

PERUSAL SCRIPT

Get the Message

A Ten-minute Play

by

Coni Koepfinger



Newport, Maine

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GET THE MESSAGE

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GET THE MESSAGE

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN (2 F; 1 M or F)

Diana Dorn – A talented, unemployed actress, early 40s, single but searching. She’s been having trouble with her cell phone and is very concerned that she could be missing messages; a not-so-happy customer, she’s ready to trade it in.

“**Cookie Cutter**” (pen name) Catherine Ann Cutter – Mid-50s, married with grown children. A frustrated playwright, somewhat new to Manhattan. A part-time sales rep at T- CosMobile. Just got her first contract Off- Broadway.

Gabby– a cell phone — her late Mother, Gabby is now taking on somewhat of an omniscient, advisory personality.

TIME: The Present, almost lunchtime

PLACE: On the streets of New York City. An afternoon in Springtime.

GET THE MESSAGE A Ten-Minute Play by Coni Koepfinger. 2f, 1e. 13 minutes. Have you ever noticed when you talk about something, suddenly an ad for it pops up on your cellphone? They say that these “smart phones” can think for themselves now. Does this one go too far? When “Gabby” starts intercepting messages on Diana Dorn’s phone, she comes close to a trade-in. But after a broken key and the broken engagement, Diana realizes that Gabby is smart enough to keep her one step ahead of the game. Diana loses a lover but lands the biggest break in her career. This show contains an optional original song, written especially for the play, by Joe Izen. **Order # 3379**

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Staged Reading, Little Black Dress Competition, Ithaca College, New York – 2013

Get the Message was first performed at Manhattan Repertory Theatre, New York City, on 22 January 2015 under the direction of Lindsay M. Shields. The cast was as follows:

Diana Dorn – **Pooya Mohseni**

Cookie – **Eileen F. Dougherty**

Gabby – **Spencer McIntosh**

Artist and Educator, **CONI KOEPFINGER** is the host of *AIRPLAY*, a weekly virtual theatre program now in its 12th season that brings the voices of artists, actors, playwrights from all over the world together. Also via new media, Koepfinger has created *DETERMINED WOMEN*, a monthly feature that interviews women who share stories to encourage and inspire. In addition to teaching theatre and composition, Koepfinger is an internationally published and produced playwright and theorist. As a Media Advisor for the Lifeboat Foundation, her play *Get the Message* was in their *Visions of the Future anthology 2016*. Coni is a former board member of the International Center for Women Playwrights/ ICWP and committee chair for the League of Professional Theatre Women /LPTW. Recent work includes three new powerful pieces with her

writing partner Joe Izen: including *Eve of Beltane*, *Broadway Bound Festival (2019)*,; *Schoolhouse (2015)* and the first musical to usher in the singularity, *Kingdom Come (2020)*. She has written well over 40 plays, short stories, books and commissions such as *Takin' It Back* a ten-minute play for THE ME TOO PROJECT in Harlem, and *Playing House* a commissioned one-act about Bella Abzug for the UNTOLD STORIES OF JEWISH WOMEN and *Playing Fate* which was accepted for New Blood Series at Theatre for the New City. Now in 2020, Koepfinger's work is virtually shown all over globe, *My Dinner with GREG*, which was read online for The Producer's Circle and was then streamed live from The Player's Club in NYC in TNC's ON AIR podcast. It was produced in the Dream Up Festival in 2021 at TNC. Her play *Simon Says*, was one of 12 selected in the world's first Virtual Theatre Festival by PLAYBILL 2020 and is slated for Manhattan Rep's STORIES film competition in 2021.

GET THE MESSAGE

(The sounds of the city come up as the Pre-Show MUSIC fades. DIANA DORN enters singing, with her headphones on. She stops suddenly, pulls out her earbuds, looks at the audience as if it was a rude passerby commenting on her singing.)

DIANA: What? I'm not allowed to sing in this city? You know how many lousy performers I pass by on that subway every day and you make a face at the way I sing.

(to her phone)

Gabby, find the nearest T-CosMobile store for me.

GABBY: The nearest T-CosMobile store is just off Broadway on 49th Street. Make a right...

DIANA: What? That is not the closest...

GABBY: It is too.

DIANA: What? Are you arguing with me? I hope "smart phone" doesn't mean smart aleck! Trust me, Gabby. You're not programmed for that....

GABBY: Neither are you, Diana. Now for once just go where I tell you... Okay.

DIANA: *(walking slowly, looking around)* Okay, but... I have a very important audition today.

GABBY: Okay, sure... I know you do. Now make a left. Walk about a half a block and... Volia! There you go.

DIANA: Great! Sorry I doubted you Gabby!

(Pulls on the closed door at T-COSMOBILE, checks the time on her cel, curses, then makes a call.)

Damn it, man it's after eleven. Why isn't this place open yet?

(makes a call, speaks to phone)

Hi Bobbie. Can you tell Mr. Leeds that I'll be like a half-hour late today. Yeah, I got an audition for another new play. I know but this one is Off-Off Broadway, and it even pays, well a little. Yeah, I know, it's all about getting discovered. Oh yeah—Sorry, I forgot it's almost time for the lunch crowd. Okay, thanks. Bye.

(makes another call)

Argggghh! Dmitry, why can't you ever answer the phone! Uh, hi sweetie, I hope you get this in time. I may need to be late today for our lunch... I had to stop at the phone store. I have to get a new phone, I swear this one is devouring my messages or something. I have three missed calls from you but no messages.

(Enter Catherine aka COOKIE-Cutter, loaded down with scripts and tapes, and papers.)

COOKIE: *(enters, pushes past Diana to open the door)* Umm... Hi there... It would be great if you could get out my way.

