

# LIFE OF A SALESMAN

a ten minute comedy

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## “Life of a Salesmen”

By Jake Doberenz

*A short, comical play about two salesmen with different motives—a confused, lousy salesman and a fantastic, charming salesman—competing at a box office store to be the top seller of the day.*

**LIGHTS UP.** *Front of an office and electronics supply store called DALE’S DEPOT. Two people, the charming and charismatic HUDSON and the downcast, soft-spoken DONALD stand there.*

HUDSON: (Checks watch; waiting for the doors to open) About 10 more minutes.

DONALD: I don’t see anyone waiting outside.

HUDSON: They’ll come. They always come.

DONALD: This early?

HUDSON: Yes. Obviously, Dale gives me the best shift. Even if my shift were to change, I’m sure people would flock to the store whenever I work. I have a way with people.

DONALD: I see... (Beat) I don’t...

HUDSON: You don’t see it?

DONALD: No, I do see it in you, but not in me.

HUDSON: Pardon?

DONALD: I mean--I don’t have “a way with people.” They don’t usually like me.

HUDSON: (Looking at Donald intently) Donald, you seem nervous.

DONALD: It’s my first day on the job. I’m not sure this is really going to be for me. Before this, I worked at a Burger King. This is all so new and different. Of course I’m nervous.

HUDSON: Dale hired you, didn’t he? Did he make you sell him the stapler on his desk?

DONALD: Yeah, he asked me to pretend like I was selling him the stapler—(Embarrassed) but I just ended up stapling his finger and ruining his desk calendar.

HUDSON: (To himself) That explains the screaming the other day... (To Donald) Nevertheless, kid, he hired ya for some reason.

DONALD: (Matter-of-factly) I’m his cousin.

HUDSON: Alright, that makes a lot more sense. I was beginning to question Dale’s sanity with this hiring decision!

DONALD: Uh, thanks...

HUDSON: But! But! I will deign to help you a little. The trick with good selling is a delicate combination of professional yet semi-casual body language with a light-hearted, though knowledgeable personality. You need to become the customer's best friends and set a time to go bowling with them all by the time they leave the store.

DONALD: That's—I don't—I'm not sure I can do any of that.

HUDSON: It's really easy. It all comes so naturally to me. I can't see why it would be difficult for anyone to just flip on their "delicately-manipulating-people-into-buying-more-products" mode!

DONALD: Sorry, I'm not wired like that. I'm so stressed! The burden of working totally on commission seems too much...

HUDSON: Working on commission isn't actually that hard when you get in the groove. And the added pressure that today's top seller gets an extra 500 bucks—no biggie! There's nothing to worry about, kid. Don't let the pressure press you down.

DONALD: Well, you know sales, Hudson. You're the king. I'm not.

HUDSON: Yes, I certainly am the king! Always have been. In first grade, I sold pencils at discount prices to fifth graders. As a 12 year old, I actually convinced my dad to let me sell his car. I got 5 grand more than the piece of junk was worth! By the time I was an adult, I convinced a poor chump to buy ocean side property—in Kansas! Use your natural smarts (points at Donald's head).

DONALD: (Sorry for himself) I don't know... I just kinda need that money so bad, but I don't think my natural smarts can get me there. But I really need the money. You see, my mom called up my cousin to get me this job cuz Burger King wasn't giving me enough money to support my lifestyle.

HUDSON: What's your lifestyle? Beaches in Bermuda? Parties in Paris? Motorways in Monaco?

DONALD: Not quite. I love giving genuine, loving gifts to people. I want to make a difference in the world. This time, my niece wants a new bike, but her mom is in the hospital and they don't have the money to get one. She just wants a simple bike to take her to school, because her mom can't.

HUDSON: (Feeling genuinely sad) Oh, I'm so sorry man. That— (A bell rings, signifying the door to the store was opened) Oh! Get out of the way ya loser! The customers are coming!

