

~~JANE. Well no, because Henry the Eighth was...~~

~~KATHERINE. I KNOW HENRY THE EIGHTH WAS A MAN JANE! (Pause.) But you are right about one thing. We do have to do something.~~

HENRY. (*Enters centre stage left.*) Hey Katherine, Jane, how's it going?

JANE. (*Shyly, a bit of a crush on HENRY.*) Hi Henry.

HENRY. All ready for the big opening? The dress last night looked terrific. Sets and costumes are fantastic, and the lighting...

KATHERINE. (*Wearily.*) Hello Henry. Henry, you can forget your President's pep talk to the cast and crew tonight. We have a problem.

HENRY. What's that?

KATHERINE. Where do I start? Anne came here alone. A minute ago I find out that Arthur and she had a fight, then he got some mysterious phone call, blew up at the world, and just disappeared. Your Board is going to be getting a harassment complaint about him next week - don't ask. And now Howard tells me that a backstage guy hasn't shown up either.

HENRY. Wow. Well, where *is* Arthur?

KATHERINE. Well Henry, if we knew that, we wouldn't have a problem, would we?

HENRY. Sorry, I meant have you tried his cell?

JANE. Yes, and we also sent him an email that we flagged as important.

KATHERINE. Thank you Jane! (*To HENRY.*) Yes. We've tried everything. He has (*Big emphasis.*) disappeared.

HENRY. What's this about him and Anne fighting? Have you talked to Anne?

KATHERINE. Yes, no joy there.

HENRY. You got that right. (*Pause.*) Sorry, I'm still a little bitter over *that* disaster. (*Pause.*) This is his first show with us. He *does* know it's opening night?

KATHERINE. Yes Henry. That was made pretty clear to everyone from day one. Opening night is the night right after the final dress rehearsal. It's also something of a theatre tradition.

JANE. (*Quietly, to HENRY.*) That was sarcasm...

HENRY. (*Ignoring her.*) Well, was he feeling sick or anything last night, or upset with anyone else?

JANE. (*Quietly.*) He forgot a couple of lines in scene two...

KATHERINE. No, he was fine. He just ISN'T HERE!

HENRY. So what are you going to do?

KATHERINE. (*Slow look to JANE, deep breath, then, as if it is her own idea.*) We need a stand-in.

HENRY. What?!

KATHERINE. (*Wearily.*) You know, someone who takes a script and...

HENRY. Katherine, I know what a stand-in is. I meant where are you going to find someone this late, who has never seen the script, and who doesn't know the show at all? And oh, did I mention, the role of the King is a *massive* part. (*KATHERINE and JANE do a slow stare at each other, then as one, slowly turn to look at HENRY.*) Oh no. Not a chance. Because of what happened with Anne and me, I've only been here to watch a couple of rehearsals. I came to give you the Board's best wishes, not to...

KATHERINE. But Henry, listen, please. ~~We've worked together on so many shows. (*Looks at JANE, who nods in agreement with what she has just said to KATHERINE.*)~~ If we put you in the role, the cast could move you wherever you needed to be. That takes care of the blocking. And you're one of this theatre's best actors. You can at least minimize the distraction of a script...

JANE. (*Hoping to strengthen the case.*) And Katherine could add a line near the opening about a recent fall from a horse, to make it clear you need help moving around. (*Pressing the point.*) When I was doing research for the show, I learned that that actually happened to the King in 1536 in a jousting tournament and it bothered him for a year or more and...

HENRY. I can see the review headline now. (*Arm up doing an arc to portray the headline.*) Horse's ass falls off horse's ass, lands on ass.

JANE. But Henry, it really happened...

HENRY. And everyone in tonight's audience who was there in 1536 will definitely appreciate that reference.

KATHERINE. Look Henry, you saw the opening scene. It takes place at that big table with everyone sitting around it. We could change the seating to put you with your back to the audience and the script on the table in front of you and...