

'Purlins'
or
'Birth of a Salesperson'
a play with music

by Joe St.Johanser
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Characters

Judy Smithers - The Secretary/Receptionist at Wellington Purlins
- youngish woman - on the bottom of the ladder

Nicolette Diralt - The Consultant from DB Consulting.

Samantha Sew - Tough cookie Executive of Truedawn Milling Machines Ltd.

Tracey Livo - Hairdresser. youngish woman - friend of Judy Smithers

Sir Colin Pantype - The Boss - Sales Director of Wellington Purlins Ltd.

Roger Marlowe - Salesman at Wellington Purlins
- youngish goodlooking man - boyfriend of Judy.

Ms Sew's assistant - small role - either sex.

Female Customer at Hair Salon - small role

Katy - Second Girl Hairdresser- small role

Blantyre - salesman - small role

Salesman - walk/dance on non-speaking

2 Female salespersons, secretaries - walk/dance on non-speaking

Six principal characters - 4 women 2 men

Six (or Seven) minor characters - 4 women 2 men - dancers

The music is played via prerecorded tracks and is St.Johanser's original composition - some in the style of dance beat music like hip hop from the 80s and some slow and contemplative scene change music. There is no singing to the music, just heightened speech rap style. No microphones should be used. The dance style should be tailored by the choreographer to suit the players, no need to be from the 80s. The frequent scene changes from office to wine bar etc. could be done via a revolve.

OVERTURE MUSIC

Act 1

Scene 1- The Office at Wellington Purlins Ltd.

Lights up on an early Monday morning in 1984 - at Wellington Purlins Ltd - a small manufacturing firm just off the M4. The monthly sales meeting. 3 salesmen dance round a whiteboard waiting for the meeting to start. 2 female secretaries flit dancing back and forth with tea and biscuits, fixing whiteboards and arranging chairs - no singing just heightened speech rap style (and dance).

MUSIC 1- SALES DANCE 1

ALL
Another bright day at Wellington
Purlins
Purlins
They hold up our
buildings
buildings
But they don't sell themselves
Ha
So we have to do it
We do indeed do it
And now we must meet to
talk
About it
And hear who Sir Colin will drop
In it
In it

Sir Colin dances in

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Good morning team.
I've just had the latest sales figures and they're looking rather poor.
To get your year end bonuses.
You'll have to do much more.
Pull your socks up.

ALL

The same old refrain
We'll hear it again
Socks up
Socks up

All mime the meeting in dance, 3 salesmen(all men!) present their results with large sheets of paper pinned on whiteboards in mime as the rest sit and listen (still dancing). Secretaries help with whiteboards. Each time a salesman finishes there is brief applause.

END MUSIC AND DANCE

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

And in conclusion gentlemen let me remind you - no sales no jobs - no jobs no take home pay. So you really need to pull your socks up. Thank you.

brief applause, the meeting breaks up, secretaries pack up whiteboards and clear coffee cups.

BLANTYRE

Excellent meeting as usual Sir Colin.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Thank you Blantyre. At least one of you is on the ball. Selling is a serious business. No sale, no business, no jobs.

BLANTYRE

Yes Sir. Nice of you to say so. I've got new leads for the large purlins from Cheneys Builders.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

We'll get on it. Let's hope your lead turns into a sale. The order book is too thin. We're down to 3 months production and then it falls off a cliff.

BLANTYRE

Yes Sir. I'll get on it.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

The building industry has to be made to know that our purlins are the best and they've got to buy them - light gauge, cold rolled steel section to die for. Factory roofs love to be supported by our excellent purlins. A Wellington purlin supported roof will not fall down. Isn't that so?

BLANTYRE

Yes Sir. Of course Sir. I'll definitely get straight on it.

Blantyre moves away to get straight on it. Sir Colin spots Roger Marlowe.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Ah Marlowe. The blue-eyed wonder boy. We're all hoping you can save the day again. Get over to your female admirer at Truedawn and see if you can expand out business there.

ROGER MARLOWE

Yes Sir Colin I'll do that.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

You did very well indeed with that first contract but there has been no movement since then. I'm sure the steely-eyed Ms. Sew and the Truedawn company can take more of our excellent quality purlins.

ROGER MARLOWE

I hear that Ms. Sew is planning to open a new factory on the old Truedawn site. She'll be needing purlins I'm sure to hold the roof up. Might as well take ours. Ha Ha.

fade down as lights fade rapidly

Might as well take ours.

blackout just after music starts

MUSIC 2 - SCENE CHANGE

Scene 2- Ms. Sew's Office at Truedawn Milling Machines.

As the lights come up we see Ms. Sew behind her executive desk and her assistant standing taking instructions. The office is ultra modern and high class. Ms. Sew is dressed quietly but powerfully as a senior executive. She piles papers into the assistant's hands.

MS. SEW

One more.

ASSISTANT

Yes maam.

MS. SEW

And one more. That's the lot. Got it? Good - then get on with it.

ASSISTANT

Yes maam.

MS. SEW

And get it right this time - I can't abide sloppiness from my staff. As you know.

ASSISTANT

Yes maam.

MS. SEW

And show my beautiful young salesman in. I've kept him waiting just long enough I think.

ASSISTANT

Yes maam.

exits

Roger enters- he is well dressed, bright and chirpy. A charming young man but alas not well endowed in the brain department.

ROGER MARLOWE

Ah Ms. Sew. Good morning. Lovely morning today. I always look forward to coming to see you. Makes my job a pleasure.

MS. SEW

gently seductive - Good morning.

ROGER MARLOWE

It's good of you to see me. All is well with our deliveries I hope. I checked before I came and the works assured me that all is on time and up to spec.

MS. SEW

stands and moves to Roger. Always a pleasure my dear Roger. I've been thinking about you.

ROGER MARLOWE

Oh really - good things I hope..

MS. SEW

Very good things. Yes.

ROGER MARLOWE

Good, excellent. I heard you berating your assistant as I came in. Has she been getting on your bad side?

MS. SEW

My assistant enjoys a little berating now and then. I'm rather good at knowing what people are thinking. I have lots of empathy for my fellow creatures feelings. It's my strongest point. Believe me she wouldn't be happy without it.

ROGER MARLOWE

Well I for sure wouldn't want to get on your bad side.

MS. SEW

Now that's not going to happen is it? We get on so well.

ROGER MARLOWE

Yes we do don't we. Definitely a warm feeling between us I'm glad to say.

MS. SEW

Warm yes.

ROGER MARLOWE

Have you tried that hairdresser I recommended yet? Friend of a friend says its really good and I know you like to have your hair looking good. As a matter of fact its looking very good at the moment.

MS. SEW

Thank you for that charming compliment.... so sweet of you.....

As a matter of fact I'd like to invite you to dine with me. Just the two of us. We can talk business and then get to know each other a little better don't you think. It's been a while since we met and I gave you that order, but we've hardly spent any time together.

ROGER MARLOWE

Oh really - well that would be lovely. When were you thinking of?

MS. SEW

I thought tonight or tomorrow.

ROGER MARLOWE

Roger however is strongly lacking in empathy .

Can't do tonight I'm afraid. I'm taking out my new girlfriend. Her name is Judy - I think I am in love. She's a secretary at Wellington. A lovely creature - young and fresh as a daisy. She's a real sweetie. Prettiest woman I've met for ages.

Ms. Sew is surprised and shocked that she is surprised - a very rare situation for her. She reacts with suppressed fury then sudden ice. Roger fails to notice Ms Sew's reaction- he blunders on.

I don't know why I didn't notice her before.

She turns her back; letting silence hang between them.

It's funny how you can see someone every day and not really notice them....

silence

Er - how about tomorrow?

More silence from Ms Sew.

Er - are you not feeling well? Can I get you anything?

More silence.

I'll come back at a better time.

he exits

MUSIC 3 - FOR MS SEW

MS. SEW

speaks free style over the music background

Damn! Damn! Oh damn!
Damn him and his silly girlfriend!

I'm the one that's silly.
Silly old woman
Jilted again.

Surely he's not seen my real age?
No one else ever has.
I keep my real age secret
Or else they call me witch
And throw a stone.

He just doesn't see me as desirable.
Or even see me at all!

