

WHERE'S THAT BRIDGE?

By Joseph Sorrentino

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WHERE'S THAT BRIDGE?

A Ten Minute Comedy Duet

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SYNOPSIS: To their utter amazement, Frank and Harry have landed roles in a community theater production of Julius Caesar but Frank flubs a line...well, flubs his only line...and is worried he won't get cast in a play again. When Harry tries to tell him not to worry about it, he mangles a cliché leading to an absurdist argument between them.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 male)

FRANK (m)A well-spoken, moderately pompous man, in his mid to late 30's *(72 lines)*

HARRY (m)More of a blue-collar type, is in his late-50's to early 60's. *(71 lines)*

CAST BREAKDOWN

Two men, ideally one in his mid- to late-30s, one late 50's to early 60's although they could be a different age, as long as there's a several year age difference between them.

SETTING

Very simple but should suggest a backstage dressing room.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

FRANK and HARRY actors who have been out of work for years and have been friends all that time. They probably share a small, dingy apartment where they spend their days dreaming of being legitimate actors. They do what they can to get by while waiting for their big break. Although at this point, they'd be happy with a small break. FRANK is just this side of pompous and HARRY is just this side of sane. They've been cast in "Julius Caesar," their first gig in years. *Where's That Bridge* takes place in the dressing room and although FRANK and HARRY have just finished their performance, they're in street clothes. This play should be like an old married couple arguing about nothing.

PROPERTY LIST

- One or two small tables
- Several chairs
- Two backpacks
- Bag of chips
- Some backstage clutter

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AT RISE: FRANK and HARRY walk into the dressing room.

FRANK: Well, that's yet another performance in the books.

HARRY: One of our better ones, too.

FRANK: It was, wasn't it...well, except for that one little glitch.

HARRY: Hey--don't let it worry you.

HARRY starts looking around for something to eat. He's really desperate and makes a lot of noise. This continues until he finally finds something.

FRANK: I'm not.

HARRY: Good. You don't want it to throw off your next performance.

FRANK: No, I...what on earth are you doing?

HARRY: Lookin' for somethin' to eat. I'm starvin' here. You got anythin'?

FRANK: Me? I wish. We're going out for a bite, Harry...can't you wait?

HARRY: Sure, OK...Sorry.

FRANK: I just want things to be crisp, you know?

HARRY: *(More to himself.)* Crisp...he hadda say 'crisp.' *(Starts looking again.)*

FRANK: This is the first play we've been cast in in months...

HARRY: Years.

FRANK: What?

HARRY: Years. We haven't been in anythin' in years.

FRANK: Has it been that long?

HARRY: 'Fraid so.

FRANK: Time sure flies when you're not doing anything.

HARRY: Sure does.

FRANK: Well, at least I finally got a speaking part...in Julius Caesar, no less.

HARRY: Impressive. Very impressive.

FRANK: I'll say. *(Somewhat pompously.)* "Hail Caesar!"

HARRY: You know, you do a great job with that, you really do.

FRANK: Not tonight, I didn't.

HARRY: One little mistake. No biggie.

FRANK: Thank you, Harry. That's sweet. I do tend to beat myself up.

HARRY: Hey, live theater...somethin's always gonna happen.

FRANK: I just hope that director's still not upset.

HARRY: He's a pro. He'll get over it.

FRANK: I know but...for the life of me, I don't know why I said "Heil Hitler" tonight.

HARRY: Simple mistake. "Hail Caesar," "Heil Hitler." Could happen to anyone. You're usually right on the money. You really nail that line...most nights.

FRANK: Thanks. And you...the way you hold that spear.

HARRY: You like it?

FRANK: Like it? I love it. The audience can't take their eyes off of you.

HARRY: I did do a lot of research for the part.

FRANK: And it shows. I tell you Harry, you are so solid...you're a rock. You're always right there with that spear. Me, I get so nervous...I start thinking too much...I worry I'll forget my lines...

HARRY: Line.

