Acting Edition

It Comes In Waves

by James McDermott

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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.

IT COMES IN WAVES was produced by Eastern Angles Theatre Productions and Seagull Theatre, touring East Anglia from 19 June 2026. The cast and creative team were as follows:

HOWARD . . . . . Ben Nealon
CRYSTAL . . . . . Érin Geraghty
JORDAN . . . . . Meg Artherton

Writer . . . . . James McDermott
Director . . . . . Jake Smith
Sound & Video Designer . . . . . Jack Baxter
Lighting Designer . . . . . Jason Addison
Scenic Concept . . . . . Jake Smith
Scenic Visualisation . . . . . Amy Watts
Company Stage Manager . . . . . Helena Pettitt
Set Construction . . . . . John Currie
Press . . . . . Chloé Nelkin Consulting
Production Artwork . . . . . Jess Baker
Production Photography . . . . . Mike Kwasniak

Eastern Angles is a regionally focused theatre company with a broad world view in our approach to creating work with community groups and artists in East Anglia.

Our productions are ambitious, dynamic and a good night out.

We aspire to be Radically Hospitable. We aim to put extraordinary effort and emphasis on making people feel welcome. We seek to remove barriers that prevent people from participating in the shared experience of arts, heritage and culture.

We are honoured to be a Change Partner with Ramps on the Moon and are committed to embedding anti-ableism across our organisation.

We are pleased to be an active member of Future Arts Centres, an active network of UK arts centres.

We are proud and committed to rural community touring and to enhancing the engagement and infrastructure of culture in the East of England.

We have a passion for supporting children, young people and our intergenerational audience to achieve their creative potential and ensure access to high-quality cultural experiences are available in the places we live or where we go to school.

Artistic Director & Chief Executive Officer: Jake Smith
General Manager: Jess Baker
Technical Coordinator: Steph Coxall
Development & Partnership Officer: Holly Morgan
Creative Communities Coordinator: Kirsty Tallent
Marketing, Data & Communications Officer: Drew Turner
Box Office & Front of House Coordinator: Vera Maia
Workshop Facilitator: Rebecca Abbott
Workshop Facilitators: Grace Wellfare

Board of Director: Alison Stewart MBE, Stephen Taylor, Simon Hooton, Jayne Phoenix, Assis Carreiro MBE, Leslie Miller, Samuel Biscoe, Harrison Rose

Venue Address: The Eastern Angles Centre, Gatacre Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2LQ
Admin: 01473 218202
admin@easternangles.co.uk
www.easternangles.co.uk
Facebook: EasternAnglesTheatreCompany
Instagram: easternangles

Special thanks to our wonderful team of volunteers without whom much of what we do would not be possible.



The Seagull is a not-for-profit community arts venue serving an area of high deprivation. For more than eighteen years, we have taken a place-based approach to supporting our town through arts activity that challenges structural barriers to access and broadens participation.

Our blended model combines high-quality programming with embedded partnerships and a grassroots ethos, delivering performances, activities and workshops that increase engagement, improve wellbeing, reduce isolation and contribute to the economic regeneration of our community.

Manager: Karen Read
Deputy Manager: Des Reynolds
Assistant Manager: Josh Harley
Finance: Jo Green
Youth Opportunities Worker: Josh Pickering
Marketing Assistant: Cerys Roscoe
Digital Inclusion Worker: Hannah Bullent
Carers Support Worker: Lizi Reeve

Board of Directors: Ian Foster, Malcolm Short, Liz Hall, Bridget Foster (Observer), Elizabeth Riach (Financial Oversight)

Venue Address: The Seagull, 19-75 Morton Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 0JH
Admin: 01502 589726
Community@theseagull.co.uk
www.theseagull.co.uk
Facebook: seagulltheatre

Special thanks to our wonderful team of volunteers without whom much of what we do would not be possible.

CAST

BEN NEALON | Howard

Trained at Drama Centre.