I remember this pain so well

END MUSIC

fade down as lights fade rapidly

I feel so lonely I could die.
go to black

MUSIC 4 - SCENE CHANGE

Scene 3- The Office at Wellington Purlins Ltd.

A nice quiet morning at Wellington Purlins Ltd We see a typical small office/reception area. Judy Smithers enters before music finishes and hangs up her coat. She is dressed as a lower class office worker in a floral print dress. She hums/sings happily- all is well in her little world. She picks up the phone and dials a number.

JUDY SMITHERS

Tracey? Yes it's Judy... how's the head? *[laughs]* What do you think of Roger? Not bad eh?...He's a salesman... here at Wellington ... Yes...Look can I come in for a cut and blow dry at lunchtime? I can pay this time..... Yes really, I got paid yesterdayYes I'll tell you all about it. See ya.

[puts phone down and begins the task of opening the post at her desk She tosses the junk mail into a waste bin and reads the other letters briefly before putting them into the relevant tray. One letter causes her to start].

Ouch - that's terrible - how could she? We tried so hard to fulfil that last order.

[picks up phone]

Roger you better get up here straight away and see this. Yes it's really really urgent I think. Sorry about last night... No it's not your fault... Sorry sorry... Yes well I did warn you about my drink capacity...Yes well it's limited as you discovered...Well I did warn you...Oh shut up - the dry cleaner will sort that out...Look just get up here will you.

[put phone down dials another number]

Sir Colin it's Judy... Judy Smithers?... secretary to you and Roger Marlowe.... Marlowe? Your salesman for the Truedawn project... Yes just opened the post - Truedawn have cancelled us... No it's in the letter. I'll get Marlowe to bring it up to you right away... Yes sir... No sir.....of course sir.

[puts phone down]

And three sodding bags full sir to you you daft old git - thanks for nothing.

[Roger Marlowe enters the office.]

ROGER MARLOWE

Hello sweetheart, what's the panic?

JUDY SMITHERS

Good morning Roger - take a look at that.

[Roger swiftly peruses the letter]

ROGER MARLOWE

That's terrible!

JUDY SMITHERS

I know.

ROGER MARLOWE

Really awful!

JUDY SMITHERS

I know.

ROGER MARLOWE

I'm sunk - this means I'll get the sack. I'll have to move back in with my parents- and I've only just left!

JUDY SMITHERS

I didn't know that - how old are you Roger?

ROGER MARLOWE

Thirty two. The firm can't stand it - it's nearly half our output. It was the biggest order ever. And I made it.. Everybody thought I was marvellous. I've hardly made any others since. Now old Sir Colin will sack me. He'll have to sack half the staff. You'll probably get the sack..

[pause]

JUDY SMITHERS

Unless we do something about it... you're the salesman - do some selling or something.

ROGER MARLOWE

Do some selling - yes.

[pause]

I'm not a very good salesman - so my mother keeps telling me. (*weak laugh*). Some people said that Ms Sew at Truedawn only gave me the order because she fancied me.

JUDY SMITHERS

Perhaps she still does. Do some selling. Get on the phone.

ROGER MARLOWE

I thought she was keen on me. She asked me to dinner. I told her I couldn't do yesterday because of our date.

JUDY SMITHERS

Oh dear. Did you mention me - your new girlfriend? To the woman that fancied you and asked you out to dinner? (*pause*)Not much thought for her feelings there. A little lacking in empathy don't you think?

ROGER MARLOWE

That was the word she used - apparently she has lots of it....

Oh Judy I think I've had it! The Truedawn order was the firm's biggest order for years - it's more than half our order book. Everybody's going to be made redundant. That bitch at Truedawn Ms. Sew. What does she have to go and do that for? Our stuff was good - we deliver on time.

pause

JUDY SMITHERS

So I'm to be made redundant.

pause

Now that I've just bought my little house and taken out a mortgage. They'll foreclose on me. I shall lose my deposit. It took me ten years to save that. Scrimping and pinching and not getting my hair done.

pause

ROGER MARLOWE

I'm so sorry. It must be something I've said or done to Ms. Sew. Mentioning you. Or somebody else. I can't think what. There's nothing wrong with our stuff is there? We've delivered on time and to spec for the last six months solid. Sir Colin hasn't been to see her has he? He'd upset a saint - and she's no saint - more of a devil.

JUDY SMITHERS

Don't mention the devil. Talk of the devil and he appears. We need an angel. A guardian angel. I had a guardian once, after I was orphaned. She wasn't exactly an angel but she saw I was looked after.

ROGER MARLOWE

I remember. You told me you never knew your parents... poor thing.

JUDY SMITHERS

Long time ago.

ROGER MARLOWE

Yes we need a guardian angel,... an avenging angel to hang Ms Sew by her bra strap till she changes her mind.

JUDY SMITHERS

Calm down Roger. Violence won't help. Unless it's murder. If she were somehow to die then all should be well shouldn't it? It's only her decision I suppose.

ROGER MARLOWE

Must be - she calls all the shots at Truedawn.

pause

ROGER MARLOWE

So that's it - I just have to kill her.

JUDY SMITHERS

Oh do calm down. I need to think. You need to get on to her and find out what the problem is.

she dials a number and hands Roger the phone

Here - now do a bit of selling. You're the salesman. You can do it.

ROGER MARLOWE

Ms. Sew? This is Roger Marlowe... Marlowe... from Wellington Purlins... Yes ... about your cancellation letter... I wonder if we could meet and discuss the ...

jerks the phone from his ear

She's hung up on me!

pause

Now what do we do?

JUDY SMITHERS

Murder the only option then? No I'm sorry. It's not funny is it? Not for you ... not for me.

pause mood change

I saved for years... and now I shall lose my little house and have to rent somewhere. I can't save up for another ten years I just can't.

ROGER MARLOWE

She is a devil!

A blinding flash of light as the door opens and Nicolette Diralt enters suddenly - one moment she is not there and the next she appears

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Hello.

JUDY SMITHERS

Good morning. How can I help you?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

To see Sir Colin at 10.00. Nicolette Diralt from DB Consulting.

JUDY SMITHERS

Please take a seat.

phones Sir Colin

A Nicolette Diralt to see you sir, from DB Consulting...

He won't be a moment. I'll take you up in a second. Can I get you a cup of coffee? How do you like it?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Sir Colin tells me you pride yourselves on your coffee. I'm looking forward to trying it. I like it hot as hell and black as the devil and sweet...

ROGER MARLOWE

As an angel?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Naturally.

Judy exits via the other entrance to get coffee

Pause

ROGER MARLOWE

What kind of consulting do you do? Not sales and marketing by any chance?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

That is part of our offering but our speciality is general problem solving and PR. You have a public relations problem; we fix it. We're very good at it. We're a long established firm and we work at the highest level with international clients.

ROGER MARLOWE

Do you have a client list?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Yes of course. Prominent clients you may remember. Some of them world leaders. Colonel Gaddafi of Libya was a long standing client enjoying excellent public relations for years until he unfortunately dispensed with our services. Then his public relations took a turn for the worse.

Ex US President Bill Clinton was another who called on us when he hit a little PR problem with his young female intern. Remember the blue dress with the stain? I'm very proud of our line there. *[in accent]* 'I did not have sex with that woman!' Remember that? A masterpiece. That was my line.

ROGER MARLOWE

I'm impressed. 'I did not have sex with that woman' - wow - that was a masterpiece. Yes...

Well we have a general problem that needs solving. A problem in spades! I don't know if it's PR or not...

You could raise the Truedawn contract with Sir Colin - if he doesn't raise it with you first. We would do anything to fix that problem.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Anything?

ROGER MARLOWE

Oh yes. I personally would sell my soul to save that contract.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Really? ...That is most interesting.

Sir Colin enters via the other entrance

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Ms Diralt? Do come on up. My secretary seems to have disappeared.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

A pleasure to meet you Sir Colin. She's just making me coffee exactly how I like it.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Good.

They exit- after a brief moment Judy returns - she has given the coffee to Nicolette.

ROGER MARLOWE

That consultant may be the answer to our prayers. Her client list is very impressive. Colonel Gaddafi no less. Maybe she'll be tough enough to handle Ms Sew.

JUDY SMITHERS

We'd better get praying then. Who shall we pray to?

ROGER MARLOWE

Pray to the Gods of Business to uncanceled our Truedawn contract and save all our jobs.

