

*At rise: The CASTING DIRECTOR is found sitting in a chair, downstage L., clipboard in hand, feverishly writing notes. After a moment he stops.*

CASTING DIRECTOR

*(Shaking his head before looking up and calling off backstage.)*

Next!

*(Nothing happens. After a moment or two he repeats his cue.)*

CASTING DIRECTOR

*(Louder.)*

Next!

*(Momentarily, ACTRESS appears from backstage and hurriedly makes her way downstage C.)*

ACTRESS

I-I'm so sorry. I'm afraid I...I didn't quite catch it the first time you—

*(ACTRESS stops abruptly as she suddenly becomes aware of the presence of the audience in front of her.)*

ACTRESS

*(With a look of alarm and confusion.)*

Oh, I...I...oh!

CASTING DIRECTOR

Is something wrong?

ACTRESS

Well, I...um...I was here for the audition.

CASTING DIRECTOR

Yes.

ACTRESS

For the, um...for the play.

CASTING DIRECTOR

Yes.

ACTRESS

Well, I...I think I must have come...to the wrong place.

CASTING DIRECTOR

Why do you say that?

ACTRESS

*(Awkwardly.)*

Well, because...

*(Gesturing toward the audience.)*

There's an audience here.

*(The CASTING DIRECTOR turns and looks toward the auditorium.)*

CASTING DIRECTOR

Oh, so there is.

*(Looking back at ACTRESS.)*

Is that a problem?

ACTRESS

Well, I...I'm here to audition.

CASTING DIRECTOR

Yes.

ACTRESS

For a play that...hasn't been cast yet...or staged...presumably.

CASTING DIRECTOR

Correct.

ACTRESS

So then...

*(Gesturing toward the audience.)*

Why are they here?

CASTING DIRECTOR

In eager anticipation of being entertained, I shouldn't wonder. That's normally the reason people come to the theatre. Either that, or they've been dragged here by a friend or relative, or they know someone in the cast who's made them feel morally obligated to show up in support. But whether here willingly or grudgingly, the expectation of being entertained is almost certain to be unanimous.

ACTRESS

Well, yes, I...I appreciate that, but...well, since the play hasn't yet been cast, let alone rehearsed, wouldn't you say their presence is a little...premature?

CASTING DIRECTOR

*(After a brief moment of contemplation.)*

Well, technically you may have a point, I suppose.

ACTRESS

Technically?

CASTING DIRECTOR

But I feel, with a fair degree of certainty, that we can get this thing cast and up on its feet in no time at all. And if that proves to be true – in the literal sense – then technically you *wouldn't* have a point.

ACTRESS

And in the meantime?

CASTING DIRECTOR

Well, assuming there is any, we'll need to get on with the business of your audition. Now, perhaps you'd like to introduce yourself and tell me what it is you've prepared for me.

ACTRESS

Oh, yes...right, um...

*(Clears her throat.)*

Well, my name's Actress, and the piece I've chosen for this evening is–

CASTING DIRECTOR

*(Raising his hand.)*

Stop, stop, stop!

*(Beat.)*

I'm sorry, my dear, your name is what?

ACTRESS

Actress.

CASTING DIRECTOR

Your name is Actress.

ACTRESS

Yes.