

Just Desserts

by

David MacGregor

dmacgregor77@gmail.com

Setting

A company lunchroom.

Time

Now and then.

Cast

JOYCE - Woman in her 20s-50s.

EVAN - Man in his 20s-50s.

BECKY - Woman in her 20s-50s.

KRIS - Man or woman in his/her 20s-50s. For the sake of consistency, male nouns and pronouns are used in the play, but these should be changed if a woman plays the part.

NOTE: References to the "Notorious Pig" can be pronounced as written or amended to "Notorious P.I.G." (a play on the name of the rapper Notorious B.I.G.) as desired.

(Two co-workers, JOYCE and EVAN, sit at a table having lunch. There is a fridge somewhere nearby.)

JOYCE

...well, I've been feeling a little burned out and I was thinking of taking a few vacation days, you know, maybe go to Mexico or something, but I get the feeling they're going to send me to Akron next week.

EVAN

There's nothing quite like Akron, Ohio, in February. I'm just glad it's your turn to go.

(BECKY enters.)

BECKY

Hey guys...

(off JOYCE and EVAN's
acknowledgement)

Okay, wish me luck. I'm going in...

(BECKY takes a couple of deep breaths,
rolls her neck, and stretches her arms.)

BECKY

And...

(she opens the fridge door)

YES!!! My lunch is still here! Must be my lucky day.

(BECKY brings some Tupperware to the
table and sits down with JOYCE and
EVAN. They chat as they eat.)

BECKY

How'd you guys make out? Any casualties?

EVAN

Well, I thought I was living dangerously by bringing a fruit salad and a salami sandwich, but as you can see, they both made it through the morning unscathed.

BECKY

How about you, Joyce?

JOYCE

I lost a couple of brownies.

(EVAN and BECKY stop eating.)

BECKY

Brownies?

(to EVAN)

Did she say "brownies?"

EVAN

She said brownies.

BECKY

Joyce, what are you thinking? You put brownies in the fridge?

(off JOYCE's nod)

Well, of course they're gone! What did you expect with the Notorious Pig on the prowl! Those brownies probably didn't make it to nine o'clock.

EVAN

If that.

BECKY

If that! You might as well ask a pack of Dobermans to guard your cheeseburger.

EVAN

Are you feeling okay? Putting anything remotely resembling a dessert in that fridge is something no sane person would do.

JOYCE

I poisoned the brownies.

EVAN

You what?

JOYCE

Poisoned them. I knew they'd get ripped off, so I put poison in them. I even put a little sign on top--"Poison Brownies."

BECKY

Oh my God...but why the sign?

JOYCE

I wanted to be honest about it. But I figured the Notorious Pig would think the sign was a joke and eat them anyway.

EVAN

So what did you put in them? Like a laxative or something?

JOYCE

Nope. Straight up poison.

EVAN

What kind of poison?

JOYCE

I'm not really sure. It was a kind of a mixture of things. I found the recipe on the Internet.

BECKY

So, what does the poison do?

JOYCE

Well, at first, I guess it makes you feel really thirsty, you know, feverish? Then it starts to work its way through your system and it gradually paralyzes you. After that, you go into convulsions and die.

(JOYCE takes a bite out of her sandwich as EVAN and BECKY stare)

I'm fed up, all right? It's ridiculous for us to put up with having our food stolen all the time. And if the company's too cheap to put a security camera in here, fine. Let's see how the Notorious Pig likes my special brownies.

(KRIS enters, looking flushed and frantic, and gulping water from a bottle.)

KRIS

Hey guys...what is the temperature in this place? Do they have the thermostat set at ninety?

(EVAN, BECKY, and JOYCE look at one another as KRIS opens the fridge in search of more water.)

JOYCE

Little thirsty, Kris?

KRIS

I'm dying out there!
(more drinking)
You guys aren't hot?

BECKY

We're fine.

EVAN

Say, Kris. You didn't happen to find a couple of brownies in the fridge this morning, did you?

