

Red Tuxedo

By Joseph Arnone

Adapted by Evangeline Bitsko

Cocktail party for business associates. Mr./Ms. Berguer is hosting the event and has asked Mr./Ms. Sanders to negotiate a deal.

Berguer: Please, take a seat, Sanders.

Sanders: I'd rather stand but I'll be polite.

Berguer: Appreciated. (beat) What do you think of the party tonight?

Sanders: It's a typical gathering. Business types coming together to try and get the most out of other business types.

Berguer: Well then you may be wondering why I've asked you to come here.

Sanders: Actually, I know exactly why you've sent for me.

Berguer: Do tell.

Sanders: Patents.

Berguer: Yes, that is correct. The patents.

Sanders: Yes, the patents that you stole from my company.

Berguer: Stole? I obtained those patents fair and square.

Sanders: In a hostile takeover.

Berguer: In a savvy business move.

Sanders: That put hundreds of people out of work and turned a philanthropic mission into a cold-hearted business deal.

Berguer: Is there any business deal that isn't cold-hearted, Sanders.

Sanders: That depends on what you want out of the deal.

Berguer: Please don't patronize me. We all want the same things out of these deals -- power, money, influence, fame, success.

Sanders: Don't get me wrong -- I want to be successful. I just think the casualties that lie in your wake pile up a bit higher than mine.

Berguer: So you admit that there are casualties in your wake as well...

Sanders: Perhaps we should cut to the chase, Berguer. We are both accomplished entrepreneurs, are we not? No need to beat around the bush.

Berguer: That is correct, Sanders. Should I offer my proposition or would you prefer to offer yours?

Sanders: I know what you want and I know how you go about getting what you want. I understand the importance of this deal, for my sake and for the sake of my company.

Berguer: We all have our ways of getting what we want. That's how we end up on top.

Sanders: I suppose you're right.

Berguer: You know I'm right. So, the ball is in your court, Sanders. What are you prepared to do?

Sanders: I'm prepared to give you forty-percent.

Berguer: In exchange for?

Sanders: Nothing.

Berguer: Nothing?

(Sanders pulls out an envelope and hands it to Berguer)

Sanders: I've completely signed over all my rights. You have full control. (beat) Don't look so alarmed. I'm giving you exactly what you wish.

Berguer: Why no fuss? Surely, there must be something you desire?

Sanders: I understand your power, Berguer. I know how you go about your business. I've thought over this quite a bit these past few weeks. I believe I'm making a very smart, successful decision with you. Am I not?

Mr. Berguer: I wouldn't disagree, Sanders.

(pause.)

Sanders: Will that be all?

Berguer: Indeed. (beat) You are a much more dangerous than I previously imagined. There is a great deal of respect that divides our interests.

Sanders: I appreciate your modesty.

Berguer: Enjoy the rest of the party.

Sanders: Good evening.