JUDY SMITHERS

I can't stop thinking about my little house. I love it so much. I can't bear the thought of going back to a tiny rented flat and a life of scrimping and saving to find another deposit before I draw my pension. Last time my savings only just kept in front of the house price rises... I'd give anything to avoid that again.

ROGER MARLOWE

Anything?

JUDY SMITHERS

Yes Roger. To avoid that fate. Anything.

Blackout

MUSIC 5 - SCENE CHANGE

Scene 4- A Hairdressing Salon.

Tracey Livo is fussing with Ms Sew who is having a hairdo. Ms Sew's hair is wet and she has a towel. There is a faint noise all through the scene from hair dryers, a radio etc. which the characters need to raise their voices to talk over.

TRACEY LIVO

I love having a new customer. I aim higher. How did you get to know about us?

MS. SEW

It was a business contact. Recommended you. Roger Marlowe - says he's a friend of yours. It's not much of a drive from the office and I thought I'd treat myself.

TRACEY LIVO

Yes I know Roger - boyfriend of a great friend of mine Judy Smithers. He did mention you might be coming in. Nice of him to recommend me.

MS. SEW

I felt like a change. Must be something in the air. Springtime.

TRACEY LIVO

It is rather warm for the time of year. All the birds are pairing up and building nests. Singing sexy songs to snare their mates.

MS. SEW

What a lovely thought. You're not a poet are you? That was a poetic thought.

TRACEY LIVO

As a matter of fact I do write poetry. Fancy you spotting that. I've been published too. Just the once but it was lovely.

MS. SEW

How nice.

TRACEY LIVO

Do you like poetry?

MS. SEW

Yes very much. As a matter of fact I write poetry too. I have been published but it was a long while ago.

TRACEY LIVO

Well there's a coincidence!

Nicolette enters the salon- a flash of light - as Nicolette gets closer there is a big reaction from Ms Sew, who stands up and stares at her. Katy guides Nicolette to a hairdressing chair and starts on her nails.

TRACEY LIVO

Good morning Ms Diralt. Nice to have to here again. Katy can do you now if you like. Have you two met already?

MS. SEW

No I don't think so. I'm sorry (*sits again*) I just had a sudden reaction. Perhaps we have met?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

No. Not as far as I know.

the hairdressing and nail work begins. Tracey and Katy mostly talk to each other and ignore what their clients are saying to each other- so we have two conversations in progress at once. Hair dryer (hand activated by Tracey), towels and apparatus go on and off as the hairdressers busy themselves.

TRACEY LIVO

(*on*) Planning your holiday this year?

KATY

No - can't afford it - have to leave it - have a nice holiday in the local park! (*off*)

NICOLETTE DIRALT

I can't help noticing your reaction to me. It's as though we had something in common. Don't you think?

MS. SEW

It is odd. I'm sorry if I startled you. Are you sure we haven't met?

TRACEY LIVO

(*on*) That's a shame. I was thinking of going to Ibiza again - with my mate Judy. But it's not going to happen I think.(*off*)

NICOLETTE DIRALT

No I don't think so. I do know you I think. You're Ms. Sew aren't you? The executive at Truedawn Milling Machines?

MS. SEW

Yes.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

I'm Nicolette Diralt from DB Consulting. One of my clients is Wellington Purlins.

KATY

(*on*)Is she still with that boyfriend? He's got something that one.

TRACEY LIVO

Certainly has.(*off*)

MS.SEW

Oh. ... would you mind if we don't talk business. I'm having a break from business

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Of course not... It's clear you haven't seen me before but I have met that kind of reaction before. May I explain?

MS. SEW

It was odd. I'm still feeling it. Do go ahead.

KATY

*(on)*He makes me go all gooey. Strange cos he's a real dope.

TRACEY LIVO

Don't be too hard on him - he does his best..*(off)*

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Well... may I ask... are you often congratulated on looking very young for your age? I don't mean to be personal but I'm afraid this is rather personal.

MS. SEW

How did you know that? I've had many remarks along those lines. I'm not complaining but I do seem to age rather well.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

I have the same remarks addressed to me. You see we have that in common. I won't tell you how old I am but I'm much older than I look.

KATY

*(on)*Roger the Dodger. I suppose he's a top salesman at his job..*(off)*

MS. SEW

How odd. I too am much older than I look. We must be eating the right vitamins or something.

TRACEY LIVO

*(on)*No he isn't really. Actually he's having a hard time at the moment..*(off)*

NICOLETTE DIRALT

I'm not married. My guess is you're not married either.

MS. SEW

A sad fact if one devotes oneself to the job. Perhaps it's the same with you. A consultant did you say? Tough assignments most of the time?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Yes indeed.

TRACEY LIVO

How's that Madame? I think that looks really nice.

MS. SEW

Lovely thank you.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Do you know that little wine bar just down the road? I'm going there for lunch after this. They do a very fine little lunchtime menu. Would you care to join me?

MS. SEW

Well I must say I am intrigued by the physical reaction I got when I saw you. Not at all unpleasant but very profound. I think I can take time for a little lunch. I'll call my office.

MUSIC 6 - SCENE CHANGE

Scene 5- A Wine Bar down the road from Wellington Purlins Ltd.

The wine bar is darkly lit with a cosy nook and a low table. A waitress buzzes about clearing glasses. Diralt and Sew enter, sit and order

MS. SEW

I don't know why I've let you inveigle me into this little tete a tete. I've had to cancel my afternoon meeting. Never been known before. They'll all be amazed at the office. Wonder if I'm sickening for something...

NICOLETTE DIRALT

It's good of you to indulge me. Please don't get annoyed but I have a strong idea I know something about you. Something you probably have not recognised yet. It will be good for you to hear it from me - it's too hard working it out on one's own. I had a guardian angel when I discovered my true nature ...

(pause)

- she was so helpful - that was a long time ago. Much longer than you could possibly realise... Yes.

MS. SEW

Well do go on - say whatever it is that's bugging you. I promise I won't take offence. I'm intrigued is the fact of the matter.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Thank you. I need to lead into it. Its a delicate matter. You'll find it rather weird and improbable I'm afraid - but bear with me. A little background. Bear with me...

You've perhaps read recently of the discovery of the Denisovans?

MS. SEW

Denisovans. Is that how it's pronounced? Denisovans? Yes I think so. I keep up with science discoveries - the name rings a bell. Aren't they another type of human species - old bones found in a cave somewhere?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Yes indeed. A cave in Siberia - bones from 50,000 years ago - specifically the finger bone of a young girl. The DNA showed that it was not Homo Sapiens, not Neanderthal but a new human species.... but a species that had interbred with Homo Sapiens... as had the Neanderthals. DNA test now show that many modern Europeans have a little bit of Neanderthal and a little bit of Denisovan in them. Some have more than others.

[pause]

MS. SEW

Really? Denisovans - OK. So we have a little bit of Denisovan in us do we? Must account for my oddities.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Yes...

How about the discovery of the 'Hobbit' creatures - Homo Floriensis?

MS. SEW

I'm with you there too. Another human species - Homo Floriensis - very small like a little hobbit - found in Java wasn't it?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Yes indeed - apparently became extinct 13000 years ago. Very recent....

Ever wondered if there might be more human species - ever wondered if they might not be extinct? Ever wondered if some of those mixed genes are still around in the human species?

MS. SEW

No not really.

pause

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Well believe me there are. Many humans have just a few Neanderthal and Denisovan genes mixed in. That was discovered very recently and it helps to explain a bit. From my personal experience I can assure you that there is at least one more species or subspecies or mutant group or whatever. One more.

(pause)

Not extinct. Still living. And not a million miles distant either.

(pause)

I've never had my DNA tested. I'm too frightened of the consequences. I don't want publicity. I don't want to be a freak. My guardian angel told me to be careful. Though there was no DNA testing when she told me. She was born in 1655 - she told me in 1829 - I lost touch with her a while ago - after she had had her child.

pause

How old are you?

MS. SEW

That's very personal.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

I'm over 200 years old. How old are you?

MS. SEW

Good Lord!...

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Well?

pause

MS. SEW

I don't let this out these days. I've learned not to. I'm 85.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Perhaps you begin to see?

pause

MS. SEW

Are you suggesting you might be one of these creatures... this subspecies or mutant group or whatever you call it...And I might be another? Is that what you're suggesting?

pause

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Oh yes.

