

*slips under the table between JAMES' legs. JAMES is startled at first as MARTIN undoes his pants. He looks at GRIGOR...)*

Your friend is a show off, right? Oh, you don't speak English. You don't even know what I'm, sorry. Sorry.

*(GRIGOR lifts his drink to JAMES again. JAMES lifts his glass back and is instantly distracted as MARTIN goes down on him. He looks down...)*

Someone's gonna see you. Someone's gonna...

*(MARTIN continues. JAMES tilts his head back and enjoys.)*

Okay. Okay.

**DEBBIE.** *(To GRIGOR.)* Hey, you! Where did your friend go?

*(GRIGOR just stares.)*

Oh! Is he magic?

*(DEBBIE looks under the table and immediately sits back up, laughing again.)*

That's not magic! Am I magic? Maybe I'm magic. Oh, James. James!

*(JAMES looks over at her, still clearly enjoying himself.)*

**JAMES.** Uh huh?

**DEBBIE.** I just remembered I'm magic.

**JAMES.** Good.

**DEBBIE.** Let me read your palm. Give me your palm; I'm going to read it.

*(She takes his hand.)*

**JAMES.** You're reading my future?

**DEBBIE.** I don't know, let me look.

**JAMES.** Can you even do that?

*(She looks.)*

**DEBBIE.** Maybe. Maybe I'm an unconventional heroine.  
Maybe I see all the answers and then...

**JAMES.** Oh my god that feels good.

**DEBBIE.** Oh. Oh no. That's...that's awful.

**JAMES.** What did you say?

*(DEBBIE releases his hand and takes off her gold headphones.)*

**DEBBIE.** Nothing. I'm gonna get more drinks. But I want you to listen to this. You need to listen to this, okay?

**JAMES.** I'm kinda busy.

**DEBBIE.** You're not busy. He's busy.

**JAMES.** Okay.

**DEBBIE.** I'm gonna just...

*(She puts the gold headphones on JAMES and sets her MP3 player next to him. Just as she walks off, she presses play. JAMES inhales sharply and...)*

*(The club music suddenly dims to a dull thud, as if most of it is being cancelled out. The lights suddenly zero in on JAMES, a pin spot on his face and chest. A string quartet softly plays.\* It's barely audible; as if it's coming from the gold headphones and we can*

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*barely hear it over the muted bass of the club. GRIGOR is still somewhat visible. MARTIN is still moving under the table. But the focus isolates JAMES. His eyes aren't any clearer, but the world around him is stark. The words just pour out of him in a waterfall and this dialogue is not projected...)*

**JAMES.** My older sister Naomi used to show me pictures of the northern lights in this big, coffee table book of nature's wonders even though I was little and she was already in high school and the photos were so gorgeous and colorful, they were mesmerizing, and Naomi used to promise me we would go there and she made me promise her we would go somewhere really far north and see those lights in the sky and I did promise, not because I felt like I had to or anything, I wanted to see them dancing in the sky, it was more than just the fact I worshipped her, and I did worship her because she let me feel like a part of things and she held my hand in public because I was nervous around crowds and let me pick the color for the pink stripe in her hair, she had this amazing thick braid with a hot pink stripe and it was wonderful and I never told my parents about Naomi's boyfriends or how she would describe to me what it was like to kiss them and I didn't know why yet but it was magical and I never told them that she would sneak out of the sliding door in her room that led to the back patio and then knock on the window so I could sneak into her room and let her back in because it was just for us, no one else needed to know and I didn't understand one morning when my parents found that sliding door wide open, Naomi's room was so cold and Naomi was gone, but none of her shoes were missing and fresh snow covered any tracks but why would she go barefoot into the snow, and I was angry that she went to see the northern lights without me until the spring came and the snow melted and they found Naomi's jawbone by the creek, only her jawbone

and some teeth and nothing else, but it was enough to know she was never coming back and my life stopped and never started again and now I fail at everything, love, work, finding fucking lights in the...

*(JAMES yanks the headphones off and slams them down on the table. The music immediately blasts back up to the loud volume and the lights return to normal.)*

*(JAMES, breathing heavy, drinks his entire drink all at once. And he drinks whatever's left in another nearby glass.)*

You're, uh, you're doing a great job down there. What was your name again? Martin. Your name's Martin.

*(Pause. JAMES calms down and gets into MARTIN's rhythm. His eyes are closed.)*

*(After a moment, JAMES opens his eyes to find GRIGOR staring at him.)*

How's it going?

*(GRIGOR puts his drink down and smiles. He speaks at a regular volume, not trying to be heard.)*

**GRIGOR.** We put something in your drink.

**JAMES.** What?

**GRIGOR.** We're going to fuck you while you're unconscious.

**JAMES.** What? I can't... I can't hear you.

**GRIGOR.** Then we're going to kill you.

*(JAMES motions that he just can't hear anything. GRIGOR starts laughing. JAMES smiles at him, oblivious, and then makes*

*the familiar face of someone who is about to cum...)*

**JAMES.** Whoa. Whoa, whoa.

*(JAMES pulls MARTIN up before he can finish the job and uses his shirt to cover himself while buttoning up his jeans.)*

**MARTIN.** Are you feeling good?

**JAMES.** Yes.

**MARTIN.** Come back to our room and you'll feel even better.

**JAMES.** I'm supposed to see the northern lights.

**MARTIN.** You will not be successful.

*(Pause.)*

**JAMES.** You're right.

**MARTIN.** But we will all be friends and feel amazing together.

**JAMES.** I really... I want to feel amazing.

# **WAIT, THERE'S MORE!**

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