

## Scene 4a

*(Lights up on the interior of Whitehall Palace, Anthony Denny is posing on a seat whilst a heavily bearded old portrait artist draws a portrait of him)*

ARTIST                    A little to the left my Lord...

ANTHONY                And so I told him, I don't care if your whole family's just been killed in a carriage crash, if you do not pay your taxes by tomorrow morning, I'll feed you to the pigs, TO THE PIGS I SAY (laughs hysterically)

ARTIST                    *(not laughing)* Very witty my Lord.

ANTHONY                Quite! Quite... I mean it's not that I LIKE being such a hard nosed bastard but...oh who i am kidding, I love it!

ARTIST                    A little more to the left...

ANTHONY                You know the old saying, some can sing, some can dance, some can extort the poverty stricken lower class for their own perverse financial gain. Me though? Just call me a triple threat baby.

ARTIST                    You are a marvel, my Lord. Perhaps just slightly further to the left.

ANTHONY                If I turn my neck any further to the left, I'll break the bloody thing. If you can't make me look powerful, brooding, sexy and slightly ingenue from this angle, I'll find someone who can, and I'll have you/

ARTIST                    Fed to the pigs, yes, very good my Lord. This angle will be perfectly sufficient.

ANTHONY                Good. It has to be perfect. Henry may wear the crown, but it's Sir Anthony Denny who runs the show here at Whitehall. The key cog of the operation. The key player. That's why I wear all blacks. All the best people do.

ARTIST                    You are the paradigm of power, my Lord.

ANTHONY                Naturally. How's the portrait progressing?

ARTIST                    I'm just filling in the gaps, my Lord.

ANTHONY                And how long does such a thing take?

ARTIST                    Oh, another minute or so I reckon..

*(awkward pause)*

ANTHONY            So, on the topic of exposition, what with Henry mere weeks or days away from facing his final agony, I've been given express command of the dry stamp. You know what that is, don't you?

ARTIST             I'm afraid my poor two-dimensional character doesn't, my Lord.

ANTHONY            Well, allow me to explain, for it's always good to show that you've done at least SOME research.... The dry stamp is effectively a royal seal to authenticate documents requiring the King's attention. In short, I sign with the King's hand, I speak with the King's voice, *(getting carried away)* I penetrate with the King's FRANCIS!

*(During ANTHONY's speech, FRANCIS entered the castle dressed totally identical to Denny)*

FRANCIS            Sir Denny, thank you again for the opportunity.

ANTHONY            Yes, yes, you really are a lucky little man. What do you think of the uniform I provided for you?

FRANCIS            Erm, i look..

ANTHONY            Yes?

FRANCIS            Like you..

ANTHONY            Well, now that you mention it, I guess the clothes are ever so slightly alike.

ARTIST             I'd say they're absolutely identical.

ANTHONY            And who asked you? Go on, piss off, you've served your purpose.

ARTIST             Rightio my Lord, just one last addition to make *(draws a cock on Denny's forehead in the portrait)* Perfect.

ANTHONY            I said leave!

ARTIST I'm leaving, I'm leaving. (*mutters*) But I'll be back.

ANTHONY THE HELL YOU WILL!

ARTIST You'll see.

*(Artist leaves)*

ANTHONY Let me take a proper look at you, yes, yes, that'll do nicely.

FRANCIS So what exactly IS it I'll be doing?

ANTHONY Well/

*(Anthony goes to answer, but he is interrupted by a voice offstage)*

JONTY (*Offstage*) Make way for the King!

ANTHONY SHIT, he's come home early from his cruise around the canals.

FRANCIS Who?!

ANTHONY Why the most notorious name in all nobility. The sinner who stands in the biggest spotlight but casts the biggest shadow. The man who puts the evil in the medieval. Henry the 8th! And he HATES it if people get in the way of his big entrances. QUICK, HIDE IN HERE!

*(ANTHONY and FRANCIS run and hide in a broom cupboard)*

### **Scene 4b**

HENRY                    Jonty? Jonty? WHERE'S/

JONTY                    I'm here, your magnificence.

HENRY                    *(clearly infatuated)* Yes. You. Are.

JONTY                    My sincerest apologies to your Majesty, I was standing in your blind spot. I pray you'll forgive me.

HENRY                    Oh, I could never be mad at you, Jonty.

