



CHOOSE 1 FOR LIFE

BY

REBECCA MILLS

excerpt

A SMITH SCRIPT

This script is protected by copyright laws.
No performance of this script -IN ANY MEDIA – may be undertaken without
payment of the appropriate fee and obtaining a licence.
For further information, please contact SMITH SCRIPTS at
info@smithscripts.co.uk

Choose 1 for life

A One Act Drama Play

Characters

Customer - Female

Call Centre Operative - Gabriel - Male

Manager -M/F

Daughter - Female

Wife - Female

Manager/Wife/Daughter could all potentially be played by the same Actor.

Running Time

30 minutes.

(The staging area should have 3 separate areas clearly defined as the Home of the Call Centre Agent, The Call Centre Office and the Home of the Customer. Call Centre should be quite simply set with Desk, Chair, Filing Cabinet, PC and Telephone. The home of the Call Centre agent should have inferences of children's presence i.e. toys scattered around, children's drawings scattered around or on "walls")

Scene 1 – The Customer

(Lights should come up slowly to show us the Female Customer in the Home. Simply set. The Customer is sat at Table surrounded with open letters and a half empty bottle of whisky which she keeps taking large swigs of whilst opening envelopes and throwing the contents down on the Table. The Customer is visibly distressed. The telephone starts to ring. The Customer shakes her head and pretends to ignore it. There should then be a knock at the door. The Customer should put her hand in her hands. The telephone will then ring again and this time the Customer walks nervously over to the Telephone and timidly answers it)

Customer: Hello?

Voice from off stage: Hello is that Mrs. Spencer? *(Pause from Customer as she rubs her temple)* Hello is that Mrs. Spencer? Hello? *(Pause)* We know you are there. You need to talk to us. It will be so much better for you if you just talk to us. *(Pause again)* Ok Mrs. Spencer you win but please at least talk to someone. There are lots of organisations out there who are trained in helping you. You really should talk to someone. *(Pause again)* Please you need to accept that this is a problem. Mrs. Spencer?

(Customer slams phone down and flings herself down on Arm chair crying and visibly upset. Light fades on Customer's home area)

(Lights up on Call Centre Operatives home which will be simply set as a living room area. Settee and Table and chairs and a scattering of items to hint that there are children living there - toys scattered around, children's pictures etc., the wife is tidying up in the living room and the Call Centre Operative is at the Desk on a laptop)

Wife: Now darling don't forget that Mother wants our deposits by Saturday. She's going to book it over the weekend. She's got ever such a good deal with the Travel Agents in town. I was quite amazed really at the deal she's negotiated.

Call Centre Operative: I thought we had agreed that we wouldn't rush into this. We have Monica's school trip to pay for soon you know. You can't just rush around like a bull in a china shop. We have to talk about these things. We have to budget for luxury items. You know how difficult it's been for me to keep everything going.

Wife: Luxury items indeed. You've been working so hard and just think of all of that overtime you have been putting in. You know I desperately need a holiday. It's been such a tough time for all of us with my illness. Not to mention my having to give up work. I'm sure only having one income had such an impact on our finances but we can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel. It won't be long till I can get back to work. I can't tell you how much weight has been lifted off my shoulders. The stress and worry has been unbearable. You deserve a holiday too darling. To have something so wonderful to look forward to...

Call Centre Operative: I know darling I know, it's just that I really think we should think about....

Child's Voice off stage: Daddy, Daddy don't forget I need to have some new ballet shoes for the recital next weekend.

Child's Voice off stage: Daddy, Daddy I need to get my school trip money in by Friday or I will miss out on my place.

Child's Voice off stage: And me Daddy and me.

Call Centre Operative: I know, I know. I will sort it. Please stop it with all the shouting you're giving me a headache.

Children's Voices off stage in unison: Sorry Daddy.

Wife: What time will you be back tonight?

Call Centre Operative: Late. There is overtime available. Let's face it I need to do as much as possible.

Wife: *(Panic increasing in voice)* Why? What's wrong? What is it you are not telling me? Are we struggling? Should I be worried? Is everything ok?

Call Centre Operative: Sorry darling, please don't worry. Please don't stress I was just joking. Of course everything is ok. Just ignore me. Anyway now you are fighting fit again things can only get better.

(Wife smiles, kisses husband on forehead and exits stage left. Call Centre Operative puts head in hands as the lights dim)

(Lights up on Customer's Home. She is sat on the Armchair with TV in front of her - the back of the TV to be facing the audience. She is holding a bottle of whisky and occasionally taking a swig from the bottle. We hear the sound of an advertisement around a Debt Management Charity helpline as per the below)

TV Announcement: If Debt is destroying your life then please call the number on your screen now.

(There is a loud repeated knock on a door which makes the Customer jump and look visibly afraid)

Voice off Stage: Mrs. Spencer open the door. We know you are there. You can't keep ignoring us. Mrs. Spencer. Mrs. Spencer.

(Knocking continues but quieter and occasional as the Customer reaches for the remote control and turns up the volume more and more)

TV Announcement: I was in terrible debt, overdraft, credit cards, loans and it just kept getting worse and worse. I ended up taking out a payday loan and then everything spiraled out of control. I thought I'd lose my home. Lose everything.

Customer: Shut up, shut up, shut up.

(Customer screams the above line as the TV Announcement says "Lose Everything" and the rest of the dialogue below is quietened as the customer curls up in a ball on the armchair sobbing.)

