

The Menu

A Ten-Minute Play

by

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Set in The Final Exit Bar and Grill, Chris gets an Evite to a Come-As-You-Are party that takes on a tragic twist.

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The Menu

Cast of Characters

PAT ENVOY:

An adult, any race, gender.

CHRIS:

An adult, any race, gender

Playwright's Note:

Both actors must look like they are the same age.

Scene

The Final Exit Bar and Grill.

Time

The present.

The Menu

SETTING: The Final Exit Bar and Grill.

AT RISE: CHRIS is standing at the doorway of
The Final Exit Bar and Grill.
The place is deserted.

CHRIS

Hello. Anyone here? I got an Evite about an hour ago to a Come-As-You-Are-Party. HEL-L0! The Evite said to go to The Final Exit Bar and Grill, 1111 Eternity Lane, so I know I'm at the right place. Since it's my birthday, I thought ... maybe ... it was a surprise party for me. But if that were the case, the place should be packed with people screaming, "Surprise!"

PAT ENVOY

(off)

You're absolutely right, Chris. This is your surprise birthday party with a twist! I'll be right with you. Just printing up the menu.

(PAT ENTERS, wearing a black suit and carrying a menu.)

CHRIS

Wait. You're Pat Envoy. I thought ... you were... Last year, in a Facebook post, it said you were dead. A train ... they said you jumped in front of a train. I guess it was just more Facebook fake news. Glad you're alive and well. Although, I'm a little surprised that you would be hosting a party for me. I mean, I haven't seen you since high school, and I didn't particularly like you back then.

PAT ENVOY

Trust me, no one who likes you would want to host this party.

CHRIS

Where is everyone?

PAT ENVOY

They'll be arriving shortly.

CHRIS

Who's coming?

PAT ENVOY

Your mother.

CHRIS

No way. She's dead.

PAT ENVOY

Your grandma Hilda.

CHRIS

Yeah, sure. She died in 1997.

PAT ENVOY

Your father.

CHRIS

That bastard's been gone since I was thirteen. He drank himself to death. My mother called it a mercy killing because when he dropped dead, it put us out of our misery.

PAT ENVOY

Your Aunt Jennie.

CHRIS

Come on.

PAT ENVOY

She's standing right there.

CHRIS

(CHRIS looks offstage.)

That does look like her, but she passed away last year. So, that can't be her. You know this whole charade is starting to piss me off – big time!

(PAT hands CHRIS a menu.)

It has my name on it. Gold lettering. Nice touch.

(CHRIS starts reading the menu.)

This has to be some kind of joke. A sick one.

PAT ENVOY

This is not a joke.

CHRIS

This menu says, "Pick your choice of death."

PAT ENVOY

Listen, Chris. I'm just the messenger. Don't shoot me. If you don't pick your method of demise, I'll have to pick it for you, and in all honesty, when we were in high school, I never liked you much either. So, keep that in mind.

CHRIS

I think you've got your wires crossed. It's my birthday, not my death day.

PAT ENVOY

Wrong. For you, it's both. You should feel honored. Few people have their death day land on the same day they were born.

CHRIS

It's like I won "the lottery," Shirley Jackson-style. Is there a choice: Stoned to death?

PAT ENVOY

No, but you could OD. That's the last choice on the bottom of the page.

CHRIS

I've never used drugs.

PAT ENVOY

There's always a first and last time. We'll just make sure that your drug of choice is cut with a heavy dose of fentanyl. A modern-day morality tale warning others of the dangers of drugs.

CHRIS

I'm out of here.

(CHRIS tries to walk out. The door is locked.

CHRIS struggles with the door, then walks to another door and finds that locked.)

What is this one of those crazy escape room parties?

PAT ENVOY

The only way out of here is death.

(PAT opens the menu and reads)

Here are your Sudden Death Options.

Cardiac arrest.

Brain Aneurysm.

Stroke.

Shot and killed by a random gunman.

Get dead drunk, fall down, crack head open.

Choke to death on your favorite food. Kind of like your own last supper.

Electrocution.

CHRIS

Electrocution?

PAT ENVOY

There's a faulty wire by table two. Hit by a car.

CHRIS

Is a car going to crash through the front window?

PAT ENVOY

No. For that one, you'd have to walk out to the street. We'll make sure you're hit by a serial drunk driver. This way, we off you, and at the same time, get that crazed boozehound off the road. Anaphylaxis from your peanut allergy. That seems like the most plausible cause.

CHRIS

I've been dodging that bullet my whole life. I am not about to die from that one now!

PAT ENVOY

Pulmonary Embolism. That should be short and sweet. Killed in a bar and grill fire.

CHRIS

You mean you'll torch this place on my account?

PAT ENVOY

No, not me. The owner. This place is a financial sinkhole. He's figuring out the logistics just as we speak. Carbon Monoxide poisoning. Brutally beaten to death in a gang-related robbery.

CHRIS

Why, in God's name, would anyone choose to die that way?

PAT ENVOY

To save others. It's your due date to die anyway. Better they kill you than someone else, whose time isn't up yet. Those gang members will get locked up and stop terrorizing the streets, so, it's all good.

CHRIS

Sorry, but I'm not that magnanimous.

PAT ENVOY

There is one other option that I am obligated to tell you about. You can opt out of dying today by choosing a long-drawn-out illness. That would give you a little more time, another year or two. Just remember, sudden death is so much easier to pull off. When I was alive, I was never shocked by someone's untimely death. I was more amazed that anyone survived a minute in this highly jinxed, booby-trapped world. For the long-drawn out death choices, go to the last page of the menu.

(CHRIS flips to the last page of the menu.)

PAT ENVOY

As you can see for yourself, the cancer menu is quite extensive ... leukemia, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, glioblastoma, malignant brain tumor, pancreatic, liver, bladder, kidney, lung, colon, esophageal, kidney, rectal, or anal.

CHRIS

(Pointing offstage)
Is that my mother?

PAT ENVOY

Yes. At the hour of our death, the dead come for us.

CHRIS

God help me!

PAT ENVOY

There are still a few other choices. You could die from cirrhosis of the liver. You do drink a hell of a lot. But, if you ask me, death by fire, carbon monoxide poisoning, or anaphylaxis from your peanut allergy seem like good choices. A substantial insurance settlement from one of those deaths could greatly benefit your family. That would accrue a bit of good karma for you. Look, I'm really sorry, Chris, but you have less than a minute to choose. So, what will it be? A sudden death or a long-drawn-out one?

CHRIS

(Frantically flipping through the menu.)
Can't I choose to live another year or two and then have a sudden death?

PAT ENVOY

In your case that is not an option. You have ten seconds to make up your mind before I become the angel of death. 10, 9, 8, 7. Oh, the paradox of choice. 6, 5-

CHRIS

-Cancer. Um, make it a malignant brain tumor.

PAT ENVOY

Duly noted. And Chris, don't bother getting any chemo or radiation treatments. They'll just make your long-drawn-out death all the more torturous.

CHRIS

Can I go now? I have a lot of things to get in order, including moving to a state where assisted suicide is legal.

PAT ENVOY

(PAT opens the door.)
The good news is: You're dying, Chris, so you can eat anything you want! *Bon appétit!*

(CHRIS runs out of the
Final Exit Bar and Grill.)

PAT ENVOY

(Shouting)

Take out a big life insurance policy. You can buy a better seat in the afterlife, just by leaving money to people who could really use it. See you on the Other Side!

CURTAIN