JONTY                    You're too kind.

HENRY                    And you are too....come, let's go and dine, I suddenly have a hankering for a steak dinner.

JONTY                    But your Majesty, we've just come from having dinner.

HENRY                    I know, but one can never devour TOO much meat, can they?

JONTY                    The more the merrier I say.

*(They both sigh at each other like two lovers, then straighten themselves up slightly embarrassed and leave)*

HENRY                    Let us depart. Ooo let's stop by the baker on the way, he makes the most delicious cakes.

JONTY                    Cake before dinner? You're so naughty.

*(HENRY growls like a tiger, they laugh and leave. FRANCIS and ANTHONY reappear)*

FRANCIS                So, that's the King.

ANTHONY Quite the specimen, isn't he?

FRANCIS Has it ever struck anyone that maybe, well, that is to say, that he might be/

ANTHONY I know what you're thinking.

FRANCIS You do?

ANTHONY Oh yes, he eats too much. All the man ever does is choke down on meat.

*(Francis coughs)*

FRANCIS What?!

ANTHONY Pork, steak, pheasant. Anything he can get his hands on.

FRANCIS Right, yes. That...is what I was thinking.

ANTHONY If he's about to eat his second dinner of the evening, that means we haven't much time.

FRANCIS Before what?

ANTHONY Before you have to perform your duties, the duties I hired you for in the first place.

FRANCIS Right, of course! So, erm, what ARE my duties?

ANTHONY Well, as the groom's of the stool, we will share the jobs between us, and since I am a selfless man, I will take on the majority of the workload. In fact, there is only one duty that you will be required to perform, one of the deepest importance.

FRANCIS Which is?

ANTHONY You will be attending to the King when he is on the close stool.

FRANCIS I see...and, just to clarify, when you say attend to him on the close stool, you mean/

ANTHONY Wiping his arse..

FRANCIS Ah, lovely...and doing...THAT.. will help me get fame and fortune?!

ANTHONY Absobloodylutely. All of Henry's grooms have been knighted and awarded more land and money than he knew what to do with.

FRANCIS How many grooms have there been?

ANTHONY For Henry, 4... 5 including you!

FRANCIS So, what happened to the other three?

ANTHONY Henry's first groom was Sir William Compton, he died of the sweating sickness.

FRANCIS And the second?

ANTHONY We don't tend to talk about Sir Henry Norris, and whatever you do, never mention him in front of the King. The last time someone did, we had to sedate the King with four roasted lamb shoulders before he calmed down. No, not advisable at all.

FRANCIS What happened? Please tell me!

ANTHONY Let's just say, there was a rather large rumour that Norris and Henry's second wife Anne Boleyn were slightly more than Queen and courtier, if you catch my drift.

FRANCIS So he was fired?

ANTHONY He was axed, and by that I mean hit rather hard in the neck with one, Anne along with him.

FRANCIS Remind me to stay away from Henry's new Queen.

ANTHONY Catherine Parr? I wouldn't worry, the woman's a miserable old crone, who's about as charming as a fly in your soup.

FRANCIS OK, good. What happened to the third groom?

ANTHONY Some say Sir Thomas Heneage died naturally of old age. But there ARE rumours out there that say one day, when he was trying to help **Henry into bed, Henry fell on top of him, crushing him flat.**

FRANCIS (*gulps*) It seems the groom of the stool is a slightly cursed position.

ANTHONY Fortunes change. Times change. I mean look at me, I'm the picture of prosperity, do I look cursed to you?

FRANCIS I guess not.

ANTHONY Precisely, so less worrying about what's happened in the past and more focusing on the task at hand.

FRANCIS Wiping the King's arse...

ANTHONY That's the one.

FRANCIS Seems a simple enough task. I've wiped my own a million times, I'm sure I can wipe his, even if it is slightly disgusting, how hard can it be?!

ANTHONY Simple?! My dear boy, it's not just a case of closing your eyes and hoping for the best. Wiping the arse of the King goes back many years! Why, it's a fine art! A highly skilled profession, some would say!

FRANCIS You're joking, right?!

ANTHONY Joking?! I don't JOKE. JOKING is for morons.. and poor people.

FRANCIS Ok, I'm sorry!

ANTHONY If you truly want to become a groom of the stool, then you need to learn our ways. The tricks of the trade. Luckily for you, I am here to teach you. Oh Isabel, Cecily?!