MS. SEW

Good Lord!... I've always wondered if there might be something different about me. The slow ageing.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Not being able to have children?

MS. SEW

Yes - I'm not a virgin - I stopped taking precautions sixty years ago - no results.

pause

NICOLETTE DIRALT

We can have children. Its just a little more complicated than normal humans.

MS. SEW

Normal humans?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Yes normal Homo Sapiens. With us - the ones who are not normal - its just a little more complicated than normal humans.

MS. SEW

Normal being Homo Sapiens? And the other ones?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Yes - and our lot... call us what you like. We don't have a scientific name - ha - as we are for very good reasons unknown to science.

(pause)

We survive - though there a very few of us - and have children - also very few. It's just a lot slower. I have no children yet but I hope to one day.

We survive if we keep ourselves secret. Otherwise we burn as witches I'm afraid.

pause

MS. SEW

Witches?

(pause)

Yes. I seem to have always known that I must keep myself secret - or risk bad things happening.

I'm surprised by what you've said - forgive me I'm still taking it on board - but in a curious way not so surprised.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

There's more to say. One of our peculiarities. We are all female. Every one of us is female. Never a male...

We need a male to produce a child - any normal homo sapiens human male will do - though there are some unusual requirements. Another peculiarity - we don't last long once we have had a child. Just a few years...

My guardian angel lasted a mere 7 years after her baby. I found a good foster home for it.

pause

No doubt you are an orphan.

MS. SEW

Indeed. My foster parents didn't tell me but I worked it out recently. They are long dead. Apparently I had a guardian before they fostered me. She paid for my education but I never met her.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

There's even more to say. Sorry to pile it on you so. I want a baby. My time is come. I've lived long enough. I want to have my child and die soon after.

I need help to do all this. You can help me. If you will.

Have another drink and have a little think.

Ha ha. Sorry. I've been waiting a long time to get all this off my chest.

[pause]

I have a plan for all this. You know Roger? He is a possible male in my scheme.

MS. SEW

Yes.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

The vibrations are all good.

pause - spotlight on Nicolette as she speaks a soliloquy to audience over music

MUSIC 7 - Nicolette's Music

Never a male born among us

Pure sisters in our oneness

My time has come

My day nearly done

END MUSIC

I must have my baby

MS. SEW

I owe you a debt for telling me all this. I need to think about it. But I'll help you if I can.

MUSIC 8 - SCENE CHANGE

Scene 6- A Hairdressing Salon.

Tracey Livo is blowdrying the hair of one of her clients.

[dryer off]

TRACEY LIVO

I think that's about the right length.

[dryer on]

CUSTOMER

[over the noise of the blow dryer]

I think it's a little too short

[dryer off]

TRACEY LIVO

Well we can leave it next time

[dryer on]

CUSTOMER

[over the noise of the blow dryer]

That's what you said last time. I really think it's a little too short.

[Judy enters and takes a seat. Tracey waves to her]

[dryer off]

TRACEY LIVO

Mmmmm. Very good. Lovely. There now all done. Next time as usual?

[dryer on]

CUSTOMER

[over the noise of the blow dryer]

I really do think it's a little too short.

[drier off, customer stands, is primped, pays with notes, tips, then leaves, meanwhile]

TRACEY LIVO

There that's lovely. Looks marvellous. Thank you.

Hello Jude how are you? Just in time as usual.. I'll do you now then we can go to lunch at the wine bar.

JUDY SMITHERS

Hello Trace.

TRACEY LIVO

God you look miserable. What's the matter with you? Roger the Dodger not working out? God you do look terrible. What on earth is the matter?

JUDY SMITHERS

Sorry. Sorry sorry. It's my job. I shall be made redundant. Sorry.

[she begins to sob quietly, Tracey comforts her]

TRACEY LIVO

There there. You poor thing. Sit down. What's all this about?

JUDY SMITHERS

Sorry. We've just lost a big contract. If we can't get it back the firm will have to sack a lot of people - including me I'm pretty sure. Sorry.

TRACEY LIVO

You poor thing. What will you do?

JUDY SMITHERS

I don't know. I'm pushed to pay my mortgage as it is. I'll have to move. I'm racking my brains. It's Roger's client. But he's so hopeless.

[Nicolette enters the salon- a flash of light - and takes a seat]

TRACEY LIVO

Hi there. I'll be with you in a minute. Just a minute Jude.

[tidies and cleans the chair and pops out for a moment]

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Excuse me. Aren't you the girl from Wellington Purlins? Who made me that lovely cup of coffee when I came to your office. Whatever is the matter? Can I help?

[a fresh outburst of snivels]

JUDY SMITHERS

Sorry. Sorry. I had hoped you would. With your expertise you know - we might have won back that contract. But Sir Colin has decided not to use your services hasn't he? Has he told you yet?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Yes he has. Alas he is averse to paying my fee it seems. It is a considerable fee. Nevertheless one he can well afford. Especially considering the costs of failure. I understand the loss of the contract will cause much of the works to shut down with all round redundancies. Ah well - he'll have to fend for himself - he thinks he can win over the dragon lady. Not a chance in my opinion. He's a large part of the problem in the first place - so I'm told.

[pause]

Funny my finding you here. I was going to ask you a favour. Something in it for you of course. I have several ideas for fixing the problem. I wonder if I could ask you...

JUDY SMITHERS

Anything.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Excellent. You see our methods require complete commitment from our clients and a passionate desire to solve the problem. People who would do whatever it takes.

JUDY SMITHERS

Anything.

TRACEY LIVO

[reenters]

Hi there. Sorry to keep you. Please take a seat. Jude I'll do you after lunch.

[ushers Diralt to a chair and puts robe around her]

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Perhaps I could take you to lunch Ms. Smithers. We can discuss my idea. I'm sure you'll find it attractive.

pause

TRACEY LIVO

No problem Jude. You go with this lady if you like. We can have our lunch tomorrow.

[lights fade on the scene]

MUSIC 9 -SCENE CHANGE

Scene 7- A Wine Bar down the road from Wellington Purlins Ltd.

[The wine bar is darkly lit with a cosy nook and a low table. A waitress buzzes about clearing glasses. Diralt and Judy are sat with several glasses in front of them - they have been there some time- Judy is somewhat the worse for wear]

JUDY SMITHERS

Do you really think I could become a sales rep? I've never done it before. They had me down as a secretary at school and I've never thought of changing. Lack of ambition I suppose.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Yes. But you've acquired ambition now haven't you - the idea of losing your little house has put a bit of steel in your soul. I can see it.

JUDY SMITHERS

You can see my soul?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Your inner thoughts and desires. Yes, in a manner of speaking. It's my art and my talent. Acquired over many years.

JUDY SMITHERS

You don't look old.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Don't I? Are you sure?

JUDY SMITHERS

Not entirely. Perhaps you are older than you look. Sorry I don't mean to be rude.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

I take no offence I assure you. I am indeed much older than I look. Much older. You are using your art and your talent that's all.

JUDY SMITHERS

You really don't look old but somehow... Sorry. I've had a little too much of this lovely wine. It's making me outspoken.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

I do think you would make a very effective sales rep. If Roger is the standard.

JUDY SMITHERS

Roger is a pretty bad salesman I know - seems to me anyway - I suppose I could try and do better than him. He's a lovely bloke but he is pretty hopeless. I do know all the stuff about Truedawn - better than Roger now I think of it. Do you think Sir Colin would let me try with Truedawn and Ms. Sew? The firm has other salesmen than Roger. Though they're not up to much either in my opinion. If it's true that he's the problem.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

I'm concluding that he is the problem. Apparently there is nothing particularly wrong with your product and Sir Colin has mostly not been involved much recently. I'm pretty sure I could get Sir Colin to let you have a go at rescuing the situation - with my help at a reduced fee - that should do the trick.

[pause]

You are attracted to Roger aren't you?

JUDY SMITHERS

Oh yes - he's lovely - makes me go all gooey - sorry - not very professional. I have had quite a lot to drink haven't I? What do you think of him?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

I can quite see the attraction. I'm afraid he makes something stir deep inside. Not something I'm used to these days...

Enough of that. You're going to be a star sales person. This is now lesson one. You can put your drink down. I'm sure you will now go out and buy all the books you can find on sales techniques - even though I tell you it's a waste of your time and money - right?

