
**PLEASE BE AWARE THAT
THIS PLAY IS FULLY PROTECTED BY COPYRIGHT**

All plays, books, music and other materials published by Heartland Plays, Inc. are fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries which the United States has reciprocal relations including, but not limited to all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, The Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention. All rights to the plays and materials on our website are strictly reserved including, and without limitation, professional and amateur performance rights; motion pictures; public reading; radio and television broadcasting; audio and video recording and reproduction of any type known or yet to be invented; information storage and retrieval systems of any type known or yet to be invented; and the rights of translation into any and all languages. No individual or organization whether amateur or stock may perform this or any play published by Heartland Plays, Inc. without first obtaining advance permission from Heartland Plays, Inc. and paying the appropriate fees including Royalties and Single-Use Copyright fees. Heartland Plays, Inc. collects royalties on behalf of the Playwrights whose plays it publishes. Unauthorized copying, transcribing or reproduction of this or any play or excerpt, or storage or transmittal in any form and by any means whether known or yet to be invented, is strictly forbidden except as provided by Agreement with Heartland Plays, Inc. Any unauthorized use is a violation of copyright laws and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

FIVE SIMPLE RULES TO REMEMBER

1. DO take advantage of the free online perusal of our plays to help you make the best choice for your particular needs or production.
2. DO enjoy the convenience of our online purchase application for performance rights and single-use copyright.
3. DO understand that this play and all plays and materials on our website are controlled by Heartland Plays, Inc. and fully protected by copyright.
4. DO NOT attempt in any way to copy, transcribe or reproduce this play by any means or perform this play or use any play or material from our website without first receiving permission from Heartland Plays, Inc. Any attempt to use this or any other work without first obtaining permission is a violation of copyright and punishable by law.
5. DO NOT rob this Author or any of the Authors we represent of their right to be paid for the use of their property. It is a crime and it is wrong!

Product Code: A0857-SP

THE HALF-WAY SOLUTION

A 10-Minute Comedy by
Robert L. Kinast

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
REPRODUCTION WITHOUT SPECIFIC WRITTEN PERMISSION PROHIBITED**

**Performance Rights Available Exclusively through
Heartland Plays, Inc. at heartlandplays.com
playsnow@heartlandplays.com
customer service: 406-431-7680**

Copyright © 2017 by Robert L. Kinast

THE HALF-WAY SOLUTION

by Robert L. Kinast

CAST OF CHARACTERS

1W / 1M

CHERYL: *GARY's wife, mid-twenties, attractive, energetic, stylishly dressed, every bit a contemporary young woman*

GARY: *CHERYL's husband, mid-twenties, good looking, exudes a confident, young executive air*

SCENE

The stage is filled with as many pieces of furniture or appliances as possible, clustered in groups without actually being in defined rooms, all with doors or drawers, e.g., a chest of drawers, an armoire, curio, kitchen cabinets, desk, cupboards, china cabinet, microwave, etc. As an alternative, the female character can mime opening drawers, doors, and cabinets without any actual pieces of furniture or appliances being on stage. In this case, however, the act of opening doors and drawers may be slightly exaggerated so the audience will understand what she's doing.

TIME

The present

SYNOPSIS

GARY has the perfect wife—except for one thing. She has a habit of not closing doors and drawers after she opens them. At first he takes the subtle approach by just mentioning it to her; then he takes a more forceful approach by dramatically closing (i.e., slamming) the doors she leaves open; finally he appeals to her concern that he might hurt himself if she doesn't close a cabinet door, but she only tells him to watch where he's going. When he puts child-proof locks on everything as a reminder to her, she interprets it as an over eager desire on his part to prepare for the children they don't have yet.

His last resort is to put everything on retractable sliders and hinges but before he can, she tells him they must talk because he has a habit that really bothers her. He never puts the lids on jars or caps on pens or tops on pots or clips on chips after he's used them. In addition, she tells him he has become very compulsive about closing doors and drawers in the house.

As they list each other's quirks and the annoyance they cause, they realize that neither one is likely to change. Then CHERYL hits upon the half-way solution. She's willing to put lids and caps and tops on things when he's finished with them if he will close her doors and drawers. That way they will each keep doing what they do, and the other will finish the job for them. And that's what they begin doing as they step closer to each other, closing a drawer and clipping a bag of chips, until they meet and embrace as the play ends.

THE HALF-WAY SOLUTION

by Robert L. Kinast

AT RISE:

CHERYL enters SR and goes to a kitchen cabinet CS, removes a mixing bowl, and leaves the door open. GARY appears SL, watching as CHERYL goes to a set of kitchen drawers SR, removes a spoon and spatula and leaves the drawer open.)

GARY

(To the AUDIENCE)

That's Cheryl. She's my wife. She's really something. I don't mean just her looks. You can see that for yourself. I mean she's so intelligent . . . and talented . . . and energetic. I didn't think I'd ever find a woman so—well, so perfect.