Theatre includes: *Black Coffee*, *Go Back for Murder*, *Murder on the Nile*, *Witness for the Prosecution*, *Spider's Web*, *The Unexpected Guest*, *The Hollow* and *Murder on Air* (Agatha Christie Theatre Company); Algernon in *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Feste in *Twelfth Night* (Mercury Theatre, Colchester); *Search And Destroy* (New End); *Harvest* (Southwark Playhouse); *The End of the Sentence* (Finborough); *Death and the Ploughman* (Gate Theatre); tours of *Passport to Pimlico* and *The Diary Of Anne Frank*. *You Will Find Me* and *Doubting Thomas* (Theatre Royal Windsor); Tony Wendice in Sean Mathias' production of *Dial M for Murder*, Nigel Lawrence in Agatha Christie's *Love from a Stranger*, Nocella in *Filumena*, Father Kelleher in *Catch Me If You Can*, Charlie Wilder in *Cat and the Canary*, *The Book Thief* in the "Off West End Award" winning Dreamcatcher and Juror 12 in the international tour of *Twelve Angry Men*.

Television: Lt Jeremy Forsythe in 4 series of ITV's award winning *Soldier Soldier*; *The Bill*, *Casualty*, *Holby City*, *Survivors – Kidnapped in Cambodia*, *Between the Lines*, *EastEnders*, *Bugs*, *Dream Team* and as DI Baxter in *Doctors*.

Film: *The Rising: The Ballad Of Mangal Pandey* and Oscar-nominated *Lagaan: Once Upon a Time in India*. Ross Bano in *They're Gone*, *Once There Was a Girl*, *The Grave*, *Perks*, *The Northern Lights*, *The Loneliest Boy in the World* and *Wirecard*.

Radio: John Gregg in the world premiere of Agatha Christie's *The Lie* for BBC Radio 4.

Director: The short film: *A Masque from Italy*.

ÉRIN GERAGHTY | Crystal

An actor for over fifty years, Érin's stagework includes Punchdrunk's *Small Wonders*, *Kindertransport*, *Time and Tide* and *Dancing At Lughnasa*.

Screenwork includes three years in *Angels*, *Knightmare*, *Nighty Night* and *That'll Be the Day* (BBC). Érin is a voice over/dubbing artiste often working in her Native Irish accent.

MEG ARTHERTON | Jordan

Meg Artherton is an actor and musician originally from Norfolk.

Meg trained at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts graduating in 2024. Credits: *Onwards and Sideways* (BBC); *Absent Friends* (Sheringham Little Theatre Rep); *Art De-tectives* (AcornTV); *Casualty* (BBC); *Shanty* (Sheringham Little Theatre).

CREATIVE

JAMES McDERMOTT | Writer

James McDermott is a writer and teacher based in Norwich.

In 2016, he graduated from the University of East Anglia with an MA (Distinction) in Scriptwriting. James also trained on the Royal Court Writers' Group, Soho Theatre's Writers' Lab, Hampstead Theatre's Inspire: The Next Playwright Programme, Criterion Theatre's New Writing Group, Menagerie Theatre's Young Writers' Workshop, Hat Trick Productions Your Voice, Your Story Scheme and BBC's *EastEnders* Writers' Shadow Scheme.

James's plays published by Concord Theatricals include *Jab* (Finborough Theatre/Park Theatre; nominated for an Off West End Theatre Award for Best New Play; Broadway World UK/West End Award for Best New Production of a Play; London Pub Theatres Standing Ovation Award), *Time and Tide* (Park Theatre/East of England Tour; nominated for an Off West End Theatre Award for Best New Play; longlisted for the Bruntwood and Verity Bargate Playwriting Prizes; shortlisted for the Snoo Wilson Playwriting Prize) and *Rubber Ring* (Pleasance Islington/UK Tour; Winner of Pulse Festival's Suitcase Prize).

James's other plays include *The Wind in the Willows* (Sheringham Little Theatre/Norfolk & Norwich Festival); *More… Ghost Stories by Candlelight* (HighTide/East of England Tour/Sam Wanamaker Playhouse); *The Birds and the Bees* (New Wolsey/UK Tour); *Shanty* (Sheringham Little Theatre); *Robin Good: The Politico-Panto* (Norwich Playhouse) and *Ghosted* (St George's Theatre/Out There Festival).