FRANK: Right...line.

HARRY: But a very important line.

FRANK: "Hail Caesar!"

HARRY: There, see? You nailed it.

FRANK: Well, I'll run my lines...

HARRY: ...line...

FRANK: ...right...line. I'll run my line a few times and I should be OK. "Hail Caesar!"

HARRY: *(Finds an old bag of chips.)* Aha! I knew it!

FRANK: What? Did I do something wrong?

HARRY: No...chips. I found some chips. Seek and ye shall find. *(Looks inside.)* Oh boy...yeah, these have seen better days. Well, you know what they say about beggars and choosers..."Beggars and choosers and..." Well, you know what they say. *(To FRANK.)* Want some?

FRANK: Thanks. I think I'll pass.

HARRY: *(Biting into a chip.)* Huh...not too bad. *(Looks at bag.)* Uh-oh.

FRANK: What?

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HARRY: I thought these musta been sour cream and onion... 'cause of the green stuff on 'em? They ain't. Must be mold. (*Keeps eating.*)

FRANK: For heaven's sake... don't keep eating them.

HARRY: What? They make penicillin outta this stuff.

FRANK: They make..? (*Shakes his head; pause.*) I just wish I didn't screw up my performance tonight. I know I shouldn't worry about things so much...

HARRY: Absolutely right. Let it go. Tell ya what... let's take a gathering breath.

They both close their eyes, breathe in deeply and slowly exhale.

HARRY: Feel better?

FRANK: You know, I do. (*Pause.*) I just hope that director gets over my *faux pas*. I have such respect for the man. A lesser director would have had the cast in togas or some such nonsense. *Tres blasé*. Not him... I mean, having everyone in street clothes... talk about your cutting-edge.

HARRY: Plus he saved a bundle in costumes.

FRANK: That too, I suppose... *Entre nous*... I was banking on being cast in his next production... we both have a shot... more cutting edge stuff... a musical adaptation of "Waiting for Godot."

HARRY: At this point, that bridge is neither here nor there.

FRANK: What?

HARRY: That bridge is neither here nor there.

FRANK: Yeah, so?

HARRY: So?

FRANK: So where's the bridge?

HARRY: What?

FRANK: The bridge... where's the bridge?

HARRY: What bridge?

FRANK: The bridge you just mentioned...

HARRY: What are you talking about?

FRANK: You just said some... some bridge was neither here nor there...

HARRY: Yeah?

FRANK: ...so I'm asking, where is it?

HARRY: I don't understand your question.

FRANK: You don't understand my...You're the one.

HARRY: I'm the one what?

FRANK: You're the one talking about some bridge that doesn't exist.

HARRY: I didn't say it doesn't exist.

FRANK: Well if it's neither here nor there, then where in the heck is it?

HARRY: Don't get all huffy.

FRANK: I'm not getting all huffy.

HARRY: It's just a saying...

FRANK: What is?

HARRY: What I said...it's just a saying.

FRANK: No it's not.

HARRY: Yes it is.

FRANK: It most certainly is not.

HARRY: It most certainly is. Everyone uses it.

FRANK: Who?

HARRY: What?

FRANK: Not what. Who? Who uses it?

HARRY: I just told you...everyone.

FRANK: I don't.

HARRY: OK. Almost everyone. Happy now?

FRANK: No. No, as a matter of fact I'm not. I've never heard anyone use it.

HARRY: I just did. Or don't I count?

FRANK: OK. But I've never...never...heard anyone else use it. Not in my entire life. Not once. Never.

HARRY: I don't understand why you're getting so upset.

FRANK: I'm not upset.

HARRY: Well you're acting upset.

FRANK: Well I just told you I'm not.

HARRY: Good.

FRANK: Fine.

HARRY: All right.

Pause.

FRANK: I was just getting over the problem with my lines...

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HARRY: Line...

FRANK: ...and you have to go and mention some bridge.

HARRY: Oh, so now it's my fault.

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