ODD MARKET

By

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INT. – DAY – SCREENED IN FRONT PORCH

MS. KELI who is an older woman, wearing her large gardening hat and overalls and THE SALESMAN wearing seersucker suit just slightly younger sit on the front porch of her house in rocking chairs sipping lemonade.

THE SALESMAN

It’s an odd market.

MS. KELI

What market might that be?

THE SALESMAN

Apologies ma’am. I’m still getting used to Southern hospitality and your offer of lemonade had me plum bumfuzzled. I forgot I was here to do some sellin’ it being so hot and all.

MS. KELI

Our time on this Earth is what we make of it and kindness is free.

THE SALESMAN

That’s probably the truest thing I’ve heard in an age.

MS. KELI

So what business might you be in Mr….

THE SALESMAN

Yes of course, I’m in the business of souls.

MS. KELI

If you’re selling Bibles I still got the one my grandmother handed down with the family tree in the cover.

THE SALESMAN

Now those were some mighty fine editions, yes siree. Is it one of them with the gold gilt on the edge of the pages?

MS. KELI

Why yes it is. Would you like to see it?

THE SALESMAN

No ma’am I do thank you kindly though. Now as to what I offer…

MS. KELI

You want my soul.

THE SALESMAN

Like I said it’s a strange market. Every single person in this world is a possible seller and me, well I’m the only buyer yet I have to make the sales pitch. Odd indeed. And by the by it’s not the whole thing I’m interested in, it’s just a percentage.

MS. KELI

Well that is odd. How does one put a value on a soul and…

Ms. Keli gasps as the salesman has changed from rustic huckster to slick looking well-dressed attorney.

THE SALESMAN

Apologies again ma’am. As you may have read in your good book I can take many forms. Since these transactions can be rather complex I usually take the form of an attorney.

MS. KELI

I do declare that must be very handy.

THE SALESMAN

I admit, it does serve. I could even take the form of that one boy you wanted in high school back before fornication among the youth was fashionable.

The Salesman stands up and transforms again. This time into a strapping shirtless teen-ager.

MS. KELI

Oh that was in high school I was a girl then. Besides I’m nearly sixty years old now. What would I do with a randy seventeen year old?

THE SALESMAN

Ma’am if you want to be seventeen again I can make that happen. Or maybe you want to be thirty-two? I bet you could break a stallion then couldn’t you?

MS. KELI

I did enjoy the carnal pleasures during my time but lust was never my personal pitfall.

He transforms back into the Salesman.

THE SALESMAN

Brining us to that odd market. I cannot begin to tell you how many people call on me in all sincerity offering me their souls in their entirety for a little help.

MS. KELI

That makes your visit even odder. I certainly didn’t summon you. Why not see to those that want what you have to offer?

THE SALESMAN

It’s an issue of quality. I get pleas from adulterers, pedophiles, embezzlers and politicians all the time. Not two of them are worth fifty cents together.

MS. KELI

So you want…

THE SALESMAN

A good soul, well at least part of one.

MS. KELI

Are you the actual Devil himself?

THE SALESMAN

That’s a widely misused term.

MS. KELI

So you’re not the Devil?

THE SALESMAN

Of course I’m the Devil!

MS. KELI

Sir if you continue to use that tone I will have to ask you to leave.

THE SALESMAN

Apologies, I have some anger issues.

MS. KELI

My pitfall was always curiosity, the need to know the why of matters. So in the spirit of nothing ventured nothing gained, how does this work?

He transforms into the attorney again and removes a blank piece of paper from his inside coat pocket.

THE SALESMAN

That is the epitome of simplicity. You write down everything you want on this piece of paper and I give it to you in exchange for ten percent of your soul.

MS. KELI

Just ten percent for anything and everything I want? Sounds like you’re short changing yourself.

THE SALESMAN

To be honest everything I can provide is part of the material world and you said it yourself, you’re pushing sixty. So sure ask for a yacht, all the cocaine your heart can handle, ten million in the bank by the end of business, no problem. Have you seen the pyramids of Egypt? Do you know what it’s like to see the sunrise in Tahiti? Have you ever had a sip of the oldest scotch in existence? Any and every.

MS. KELI

Lands of Goshen that is a bold claim.

THE SALESMAN

Did I mention it’s guaranteed? If I don’t deliver every selfish desire you don’t pay and I am required to deliver no matter what you ask for.

MS. KELI

My selfish desires in exchange for a little piece of me I probably won’t even miss. Am I to trust you on that?

He transforms into a dirty monk with shaved head. He bows his head and points upward.

THE SALESMAN

A higher power sets the rules.

MS. KELI

Well as long as it’s official. And just to be clear you have to deliver whatever I put on this paper.

THE SALESMAN

Within the Earthly realm of course. Just list what you want for yourself, I grant it, and then I collect.

MS. KELI

Anything I ask for you deliver?

THE SALESMAN

Yes! By the Father get what you fucking want for you! Do something good for yourself in your twilight years. What you write is my command, a covenant if you will.

MS. KELI

May I borrow a pen?

He transforms into lawyer mode.

THE SALESMAN

Certainly.

An ornate Monte Blanc fountain pen appears in his hand and he gives it to her.

While you write may I help myself to some more of this lemonade?

MS. KELI

Please do.

INT. – DAY – SCREENED IN FRONT PORCH

The salesman is looking at the document and shaking his head. He is getting more furious as he reads. Ms. Keli is sipping lemonade and rocking in her chair.

THE SALESMAN

This is fucking bullshit!

MS. KELI

Mr. Salesman!

THE SALESMAN

Yes yes language! What is this…malarkey?

MS. KELI

That sir is a list of tasks you are obligated to complete.

THE SALESMAN

What…pay off Ed Richard’s truck, ease the suffering of the Baker kid? And who are all these other people you want me to help? These have nothing to do with you!

MS. KELI

You are obligated to deliver none-the-less though?

THE SALESMAN

You were supposed to ask for things for you damnit! I can’t collect unless wish for selfish things!

MS. KELI

But you are still required to deliver anything I ask for correct?

THE SALESMAN

Fuck this! I’m not doing any of….

We hear the roar of thunder. The Salesman looks up at the sky with dread.

MS. KELI

Yes, it’s an odd market indeed.