James has written multiple episodes of BBC One soap opera *EastEnders* and *Doctor Who* audio drama for Big Finish Productions.

James's poetry collections include *Father Myself* (Nine Arches Press), *Wild Life* (Nine Arches Press), *Erased* (Polari Press) and *Manatomy* (Burning Eye Books).

James is a playwriting teacher for the National Theatre's New Views Programme, an Arvon writing tutor and lectures in creative writing at the University of East Anglia.

JAKE SMITH | Director

Jake Smith is the Artistic Director and CEO of Eastern Angles, the touring theatre company for the East of England.

Jake has held positions as Resident Director at the Almeida Theatre, developing new work for the venue, and was invited by the National Theatre to their Directors Programme in 2017. Jake worked as a Trainee Director at Chichester Festival Theatre (2014–2016) under the tutelage of Jonathan Church, where he assisted directors such as Jonathan Kent, Howard Davies, Nadia Fall and Max Stafford-Clark.

His credits as a director include: *We Aren't Kids Anymore* (Savoy Theatre); *Beauty and the Beast* (New Wolsey Theatre); *Teechers* (New Wolsey Theatre); *Stones in His Pockets*, *The Deep* (Eastern Angles); *Into the Woods* (Southwark Elephant); *Cinderella: A Fairytale* (Northern Stage); *The Crooked Spire: The Musical* (Pomegranate Theatre); *The Wasp* (Customs House); *Off the Wall* (Hadrian's Wall 1900); *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (UK Tour); *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (Northern Stage & UK Tour); *A Christmas Carol* (Chichester Festival Theatre); *West End Girls* (Live Theatre); *It's a Wonderful Life*, *Goodnight Mister Tom*, *Little Women* (East Riding Theatre); *I'm Gonna Pray for You So Hard* (Off West End Award nominee for Best Director, Finborough Theatre); *Andy Capp: The Musical* (Finborough Theatre); *The Nutcracker Re-Miced* (Durham Gala); *The Tempest*, *As You like It*, *Henry V*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Hamlet* (Petersfield Shakespeare Festival) and *The Buried Moon* (Rose Playhouse, Theatre Royal Winchester & Tour).

Credits as an Assistant, Associate and Resident Director include: *Aspects of Love* (West End); *Back to the Future: The Musical* (Manchester Opera House), *The Height of the Storm* (West End & UK Tour); *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (West End & UK Tour); *The Last Ship: The Musical* (Northern Stage & UK Tour); *For Services Rendered*, *Miss Julie*, *Black Comedy*, *Way Upstream*, *One Hundred and One Dalmatians*, *Gypsy*, *Pitcairn* (Chichester Festival Theatre) and *Stevie* (Hampstead Theatre).

JACK BAXTER | Sound and Video Designer

Jack is a video and sound designer. He trained at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Theatre: *Gulliver's Reisen* at Deutsches National Theater (video); *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (sound) and *The Mountaintop* (sound & video) at Leicester Curve; *Maiden Voyage* (video) and *Midnight Cowboy* (video) at Southwark Playhouse; *Pig Heart Boy* (video) and *The Wolf, the Duck and the Mouse* (sound) at Unicorn Theatre; *Grud* at Hampstead Theatre (sound & video); *Metamorphoses* (sound) and *The Lies You Tell* (sound) at New Wolsey Theatre; *Kitchen Sink* (sound) at Queen's Theatre Hornchurch.

Film/TV credits: BBC, National Theatre, Channel 4.

JASON ADDISON | Lighting Designer

Jason is a Graduate of the ALPD Lumière Scheme.

He has worked in the industry for more than twenty years in various disciplines throughout the UK and internationally, including theatre tours, cruise ships, dance, circus, events, live music and at a number of regional theatres.

Jason works as a Lighting Designer, Associate/Assistant and Relighter. He is also a Lighting Tutor at the University Centre Leeds. Jason is a Professional Member of the ALPD, ABTT and Equity.

See www.jasonaddison.com for a full credits list.