CHERYL now goes to a desk, removes a notebook, and leaves the drawer open as GARY watches, then turns back to the audience.)

There is one small thing, though. It's hardly worth mentioning. It's nothing really.

GARY sidesteps to CS and then SR closing the cabinet door and kitchen drawer CHERYL left open.

She has this habit of leaving drawers (*He closes a drawer*) and doors (*He closes a door*) open. To tell you the truth, I didn't notice it at first. I mean we've all left doors open if we're in a hurry or if we just forget to close them.

CHERYL does it again with another piece of furniture.

So whenever I saw that she left a drawer open (*He closes it*), I'd close it. And close it. And close it. Until I started getting . . . annoyed. Rather than make a big deal out of a little thing, I decided to mention it to her the next time it happened.

CHERYL does it again.

Which was almost immediately. (*Beat*) Ah, honey, you left that drawer open.

CHERYL

I know.

GARY

Don't you want to close it?

CHERYL

I will when I'm finished.

GARY

(To the AUDIENCE)

There you have it! A simple explanation. You open a drawer to take something out. You use it and put it back; **then** you close the drawer.

CHERYL gets up, comes to the kitchen cabinet, puts the mixing bowl back and takes out another one, leaving the door open.

But Cheryl never seemed to finish using things. And she kept leaving drawers and cabinets and doors open, so I thought I'd take a more direct approach.

CHERYL removes something from another drawer and leaves it open.

Sweetie, you left the drawer open again.

CHERYL

Oh, sorry. Would you mind closing it, dear?

GARY

I felt like saying, "Yes, I do mind. Why can't **you** close a drawer after you open it?" But I didn't want to sound petty. So the next time it happened, I appealed to her feelings for me.

GARY stoops to close a lower drawer and barely misses hitting his head on an upper cabinet door which CHERYL left open.

(To CHERYL)

Whew, I almost hit my head on this door you forgot to close.

CHERYL

You should pay more attention to what you're doing.

GARY

But I didn't expect this cabinet door to be open. I could have really gotten hurt.

CHERYL

You'll have to be more careful next time.

GARY

There shouldn't be a next time.

CHERYL

Then you shouldn't have to worry.

CHERYL opens some more drawers and doors.

GARY

(To the AUDIENCE)

Okay, so the courteous approach didn't work and the I-might-get-hurt-by-your-negligence approach didn't work either. That's when I decided I'd been too subtle. So, I began closing every open door and drawer—forcefully.

Slams one door, then another, each time with a flourish.

CHERYL

Gary, could you close those doors more quietly? You're disturbing the canary.

GARY

(To the AUDIENCE)

She's more concerned about her pet bird's feelings than mine? I was really starting to get annoyed now. Then I had a sudden flash of inspiration. All I had to do was make it a little harder for Cheryl to open the doors and drawers around here. One Saturday while she was working out at the gym, I put child safety latches on everything in the house that she might open. The latches would serve as the perfect reminder to close the drawers and doors!

CHERYL tries to open a chest drawer, realizes there is a safety latch, and releases it. She removes a negligee and, of course, leaves the drawer open. Coming over to GARY, draping the negligee on her front.

CHERYL

Gary, darling, I know we've talked about starting our family soon, but don't you think it's a bit premature to put child safety latches on everything?

GARY

(To the AUDIENCE)

Wrong reminder. But the safety latches gave me another idea. Reverse the strategy. Put every door and drawer on retractable hinges and runners. Every time she opens one, it goes back into the closed position on its own! I waited until Cheryl was going to be gone for the day to put my plan into action—but I didn't get the chance.

CHERYL

(Approaches GARY, holding a large cardboard box)

Honey, there's something I'd like to discuss with you.

GARY

(To the AUDIENCE)

I didn't like the sound of that. It didn't feel ominous, like "I've met someone else" but it wasn't trivial either, like "you forgot to get milk or put out the trash." It was in that murky middle where a woman's ways compete with a man's ways for how things are to be done.

(To CHERYL, cheerfully)

Yes, honey.

CHERYL

(Sets the box on a table or countertop)

Do you remember how we said if our relationship is going to last, we have to be perfectly honest with each other? Even about small things we do that might annoy each other?

GARY

I certainly do.

CHERYL

Well, I want to be perfectly honest with you.

GARY

Just "honest" would be fine with me.

CHERYL

You have a habit that is starting to annoy me.

GARY

I'm sorry, but I can't help it if I snore when I sleep.

CHERYL

No, you can't. We can work on that some other time. This one you can help.

GARY

I promise not to interrupt you anymore when we're reading the newspaper together.

CHERYL

Do you interrupt me when we're reading the newspaper? I never noticed.

GARY

If you haven't noticed, I guess I haven't. (*Beat*) It's the way I flip through the channels when we're watching TV, isn't it? I'll be glad to let you control the remote.

