

Groom of the Stool Plot

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FRANCIS Scrubber is writing a secret ledger, confessing to a crime he committed in 1547. He takes us back in time to the weeks leading up to the act ("**The 1540's**").

All FRANCIS wants to do is to marry the love of his life, the beautiful SERENE. Unfortunately SERENE's father won't allow them to be married due to FRANCIS's lack of money, reputation and social standing. SIR ANTHONY Denny, the royal Groom of the Stool, is sick of performing some of the duties his job role involves, mainly having to wipe the rear of the ailing HENRY VIII, so he goes searching for a "nobody" to bring in to the palace to perform this vulgar task, so he can focus on the more important ones. After an incident in the marketplace, ANTHONY meets FRANCIS - the perfect "nobody". ANTHONY offers FRANCIS the role and sells it as the job of a lifetime whilst not fully explaining what the job actually entails ("**Groom of the Stool**"). FRANCIS gets nervous and refuses the offer, fleeing the scene.

When having one of their secret meetings, SERENE exclaims how she wishes her and FRANCIS could be wed but until he gets the success her father demands, she fears they will never be able to. FRANCIS relays how he rejected the job offer from ANTHONY that would have allowed them to be wed as it seemed '*too good to be true*'. SERENE tells FRANCIS that if he wants them to have a future then he should accept the offer, it's now or never ("**Don't Be Such a Little Bitch**"). FRANCIS decides she's right and goes off to find ANTHONY to accept the job. He's sick of being a loser and wants things to finally start picking up for him ("**Aiming for Average**")

FRANCIS, dressed in the same clothes as ANTHONY, starts his first day at his new job. ANTHONY finally tells him that his sole task is to wipe the royal rear but before he can explain more, they are interrupted by the entrance of the 28-stone, raging psychopath HENRY VIII. HENRY, however, is not quite what the history books depict.

He is wheeled out on a bejeweled wheelbarrow by the royal wheelbarrow pusher, the hunky JONTY. It turns out that HENRY did not want a male heir, he really wanted a male lover ("**They Must Be Male**"). HENRY and JONTY are clearly in love and they depart to go and have their second dinner sitting. ANTHONY explains to FRANCIS that they can never be seen in the same room at the same time, as he needs the *virtually blind* HENRY to believe that FRANCIS is ANTHONY. Whilst not fully understanding this, FRANCIS goes along with it. ANTHONY takes FRANCIS to "Stool School" to explain the ins and outs of his job ("**Ass Wiping 101**"). HENRY enters in a blind panic needing to use the close stool so ANTHONY flees the scene and leaves FRANCIS to deal with the horrifying task of wiping HENRY's rear for the first time. JONTY confronts ANTHONY about bringing in an imposter (FRANCIS). ANTHONY tells JONTY that he knows about the feelings he holds for HENRY and that if he tells anyone about FRANCIS, he will tell the whole kingdom about his forbidden love.

A week later, FRANCIS meets with SERENE and sugar coats his new position, telling her that it's amazing and that he and the King are basically best friends. Seeing how it impresses SERENE, FRANCIS gets carried away and brags that he could steal a feather from the pillow where the King sleeps for her. SERENE takes him up on his offer and FRANCIS runs off to secure the feather, eager to impress.

HENRY and JONTY have gone for a stroll around the royal gardens so the castle seems to be empty. Not believing his luck, FRANCIS sneaks into the royal chamber to steal the feather. Whilst doing so, HENRY's current wife CATHERINE PARR enters, catching FRANCIS in the act. Until her entrance, CATHERINE has been depicted as old, decrepit and hag-like. This couldn't be further from the truth in today's standards, she is absolutely stunning. CATHERINE goes to call the guards but a desperate FRANCIS enquires if there is anything he can do to win her secrecy. CATHERINE, feeling the pressure to provide HENRY a male heir, tells FRANCIS that if he wants her secrecy, he needs to sleep with her until she gets pregnant, a deal that will help them both keep their heads in the long run. (**"Please the Queen"**)

JONTY and HENRY are strolling around the royal gardens and both wish they could tell the other how they feel, but they know the world wouldn't understand. (**"Two Boys and a Barrow"**). FRANCIS, due to his love for SERENE, was unable to sleep with CATHERINE but instead talks to CATHERINE about how she feels. We find out that CATHERINE is lonely and just wants to feel loved. She tells FRANCIS he's a good man and that she'll keep his secret. The conversation is interrupted when they hear HENRY arrive so FRANCIS flees back to his post in the close stool with his feather in hand. Upon hearing ANTHONY and JONTY entering the closed stool, FRANCIS hides the feather in the toilet, and hides himself. JONTY and ANTHONY are arguing that the picnic ANTHONY arranged upset the King's stomach. JONTY is holding a bowl of the King's excrement and dumps it in the toilet on top of the feather. When they leave arguing, FRANCIS sneaks out and unknowingly puts his hand in the toilet to retrieve the feather, resulting in his hand being absolutely covered in the King's crap. This makes FRANCIS hit breaking point (**"All Gone to Shit"**). FRANCIS tells ANTHONY he can't be a groom anymore and wants to quit. ANTHONY shows his true colours and says that he refuses to have to wipe the King's arse and that if FRANCIS tries to quit, he'll have him and everyone he's ever loved killed.

CATHERINE is acting differently with HENRY, trying to be nice and to seduce him, to rekindle their flame. This switch in character convinces the paranoid HENRY that CATHERINE is having an affair. He relays this to FRANCIS in the form of a rant about his six wives to date (**"Shoutout to the Six"**). HENRY then sits down and excretes. When he asks FRANCIS to wipe, FRANCIS finally finds his spine and tells the King to wipe his own arse, confessing his real identity in the process. An enraged HENRY stands up, screaming imposter, but suffers a severe heart attack in the process. He falls down dead, face down, trousers down. A farcical number ensues where FRANCIS, CATHERINE, ANTHONY and JONTY all come in to find the King dead, each worrying that they'll receive the blame if they are caught so they all decide to hide (**"Regicide"**). They all discover one another and decide between them that for the sake of HENRY's dignity and legacy (and for the

sake of their necks!), they should put HENRY in his bed and pretend he died in his sleep. Between them, they devise this grand cover-up.

FRANCIS ends the show telling us how he managed to blackmail ANTHONY to get enough money to marry SERENE and live a happy life. The history books will never recall his name, he is a totally average man who now lives an average life, but that is ok! Everyone has worth and everyone deserves to be loved (**“Finale”**).