

CLOSING THE SALE

A One Act Play by Joanne Mercer

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CHERI: What's the problem, honey? No sales? No sugar?

KEVIN: Both.

CHERI: You can't listen to Tony, sweetheart. What works - or doesn't work - for him won't work for anybody else. Trust me on this one. You have to set yourself up so that they want what you're buying without you actually selling it.

TONY: I already said that.

CHERI: I heard. But there's more to it than that. You have to make it what you want, and then make the customer want it, too. So, Kevin, what is it you want?

KEVIN: I want my father's baseball card.

TONY: Oh, brother.

CHERI: That is so sweet!

TONY: Oh, for . . .

KEVIN: You think so?

CHERI: Absolutely!

KEVIN: Go on.

CHERI: (very turned on) Well, take this . . . baseball card, for instance. Look at the situation like you're the customer. From the customer's point of view, O.K.? Put yourself in her place. What are her needs? Her interests? Is it just the baseball card, or is there more to it than that?

KEVIN: I don't understand . . .

CHERI: (actively relating the sale to having sex, building in intensity) What is it that she wants out of this transaction? A free sample? A short-term contract? A lifetime guarantee? You dig, and you dig, until you know just exactly what it is she wants, and then, even if she thinks she's got you in the palm of her hand, the truth is, you're the one who's got her right where you want her. Then, with total respect for her position as your customer, you give her what she wants, whether she knows she wants it or not, but you give it to her anyway, and you give, and you give, and you keep on giving, maybe with a little extra tossed in as a perk and you stay with her until you know . . .

KEVIN: Yes? Yes?

CHERI: . . . Until you know she's satisfied with her purchase.

TONY: I need a cigarette.

KEVIN: Me, too. And I don't even smoke.

CHERI: What you need, honey, is a whole new approach to life. Don't let it get you down. You're failing at the sale before you even have a chance to open up that sexy little briefcase.

KEVIN: I still don't understand.

CHERI: (sexy challenge) Sell me.

KEVIN: Huh?

CHERI: I'm a cold call, honey. Warm me up.

TONY: Easy sale, Kev. Take my word for it.

CHERI: You already made your bid. I'm looking for another proposal now, so back off.

KEVIN: Really?

CHERI: Really.

TONY: Oh, for God's sake.

KEVIN: O.K. Uh . . . where do I start?

CHERI: Wherever you want. Take a chance.

KEVIN: How?

CHERI: You'll never get that foot in the door unless you cross the line.

KEVIN: Well, O.K. (KEVIN tries to talk, but panics.) Good evening, Ms. Vallet, I'd like to talk to you about . . . Uh . . . Please give me just 30 seconds of your valuable time . . . no . . . uh, How would you love to own this lovely set of Encyclopedia Britannica's . . . I . . . um . . . (On a whim, KEVIN kisses CHERI. She responds, and they kiss for several seconds before stopping for a breather, still standing very close to each other.)

TONY: Well, it's about time.

KEVIN: (breathless, eyes closed as CHERI runs her fingers through his hair) I see what you mean.

CHERI: That's right. See how a whole new attitude works to your benefit?

KEVIN: I sure do.

CHERI: All you have to do is believe in the product . . .

KEVIN: . . . and it sells itself!

CHERI: Yes! Oh, yes!

KEVIN: Shall we . . . take a little break?

CHERI: Absolutely! (KEVIN picks CHERI up, leans over, and using her feet, hits the bell on the table)

KEVIN: Sale!

TONY: Hey! Wait a minute! I don't . . .

CHERI: Come on, darlin'. Let's go get that baseball card! (KEVIN and CHERI exit. TONY cannot believe what has just happened. There is a visibly physical change in TONY, from jaunty and overconfident to meek and unsure of himself. He picks up KEVIN'S telephone sales script and dials the phone. Then, in a meek voice echoing KEVIN'S insecurities from the beginning of the play, he begins to speak.)

TONY: Hello? Miss Evans? I was wondering if you could spare just 30 seconds of your valuable time. Miss Evans? Hello?