

CHEESE LUST

by Bradley Walton

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CHEESE LUST*A Comedy Duet***by Bradley Walton**

SYNOPSIS: A customer in a cheese shop tries to buy five pounds of Irish cheddar, only to be told that it has to be melted onto vegetables first. The customer protests, but the shop's owner refuses to budge on moral grounds. Can the owner be convinced to compromise their morals? Or will the customer be undone by their own lust for cheese?

CAST OF CHARACTERS*(2 either; gender flexible)*

CLERK (m/f) The shop owner of "I Have Cheese!" (88 lines)

CUSTOMER (m/f)..... Just wants to buy some cheese.
(89 lines)

TIME: Present day.**SETTING:** Cheese shop.**SET:** Bare stage.**COSTUMES**

CLERK – A shop apron.

CUSTOMER – Everyday attire.

AT RISE: *CLERK is on a bare stage. CUSTOMER enters.*

CLERK: Good afternoon!

CUSTOMER: Hi.

CLERK: How may I help you?

CUSTOMER: I was driving by and I was intrigued by your sign, so I figured I'd check things out.

CLERK: Wonderful!

CUSTOMER: I love the name of the shop—"I Have Cheese!" with a big exclamation mark. It's simple, direct, enthusiastic, and welcoming. It makes you want to come inside.

CLERK: Cheese is the great passion of my life.

CUSTOMER: I love the stuff.

CLERK: Please, take a look around and see if there's anything you like.

CUSTOMER: Oh, I see a lot of things that I like. The variety is kind of overwhelming. What do you recommend?

CLERK: I'm fond of the smoked Gouda, myself. The gorgonzola is deliciously bold, and the Irish cheddar is one of our best sellers. You can't go wrong with any of those. Or, if you prefer, we have some vegan cheeses.

CUSTOMER: No! No vegan cheese. I mean, no offense if you're into that kind of thing, but—

CLERK: It's okay. I understand.

CUSTOMER: I just... I prefer real cheese.

CLERK: Oh, I agree with you 100%. Between you and me, as a cheese lover, I try not to even think about the vegan stuff. But as a business owner, I figure I need to have something for everyone.

CUSTOMER: Sure.

CLERK: It's just good public relations.

CUSTOMER: So, um... can I get five pounds of the Irish cheddar?

CLERK: Five pounds?

CUSTOMER: It's one of my favorites.

CLERK: Obviously. I think you might be an even bigger cheese lover than me.

CUSTOMER: Maybe so.

CLERK: Would you like that on broccoli or cauliflower?

CUSTOMER: I'm sorry, I don't understand.

CLERK: What kind of vegetable would you like me to put your cheese on? Broccoli or cauliflower?

CUSTOMER: I don't want you to put it on anything. Just wrap it up and put it in a bag.

CLERK: "Put" may not be the best word here—completely my fault. I'm so sorry. What I should have said was "melt"—after I melt it onto your vegetable. Don't worry, it doesn't take long.

CUSTOMER: I don't want my cheese melted.

CLERK: If it's not melted, then it would fall off.

CUSTOMER: It won't fall off if it's not on a vegetable in the first place.

CLERK: It doesn't have to be either broccoli or cauliflower. I can do both. I even have some carrots and lima beans, if you want to be really unconventional.

CUSTOMER: I don't see any vegetables here.

CLERK: They're in the back.

CUSTOMER: Why?

CLERK: I prefer to focus on the cheese. People like cheese more than they like vegetables.

CUSTOMER: Then why are you pushing vegetables?

CLERK: The cheese is healthier that way.

CUSTOMER: It's okay. I don't mind.

CLERK: But I do. I care about your health.

CUSTOMER: I'll live.

CLERK: You'll live longer if you eat vegetables.

CUSTOMER: I don't want vegetables. I want cheese.

CLERK: And that's a common attitude. Very common. People don't watch out for their own self-interests. They only think about what they want in the moment, rather than what's good for them in the long run. So I'm taking that burden off your shoulders—I'm protecting your self-interests for you.