[looks at Judy]

I thought so. I know you are keen and conscientious - and the opposite of stupid - that's why I picked you.

Let's examine the sales process. Number one - the customer is presented with the product and asked to buy - simple isn't it? Number two - the customer buys the product, or they buy a rival product or don't buy anything - piece of cake - so what is all the fuss about?

Well all those books are products - and you are the customer - when you have bought the book that's the end of it. Sale accomplished.

I'm not saying they are rubbish - they are packed with sound advice - look both ways before you cross the road - that sort of thing. The fact is every situation is different - different products, different customers, different salespeople, different circumstances. Tricky that last one.

No the talent of a good salesperson is empathy- other talents help of course - hard work, stamina, charm - but empathy is the thing. And basically one either has it or one doesn't - you my dear have it. In rather exceptional amounts. My instruction is just going to save you time - lots of time - that's all.

JUDY SMITHERS

It's so kind of you to help me in this way.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Yes it is isn't it?

Lesson two.

JUDY SMITHERS

Already?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Yes - remember I save you lots of time. Lesson one - every sale is different. Lesson two what is the customer thinking?

JUDY SMITHERS

Wow - you've got my head spinning.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Come on focus - what is Ms Sew thinking?

JUDY SMITHERS

She's pissed off - sorry - upset - with us - with Roger? But what can he have done?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Come on - keep going.

JUDY SMITHERS

Poor Roger won't have done anything - he'll have just turned up for his sales visit and chatted away. I did his notes for his last meeting. There's nothing there - just chat about about the party he was going to take me to...Is that it?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Keep going.

JUDY SMITHERS

Is Ms. Sew reacting to something? Perhaps she doesn't like parties? Sorry I'm being silly.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

You have a natural empathy talent. Very high level. Let it lead you where it will.

JUDY SMITHERS

No it must be something to do with the product. With Wellington's performance. Is Ms. Sew reacting to our performance. But we've not changed. The product is being delivered up to spec and more or less on time - as far as I know. I've looked at the figures. Perhaps she really doesn't like parties? Sorry still silly.

Perhaps she doesn't like Roger?. But she's been happy with him as our salesman since he took the account from Sir Colin in the early days...

Perhaps it's something at Truedawn? They're a very big and thriving company. Financially very solid. I checked them out Our product is just small beer to them. They can easily replace us. It was a wonder we won the big contract in the first place. It happened when Sir Colin took Roger along...

[Judy muses]

Perhaps she does like Roger - he is lovely...he does like flirting.

Perhaps she doesn't like the idea of him taking me to a party and not her? No still silly. Surely not petty jealousy.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

I think we're getting there. That would be my analysis.

[Long pause]

JUDY SMITHERS

If that's the case how does my involvement help? Surely Roger is the key. My seeing her would just be oil on flames wouldn't it?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Yes Roger is the key.. You've got it again. Your talent is really remarkable. But you won't understand why at this stage. Perhaps later. Let's just say I have plans for Roger. You'll have to trust me. Do you trust me?

JUDY SMITHERS

I suppose I do. You're doing so much for me.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Good. Lesson 3. What does the customer want?

spotlight on Judy as she speaks her soliloquy to audience over music

JUDY SMITHERS

MUSIC 10 - JUDY'S MUSIC

What does the customer want?

Who knows what the customer wants?

Do I have it in me?

Can I really do it?

She says my talent is remarkable,

Roger might think her claim is farcical,

Sir Colin that my talent's not discernible .

END MUSIC

Do I have it in me?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

What was that?

JUDY SMITHERS

I don't think I can handle any more today. And I have to get back to work.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

OK - you're right. Come on I'll walk you back to the office. We can fix another time for the next session. I must control my eagerness. My impatience.

We can meet here tomorrow after work - it's pretty quiet - we'll drink orange juice and I'll teach you how to sell - or rather I'll unleash the potential that I can see you already have

(they exit)

MUSIC 11 - SCENE CHANGE

Scene 8- The Office at Wellington Purlins Ltd.

Sir Colin is pacing up and down - the office is unmanned and empty and he is not a happy man - he kicks the odd chair. Then Roger enters. Sir Colin swings around and glares at him.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

At last. Where the hell is everybody? It's like the bloody Marie Celeste in here. Nobody aboard.

ROGER MARLOWE

Sorry Sir Colin. I've just been at lunch. Judy must be out. Unlike her to leave the office unmanned - or unwomaned - ha ha.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

You really are a twit Marlowe.

ROGER MARLOWE

Yes sir. Sorry sir. Just trying to lighten the atmosphere. I think you said the monthly sales meeting was to begin at 2.30 and it's only 2 pm. Haha. I can't get over that Truedawn cancellation. I've tried to get through to Ms Sew at Truedawn but she just hangs up on me.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

That contract is our bread and butter. I can't accept the cancellation. I've had that Diralt consultant woman on to me again with a proposition. I'm minded to accept it. She is very persuasive.

ROGER MARLOWE

Oh good. I was impressed by her credentials. Pretty hot at this kind of situation I would have thought. We could use her help.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Yes. As a matter of fact we could use her help. But she doesn't want you in on the deal. Specifically not you.

ROGER MARLOWE

Oh. I thought she and I got on very well.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Yes. I'm sure you did. Perhaps you do. Nevertheless - she was insistent. And I've agreed.

ROGER MARLOWE

Oh.

the sales crew and some secretaries now enter and set up white boards while this dialog continues

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Yes. Weirdly she doesn't want me involved either. Gave me a long tale about client relationships. Ms. Sew won't take my calls either. So I've had to go along. Don't like it but needs must.

We've got to get that contract back or I'll have to take a bloody chain saw to the staff roster and sack half of you.

ROGER MARLOWE

Yes.

[pause]

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Yes. Odd thing is Diralt wanted our secretary to assist her - what's her name?

ROGER MARLOWE

Judy Smithers?

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Yes. Can't think why. She's keen enough. Diralt is on a contingency. If we don't get the contract back she gets nothing. So I'm in a mood to grant her wishes. Well?

ROGER MARLOWE

Oh.

[pause]

Judy's very good. I'm sure she'll be a big help.

MUSIC 12 - SALES DANCE 2

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

I've had the latest sales figures, the future's really dire.
At this rate we'll soon be bust, the fat is burning in the fire

ALL

This time he really means it

This time he really means it

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Half of you will get the chop if we can't make some sales.
For God's sake do some selling, you bunch of useless males

ALL

There's no more room to skive
We're selling for our lives
We're selling for our lives

salesmen and secretaries dance off leaving Sir Colin, who puts head in hands as curtain comes in to close 6 bars before last chord.

*** INTERVAL ***

Act 2

MUSIC 13

Scene 1- A Wine Bar down the road from Wellington Purlins Ltd.

[Judy is sitting with an orange juice and a pile of books, studying furiously - after a moment Diralt enters to a small flash of light - Judy stands up]

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Hi there - I see you're still ignoring my advice about books on salesmanship. No doubt you're thoroughly confused. They're all so full of good advice but there is just so much of it. How can anyone remember all that? Come on sit down and we'll get on. What is it? Lesson 20? I can't remember.

[both sit- a waitress takes Nicolette's order]

JUDY SMITHERS

It's Lesson 21 - we've done 3 every day for the past 7 days and I'm stuffed full of new information. You're so right about the books! I hereby give them up!

stuffs the books back in her bags

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Good. Lesson 21 - a practical test. I've arranged for Ms. Sew of Truedawn to come in here for a drink after work. You are to introduce yourself and make a sale.

JUDY SMITHERS

What just like that? I can't! You can't mean it!

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Relax. You'll be fine. If it doesn't work this time it'll work the next. Calm down!

Judy makes a bit effort with deep breathing - and calms down

JUDY SMITHERS

How did you get her to come here?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Lesson 21 - you've got to have something the customer wants. It may well have nothing to do with the product. I've done lots of digging on Ms. Sew - she interests me in many ways...

pause

And I finally found an angle. She has a weird name hasn't she? Sew spelled 'S e w' and pronounced like what you do with needle and thread. Well I discovered it wasn't always like that. When she was a little girl - a long time ago believe me - it was spelled 's o w'. It's on her birth certificate. Now you can pronounce that as either way - pronounced in one way it is the name of a certain female animal that lives in a pig-sty and goes 'oink' - 'sow'. Not

very nice. Some people still use it as an insult don't they? Or they did in the rough cockney pubs around the London docks when I was last there - before it all got gentrified and turned into the Canary Wharf financial district. Well she had it changed of course.