CHERYL

Don't be silly. I tape the programs I like so I can watch them whenever I want. It doesn't bother me that you make the circuit of a hundred and eighty channels in two minutes.

GARY

What is it then?

CHERYL Removes a large, empty, plastic juice bottle from the box and holds it out with both hands to GARY.

CHERYL

Here, take this.

Puzzled, GARY takes it by the cap and the bottle immediately falls to the floor while he's left holding the cap.

GARY

What the . . .

CHERYL

That's what happens when you don't tighten a lid.

GARY

Do I do that?

CHERYL

No, you don't do it. That's the problem. I dropped an entire jar of dill pickles in the refrigerator yesterday. Fortunately the bottle was plastic but the smell will last for days.

GARY

And I thought you were using a new air freshener.

CHERYL glowers at him while removing the following items and setting them on the counter as she speaks.

CHERYL

You do the same thing with the iced tea pitcher, the coffee canister, the dish washer detergent, the vitamin bottles, and every spice jar you get your hands on. You never put the lids back on anything—properly.

GARY

It seems like a waste of effort.

CHERYL

It can cause accidents.

GARY

Only if you pick things up by their lids. Why do you do that?

CHERYL

(As if quoting an authority to make her point)

My fitness trainer said it's a good way to build up wrist and forearm strength as well as maintain finger flexibility. Besides, it's the way I want to do it and I should be able to pick things up any way I want without worrying that they'll come apart.

GARY

Okay, in the future I'll tighten things I loosen. Now there's something I want to . . .

CHERYL

I'm not done. Here.

CHERYL shoves a handful of pens toward GARY; some are marker pens; some are ball points; none of them have caps.

GARY

What're these?

CHERYL

Useless pens.

GARY

Why are you keeping them?

CHERYL

To make a point. They were all perfectly usable until **you** forgot to put the caps back on. Now they're dry as dust.

GARY

How do you know it was me who forgot to re-cap them?

CHERYL

Because when I use a pen, I put the cap on the end so I'll remember to replace it when I'm finished.

GARY

Maybe I should start using pencils.

CHERYL

Maybe you should remember to put things back the way you found them.

GARY

That brings up a matter I want to . . .

CHERYL reaches into the box and produces a saucepan and lid which she holds out to GARY.

CHERYL

What are these?

GARY

A pot and a lid.

CHERYL

And they go together, don't they?

GARY

Looks like they're made for each other.

CHERYL

But not when **you** put them away. You stack all the pots and pans inside each other and all the lids by themselves.

GARY

At least, I put them away. What's wrong with the way I do it?

CHERYL

It's very annoying having to find the right lid for the right saucepan every time I go to the cabinet.

GARY

Ah, speaking of the cabinet, and cupboards, and drawers . . .

CHERYL

We aren't. Don't get me off track. I have one more thing to bring to your attention.

She pulls out a half dozen bags of chips and pretzels, holds them up in front of GARY, and cocks her head waiting for a reaction.

GARY

We're running low on snacks and you want me to get some more?

CHERYL

(Demonstrates dramatically with a "chip clip")

I want you to put a chip clip on each bag after you use it. Do you know why?

GARY

Because you were given a lifetime supply of chip clips at your bridal shower and don't know what to do with them?

CHERYL

To keep the contents fresh! You have to remember to close things you open.

GARY

Ah, that brings up what I've been wanting to . . .

CHERYL

And don't close things you don't open.

GARY

Like what?

CHERYL

Like the doors and drawers and cabinets around here. You've become very compulsive about closing them.

GARY

I only close them because you leave them open.

CHERYL

I don't **leave** them open. I just don't have time to close them before you do.

GARY

How much time do you need?

CHERYL

More than you give me.

GARY

But it only takes a second to close a drawer after you've opened it.

CHERYL

That means you open and close it twice. (*Demonstrates by opening and closing a drawer twice*) Once when you take something out, and once again when you put it back.

GARY

I'll bet your fitness trainer would recommend it for arm strength.

CHERYL

It's a waste of effort.

GARY

Hah! Where have I heard that before?

CHERYL

It **is** a waste of effort to open and close things twice when once will do. It is **not** a waste of effort to put lids on tight and recap pens.

GARY

Have you forgotten about the pots and chip clips?

CHERYL

No. And I haven't even brought up the CDs and DVDs that you never put back in their containers.

GARY

If I did, you wouldn't snap the covers shut.

CHERYL

So we're back to that. I just don't understand why it bothers you so much when I leave things open for a while.

It's unsightly.

GARY

Who's looking?

CHERYL

I am.

GARY

Why don't you try to **overlook** it?

CHERYL

Why don't you do the same?

GARY

Because your actions are inconsiderate.

CHERYL

And your "open door" policy can cause accidents.

GARY

So can your "open-ended" habits.

CHERYL

There is a long pause as they catch their breath.

So what are we going to do? I'm not sure I can remember to put the cap back on the toothpaste every night.

GARY

Hah! You're aware of that one too!

CHERYL

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes