

# *The Dead* (1987)



Directed by John Huston (1987)

Tony Huston (screenplay)

James Joyce (story)

James Joyce:  
Ireland's most famous writer



# The time and place of *The Dead*

- Set in Dublin on January 6, 1904
- The annual party hosted by the Morkan sisters to celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany.
- You will be introduced to a crowd of people, so be prepared for that.

# Key characters in *The Dead*

Gretta Conroy (*Anjelica Huston*)

Gabriel Conroy, her husband and the aunts' favorite nephew (*Donal McCann*)

Aunt Kate Morkan (*Helena Carroll*)

Aunt Julia Morkan (*Cathleen Delany*)

Mary Jane, their niece (*Ingrid Craigie*)

Lily, the maid (*Rachael Dowling*)

Mr. Daniel Browne, a Protestant (*Dan O'Herlihy*)

Freddy Malins, the drunk (*Donal Donnelly*)

Mrs. Malins, Freddy's mother (*Marie Kean*)

Bartell D'Arcy, a tenor (*Frank Patterson*)

Molly Ivors, a radical (*Maria McDermottroe*)

Mr. Grace (*Sean McClory*)

Miss Furlong (*Katherine O'Toole*)

Miss O'Callaghan (*Maria Hayden*)

# Epiphany

- Feast of the Three Kings and the recognition of Jesus's divinity
- In Joyce's work: a sudden, brilliant insight that reveals a previously unknown truth.
- The film closes with Gabriel's epiphany, which is about Ireland as much as it is about Gabriel.

# Settings in *The Dead*

- The interiors were shot in a warehouse in Valencia, on the I-5 north of Los Angeles.
- But the exteriors really are Dublin.
- The Morkan house is, as specified in the original story, 15 Ushers Island, on the south quays of the River Liffey, at the James Joyce Bridge (opened in 2003) to Blackhall Place.
- Other genuine Irish locations include the Halfpenny Bridge over the Liffey; Temple Bar; Anglesea Street and Henrietta Street.

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# Political and Cultural references

- James Connolly
- Daniel O'Connell
- Emigration
- A “West Briton” [remember that Ireland was not independent in 1904; it was part of Britain, like Wales]
- Irish cultural scene versus London, Paris, and Milan
- Talent and respect for art and music

Let's watch the  
film



# Key thematic in *The Dead*

- Church and priests
- Family: Morkans, Conroys, Malins
- The Past: history, memory, tradition
- Masculinities
- Social class
- Talent and respect for artists
- The joy of music and poetry
- Dublin, "West Briton," the Aran Islands