CHARACTERS

HOWARD – fifties
CRYSTAL – sixties
JORDAN – nineteen

SETTING

A grief café in a community space in Lowestoft, East Anglia

TIME

Today

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to the original cast, Meg Artherton, Érin Geraghty and Ben Nealon, for all their help and insights whilst researching and developing this script, and for bringing Jordan, Crystal and Howard, respectively, to life each night with such skill and sensitivity.

Thanks to director Jake Smith for his help developing the script and for directing the original production with such heart, imagination and precision.

Thanks to Karen Read of the Seagull Theatre Lowestoft for gifting me a creative bursary to write the first draft of this play.

Thanks to all those at Eastern Angles and the Seagull Theatre who have worked on bringing the original touring production of this play to the stage.

Thanks to grief recovery specialist Simon Arthur for his help when researching this play.

Thanks to Neil McPherson at the Finborough Theatre for his dramaturgical feedback on drafts of this play.

Thanks to Arts Council England for supporting the original East of England tour of this production with generous funding.

Thanks to all at Concord Theatricals for designing and publishing this beautiful play text.

Thanks to my agent, Micheline Steinberg, for her support, guidance and wisdom.

Thanks to my partner, Aaron, for his love, companionship, encouragement and feedback.

This play is dedicated to the memory of my father,
Shaun McDermott.

0

(As a preset, perhaps group leader **HOWARD** *welcomes the audience to the grief café. Maybe he helps them make a tea or coffee, grab a biscuit, find a seat.)*

1

(When everyone's in, **HOWARD** *addresses his audience.)*

HOWARD. Right. Well. Shall we er…make a start?
Well done for – coming along today: I know it can – take a lot to cross that threshold so…
For those who don't know, my name's Howard and er…
Well: that's it really. I'm Howard.
Shall we er – start by snaking round the room and saying our names?

(Suddenly, stalwart member **CRYSTAL**, *always late, bursts through the door.)*

CRYSTAL. Sorry sorry sorry.

HOWARD. It's fine. Come in.

CRYSTAL. Didn't have change for the car park.

HOWARD. Grab a chair.

CRYSTAL. You'd think it'd be contactless now, like the one at Morrissons but…

HOWARD. Just – grab a chair.

CRYSTAL. Kettle on?

HOWARD. Yep…

*(***CRYSTAL** *heads over to the kettle, flicks it on, noisily starts making a cup of coffee –)*

CRYSTAL. Ooh good. Freezing my bits off out there, 'scuse my French.

HOWARD. Um…right, well, do you want to make a drink then join the group?

CRYSTAL. Anyone else want one or –?

HOWARD. Crystal: we have started so –

CRYSTAL. Sorry sorry sorry, ignore me, I'm not here…

(The sound of the boiling kettle starts to assert itself.)

(Behind **HOWARD***'s back,* **CRYSTAL** *removes a hip flask and tips a shot of alcohol into a mug.)*

HOWARD. Right. Well. Where was I?

(A tentative knock at the door.)

(A moment.)

CRYSTAL. Who's there: the Grim Reaper?

(The door opens and in shuffles new member **JORDAN***, who doesn't want to be there, holding a well-thumbed leaflet.)*

HOWARD. Hello.

CRYSTAL. Come in, love: we don't bite. Not unless you're male and under fifty…

*(***HOWARD** *eyes* **CRYSTAL***, who mimes zipping up her lips and finishes making her coffee.)*

HOWARD. You must be Jordan? It's Howard?

*(***JORDAN** *looks between* **HOWARD***, smiling* **CRYSTAL***, the group…)*

For the –?

CRYSTAL. Death caff?

HOWARD. Grief café.

CRYSTAL. It's not actually a caff. Don't know why they call it that. You don't have to pay for nothing.

*(***CRYSTAL** *bites into her second biscuit.)*

HOWARD. I do… Jordan: do you – want to come in then or…?

*(**JORDAN** looks at the group then back to the door she's just come through…)*

2

*(**HOWARD**, **CRYSTAL** and **JORDAN** sit on chairs in a semicircle.)*

HOWARD. Eight.

(A moment.)

CRYSTAL. Five.

(A moment.)

HOWARD. Jordan?

(A moment.)

How would you say you're feeling today? Out of –

JORDAN. One.

(A moment.)

