

# THE LAST TEN

By Mark Scharf

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# THE LAST TEN

*A Comedy Duet*

**by Mark Scharf**

**SYNOPSIS:** Nuclear Missiles have been launched and there are only ten minutes left before they hit! How much living can you do in ten minutes? While Peggy is sanguine about their approaching doom, George desperately tries make their final moments together count. Will they find a shared peace before it's too late? In a funny yet piquant journey of love and understanding, Peggy and George learn what really matters as they face their final challenge together.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

*(1 female, 1 male)*

PEGGY (f) ..... Old enough to have been married a while to George, she is calm and cool with an impish sense of humor. *(57 lines)*

GEORGE (m) ..... Old enough to have been married a while to Peggy, he is as agitated as Peggy is calm – a whirlwind maniacally on a mission to find meaning in his life and in their life together. *(59 lines)*

**TIME:** Present day.

**SETTING:** Peggy and George's kitchen and living room.

## PROPS

- ☐ Champagne Bottle
- ☐ Two Champagne Glasses
- ☐ Open Suitcase with Clothes
- ☐ Wristwatch

## PRODUCTION NOTES

The play can be presented in as elaborate or as simple a production as your taste and resources require; all that's needed are the props. If desired, the living room can feature a sofa the couple can sit on together. It's important that George and Peggy be played "straight" and not for laughs – the juxtaposition of George's panic to Peggy's calm will be funny without playing it big. It's also important to take note of Peggy's line "Maybe nothing. No reunion. No homecoming. Maybe there's just... nothing." – this is a turning point for her character in recognizing the depth of the situation and what it means to lose George and life itself.

## PREMIER PRODUCTION

*THE LAST TEN* was first produced in April, 2018 at the Fells Point Corner Theatre in Baltimore, MD. With the cast as follows.

PEGGY .....Holly Gibbs

GEORGE ..... Jon Meeker

Director.....Bobby Harris

**AT START:** *The lights rise on an empty stage. GEORGE enters exploding through the front and runs offstage. PEGGY enters calmly and stands by as GEORGE enters the room carrying a half closed suitcase leaving a trail behind of clothes falling out of it.*

**GEORGE:** What're you doing? Let's go! Let's go!

**PEGGY:** Stop.

**GEORGE:** We gotta go! Now!

**PEGGY:** Where?

**GEORGE:** As far away as we can get...

**PEGGY:** Won't be far enough. Might as well stay here.

**GEORGE:** We'll die if we stay here.

**PEGGY:** I'd rather die at home than sitting in traffic. What do you think everyone else is doing? They're crazy. You can't outrun a missile in ten minutes. That's what the radio said – it would be here in ten minutes.

**GEORGE:** Maybe they can shoot it down.

**PEGGY:** We'll find out.

**GEORGE:** You're awfully calm.

**PEGGY:** There's nothing I can do about it. Why freak out?

**GEORGE:** Because we're going to die in ten minutes!

**PEGGY:** Nine.

**GEORGE:** What?

**PEGGY:** Nine minutes from now. If it makes it this far. If the warhead works. They have a pretty bad track record in making missiles that work.

**GEORGE:** What if it does?

**PEGGY:** We won't know it. We'll just... be gone.

**GEORGE:** We need to make these minutes count!

**PEGGY:** Like a countdown of the seconds to blast off?

**GEORGE:** How can you make jokes...?

**PEGGY:** Why not?

**GEORGE:** Because this isn't funny.

**PEGGY:** I thought it was.

**GEORGE:** You want to spend your last minutes on earth ridiculing me?

**PEGGY:** Are you hungry? I've got some hot pockets in the freezer...

**GEORGE:** You want to spend your last minutes on earth eating a hot pocket?!

**PEGGY:** Won't take more than a couple of minutes to be ready. We don't have to die on an empty stomach.

**GEORGE:** This is serious!

**PEGGY:** How about some champagne? We still have that bottle you bought for my birthday in the fridge. That's serious, isn't it? We'll make a champagne toast!

**GEORGE:** To what?

**PEGGY:** Anything you want. To each other, to ourselves, to the great beyond... Let's go in style!

*Beat.*

**GEORGE:** All right. You get the glasses and I'll open the champagne.

**PEGGY:** Okay.

**GEORGE:** And hurry.

*PEGGY gets two glasses champagne glasses and GEORGE gets a bottle of champagne, which he struggles to open.*

**GEORGE:** Damn it!

**PEGGY:** Don't rush! We've got at least five minutes.

**GEORGE:** (*Pops the cork.*) Here.

*PEGGY holds the glasses as GEORGE fills each one with champagne. GEORGE then sets the bottle down and PEGGY hands him a glass*

**PEGGY:** So, what do we drink to?

**GEORGE:** To the end of it all.

**PEGGY:** Do you have to be such a downer? Let's drink to something nice!

**GEORGE:** We're going to die, Peggy. Right here in our kitchen. Doesn't that mean anything to you?

**PEGGY:** If it were just you and me. But millions of people are going to die and that just becomes a statistic. No one really cares.

**GEORGE:** I am not a statistic! My life matters! I matter! Don't I at least matter to you?

**PEGGY:** Here's to you, George. You matter.

*Beat.*

**GEORGE:** And here's to you, Peggy. You matter more to me than anything.

*They clink glasses and drink. PEGGY downs her glass.*

**PEGGY:** More please.

*Beat as GEORGE looks at her.*

**PEGGY:** Might as well enjoy it now, right?

*GEORGE downs his glass then picks up the champagne bottle and refills their glasses. They clink glasses again and empty them. PEGGY holds out her empty glass to him and they refill and drink. GEORGE picks up the bottle and drinks from it until it is empty.*

**PEGGY:** That was good! Now what do you want to do?

**GEORGE:** I don't know.

**PEGGY:** Something special to mark the occasion.

**GEORGE:** You're making fun of me again.

**PEGGY:** No, I'm not. I'm really not.

**GEORGE:** I think we need to tell each other the truth. Especially now. Do you have anything you want to say to me? Anything you want to get off your chest so we can die in peace?

**PEGGY:** We're not even going to die in pieces, George. I think the thermonuclear blast is going to vaporize us.

**GEORGE:** Is there anything you want to say to me? Anything I should know before... well, before.

**PEGGY:** No, George.

**GEORGE:** Any secrets?

**PEGGY:** None I can think of.

**GEORGE:** Regrets?

**PEGGY:** I regret we only have about three minutes. That champagne made me hungry and now we don't have enough time to nuke the

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