DIANA: Excuse me???

COOKIE: That's good. So much stuff, I need a slave—know any eligible young actors? Damn key sticks every time.

DIANA: Um, yeah. This is still the cell phone store. Isn't it?

COOKIE: Yes, it sure is, unfortunately. “Welcome to T-CosMobile, our contract plans are out of this world.”

DIANA: Do you work here?

COOKIE: Of course, I work here. But not for long. Definitely stuck... Son of a ... Hey, can I borrow your cell phone?

DIANA: What? What's wrong with yours?

COOKIE: It's dead. I forgot to charge it last night. I shouldn't have stayed for last call, but I did. Drowning my sorrows. So... May I use your cell please? The sooner I call the locksmith, the sooner we can deal with your issue.

DIANA: Oh, alright. Here.

COOKIE: Thanks.

(makes a call, speaks to phone)

Hello Morty? It's Cookie. No, Catherine. Cutter. I'm the new hire. Catherine Cutter.

(under her breath)

But not for long.

(louder)

Yeah, I know you're busy. But this is an emergency. The key broke off in the front door.

No, you call the locksmith. Alright, alright... Who? *Linear Locksmith* on 48 ... I'll call. I'll call. Bye.

(to Diana)

Do you have voice control on this crappy little thing?

DIANA: Look, just give me my phone back. I don't need this. There's a phone store on every block.

COOKIE: No please. I'm sorry... Sorry, I'm late, I'm sorry I was being a smart ass—I really need this job for one more month. I'll be on the street without it. Or worse back in Ohio. Please. Please. Please.

DIANA: Go on, call the locksmith. And yes, I have voice control, her name is Gabby. I customized

her.

COOKIE: Cute name. As in “gift of Gabby?”

DIANA: No actually, my mother was named after the angel Gabriel... Gabriella.

COOKIE: So, your mother is Gabby too? I bet she calls all the time. Mine does. God forbid I have a life of my own now.

DIANA: My mom just died like six months ago. And we were very close. I used to call her every day. She was my angel.

COOKIE: Sorry. Gabby, please call “*Linear Locksmith*” on 48th Street.

GABBY: No such listing as “line-ear lox myth”. I have found one listing for a Linus Smith on 242 West 59th Street. Would you like me to try that one instead?

COOKIE: No Gabby, I would *not* like you to try that one. I would like you to simply follow my voice commands. Don’t try to think for yourself, you are much too stupid for that.

GABBY: That was not nice, Cookie Cutter.

COOKIE: Here, take, your phone. Creepy how they recognize our voices; remember things. Huh?

DIANA: You’re Cookie Cutter, the playwright? My God. I love your work.

COOKIE: Cool.

DIANA: Wow, so glad I came here, I mean. What’s the chances of an out of work actress meeting one of her favorite, famous playwrights like this?

COOKIE: Thank you but... One drama desk does not a famous playwright make. This year, I’m going for the Pulitzer.

DIANA: I’m Diana Dorn... We’re connected on the New York theatre groups on Synched-In.

Congrats on the Drama Desk ...

COOKIE: Hey thanks. I have an idea. Can you watch my stuff. I'll run over there to the main store and get another key. That might be faster.

DIANA: I sent you a message once. And my resume... But I can see why you didn't get back to me. Your work is a little on avant-garde, absurdist side, while I am somewhat more traditional musical theatre. I've done *Oklahoma!* with 37 different casts.

COOKIE: Oh, my God. I thought that was a joke. I mean the message, that's why I didn't respond. Sorry... That was you? I mean I got the message, but I thought...

DIANA: Yep. That's my claim to fame.

COOKIE: Seems impossible.

(Sets down her papers)

Here, watch my scripts. You can read my new play if you like. We just started into rehearsals; I hate the lead already. She's not right at all, and her voice—like chalk on a board! My lead should sound more like, like you. You're more her type. And I love your voice. Be right back.

(COOKIE exits, DIANA sits.)

DIANA: Okay. Hey. Thank you for saying that about my voice. I'll read... I can't believe this is actually happening...

(opens the script)

“Was this really considered a sacred practice within the church? It seems a bit perverse.... You don't have to be a cloister to hear a divine voice. Many of us hear His call in daily life. In fact, inspiration comes right off the street at times. People have such misconceptions about it. God is in our presence all the time. We turn away. We reject His beauty, His grace, and His truth. It's not so unusual. *(Resentfully)* Besides, anyone at all could say he or she hears the voice of God.

Just like our little choirboy here. Anyone could offer advice and say it's divinely inspired.... It's just like all of these secular, psychological counselors out there today. They tear open the hearts of fragile young people and leave them to wander about as the walking wounded in a spiritual wasteland.”

GABBY: Bravo! It's like you were made for that role, Diana Dorn.

DIANA: It is a great monologue. She's an awesome playwright. Yikes, am I talking to my cell phone again? What's worse—my cell is talking to me again. This is not right! I'm losing it. Maybe I need to see a shrink.

GABBY: Maybe. Diana, listen to me... I have something very important to tell you right now. Your mom asked me to...

DIANA: Stop! No! That's it. Back to the shrink. I've finally flipped a digit. Gabby, call Dr. Izenberg. Now.

GABBY: You don't need a head doctor. Especially that quack. Just read his reviews online. I *am* really talking to you, Diana. Although, I can't be your counselor—as your cell phone—it's somewhat of a conflict of interest—but I will advise you when I feel you are making a big mistake. That's why I deleted Dmitry's calls.

DIANA: You what?

GABBY: I'm sorry, call it a hunch. He's going to hurt you. I get a really bad vibe from him.

4 MORE PAGES TO THE END