*(**JORDAN** folds her arms.)*

3

HOWARD. Right. Well. Crystal: you're next. Tell us as much or as little as you like about what's brought you here today?

CRYSTAL. I'm here for the same reason as everyone else: free coffee and cake.

*(***CRYSTAL** *laughs.* **JORDAN** *smirks.* **HOWARD** *forces a smile.)*

HOWARD. Anything else you'd – like to add or –?

CRYSTAL. Yeah: quiche would be nice an' all.

*(***JORDAN** *sniggers.* **CRYSTAL** *beams, glad of a new audience.* **HOWARD** *notes this.)*

HOWARD. Right. Well. Noted. Moving on… Jordan?

(Suddenly **JORDAN** *stops smiling.)*

If you're happy to share…who are you here to remember?

(A moment.)

(Then **JORDAN** *wells up with tears and covers her face with her hands.)*

*(***HOWARD** *and* **CRYSTAL** *take her in.)*

4

*(**HOWARD** holds a tray of different sized and shaped pebbles.)*

HOWARD. Right. Well. We've er – got a tray of pebbles here, from Pakefield Beach. What I'd like us to do is to pass the tray round the group and for us to each pick the rock that best reflects how you're feeling today.

*(**JORDAN** tuts.)*

Once you've picked one, I'd like you to hold it up so the group can see it. You don't have to explain anything… Just pick the one that best represents your mood today and – hold it up in the air so we can see it. Does that make sense?

*(**CRYSTAL** nods.)*

*(**JORDAN** eyes **HOWARD** then shrugs.)*

Right. Well. I can go first…

*(**HOWARD** looks at the tray of rocks.)*

(Eventually, he picks a big, strong but heavy one and holds it up for the group to see.)

*(**CRYSTAL** nods as if she understands him.)*

*(**JORDAN** glares at **HOWARD** and his big, manly stone.)*

*(**HOWARD** passes the tray on to **CRYSTAL**, who takes her time staring at the rocks.)*

*(And then **CRYSTAL** holds up a small black stone.)*

*(**HOWARD**'s surprise.)*

*(**JORDAN** stares at **CRYSTAL**, taking her in, re-seeing her…)*

*(Feeling exposed, **CRYSTAL** quickly puts the stone back on the tray and passes it to **JORDAN**.)*

*(**JORDAN** stares at the stones for some time.)*

HOWARD. Are you – okay Jordan?

*(**JORDAN** keeps staring at the tray of stones.)*

Do you – want to say something? About what's coming up for you?

*(**JORDAN** just keeps staring at the tray of stones.)*

*(Then, tentatively, **JORDAN** holds the whole tray in the air.)*

*(**CRYSTAL**'s confusion…)*

*(**HOWARD**'s concern: is **JORDAN** going to drop the tray of stones?)*

*(But **JORDAN** just keeps holding the tray in the air.)*

You…feel like – all of them today?

(A moment.)

*(**JORDAN** nods, surprised to have been understood.)*

*(**HOWARD** smiles at **JORDAN**.)*

*(**JORDAN** manages the smallest smile back.)*

*(**HOWARD** takes back the tray of stones.)*

JORDAN. My dad.

HOWARD. Sorry?

(A moment.)

Who you're…here to remember?

(A moment.)

*(**JORDAN** nods.)*

*(**HOWARD** smiles.)*

Thank you. And – what's his name?

(A moment.)

JORDAN. His name was –

HOWARD. His name *is*.

(A moment.)

JORDAN. His name is…George.

HOWARD. George. My granddad's name. Thank you, Jordan.

*(**HOWARD** smiles at **JORDAN**, who smiles back.)*

*(**CRYSTAL** takes in brave **JORDAN**.)*

CRYSTAL. Terry… My husband…

*(**JORDAN** looks to **CRYSTAL** and they share a smile.)*

HOWARD. Terry. Thanks Crystal.

(A moment.)

CRYSTAL. But I am mainly here for the coffee and cake…

*(**JORDAN** laughs.)*

*(**HOWARD** does too.)*

CRYSTAL. Who are you here to remember, Howard?

(A moment.)

HOWARD. *(To audience.)* Right. Well. Never mind me… Who's next?

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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