

JANE. (*Frantically, as are all of JANE'S lines in this scene.*) Thomas we need your help desperately.

THOMAS. Right. (*Eyes HENRY in his ill-fitting costume.*) Interesting outfit Henry. Was it on sale?

HENRY. Very funny.

HOWARD. (*Offstage, via the intercom.*) Attention cast and crew. Stage Manager Howard again. Katherine has asked that all cast and crew assemble at the back of the house in 20 minutes for an important update on tonight's performance. Thank you. (*Pause.*) But don't worry. This in no way affects our ShowNight Challenge.

THOMAS. (*Confused.*) ShowNight what?

JANE. No time to explain Thomas, but we need a large, old-fashioned, magnifying glass. Immediately.

THOMAS. Of course you do. Let me see what we've got. (*Knows generally where to search, looks in pull-out drawers, while looking asks.*) What do you want this prop for Jane? It may make a difference because.

JANE. I'm really sorry Thomas, but I can't explain right now. We just need a large, old-fashioned looking magnifying glass for the opening scene.

THOMAS. (*Locates a large, somewhat delicate looking magnifying glass.*) Will this do?

JANE. (*Not really looking at it carefully.*) Do you have any others?

THOMAS. (*Holding a smaller one.*) Just this one, but it may be too small?

JANE. (*Indicating the larger one.*) Let's go with this one. (*Gives it to HENRY, who removes his glasses, hurriedly examines it, and nods his head. Hands it to JANE.*)

THOMAS. Good. (*They start to exit.*) Now before you go, you need to sign that prop out. (*JANE and HENRY exchange looks.*) This place would fall apart without proper inventory control, so I'm afraid there are no exceptions. Just let me boot up the computer to update the master inventory spreadsheet. (*Turns on computer. JANE checks her watch, HENRY gets increasingly frustrated with the delay. To keep the action moving, THOMAS chats on while the computer is booting up.*) As you know Henry, the Board of Directors got a "Moving Forward" government grant and we changed from the old sign-up sheets that everyone ignored, to a computerized system. We just went live last month, so there are still a few bugs in it. The main problem is the "old dog" – me – and my lack of computer training. Also, I'm not a very fast typist. Ah, here we go. Okay, let's see. "User name" (*Types. Two index fingers. Always slowly.*) "Password." (*At this*

*point JANE and HENRY are looking over THOMAS's shoulder.)* Sorry, would you mind turning away while I enter my password? *(They exchange looks, but turn.)* Thanks. I don't mean to be fussy, but security – you understand. *(Both nod grimly, as THOMAS keys in the password out loud.)* "Props123\*". Great, we're in. So, as I was saying, the new system is so much more efficient.

HENRY. And so much faster. I wish we had known that when we applied for the grant.

THOMAS. Ah, here we are. So, searching for "Magnifying glass". Got it. "Location": Container "M". Right. "Size": Large. "Number required": 1. "For what show?"

JANE. *(Trying to contain herself.)* This one Thomas.

THOMAS. Of course. Right. "Henry 8 Wives 6" – oh goodness, that should have been Roman numerals *(Corrects his entry.)* "Sign-out date": Today. "Signed for by": Jane Seamoore. "Position": what is your exact title Jane?

JANE. Assistant to the Director. Thomas can we not...

THOMAS. *(Typing.)* Assistant to the Director. Rats, I always spell the "t e h". *(Corrects it.)* Okay, that's all the info I need. *(Brightly.)* That wasn't too painful was it? Now, send it to printing. Done! Just got to step out to get the print-out, be back in a jiff. *(Exits. Printer sound somewhere offstage, outside props door. Re-enters with the paper.)* Here we are. Such a great system. Henry please thank the Board again for me. You sign here Jane. *(She scribbles a mark and they are about to rush out the door.)* Oh wait, sorry did you want a copy for your files? I can make one. It'll just take a minute...

HENRY. No!

JANE. No, thank you Thomas. *(Another attempted exit.)*

THOMAS. *(Placing the paper in a large binder.)* This goes in the Props Inventory Binder and you two are good to go! *(A third attempted departure.)* Now Jane, you need to know this magnifying glass was something that I made as a prop for a show about three years ago, just for a bit of stage dressing. *(Corrects himself.)* No, actually it was four years ago for that gothic mystery, *Dark Lights? Dark Nights?* Something like that. Do you remember it, we had a devil of a time.

JANE. *(Desperately.)* Please Thomas...

THOMAS. Oh sorry, old war stories eh? Anyway, it was never intended to be used. It's pretty fragile, so please handle with care.