

Figure of Speech

by

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Cast of Characters

LEONARD:

60's

GARY:

50's

Place
Office

Time
Present

Setting: The play takes place in a boardroom overlooking the city. The room consists of a large and long mahogany wood table, surrounded by leather padded chairs on wheels, paintings of the Rembrandt style on the walls and a liquor cabinet off to one corner. At the center of the table are a few bottles of liquor and glasses on a tray.

At Rise: The play opens with Leonard and Gary both sitting on one side of the table, each with their own liquor glass. Leonard's jacket is on the back of one of the chairs as is Gary's. Both men have been drinking for a good hour.

LEONARD: It's a modest little business I've built. People in the area know me. There's a network. I have a network threaded through the community. It's taken years. Many years. Many, many, years. I have a load of memories, some I'd like to forget, other memories I will always hold dear to my heart. I've provided for my family...lived a decent life, Gary. I'm not asking you to pay me for the thirty odd years I've been running the show, but what you are offering me is, err, I can't take it, it's far too little.

GARY: Emotional attachment -

LEONARD: No, no, it's not that -

GARY: Sure it is -

LEONARD: It's not.

GARY: Leonard, it's a fair deal.

LEONARD: I can't agree with you.

GARY: We've known one another for over two decades. I wouldn't throw a number at ya that I didn't think was fair.

LEONARD: But, you would.

GARY: Would I?

LEONARD: Well, that's what you're doing here.

Pause.

Gary gets up from his chair. He fills up Leonard's glass with more liquor and then his own before walking around the conference room table.

GARY: ...Perhaps, I would.

LEONARD: I don't blame you.

GARY: This is business.

LEONARD: I'm not saying it isn't.

GARY: ...Well? ...What do you want?

LEONARD: I don't...

GARY: ...Go on.

LEONARD: I'm not at liberty to say.

GARY: You're the owner, aren't you?

LEONARD: To a degree, yes.

GARY: Well..? What can I offer you?

LEONARD: We both agree that your original offer wasn't satisfactory.

GARY: Alright.

LEONARD: We've gone over all the accounts.

GARY: We have.

LEONARD: ...Make me an offer.

GARY: Hundred thousand more above what I've already offered you.

LEONARD:...(shakes his head)

GARY: You've got to make room for me, Len. I have to make my money back for goodness sakes. Years are going to pass me by before I see a penny.

LEONARD: You've seen th' books.

GARY: No. Forget it. Forget the whole deal.

LEONARD: Okay.

GARY (*stares at Leonard*): Okay, what?

LEONARD: I'm saying okay as in we can forget the whole deal.

GARY: I can't do the deal at that price. You're asking me -

LEONARD: What price?

GARY: Huh?

LEONARD: I wasn't asking for any price, except the right one.

GARY: And what is the right price, Leonard?

LEONARD: You already know the -

GARY: I met you tonight because I thought we had a deal.

LEONARD: There was no deal -

GARY: Make a deal. I thought we were going to make a deal.

LEONARD: Yes.

GARY: I don't need your business.

LEONARD: That's fine.

GARY: I'm trying to help you retire.

LEONARD: Are you?

GARY: No one out here is going to offer you what I'm offering you Len. So what are you goin' to do? Die in yer shop? Close the doors and walk away with nothin'? Why are ya playing hard ball? It's a simple yes Len and the deal is done. Say yes!

LEONARD: Gary -

GARY: Just say yes! You're overthinking all a' this.

LEONARD: Gary, I -

GARY: Say YES! Just say the words and be relieved of your duties.

LEONARD: ...No.

Gary shoves a chair as he walks past one.

GARY: Haven't I been there fer ya..as a friend? Haven't I been there, Leonard? When you were jammed up durin' the recession 'ere..who came to your aid? Wasn't the banks, wasn't yer family..it was me! I'm the one who saved your ass. Me! You'd be out on the street if it weren't for the time we got you out that hole. I spared ya life...literally, at no interest to ya.

Listen now, now I'm not tryna' short change ya, but this is business and we 'ave history, a good history I assume. I'm giving you a fair offer, yes, I'm bargainin' just a tad alright but what other options do you 'ave? You could sleep well at night. Marvelously!

Why th' fuss? Why th' hesitation? I even offered you an extra hundred gran christ almighty..take the deal ya selfish son of a prick and be free of all this!

Say yes! The wife'll be happy, kids'll be happy - RETIRE and do the paintin' you've always complained to me 'bout. Ah jeez. *(Beat.)* Sorry. *(Beat.)* I'm frustrated, Len. *(Beat.)* You frustrate the shit out of me. *(Pause.)* I'll give you an additional hundred gran...but, that's it Lenny. *(Waving his arms.)* That's all I got! Go on. *(Pointing.)* Sign the sheet and let's be done. Come on! *(Pointing.)* Sign the damn document, Lenny...Why are you...*(Sighs.)* 'ere 'ave a smoke...*(Lights cigarette.)* Ah, not tryna' pressure you, okay? But you gotta allow me to make money on this deal. I promised you that this won't be a quick flip. I'll ride it out...three years, three years I'll be lucrative, but even then...Oh, I don't know...

GARY *Cont'd: (Giving in.)* This is what you do, gettin' second thoughts about this now...Some days I wonder if it's all worth it. Why do I kill myself fer it?

Look, you're my friend Leonard, okay? Work with me here...It's the best offer I can provide for you...let's get it done and we'll go for steaks.

LEONARD: No.

GARY: What did you say?

LEONARD: I said, no.

