

# I INVITED YOUR MOTHER FOR THANKSGIVING

by

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## SYNOPSIS

10-MINUTE TWO-HANDER. Warren has been estranged from his mother for five years, ever since she discovered he is gay. He is not pleased to find out she and his partner Dale talk on the phone regularly. And that he has invited her to Thanksgiving. And that she will be joining them at the traditional “orphans’ feast” where she will be surrounded by all their gay friends. Can Warren be placated by Dale’s homemade cinnamon rolls? A play about being open to reconciliation when the opportunity presents itself.

## CHARACTERS (2M)

DALE	Gay male age around 30	Any race or ethnicity
WARREN	Gay male age around 30	Any race or ethnicity

## SETTING

A kitchen table, Sunday morning.

## PRODUCTION

Produced by the Chapin Theatre Company, Chapin SC, November 4-5, 2022.

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*SETTING:* Late Sunday morning.

*AT RISE:* DALE sits at a kitchen table drinking coffee and reading a Sunday newspaper. WARREN enters sleepily and sits down.

DALE

Morning. You OK? You were tossing and turning most of the night.

WARREN

It was horrible. I kept having the same nightmare over and over. A monster was chasing me. Every time I hid in some room it'd bang on the door louder and louder.

DALE

What kind of monster?

WARREN

The same one it always is. My mother. What time is it anyway?

DALE

11 o'clock.

WARREN

I haven't stayed in bed that long since college.

DALE

When I got up it looked like you were finally having a restful sleep. Since it's Sunday I didn't see any reason to haul you out of bed. Figured you could miss *Meet the Press* for once in your life.

WARREN

Guess I'll have to rely on coffee to raise my blood pressure then. Any left?

DALE

Just made a fresh pot when I heard you stirring around.

WARREN

Bless you. And what's that I smell?

DALE

Homemade cinnamon rolls.

WARREN

God, I love you.

DALE

You may change your mind when I tell you what else I did this morning. Interesting you should mention your mother. ...

WARREN

Oh?

DALE

I called and invited her for Thanksgiving.

WARREN

If that's some kind of sick joke it isn't funny.

DALE

No, I did it. *Mea culpa*.

WARREN

Why would you intentionally ruin a holiday? You know how I feel about her.

DALE

Because she's your only mother and you're her only son and after five years of mutual silence it's time the two of you got over yourselves.

WARREN

These have been the most peaceful five years of my life since I came out to her and she finally realized Jimmy wasn't just my roommate and exploded like Mt. Vesuvius. Speaking of Jimmy, did you forget he and Zander invited us to their annual orphan's feast for Thanksgiving? We already accepted.

DALE

I talked to Zander. He and Jimmy discussed it and decided we could bring her with us. They think the situation will add a certain *je ne sais quoi* to the occasion. If it goes well everyone will be happy for you. If it doesn't they'll be that much more thankful they aren't spending the holiday with their own families.

WARREN

Jimmy always had a sadistic streak. That's why we broke up. But at least he and Zander discuss things. I can't believe you made all these arrangements behind my back.

DALE

After three years together I know how you are. Some things are just easier if I present you with a *fait accompli*. If I ask you first we'll have *two* fights, one because I'm *going* to do something and the other because I already *did* it. This way I can cut the arguing in half and you can get it out of your system before whatever happens, happens.

WARREN

How do you even know my mother's phone number?

DALE

... We talk.

WARREN

You talk. To my mother. Not just this morning.

DALE

No. Every few months. If I'd told you, how would you have reacted?

WARREN

*Stone cold silence.*

DALE

That's what I thought.

WARREN

Just how long have the two of you been carrying on this little phone romance?

DALE

Couple of years. Called her the first time to tell her about that carcinoma you had taken off your forehead.

WARREN

Why? It was only a little spot for Christ's sake.

DALE

A little spot of cancer. I thought she'd want to know. Wouldn't you want to know if she had cancer? She was a little cool at first but she thanked me for telling her. Since then I've called whenever I thought she needed to know something. Like when we moved into this apartment together. She needed to know your—*our*—new address. And I called her when you got promoted to district manager. She was very happy for you.

WARREN

I'll bet.

DALE

She was. And guess what? The more we talked the more she warmed up and the more I liked her. I even thought about trying to fix her up with my dad.

WARREN

Is that what this is really about? You never knew your mother so you want to adopt mine? Well you can have her.

DALE

Yeah. I never had a mother, so it breaks my heart you have one you don't even want.

WARREN

One who doesn't want me.

DALE

How do you know that?

WARREN

That's the distinct impression I got during the big coming out scene.

DALE

So she went from denial to anger right before your eyes. Maybe since then she's gone through the rest of the stages of grief and arrived at acceptance. When have you given her a chance to demonstrate that to you? I think it means something that she's willing to celebrate the holiday with us—with us as a couple—and she *wants* to meet our friends. She even offered to bring what she called her “famous cranberry sauce.”

WARREN

Something else I thought I'd escaped. You realize it contains onions and horse radish and it is a most unappetizing Pepto-Bismol pink color? She got the recipe off NPR years ago and it became a “tradition” she inflicted on the family every Thanksgiving and Christmas. She sure knows how to torture people with a smile on her face. ... Alright.

DALE

Alright, what?

WARREN

Alright I know you mean well and alright we'll show my mother a gay old time at Thanksgiving.

DALE

And you'll try to get along? Try really listening to each other?

WARREN

... I'll do my best. That's as much as I can promise.

DALE

That's all I ask. Still hate me?

WARREN

'Course not. You know I love you. And your homemade cinnamon rolls. Which I have yet to taste this morning.

DALE

Coming right up. And you know I love you, too?

WARREN

Of course.

DALE

Who knows? Maybe next time you have that dream it won't be so bad. Maybe you'll hear your mother knock and actually let her in.

WARREN

Dale?

DALE

What?

WARREN

Thanks. I don't know what'll come from this. But thanks. Thanks for trying.

DALE

You want icing on your cinnamon roll?

WARREN

After three years you even have to ask?

END OF PLAY