JUDY SMITHERS

How interesting - of course... she had it changed.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

I issued an invitation for her to meet you here - I've given you a cover story - a background - you are researching Truedawn in order to write a commercial history, going back to the beginnings of the firm. You are doing this privately - inspired by your interest in the firm seen from Wellington's viewpoint. You hope to sell a few copies but mainly use it for your research degree that you plan to do in future.

JUDY SMITHERS

My research degree?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

This all in your head - no paper trail if she cares to check up on you - which she may well do! She has been there for ages so she is the obvious subject for interview about Truedawn. She will have worked out that you may possibly discover her name change. She needs to control the situation to avoid possible embarrassment over the name change and her age and appearance.

pause - Nicolette drinks and eats while Judy absorbs the news

We'll soon see if I have calculated correctly. If she is coming she'll be here soon. Just remember lesson what ever it was - the one about cold introductions - smile and ask for help.

The sale you want to make is for her to like you and trust you and give you another interview. That's all.

JUDY SMITHERS

Oh God.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

I've explained who you are - Roger's girlfriend. She's fine with that. Her problem is with Roger not you. And I think she's over that now.

JUDY SMITHERS

Oh God.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Come on focus - I need to disappear. You know what she looks like don't you?

Judy nods - Diralt gets up and exits

Good luck!

MUSIC 14

pause with music over - Ms Sew enters, looks round - Judy gets up and goes to her

JUDY SMITHERS

Ms. Sew? I'm Judy Smithers. Thank you for coming to meet me. Can I get you a drink?

MS. SEW

Thank you. I'll have a gin and tonic. Judy Smithers was it?

JUDY SMITHERS

Yes - please call me Judy. Shall we sit down?

they sit - the waitress takes orders

Thank you for coming. Er I'm most grateful. I'm hoping you can help me with my research into your firm.

MS. SEW

That's why I'm here. I want to make sure you get all the facts right. Wouldn't want any misinformation getting into print would we? You can call me Samantha if you like but most people call me Ms. Sew. I've been with the firm for donkey's years. I'm a little bit old fashioned I'm afraid - I'm rather older than my appearance might indicate.

JUDY SMITHERS

Yes. I should say that I work for Wellington Purlins and I know about the recent order cancellation. My work on the Truedawn commercial history has nothing to do with any of that. Er I'm hoping to make some money from the publication and to use it for my PhD research project.

MS. SEW

I like to see ambition in the young. Well done. The Wellington situation is complicated and commercially sensitive. I hope we can avoid the subject.

JUDY SMITHERS

No problem. It doesn't bear on the history of the firm. Such a small recent event. Er I should add to make it all quite transparent that my boyfriend Roger Marlowe was the salesman for Truedawn - no longer your salesman I hasten to add - and I'm hoping to get into sales myself.

MS. SEW

Really. I remember your salesman - Marlowe was it - mentioned he had a new girlfriend. No longer eh? I like that idea. Not enough females in sales. Good luck with that. Marlowe was it? Quite hopeless as a salesman from the little I can recall. Based everything on charm. Hopeless. Your consultant Diralt has contacted me and given me some background.

JUDY SMITHERS

It's so good of you to help me. So little documentation. I shall have to rely on oral histories.

MS. SEW

Of course. How about we start by my recounting my outline of the history and you can ask me further details as we go along.

I'm very proud of our firm. It has a long and distinguished history and I look forward to seeing it written down correctly.

JUDY SMITHERS

Perfect. Today can be a brief start - I don't want to wear you out.

If you have time in the evenings I would be happy to buy you the odd dinner somewhere pleasant and relaxing.

MS. SEW

Perfect.

MUSIC 15 - SCENE CHANGE

Scene 2- The Office at Wellington Purlins Ltd.

Early Monday morning at Wellington Purlins Ltd - the monthly sales meeting. The salesmen are sitting in front of a whiteboard waiting for the meeting to start - among them Roger. Judy is not present. Sir Colin enters- he is miserable and downhearted.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Good morning team... Actually it's not a very good morning - it's a bloody terrible morning.

pause

I've just had the latest sales figures and they're looking bloody awful!

Bloody awful!!

The Truedawn contract cancellation is hitting us hard. The warehouse is stuffed full of unsold purlins. No room for any more. The factory is now on a three day week and they spend most of that drinking tea!

There are bound to be major redundancies if this keeps up. Over half of you will be looking for new jobs.

But I don't want to hear any talk or rumours about that. We must keep up our spirits and fight for sales. Fight like bloody hell for sales!

pause

Er I would have liked you to welcome Miss Smithers to the sales team. Odd that she doesn't appear to be here. First week on the job and she misses her first sales meeting. Not a good start.

You'll all know her from the office secretary role she has been engaged in since she joined us. A very fine secretary I'm sure you'll all agree. I'm giving her a go on the Truedawn account. Nothing to lose I suppose ha ha. She has support from our consultant Ms Diralt.

pause

OK Blantyre please lead off.

Blantyre puts up his figures on the whiteboard - new leads 3, orders £nil, hot topic 'New aluminium alloy purlins well received by the building trade'

BLANTYRE

Thank you sir. Good morning everybody. I've had a busy month as you can see from my figures. A good lead from BAV for aluminium purlins for purlin fixing.. They liked the new samples and may place an order. I've now got more leads from the building trade and hope to convert. Er ... thank you.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Thank you Blantyre - good effort. Keep at the building trade - there's more to be done there. An actual order would be nice. Man does not live by leads alone. OK Marlowe - what have you got for us?

ROGER MARLOWE

Thank you sir.

Roger puts up a paper with his figures on the whiteboard - new leads 1, orders £nil, hot topic 'New aluminium alloy purlins well received by the motor trade'

I've worked my new patch hard this month but as yet I've nothing to show. Should pick up next month. I can support Jackson in the reception received for the new aluminium purlins - which seem to going down very well. The motor trade are impressed by our lab figures and are looking to test samples. Er ... thank you.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Thank you Marlowe. I appreciate you have a new patch but I'm sure you could have done more this month. We can't live on goodwill - we need orders. Try harder this next month..or for many of you there won't be a next month next month.

Judy creeps in

Ah Miss Smithers here at last. Thank you very much for coming.....

OK Ms Smithers, we're all waiting... it's your turn.

JUDY SMITHERS

Thank you sir. Good morning everybody. This is my first sales meeting - please excuse my nerves.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

No need for that Ms Smithers. Just get on with it.

JUDY SMITHERS

Judy puts up a paper 'hot topic 'Truedawn account cancellation'

I've been very lucky with Ms Sew at Truedawn. I have met her and she has agreed to cancel her cancellation... er we are back in business at Truedawn - just as before.

Thank God for that. *draws line through cancellation*

huge chorus of relieved applause - the mood changes

I must acknowledge the help of Nicolette Diralt, the consultant. She has taught me a lot. I am most grateful. I don't know what price she is charging us. I'm sure we'll soon find out when she sends in her bill. Ha Ha. But in my book she is worth it. Er... thank you.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Thank you Judy. Ha Ha. I don't know what to say. Cancellation cancelled eh? That's marvellous.

You seem to have saved our bacon. I know you're a beginner but I have to say you have made a major contribution... a major contribution.

Jackson is still abroad - finishing his North America trip. He reports a good month. Possible order for the new purlins. Well done Jackson.

polite applause

And Jones is still on holiday. Nothing from him. Well that wraps up our meeting. Keep up the good work. And keep pushing the message on the new aluminium purlins. I'm sure we are on to a winner there.

I'd like you to congratulate Judy Smithers She's got off to a flying start on the Truedawn account. I'm pleased to say, subject to confirmation of the cancellation of the cancellation... er... looks like we can forget all that talk about redundancies in the near future. *ecstatic applause- Blantyre stands and interrupts*

BLANTYRE

Er.. I'd like to congratulate Judy Smithers on saving me from having to make my aluminium purlins accounts support the whole firm. Er ... thank you.

ecstatic applause

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Yes indeed. Now please join me for our buffet and drinks Mine's a large one!

