

So Fire Me Audition Piece

Kingsley- Laura knows how I like it, Steve. Next item on the agenda...ah yes, it appears someone is still taking liberties with the stationery cabinet. We're losing pencils at an alarming rate. *(Ben opens his jacket to reveal a line of pencils attached to the inside of his jacket lining like sticks of dynamite. He takes out two pencils as Kingsley rambles on obliviously, sticking the blunt ends in his ears to clean them.)* If the guilty party returns the pencils to their rightful place before next week's meeting there will be no questions asked, but we can't be wasting money or resources. If there's no sign of the pencils by next week, I WILL hire a private investigator to get to the bottom of this. Right, I'm sorry that took so long, but I think that's everything. Let's get to it. *(Ben gets up to leave.)* Ben? Where do you think you're going?

Ben- You said we were finished.

Kingsley- That was just the pre-meeting meeting.

Ben- But the 10am meeting starts in five minutes!

Kingsley- It's 9.55am already? Time flies when you're having fun. We'll have to push the 10am meeting back to 11 and the 11am meeting back to noon. *(Ben slumps back into his chair.)* Right, first item on the agenda, is Kate with the Safety Warden's report.

Ben- Are we going to actually talk about work at some stage?

Kingsley- It's a mandatory safety procedure, Ben. We can talk about work in the post meeting meeting. *(Kate rises and makes her way to the head of the table, one hand obscured behind her back.)*

Kate- Ok, I know some of you are pressed for time, so I'll try to keep it short. You would have all noticed we're a bit shorthanded at the moment; Brian slipped on the kitchen floor and bumped his head, Kevin leaned back too far in his chair and fell out an open window and Jordan gave himself a nasty paper cut. I'd just like to remind you all to make sure to clean up any spills in the bathroom or kitchen, make sure to sit in the correct manner; with all four legs on the ground and do not, under any circumstances enter the photocopy room without wearing full protective equipment.

Laura- I guess I can see the point of the padded gloves, but I don't get why we need the safety goggles and the helmet.

Kate- In light of our recent series of misadventures, I thought we might all benefit from a little workplace safety quiz. *(Ben groans.)* Now, I know workplace safety can be a bit of a dry topic, so I've brought a friend along with me. Everyone, I want you to give a warm welcome to... *(She removes her hand from behind her back to reveal she is wearing a beady eyed sock puppet.)* Sammy the Safety Sock. *(She affects a comical voice.)* Good morning, everyone. *(Everyone just stares.)* So, Sammy, I know you're an expert on workplace safety. I thought it would be a good idea for you to come and talk to everyone. I hear you've seen some ugly things. *(As Sammy.)* You bet. I was just a regular sock once. I've seen bunions!

Kingsley- Kate, I really don't think the puppet show is adding anything. Lose the sock.

Kate- *(Begrudgingly.)* Fine. I guess I'll just get on with the quiz. First question- what's the first thing you should do if the fire alarm rings?

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Ben- Hide under the desk.

Kate- No!

Ben- Oh right, sorry. That's the first thing you should do in the event of a meeting breaking out.

Kate- If the fire can be contained, try to put it out with the extinguisher (*Ben picks up a pencil and inserts the pointy end into his nostril.*) If there's no chance of containment, head calmly towards the nearest fire exit. (*Ben sticks the second pencil into the other nostril.*) Next question, who can tell me the difference between a hazard and a risk? Laura?

Laura- Well, the pencils Ben just stuck up his nose would be hazards, the risk is that he might bang his head into the desk again and pierce his brain. (*Ben goes to slam his head, but Laura and Kate catch him with each plucking a pencil out of his nostril.*)

Kate- Can we please get on with this? I have 48 more questions to get through!

Kingsley- That's a lot of questions. I could use another coffee. (*Steve springs to his feet. Nobody notices Ben taking another pencil from his jacket.*)

Steve- I'll get it! (*He strides enthusiastically toward the coffee table. Ben sticks a leg out to trip him, leaps to his feet and seizes him as he stumbles, digging the point of the pencil into his neck.*)

Ben- Right. Nobody make a move, or the sycophant gets it (*gasps*).

Laura- I think he means business.... That's a 2B!

Ben- Damn right I do. Stay still, or I'll pump him full of lead.

Kate- I don't want to even think about writing up that incident report.

Steve- Do what he says, everyone. I'm too young to die. (*Glances at Kingsley*) Unless you'd prefer that I did, sir?

Kingsley- Nobody is going to die, Steve. Ben, think this through.

Ben- You think I haven't thought this through? We've been here for well over an hour and a half. I've had plenty of time to think this through.

Kingsley- What do you want?

Ben- What do you think I want? I want out! I've hardly been home in the past month. I've taken power naps at my desk between sifting through mountains of catch up work that keep growing and growing as I waste away, sitting through meeting after bloody meeting. I've been trying to get you to fire me for weeks. Putting complaints about myself in the suggestion box, being disruptive and obnoxious, stealing all those pencils from the stationery cabinet. I was planning to use them to build a raft so I could paddle to Mozambique; where I could use my leave entitlements and sick pay to buy a nice little goat dealership. But day after day, my efforts have been ignored. Now you're saying we're going to have to sit through even more bloody meetings. I can't stand for it. I won't stand for it. If you won't take the hint and fire me, I have to take matters into my own hands. I have responsibilities outside this office, you know!

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Kate- It's not like you have kids.

Ben- The goldfish doesn't feed itself, Kate.

Kingsley- Try to be rational, Ben. I know you've been under a lot of pressure lately. Maybe what you need is a nice, long holiday.