GARY: No?

LEONARD: No.

GARY: Why?

LEONARD: I never knew you could be so shrewd.

GARY: Oh, for fuck sake!

LEONARD: Honestly.

GARY: I'm giving you more than the business is worth!

LEONARD: You really?

GARY: It's a fair deal.

LEONARD: But are you really giving me more than the business is worth?

GARY: That's just a figure of speech.

LEONARD: Then place the correct figures in your speech, Gary.

GARY: Oh no, forget this deal, this deal is bonkers.

LEONARD: You've tried that already.

GARY: What? Tried what?

LEONARD: The whole walking away from the deal bit.

GARY: You think I'm tryin' to game you?

LEONARD: You said so yourself, this is business.

GARY: But we're friends.

LEONARD: I know. Ha, ha, ha.

GARY: I'm glad you find humor in this..I really do.

Gary sits down. Facing Leonard.

In that case I should go back to my original offer.

LEONARD: That's fine.

GARY: Fine! Fine! Everything's fine with you. Meanwhile, you are sinking and will soon drown!

Gary pours them more liquor.

Drink more cause you're not thinking straight.

LEONARD: What does it feel like?

GARY: What you talkin' 'bout?

LEONARD: This (*Looks around the room.*), all of this..the boardroom, your various businesses...knowing you have the power to make or break situations.

GARY: It's, it's satisfactory.

LEONARD: (*Laughs.*)

GARY: Who gives a damn, Len?

LEONARD: Do you sleep well at night?

GARY: What are you drivin' at?

LEONARD: Have you ever made a deal that's not in your favor?

GARY: Of course not.

LEONARD: Oh.

GARY: Why should I?

LEONARD: I get it -

GARY: You sayin' I should humble down just for you?

LEONARD: Not in the slightest.

GARY: What then?

LEONARD: Gary, why don't you stop fucking around and make me a real offer...an honest offer..the right offer. You've had your people study my accounts, we both know what my business is worth, all you need to do is make an honest offer and we can continue as always.

GARY: You saying I'm not honest?

LEONARD: Yes, that's exactly what I'm saying.

GARY: I'm hurt.

LEONARD: Of course you are.

GARY: No, really, I'm hurt. Here I am thinking I'm doing something good and you are biting the hand that's tryin' to feed ya.

LEONARD: I've fed myself and my family for over thirty years Gary, please, no need to pull rank with me.

GARY: It's a figure of speech, buddy. Stop takin' everything so seriously. Relax.

LEONARD: Perhaps you need more time.

Leonard stands up, puts on his jacket.

GARY: For what?

LEONARD: Think things over.

GARY: Oh - look, if I've insulted you in any way Len, I'm sorry, alright? Come on. I wasn't, you know me, I have, I can get ahead of myself. Last thing I want to do is ever treat you poorly, okay?

LEONARD: It's getting late, Gary.

Pause.

GARY: ...Cigar?

LEONARD: No.

GARY: Chocolate. Just had them imported from Vienna. Incredible. Try on.

LEONARD: No, my indigestion.

Gary eats one.

GARY: You don't know what yer missin'.

LEONARD: What do you want to do, Gary? I'm tired of going in circles.

GARY: So am I.

LEONARD: Why don't you think it over?

GARY: There's nothing to think over. We do the deal tonight, or we walk.

LEONARD: Okay.

GARY: I'm offering you THE SAME EXACT OFFER.

LEONARD: Which?

GARY: The original.

LEONARD: But that's even less!

GARY: (*Laughs.*)

LEONARD: Yer' bastard! If the shoe was on the other foot, I'd never treat you in such an ill manner. I've always known you to be rambunctious but this sort of treatment has demoted your person in my eyes. Aren't you embarrassed?

GARY: Not at all.

LEONARD: I've got to leave.

GARY: Hey, think about my original offer when you come to yer senses.

LEONARD: There is no way in hell that I will ever, ever, take you up on your offer Gary. Don't you come to me about it ever again...even if you double your price the answer will still be no.

GARY: Double!

LEONARD: WHAT?!

GARY: You heard me.

LEONARD: Give it a rest!

GARY: Wait, wait...I am serious now...I said double.

LEONARD: Are you fucking with me?

GARY: I wish I were, but no, I'm not...

LEONARD: ...Why didn't you say that in the first place?

GARY: I thought you'd agree.

LEONARD: Go on, get us a drink.

Gary pours more liquor.

Gary hands glass to Leonard.

GARY: Let's...have a seat.

Leonard sits down.

Here..(*Gary crosses out a number on the document, writes a doubled amount figure in it's place*) Double. You see...double. Now sign.

LEONARD: Why double all of a sudden?

GARY: You're joking?

LEONARD: No, no, why did you push me to my very limit only to offer me double?

GARY: If I was able to get you for way less...why shouldn't I?

LEONARD: So, if I had signed this document...

GARY: Exactly.

LEONARD: Double is more that what I ever imagined.

GARY: I know. Just sign.

Pause.

LEONARD: ...No.

GARY: Excuse me?

LEONARD: ...I won't.

GARY: Have you gone mad?

LEONARD: ...I believe I have.

Leonard gets up and makes his way to the door.

GARY: Where are you off to?

LEONARD: Home. My wife has been waiting patiently for me.

GARY: You are an impossible man, Leonard.

LEONARD: That I am sure.

GARY: Leave now without signing and I promise you there will never be another offer for your business again..not from me.

Leonard and Gary stare into one another.

Leonard turns and exits.

END OF PLAY