CUSTOMER: By selling me vegetables that I don't want?

CLERK: Oh, no. I wouldn't dream of it. The vegetables are free.

CUSTOMER: But you jack up the price of your cheese to cover them?

CLERK: I would never do a thing like that.

CUSTOMER: Then how do you stay in business?

CLERK: It's hard sometimes, but I sleep better at night. Now, if you want the vegan cheese, I can sell you that by itself.

CUSTOMER: I don't want vegan cheese!

CLERK: I don't blame you.

CUSTOMER: Vegan cheese is like—cheese without the cheese.

CLERK: I've heard some of it's actually pretty good. Not that I've tried any of it myself. Or ever plan to.

CUSTOMER: No matter what it tasted like—even if the taste and texture were perfect—I'd know I wasn't eating real cheese. The disconnect between my taste buds and my brain would probably make me throw up.

CLERK: I hear you.

CUSTOMER: What's the point of pretending something is a thing that it's not? That's living in a world of make-believe. That's dangerous. We need to accept reality so we can learn to cope with it. To make the world a better place. Vegan cheese does not make the world a better place.

CLERK: Unless you're a vegan.

CUSTOMER: Who cares about vegans? Are vegans even real people?

CLERK: Probably.

CUSTOMER: Vegans don't eat real food. Can you be a real person if you don't eat real food?

CLERK: I'm pretty sure vegans do eat real food.

CUSTOMER: But it's food made without any ingredients. How can that be real?

CLERK: Their money spends the same as everybody else's. That's real enough for me.

CUSTOMER: Is my money real enough for you?

CLERK: Yes, definitely.

CUSTOMER: Then you should allow me—as your customer—to make my own decisions.

CLERK: I'm sorry. I really can't do that.

CUSTOMER: It's like you're running a dictatorship—with cheese!

CLERK: You can choose not to buy anything if my business practices bother you.

CUSTOMER: But you have cheese.

CLERK: That's true.

CUSTOMER: Cheese is powerful and alluring.

CLERK: It is.

CUSTOMER: Especially when you're standing in a room with it...
(*Looks around.*) ... lots and lots of it.

CLERK: I know.

CUSTOMER: And the longer I stand here, the more I crave cheese.

CLERK: I work here. Imagine how I feel.

CUSTOMER: If you were in my place, would you want your five pounds of Irish cheddar melted on a vegetable?

CLERK: Of course not. I'd want to eat it straight up, all at once, possibly in a single, huge bite if I could open my jaws wide enough—assuming I didn't try to inhale it and suffocate first.

CUSTOMER: Then why not let me do that myself?

CLERK: Because you'd be making a poor decision based on impulse and desire. There would be no rational thinking behind it. Cheese scrambles your brain and clouds your judgment. It hyper-focuses your sense of longing into a laser beam of lust—cheese lust. If I sell you five pounds of Irish cheddar, would it even make it home to your fridge? Would it make it as far as the first stop light? Or would you eat the whole thing in your car before you even leave the parking lot?

CUSTOMER: I'm pretty sure I'd at least fasten my seat belt first.

CLERK: That wouldn't do you any good.

CUSTOMER: Seat belts save lives.

CLERK: Seat belts don't protect you against cheese. Especially if it's already in your car.

CUSTOMER: How I live my life is none of your business!

CLERK: But if you buy your cheese from me, then that is my business.

CUSTOMER: You could just not care! It would be easy.

CLERK: Yes—it would. But I have morals. I have ethics.

CUSTOMER: Then compromise them!

CLERK: Never!

CUSTOMER: Compromise isn't bad. It's how things get done between people with opposing viewpoints. The whole attitude of "this is how I feel and I'm not gonna change no matter what" never does anybody any good. It doesn't allow for growth or progress.

CLERK: I agree. But moral compromises are completely different.

CUSTOMER: Do you live in the real world?

CLERK: I live in a real world of cheese. I've seen its effects. I know what it can do. Is that real enough for you?

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