

CURRIED CONDO

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A short play

by  
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Linear scene #3  
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## CURRIED CONDO

### CHARACTERS

RAMESH SHARMA - 30s, real estate agent of East Indian descent.

SUE CHEN - 20s, business woman, fashionably dressed. Needs an apartment quickly.

### SETTING

A swanky condo in a nice part of town.

### TIME

The present.

SHARMA

...and here is my card. (entering) Here we are. This is a Deluxe Condominium: two bedrooms and one and a half baths with high ceilings and-- Come on in Miss Chen. (she does) See. Here we have a nice view of the swimming pool, and there's the squash court. And over there is the barbeque area. Back through the kitchen there is the capacious maid's quarters with an immaculate laundry area. And the two luxurious bedrooms, of course. Here are the one and a half opulent bathrooms. It's well within your price range. Very affordable. I've had several clients look at it already today. I think it's exactly what you were looking for, isn't it? The owner is keen to rent it by the first.

SUE CHEN

That's Monday, isn't it?

SHARMA

Yes, Monday. If you don't snatch this one up, I'm sure it will be gone by tomorrow.

SUE CHEN

How much are they asking again?

SHARMA

Twenty-five hundred. (SUE Chen starts sniffing) Plus the first and last and a small cleaning deposit--is there something...

SUE CHEN

What is that smell? (sniffs)

SHARMA

What smell?

SUE CHEN

It smells like...(sniff) armpit.

SHARMA

Armpit?

SUE CHEN

Yes. Come here. Can't you smell it? (they both sniff)

SHARMA

No. I don't smell anything.

SUE CHEN

That! That! It smells like a combination of armpit (sniff)...rotten feet, (sniff) patchouli and...what is that? (sniff) Curry powder!

SHARMA

What are you implying?

SUE CHEN

Nothing.

SHARMA

I'm sorry Miss Chen. I can't smell a thing. So, what do you say? It's a nice place, isn't it? Should I tell the owner you'd like to make an offer? I think we might be able to get him to come down a bit to say, I don't know, twenty-three--

SUE CHEN

It *is* a nice condominium...

SHARMA

It has a covered car park. And it's walking distance to the MRT. And there is a Cold Storage across the street.

SUE CHEN

But what about that smell?

SHARMA

I'm sorry Miss Chen, I don't smell anything.

SUE CHEN

It's disgusting. I can't believe you can't smell that. Come here and smell it again.

SHARMA

That's all right. I'll take your word for it. I can ask the owner if he will pay to clean--

SUE CHEN

Oh God! It's over here, too. The whole place reeks! Did they have a dog?

SHARMA

A dog?

SUE CHEN

The previous tenants.

SHARMA

I wouldn't think so. There are no pets allowed in the building. And no smoking either.

SUE CHEN

Who *were* they?

SHARMA

I--I don't know really. Just--just a family.

SUE CHEN

A family? How do you know it was a family?

SHARMA  
Well, I just assumed.

SUE CHEN  
Where were they from?

SHARMA  
Uh...It doesn't say here.

SUE CHEN  
What were their names?

SHARMA  
Their names? Why--I--I don't know.

SUE CHEN  
What's this? The mail?

SHARMA  
Here. Let me take care of that.

SUE CHEN  
Give it to me.

SHARMA  
Why?

SUE CHEN  
I want to- (she snatches the mail away, reads it, looks at Sharma then at his business card) Mr. Sharma? (pause) Mr. Ramesh Sharma? Is this your condominium?

SHARMA  
No. (pause) No. (pause) No. No, of course not. (long pause) Well, not any more.

SUE CHEN  
I can't believe this. (she goes to leave, he blocks her)

SHARMA  
Wait! Wait! Please, please don't go. Let's be reasonable. It's a great condominium. I apologize about the smell.

SUE CHEN  
So you *do* smell it!

SHARMA  
I'll have it cleaned--sterilized even!

SUE CHEN  
No! Let me go!

SHARMA

Please! I'm desperate. We just had twins. We had to move. I have a two-year lease. I can't afford both places. I'll waive the deposit. I'll waive the agent fee.

SUE CHEN

Stop it! Stop it!

SHARMA

Do you know how hard it is to find a good tenant these days? Do you know how many people I have shown this to? I know you'll be a good tenant. I can just see it in you. I can see it in your eyes—in your face! In your impeccable fashion sense. You have a good job. You don't smoke.

SUE CHEN

Actually, I do.

SHARMA

It doesn't matter. (beat) I'll reduce the rent. What do you say? Name your price? Please? Please?

SUE CHEN

You'll have it sterilized?

SHARMA

Yes! Yes! Anything!

SUE CHEN

And you'll drop the rent to...eighteen hundred?

SHARMA

Eighteen hundred?!?! How about two thousand?

SUE CHEN

Nevermind.

SHARMA

All right! All right! Eighteen hundred.

SUE CHEN

All right. I'll take it.

SHARMA

Very well. Sign here. And the cheque. And the keys. There you are, all set. Thank you very much Miss Chen. I hope you'll be very happy here.

SUE CHEN

Yes, thank you.

SHARMA

Oh, and by the way, that smell you found so objectionable?

SUE CHEN

Yes?

SHARMA

It's emanating from our downstairs neighbors, the Chongs.  
Seems they are just mad about curry.

He exits. She follows after him.

END.