KRIS

Brownies? No. Why?

BECKY

Because if you happened to take somebody else's brownies--

KRIS

Wait, what are you guys saying? I'm the Notorious Pig? You think it's me who's stealing food?

JOYCE

Is it?

KRIS

No! God, I'm thirsty!

(KRIS guzzles more water.)

JOYCE

You're thirsty because you stole my brownies and ate them.

KRIS

No, I didn't!

JOYCE

You did.

KRIS

That's ridiculous! You have no right to accuse me of anything! Besides, why would brownies make me thirsty?

JOYCE

Because I poisoned them. Just like the sign said.

(KRIS stops drinking, not quite believing what he just heard.)

KRIS

You're...you're making that up.

JOYCE

Are you feeling any abdominal cramping yet?

KRIS

(as an abdominal cramp hits)

No...

JOYCE

Kris, you are the Notorious Pig and you've been stealing people's lunches for the past six months. Admit it.

KRIS

I'm not! I don't have to take this...you know what? Screw you guys! I don't feel well. I'm going home!

JOYCE

Suit yourself. But you'll never make it to a doctor in time.

KRIS

In time for what?

EVAN

The poison in those brownies is going to kill you--

JOYCE

--unless you confess to being the Notorious Pig. In which case, I have the antidote right here.

(JOYCE pulls out a glass vial and holds it up.)

BECKY

(to JOYCE)

Nice. You really thought this out.

KRIS

But I didn't eat any...

(A spasm of pain hits KRIS.)

JOYCE

...brownies? Then you don't need the antidote.

(JOYCE puts the antidote away and takes another bite of her sandwich. KRIS agonizes, until...)

KRIS

I found one of the brownies on my desk, okay? Somebody left it there and I ate it.

BECKY

That's a lie.

EVAN

Of course it's a lie.

JOYCE

Tell us what you are. Tell us you're the Notorious Pig.

(Another spasm rips through KRIS.)

KRIS

Oh my god...Joyce...please give me the antidote.

(JOYCE pulls out the antidote again.)

JOYCE

This? Only when you admit what you are.

(KRIS wobbles, grabs for the table, and drops to the ground, panic-stricken.)

KRIS

I can't feel my legs. Joyce...please...

(JOYCE holds out the vial, but when KRIS reaches for it, JOYCE pulls it back.)

JOYCE

Tell us what you are...say it.

KRIS
(softly)
I'm the Notorious Pig.

JOYCE
I didn't catch that.

KRIS
I'm the Notorious Pig.

JOYCE
Louder. Like you're proud of it. Tell the world, Kris.

KRIS
I'M THE NOTORIOUS PIG!!!

JOYCE
Yes, you are. But I suppose even Notorious Pigs deserve to live.

(JOYCE holds out the vial. Just as KRIS is about to grab it, EVAN takes the vial.)

EVAN
I disagree. I don't think the Notorious Pig deserves to live.

BECKY
Evan! Give him the antidote! He's going to die!

EVAN
And what's the downside there?

BECKY
Death!

EVAN
So? People die all the time. I mean, seriously. Give me one good reason why he should live.

BECKY
You think he deserves to die because of a couple of brownies?

EVAN
It's not just a couple of brownies! He's been scavenging around here for months! It's like having a parasite inside your body. That's what we're looking at...a human parasite! I say, let's get rid of it while we can.

BECKY
But it's just some food--

EVAN

It's not just food! It's...let me tell you something. About a month ago, I knew I had a rough day ahead of me, so in the morning, I got up and made myself a sandwich for lunch. And not just any sandwich. I had some fresh sourdough bread, smoked turkey, a couple of slices of provolone cheese--and I made myself some guacamole to go with it, just the way I like it--nice and chunky, with some tomatoes, some lemon juice, and a little bit of garlic salt. And that day was the day from hell. Every phone call, every e-mail, I felt like my head was going to explode. But I kept telling myself, "Okay, this is bad, but you have the most kick-ass sandwich in the world waiting for you." But you know what? I didn't have it waiting for me. Because when I opened up the fridge at lunchtime, it was gone! And do you know what I ended up eating?