TV Announcement: I needed somebody to talk to but I was ashamed. How could I ever get out of this? How could I ever admit the state I had got myself into? At my lowest moment I realised that actually my life was worth living. Yes I had made some mistakes but I deserved to give myself another chance. I decided to call Debt Free Charity Helpline. They have helped over 500,000

customers find practical ways to beat debt. Remember there is always someone who can help. Debt is a problem that you CAN overcome. You can choose to overcome this problem. You can choose life.

(Customer sits up in chair, grabs pen and paper and writes down the number on the screen. The occasional knocking stops and the lights go down. Lights come up on Call Centre Office. Call Centre Operative is sat at a Desk working on a laptop/Computer. Manager enters stage left and walks into Office Area)

Manager: Ah here you are again. More overtime eh? You'll be making yourself ill if you're not careful. I noticed you have done way over 80 hours overtime already this month. Are you sure you are ok?

Call Centre Operative: Yes, yes I'm fine. The wife wants a fancy holiday this year and let's face it, after the year she's had I can hardly blame her.

Manager: Ah very true indeed but please try and take care of yourself. Your wife has only just got her health back so the last thing you all need is for you to get sick too.

Call Centre Operative: I will be fine don't worry. Thank you for your concern though.

(A telephone is heard to ring in the Call Centre)

Call Centre Operative: Better get on. Targets to hit and all that.

Manager: Yes of course.

Call Centre Operative: *(Picking up telephone)* Good morning Debt Free Charity Helpline how may I help you?

(Lights go down on Call Centre Operative. Lights come up on Customer's home as Customer picks up telephone and dials number and is seen to press buttons as per the below.)

IVR Voice Over: Thank you for calling Debt Free Charity Helpline. Your call is very important to us. If you are an existing customer with a new query please choose 1. If you are an existing customer with an existing query please choose 2. If you have an IVA in place please choose 3. If you have applied for Bankruptcy Order please choose 4. If you are a....

(Sound of a button being pressed on telephone keypad)

IVR Voice Over: You have chosen option 1 an existing customer with a new query thank you. As you are an existing customer please enter your customer number on the telephone keypad after this tone.

(Sound of a tone loudly played)

Customer: But I don't have a customer number. I just want to speak to somebody.

IVR Voice Over: I'm sorry I didn't catch that. As an existing customer please enter your customer number on the telephone keypad after this tone.

(Sound of a tone loudly played)

Customer: I don't have a damn customer number.

IVR Voice Over: I'm sorry I still didn't catch that. As an existing customer please enter your customer number on the telephone keypad after this tone.

Customer: *(Louder and more frustrated)* I don't have a damn customer number.

(Sound of a tone loudly played)

IVR Voice Over: I'm sorry I still didn't catch that. Please call back with your existing customer number and we will be happy to help you with your query. Thank you for choosing Debt Free Charity Helpline. Goodbye.

(Sound of a dead line)

Customer: *(Screams in anguish and anger and in slams telephone back down)*

(Sound of a telephone ringing. Customer steps away from the telephone looking frightened and ignoring the ring. The line goes to Voicemail)

Customer Pre-Recorded Voice Over: I'm sorry I'm not available to take your call at the moment. Please leave your name, number and message after the tone and I will get back to you as soon as possible. Thanks.

(Sound of a tone being played)

Daughter's Voice off Stage: Mum, mum are you there? *(Pause)* Mum please speak to me. We are all so worried about you. *(Pause)* We haven't seen you in so long and the neighbours are telling us you've lost so much weight and they've hardly seen you about. I've tried calling your work but they won't speak to me. Keep going on about data protection act and other rubbish. Mum...mum...mum *(Pause)* we love you. Please call me.

(Line goes dead and Customer sits down in Armchair puts the television back on and pours a whisky)

TV Announcement: Once you have accepted your debt is a problem it's very important that you talk to someone about your worries. Talking about your problems shares the burden and worry and will help you to reduce your feelings of stress. If you can't speak to your family or friends please call us today. We want to help. Debt is a problem that you CAN overcome. You can choose to overcome this problem. You can choose life.

(Customer switches off Television and slowly walks over to the Telephone and begins to dial again. Lights come up on Call Centre Office. As the telephone rings the Call Centre Operative answers the call. The Customer and the Call Centre Operative will conduct the below as a telephone call with spotlights on them talking directly to the audience)

Call Centre Operative: *(Picking up telephone)* Good morning Debt Free Charity Helpline how may I help you? *(Silence - pause)* Hello? Debt Free Charity Helpline how may I help? *(Pause)* Please talk to me. I'm here to help. *(Pause)* Please do not be afraid. I am not here to judge you. *(Pause)* It's all completely confidential. *(Pause)* Please let me at least try to help.

Customer: *(Pause)* Erm, hello, I erm, I've got myself into a terrible situation. I don't know what to do. Everything is just horrendously unmanageable. Can you help me? Please can you help me?

Call Centre Operative: I will do my very best. My very best. I promise you that. Now let's get started. First of all I need to know your name so I know who I am helping.

Customer: It's Mrs. Spencer.

Call Centre Operative: Mrs. Spencer it's lovely to speak to you. I am glad you called me. I am very happy that you chose life.

(Lights go down on Call Centre Operative whilst spotlight around Customer fades in and then dims slowly)

Customer: *(Bursts into tears)* Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