*(Two serving girls run in and stand either side of ANTHONY)*

ANTHONY Hey girls?

GIRLS Yes, Sir Denny?

ANTHONY What say we take this kid to stool school.

GIRLS *(enthusiastically)* Yes, Sir!

## **Song: Ass Wiping 101**

### **Scene 4c**

ANTHONY Thank you, girls.

GIRLS Thank YOU, Sir Denny.

*(The GIRLS leave)*

FRANCIS I'm nervous, I don't know if I can do this.

ANTHONY Of course you can! Just do what I've told you and you'll be fine.

FRANCIS Alright....but what if/

*(We hear people entering)*

ANTHONY Fuck, he's coming, alright, you're on your own. Good luck!

FRANCIS WHAT?! You can't leave!

ANTHONY I must, only one groom is allowed in the room at once.

FRANCIS Why?

ANTHONY Because those are the rules, oh, I almost forgot, the King will think you're me.... Don't tell him otherwise.

FRANCIS But, don't you think he'll clearly see an ever so slight difference in our appearance.

ANTHONY Ah, I think I can see what you mean...But hey, it's not your fault you're fugly. But don't worry, these days the King's as good as blind.

FRANCIS That's not what I/

ANTHONY No time to chat, I'll explain everything later.

FRANCIS BUT/

ANTHONY Tata!

*(Anthony flees the scene, as he does HENRY arrives wheeled in by JONTY, HENRY is holding his stomach and groaning)*

JONTY                    Quick, lift the seat?

FRANCIS                Huh?

HENRY                    LIFT THE FUCKING SEAT!  
*(FRANCIS lifts the seat)*

JONTY                    Help me get him up!

*(they tip HENRY on to his feet facing the toilet)*

JONTY                    Quickly, open his hind patch

FRANCIS                His what?!

JONTY                    Hold on, who are you?!

HENRY                    IT'S COMING!

*(Jonty opens a flap of material on the back on HENRY's trousers that reveals a portion of his bottom. HENRY turns around and sits on the toilet)*

HENRY                    Jonty, leave us!

JONTY                    But your Majesty, this man is/

HENRY                    I don't want you to see me like this. LEAVE US.

*(with one last suspicious scowl at FRANCIS, JONTY leaves. Once he's sure Jonty has gone HENRY lets loose with loud sounding diarrhoea)*

HENRY                    Oh sweet god.

*(The shitting lasts an uncomfortable amount of time with HENRY hitting lots of positions whilst he strains and FRANCIS looking more and more horrified as the session goes on)*

HENRY                      Denny, use those magic hands of yours on my back. Help me birth this bloody thing.

*(Horrified, FRANCIS lifts his shaking hands and starts massaging HENRY'S shoulders)*

FRANCIS                    Like this, your Majesty?

HENRY                      Yes, but harder, put more, oh yes, that's it, just like that, now go lower, lower, lower, lower, that's it, it's coming, OHHHHHH YEA.

*(Loud pooing noises are heard like Henry just dropped the biggest turd in history, FRANCIS jumps back absolutely horrified. Both HENRY and FRANCIS are breathing heavily like they've just been intimate with each other)*

HENRY                      Denny, have you been practising those massages? That was amazing, I NEVER usually finish that quickly.

FRANCIS                    I guess I'm just a natural.

HENRY                      You know, if we wait around a few minutes, I might be able to go another round. On second thought, I have the most delicious cake waiting for me in the other room. It's just two pieces of sponge, cream and jam. I call it a Henry sponge cake.

FRANCIS                    Sounds (tries to keep down a heave) delicious.

HENRY                      Oh, it is! I shouldn't really be having all that cream, the dairy gives me the most awful stomach cramps. But, with you here, I know I'm in safe hands. Buckle in for a long night Denny, I think I'll be visiting you A LOT.

FRANCIS                    Yay me.

HENRY                      Right, I think the first 'turdal wave' has ended. *(He leans forward)* You may wipe.

FRANCIS            What?

HENRY             Don't dilly dally, come on man, get in there. Oh, and Denny?  
Don't be gentle.

FRANCIS           Well, here goes nothing.

*(Francis gulps then as his hand slowly moves towards HENRY to wipe, the lights go down)*