(shaking the bottle in KRIS's face)

Some stale Fritos and a Twix bar from the vending machine!

JOYCE

I remember that day. I thought you were gonna stroke out on us.

(KRIS clutches at EVAN's pant legs.)

BECKY

But we can't just let him die! What are we, judge, jury, and executioner?

JOYCE

We don't need to be the judge or jury. He just confessed.

EVAN

And if he dies, he's his own executioner. He did this to himself.

BECKY

Give me that!

(snatching the vial from EVAN)

Honest to God...

(KRIS crawls to BECKY, hand outstretched, struggling to get a breath, as BECKY uncaps the vial. But just as KRIS gets there, BECKY pulls the vial away.)

BECKY

(to EVAN)

But you know...you might have a point. Say we do give him the antidote. What then? I'm guessing after all this he would quit this job, but then he's going to go somewhere else and do the same thing all over again.

EVAN

Yep.

JOYCE

Well, we don't know that. Maybe he's learned his lesson.

BECKY

He's a grown man! And day after day, week after week, he has been ripping off his co-workers. What kind of person does that? And is this the kind of person we want in society? Do we want him to breed and have kids? No! Do we want him associating with other people and passing on his behavior? No!

EVAN

Exactly! Is the world a better place with him in it? I say no.

BECKY

Me too.

JOYCE

Okay, I see your point, but honestly, I never wanted to actually kill anyone. I just wanted to teach him a lesson. And if he dies, I might get into trouble.

EVAN

No, you won't! They were marked "poison brownies!" Can you sue a rat poison company if someone eats the rat poison? No. He knowingly ate brownies that were marked "Poison." That's his problem, not yours. You're golden.

BECKY

Besides, none of us is talking, and when someone finds him dead in here, they're going to think heart attack or stroke or something.

EVAN

But you know, this really should be Joyce's decision. She's the one who cooked up the brownies, after all.

BECKY

That's true. Yeah, that makes sense.

(handing the vial to JOYCE)

Your call, Joyce.

JOYCE

Gosh, I don't know. This is America, right? A democracy and everything? Maybe majority rule is best.

(KRIS convulses violently, then goes still.)

JOYCE

Huh. That worked quicker than I thought it would.

BECKY

Well, what's that expression? "Death is what happens while you're busy making plans."

EVAN

I think it's, "Life is what happens while you're busy making plans."

BECKY

Oh. I guess they both make sense.

(EVAN stands up.)

EVAN

Well, I have a PowerPoint presentation to put together. I'd better get cranking on that.

(BECKY and JOYCE stand up as well.
EVAN dumps the remains of his lunch
into a trash bin.)

BECKY

And I need to start crunching some numbers for a certain somebody's trip to fabulous Akron, Ohio.

JOYCE

Dammit, are you kidding me?

BECKY

Sorry. You're up in the rotation.

EVAN

Hey, you know what? Take your vacation days. You deserve a margarita or two on a Mexican beach. I'll go to Akron.

BECKY

Good call. I'll get started on the paperwork.

JOYCE

Seriously?

EVAN

Absolutely. You really went out on a limb taking care of this whole Notorious Pig business for everyone.

BECKY

And you know how they keep telling us we're a team and all that? Well, this is what teammates do.

EVAN

You had our back. We have yours.

BECKY

Damn straight.

JOYCE

Thanks guys! Hey, you know what? I'll grab some Mexican chocolate when I'm down there, and when I come back, I'm bringing in fresh brownies for everyone!

(They all high-five.)

ALL

Yes!...That's what I'm talking about!...Winner winner chicken dinner!

(They all start to exit, then pause to look back at KRIS.)

BECKY

It is a little sad.

EVAN

What happens to people?

JOYCE

I don't know.

BECKY

I just don't get it.

EVAN

Yeah.

JOYCE

Oh well.

(They all exit.)

END OF PLAY.