MUSIC 16 - DANCE

the buffet and drinks are served - all stand, dance a bit and chat, drinking and eating off buffet plates

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Smithers J has saved your bacon. She's really made a sale.

ALL

Let's give three cheers for Judy

She's better than us males

The figures were all bloody

She's made it into sales

She's made it into sales

END MUSIC AND DANCE

Roger buttonholes Judy

ROGER MARLOWE

Well done Ms. Smithers. You seem to have pulled the fat out of the fire. Now we can all rest easy and forget about imminent redundancies. I'm proud of you. What's the magic ingredient?

JUDY SMITHERS

I don't know Roger. That consultant Nicolette worked wonders for my confidence. It was all just a breeze. I got the impression that Ms Sew was a little disturbed by your presence - did you ever feel that she fancied you? Nicolette asked me if she could borrow you.

ROGER MARLOWE

Borrow me?

JUDY SMITHERS

Yes. Peculiar thing to ask. I said feel free - I didn't own you - you always did what you felt like anyway.

ROGER MARLOWE

All my lady customers fancy me I think - just part of my charm. I thought it was a good thing but now I'm not so sure. I wonder what she means 'borrow me' - some sales plan scheme I suppose - I'll be the before and some hot shot will be the after - haha.

[Sir Colin joins the group- Roger edges away]

JUDY SMITHERS

I thought the meeting went very well Sir Colin.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Yes indeed. Keep it short and sweet is my motto. What are your plans for next month? I hope you are going to do great things for the firm. I have in mind a small rise. I think you've earned it.

JUDY SMITHERS

Thank you sir. I appreciate your interest in me.

MUSIC 17 - SCENE CHANGE time passes, then back to the winebar

Act 3

Scene 1- Winebar

Some months have passed. The winebar waitress is bustling about as Tracey Livo enters the winebar with her friend Katy. They sit - the waitress takes the order and returns with a drink and a bag of crisps.

TRACEY LIVO

Two diet cokes please and a bag of crisps.

KATY

Are we on our diet or not?

TRACEY LIVO

Sort of yes - but not entirely. I've got a packet of biscuits back in the salon in case we get low sugar before tea time. Till then we starve. And share one bag of crisps.

KATY

Seems pointless to lose weight when all the men I know seem to like a bit of female flesh on a woman.

TRACEY LIVO

Is that what you think?

KATY

I don't know what I think. Mostly I just think what I'm told to think. Or perhaps I just keep on thinking what I was thinking before.

TRACEY LIVO

I know the feeling.

KATY

Not like Judy. She's really changed since I first met her when I started working at the salon. Like a different person in the last year.

TRACEY LIVO

Yes hasn't she just.

Well I'm trying to look good for Roger. Judy told me she's moved on from Roger - why I don't know - but she was definite. She's always known I fancied him. She told me he was now available.

KATY

He won't stay available for long. He's lovely. Do you think he'll come?

TRACEY LIVO

Well he said he would. I came right out and asked him for a date. Just a drink in the wine bar. He looked at me long and hard - then he said he would love to. I hope it works out. I think we might be very compatible.

KATY

So do I - I'll disappear when he comes.

TRACEY LIVO

Thanks Katy - I'll do the same for you.

MUSIC

[Roger enters, hesitates and comes over and greets Tracey and Katy]

ROGER MARLOWE

Tracey - hello.

TRACEY LIVO

This is my colleague Katy.

KATY

Hello Roger - I've heard a lot about you - I'll catch up later Tracey - just off now - see you back at the salon.
[she exits]

TRACEY LIVO

[she stands takes both his hands and pulls him down next to her]

Come and sit down. Lovely to see you. How have you been?

ROGER MARLOWE

Well it's lovely to see you too. I'm fine thank you....
Have you seen Judy? How is she?

TRACEY LIVO

She's fine. Shame about you two breaking up.

ROGER MARLOWE

One of those things. I'm over it now. We grew apart.

TRACEY LIVO

I saw it happen. I don't see much of her now. She's bought that big house in London now she's mainly based there. Cost an arm and a leg and she bought it without a mortgage. Alright for some. She's Miss Moneybags alright - that and the Porsche she drives. Bit out of my league now.

ROGER MARLOWE

One of those things. I'm over it now.
You know how she changed when they made her a salesperson and she started to do spectacularly well. She made five times her sales target after just three months of last year. She's all over the place now, getting promotions right and left. She's just back from Germany - selling many a purlin in Berlin. Ha. How about that for salesman's wit? Many a purlin in Berlin.

TRACEY LIVO

I think that's very witty Roger. Doesn't quite scan though does it? Matter of accented syllables thingy. Purlin..Berlin.

ROGER MARLOWE

Scan? Oh I forgot you're a poet. Yes I see. Oh well I do my best. As a matter of fact it was hard keeping up with her. I'm not the world's greatest salesman but I do all right.

TRACEY LIVO

I think you do all right - you're fine by me.

ROGER MARLOWE

Not in her league though. All of us at Wellington owe her a big debt for saving the Truedawn contract. If she hadn't fixed it we'd all be out on the street. And now she's blazing a trail across the country and Europe with the new purlins - amazing sales.

TRACEY LIVO

Well we're still friends though I don't see so much of her now she's gone to that other office. Miss Big-Shot... So.. what are your plans for this evening?

ROGER MARLOWE

I haven't got any plans for this evening.

TRACEY LIVO

teasingly Well how about making some and including me in them?
Roger Marlowe's fine by me
Roger Marlowe's my cup of tea.

ROGER MARLOWE

Definitely..... Definitely.

MUSIC 18 - SCENE CHANGE

Scene 2- A Hotel Room.

music over.

A softly lit luxurious room with a large bed, on which is a scarlet satin bedspread. Pink lampshades and soft pink light. Nicolette and Ms Sew are lounging on the bed in flattering negligees and sexy lingerie enjoying a glass of champagne.

MS. SEW

This is all very pleasant. Lovely champagne, your charming company. I do feel a little odd. You do realise I'm not gay don't you? Ha ha. Of course you've told me you're not gay - just rather different. I hope you're right about our race. I sense an imminent fulfilment in some way.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Relax. Nothing will happen if there is just the two of us. Another drink?

MS. SEW

Yes please. You must have done this before I suppose.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Yes - though not often. Everything with us is slow and very occasional. My last time was in 1940 - in the middle of the Battle of Britain. My partner had managed to bag a flyboy who was having a 3 day break from 3 weeks of solid air sorties night and day, in his Spitfire against the Luftwaffe. He could hardly see straight. I'm afraid our little session didn't help his vision much. Afterwards we put him back in his uniform and stuck him on the train for his RAF airfield in Norfolk - he was fast asleep when the train left the station. A wonderful memory. I was in heaven for weeks afterwards. My partner conceived.

MS. SEW

Had you known her long?

NICOLETTE DIRALT

No - just a few months - rather like us. I stayed with her for the birth - a girl of course - we are all female - and then lost touch. She died when the child was 7. I helped in finding a good foster home and have watched out for her since with the odd bit of financial assistance.

Now it is my turn.... I'm entirely ready.

[there is a knock at the door - Nicolette goes to the door and admits Roger]

Roger Marlowe! Thank you for coming. You are right on time. Do come in. Please excuse my dress - or lack of dress. Ha ha. We're just having a couple of drinks - let me offer you one.

[gets a drink and gives it to him- it is pink and fizzy]

ROGER MARLOWE

Thanks. Sorry to disturb you. You said it was urgent. I've brought the new brochure on our purlins.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

No really - you're right on time. This is going to be an informal meeting. No purlins. Really informal.. Bottoms up! Do people still say that?

ROGER MARLOWE

Cheers!

[takes a big swig- splutters a bit- it is strong stuff]

MS. SEW

I think people still say that. Down the hatch!

NICOLETTE DIRALT

You know Ms Sew of course.

MS. SEW

Hello Roger. How are you?

ROGER MARLOWE

Well - I'm fine. How are you? ...Cheers!

[another nervous swig- this one really hits the spot]

MS. SEW

Cheers!

NICOLETTE DIRALT

This is really good stuff. You'll be feeling the effects already I expect. A wonderful tingling in the loins.. and a dreamy languorous lethargy. Come and sit next to me. Why don't you take your jacket off. It's nice and warm in here isn't it?