*A man, GARY, comes into the door, looking around.*

HUDSON: (Bounds up to him first) Welcome to Dale's Depot. I'm Hudson, your personal sales consultant. What can I help you find?

GARY: I'm just looking for a printer.

HUDSON: You came to the right place, sir!

DONALD: (Tries to talk to the customer excitedly) I know where the printers are! I know this one!

GARY: (Walks toward Donald) Okay. Where they at?

HUDSON: (Cuts him off from going to Donald) Wait, sir—I think I remember you. Gary, right?

GARY: (Shocked) Wow! How'd you know?

HUDSON: Oh I remember you last time you came in.

GARY: (Thinking) The last time I came in here, was like two years ago!

HUDSON: Well, two years, 3 months, and 10 days. Yeah, about two years.

DONALD: (Not believing what Hudson was saying) Yeah right. Your memory isn't that good, Hudson.

HUDSON: (To Gary) I believe you bought some batteries with cash and then toner with a company credit card. You own a construction company, right?

GARY: That's absolutely right!

HUDSON: Right this way. I know just the printer for you. HP has a new one that would fit the needs of your small business—your budget and your printing load.

DONALD: (Runs over to Gary) Uh, do you want some paper with your printer?

GARY: (Startled by Donald—backs away because Donald is too close) I think I'm good.

DONALD: I know where the printers are too.

GARY: I think I'm just going to go with Hudson.

HUDSON: Gary, my boy! My friends call me Big H.

GARY: Sorry, guy, I'm just going to go with Big H. He's been a big help before.

HUDSON: Ya know, Gary, I have a question about commercial building codes that I've just been dying to have answered. You're a smart character. Mind if I ask?

GARY: Of course! I love building codes!

HUDSON: I thought you might. I too have a fascination for legal codes involving the construction of buildings.

*They walk off scene, and another customer, Beverly, comes up to the front of the store.*

DONALD: Welcome to Dale's Depot. Can I help you find something? Oh, my name is Donald. Can I help you find something?

BEVERLY: I don't need any help, thank you I'm just getting paper.

DONALD: Hey, don't I know you? I think I recognize you from Burger King. Is your name Janet?

BEVERLY: No it's not.

DONALD: Claire?

BEVERLY: No.

DONALD: (Frantically trying to be as cool as Hudson) Irene? Clementine? Susan? Agnus? Kasey with a K? Anything like those at all?

BEVERLY: (Slightly angrily) No, it's Beverly. You'd never would have seen me at a Burger King. I only eat organic—not the processed chemical meat substitute large food companies want me to swallow! Are you saying you support those corporate monsters?

DONALD: (Nervously) Oh... No... Okay... Paper?

BEVERLY: (Pleasantly) Yes please!

DONALD: I think it's this way (turns left) or that way (turns right). Rats, I thought I knew this one.

BEVERLY: (Concerned) Are you alright sir?

DONALD: Sorry. It's just it's my first day. I'm just trying to make enough money to help my niece get a bike. She's lived a hard life. Her father isn't in the picture. Her mom—my sister—is dying. Brain cancer, stage 4. The only birthday gift she has gotten for the last four years is a family photo her mom wraps again each time.

BEVERLY: Oh dear. That's so sad. When my mom went through cancer—ugh, I can't even imagine what this must be doing to a small child. (She starts to sob softly). What can I do to help?

DONALD: I took this job just to get a little extra cash. I'm also a part-time busboy at Denny's. There's this competition here today on who can sell the most. I'm trying to win to help my family. If you want to buy like one or two reams of paper under my name that would be great. Whatever you can do.

BEVERLY: No, I can do more than two reams of paper.

DONALD: Ma'am, I don't want to pressure you. I'm not some manipulative salesman like some people. Just buy the amount you came in here for. You needn't worry.

BEVERLY: I'll take 20 boxes of paper today! Yes, that would be about a 180 reams, right? I need all the paper I can get. I'll make fliers about your niece getting a bike. And I'll put it on my blog, Moms Against Malevolent Business Practices. Raising awareness about seemingly small causes is my specialty.

