

THAT GAME WITH DEATH

(third draft)

by Patrick Griffiths

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EXT. PARK. AFTERNOON

The pale, sullen face of Death, the spitting image of the character from *The Seventh Seal*, slowly emerges from the shadows.

DEATH

I am the embodiment of the end.
The harbinger of eternal sleep
and the protagonist of final
dreams. I am the taker of breath
and silencer of the heart. I am
the dark night that draws over
the last day of days. I am he who
you may crudely refer to by a
simple moniker. I. Am. Death.

In stark contrast, the rosy-cheeked face of an unhealthy man, loudly chomping on crisps stares back at Death, wide-eyed but unflustered.

MAN

(after a fair few chews and
a swallow)
I'm Brian.

Titles, music.

Following an awkward silence, Brian extends the bag of crisps towards Death.

BRIAN

Crisp?

Death, unimpressed, refuses to shake Brian's hand.

DEATH

I am here to take you to the
afterlife. Your time on this
world has come to an end.

Unfazed and thinking that the situation is "cool" more than anything else Brian thinks about what Death has said and stuffs a few more chips into his mouth.

BRIAN

Well... shit... that's, um, a bit
of a pain. Isn't it? So. Um.
You're sure about that?

Brian looks hopefully at the expressionless Death.

BRIAN

Right. Yeah. I guess you are... I
tell you what! How about a game?

Death raises an eyebrow.

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BRIAN

If you win then fine; whisk me away. But if you don't... you let me go. Deal?

Death, certain of victory, breaks a tiny smile and nods. Fade to black.

Fade in Death, sitting on a rock in front of a tree stump on top of which is a chess board. As he sets up the board Brian sits on a rock on the other side of the tree stump and waffles on, clearly very happy with himself.

BRIAN

This is remarkably like that film, don't you think? What's it called...? You know, the one about a hero who faces the futility of living in a world without meaning. You know! Oh... what's it called...?

Brian sits at the opposite end of the chess board and, with a huge smile on his excited face, stares Death in the eyes.

BRIAN

War Games! That's it!

A puzzled Death looks on as Brian sweeps the chess pieces off the board, pulls out random crap from his pocket and with an overwhelming sense of achievement unravels a serviette, slams it down on the chess board, draws a noughts-and-crosses grid, and a circle in the top right corner. Brian takes a break from his excitement as he bluntly picks sides with a momentary serious tone.

BRIAN

I'll be noughts and you... you can be crosses. Which is apt. Given that not many people have been nailed to circles and left to die.

Brian quickly snaps back into excitable mode and unleashes a mad train of thought.

BRIAN

So, anyway, War Games! Matthew Broderick, who is, essentially, a terrorist, actually saves his - and the world's - ass. You see there's this mad-ass psycho computer hell-bent on figuring out the launch code for America's nuclear arsenal and all these military types suddenly go "oh,

(MORE)

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BRIAN (cont'd)
shit" and it's, like, "oh no!
What a crazy fucking idea this
whole nuclear war thing is!" but
it's, like, way too late: "Oh!
Oh! Oh shit! This psycho
computer's going to kill us all!
If only we'd realised what a
crazy fucking idea this whole
nuclear war thing is earlier!"

The two continue to take their turns, Death firmly focused on the tic-tac-toe grid and Brian perhaps not paying close enough attention.

BRIAN
So, like, Matthew Broderick
challenges the computer to a game
of tic-tac-toe. And the
computer's, like "Yeah, ok, go on
then, why the hell not?" but
it's, like, set up so that the
computer is both players and it
cycles through the game, like, a
million times or something, and,
comparing it to Global
Thermonuclear War, it finally
realises "Oh no! What a crazy
fucking idea this whole nuclear
war thing is!" because, you see,
there's no way to win!

After his latest move, Death sits back and stares at Brian. To suddenly find he has Death's attention, Brian stops talking and looks down at the grid. Three crosses sit in a row. Turning pale, Brian slowly locks eyes with Death.

BRIAN
How about a nice game of Snakes
and Ladders?