ROGER MARLOWE

[takes off his jacket and hangs it on the back of a chair that is conveniently placed- sits on the bed between the two women who have made a space for him]

Well - this is informal - yes it is rather warm. Er.. what's the meeting about? You said it was urgent.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Oh it is urgent. We are both feeling very urgent. How's the tingling feeling?

MS. SEW

[now much aroused]

Let me take your tie off.

ROGER MARLOWE

[now much under the influence of the strange drink - allows his tie to be taken off, his shirt to be unbuttoned and his shoes to be removed - his speech is now slurred]

It is rather warm isn't it - haha?

MS. SEW

Let me take your shoes off.

ROGER MARLOWE

This drink is beautiful - it really hits the ... hits the ... hits the spot! You can untie the knots, this drink has hit the spots. haha.

NICOLETTE DIRALT

Just one more swig I think.

Roger drains the glass and Nicolette takes it from him.

MUSIC 19

[Music fades in -Lights very slowly fade out with lots of red and leaping shadows - there is the odd flash of lightning - Miss Sew starts to growl softly, then Nicolette follows suit- both women hurl themselves at Roger, wrestle him to the bed, tear off his trousers and writhe furiously on his helpless and almost unconscious body - bedclothes are tangled and pillows and bits of clothing thrown in the air - he giggles softly and helplessly as they loudly growl and shriek - definitely an orgy! the woman scream and wail like banshees for a few seconds at the top of their voices till the music starts to fade and lights fade further - then blackout and silence]

MUSIC 20 - SCENE CHANGE time passes

Scene 3- The Office at Wellington Purlins Ltd.

7 years have passed - all are a little older.

Early Monday morning at Wellington Purlins Ltd - the monthly sales meeting has just finished and the buffet started. A largish group of salespeople, including Sir Colin and Blantyre and two female salespersons, are standing around with drinks and snacks.

BLANTYRE

Excellent meeting Sir Colin. All well with you?

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Yes - thank you Blantyre. Great sales figures this month. Well done.

BLANTYRE

I hear our local group is getting a visit from Judy Smithers today. I wonder what we have done to deserve the royal attention? I remember her from 7 years ago when she was a newbie salesman working for you. What a meteoric rise!

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Yes. She's here to keep a beady eye on us all and deliver a pep talk no doubt. Ha ha.

BLANTYRE

I remember - her sales figures were astonishing before she went up to board level. A top salesman indeed in my book. We all saw the birth of that super salesman didn't we?

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Yes. That woman has done wonders for the firm. The board only made her Managing Director a year ago and now we've doubled in size again. Better not say salesman - she prefers salesperson.

BLANTYRE

Oh of course. Thank you.

[Roger enters with a drink in hand]

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Marlowe. Hey Marlowe! Didn't you used to be her boyfriend or something? Judy Smithers. I remember her as a young secretary. That was you wasn't it?

ROGER MARLOWE

Yes that was me. All of 7 years ago that was. Like another age.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Good Lord yes. Just 7 years. Life is full of surprises. I always thought she would go far that young lady. It was me wasn't it that gave her her first sales assignment.

ROGER MARLOWE

Yes that was you. The Truedawn job. Very nearly my last sales assignment.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

Yes I remember that too. Potential disaster there. She fixed it all as if by magic. Remarkable.

Judy enters and all stand for her. She has seemingly not aged but grown in stature and authority. She has a dark power suit and black shoes. A young male flunkey follows her in carrying her briefcase.

JUDY SMITHERS

Good morning sales team. Please take your seats.

[all find their seats and sit bar Sir Colin]

This is just a flying visit. I have some news on our new division I'd like to announce and I've also just introduced a new bonus scheme - which I'm sure you will find very interesting. Then I'll stay for some of your sales meeting.

SIR COLIN PANTYPE

[shakes hands with Judy] A pleasure to have you with us Ms. Smithers. You are very welcome. I'm afraid our sales meeting is over but please do join us for a drink and a bite after.

[sits]

JUDY SMITHERS

Yes I shall enjoy that very much. It's nice to be back at Wellington. Nice to meet my old colleagues again. Mr. Marlowe. Sir Colin. Mr Jackson.

Now our new titanium fixings division has opened for business. The head is Charlie Punnett who is moving over from property. You will all be receiving a brochure. Please read it and be sure to notify Charlie Punnett's office if you pick up any sales leads for titanium fixings. We hope to turn over ten million plus in the first year and we need your help to get there. Our new bonus scheme has points for referred sales leads - so it's in your interest to keep your eyes open. My assistant will hand out a brief outline of the bonus scheme - you can read it at your leisure - any queries please put them through Sir Colin or direct to my office if you wish. I'm planning that the new bonus scheme will ignite your fire. My aim is to double our sales within the next eighteen months. Our products are the finest in the world. Especially the new titanium range which is a real winner - they may not be the cheapest but they are worth it to our customers - top quality and rugged reliability are vitally important to our customers - and we provide them.

Now please resume your drinks party - you deserve it after such a successful month.

[all stand and pick up their drinks and plates - Judy joins Roger and takes him to one side]

Hello Roger - how are you? How is Trudy?

ROGER MARLOWE

Hello Judy. Congratulations on your promotions. I hear you are doing very well. Trudy is fine thank you - we are planning another holiday in Spain this year.

JUDY SMITHERS

Yes. Give her my regards. How is the baby? I miss the old days.

ROGER MARLOWE

The baby is fine thank you. Yes - we're all getting older. Ha ha. Actually you're not - at least you don't seem to have aged at all. How do you manage that?

JUDY SMITHERS

I don't know. Pure thoughts and high minded living I suppose. People do remark on it a lot - those who knew me before.

ROGER MARLOWE

Yes - do you plan on settling down and having children some day?

JUDY SMITHERS

I don't know. Not in the near future for sure. Maybe in the far off yonder.

ROGER MARLOWE

Bit like that consultant that started you off. She was a lot older than she looked wasn't she. I seem to remember. Though my memory of her is a bit vague.

music starts all freeze and lights fade - we hear ten seconds or so of the end of the orgy scene, music and screaming

MUSIC

then lights come up - all are reanimated

JUDY SMITHERS

Wake up Roger! Snap out of it! Nicolette Diralt? I wanted to tell you about Nicolette Diralt. Then you went all catatonic. In a trance.

ROGER MARLOWE

Oh.

JUDY SMITHERS

Have you heard she has died? It happened a week ago.

ROGER MARLOWE

Oh.

JUDY SMITHERS

Hadn't you heard? Yes. It happened a week ago. I was very sad - she was such a help to me when I started out in sales.

ROGER MARLOWE

Oh.

JUDY SMITHERS

I met her a few months ago and she said a very odd thing to me - almost as if she knew she had not long to live. Weird. She said I should remember her in a hundred years time.....and she said 'femina sapiens'. Very odd - normally 'homo sapiens' isn't it? Sounds like a new species of women. Must be her little joke.

ROGER MARLOWE

Oh.

JUDY SMITHERS

She had a little girl who she had just packed off to boarding school. Apparently she appointed Miss Sew as the little girl's guardian. Do you remember Miss Sew?

ROGER MARLOWE

Oh really? Yes I do - very well.

JUDY SMITHERS

Yes. And she made another weird remark. She said her little girl was not yours.... did you and she have a fling? I remember she once asked me if she could borrow you. I thought that was for some sales demo?

ROGER MARLOWE

I don't remember much about her.... Memory all blank regarding her and who was it - oh yes of course - Miss Sew.

JUDY SMITHERS

Yes....

ROGER MARLOWE

I do remember she was a super salesperson..... Bit like you turned out to be in fact.... Funny old business sales isn't it?

JUDY SMITHERS

Yes....

[pause]

MUSIC 21 AND SALES DANCE 4

Well good bye Roger... Keep up the good work..... John!
[She summons her flunkey who carries bags and strides out - all watch her go.

Chorus dance - Roger does not join the dance but stares into space then exits the other way

ALL

Let's give three cheers for Judy S
Of all the sales bods she's the best.
There's no stopping her.
We can sell it!
We can sell it!
It's no pose
Fridges to eskimos!

dancers finish in pose 8 bars before end with curtain in on dancers to finish closing 4 bars before end