

## 28 Plays Later – Challenge # 6

### **#stillnotequal**

Today is in celebration of the 100th year anniversary of Women first being given the vote in the UK. However, we're also going to acknowledge that women didn't actually get equal voting rights to men until 1928, so today's prompt is: 'Still Not Equal.'

And to reflect modern times, I'd love you to write it in the style of a farce, if you like (or whatever you conceive to be farce in these days)!

## An Exercise in Futility

By

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ACT ONE – Scene 1

TIME: Last Week

PLACE: A DMV office in Texas

There is a row of cubicles with open sides and a yellow line on the floor about three feet in front of them. MARCI is at the desk of the outer-most cubical. KAREN is part of a group of people off to the side waiting for their turn. MARCI is young – early 20s – with vibrant purple hair. KAREN is older – mid-40s.

LOUDSPEAKER (off stage): Now serving number C-Sixteen thousand, nine hundred, thirty-five at station number eight. (beat) Ahora sirviendo numero dieciseis mil novecientas treinta y cinco en la estacion numero ocho.

KAREN (waving a slip of paper, like a deli ticket): That's me! (Heads toward MARCI's cubical)

MARCI (bubbly): Welcome to the DMV. I'm Marci-with-an-I. Have a seat. How can I help you today?

(Karen sits down in one of the two chairs facing MARCI; she drops her tote bag onto the seat next to her.)

KAREN: My ID is extremely expired. I need to renew it.

MARCI: How extreme is extremely?

KAREN: Oh... um... August.

MARCI (pointing to a calendar tacked to the side of the cubical): Oh, that's not extreme. We can still do a normal renewal within a year. If it was *really* extreme, we'd have to start from scratch. (Types into a computer). So, what I need from you is the renewal application, your current ID card – it is just ID? – and your social security card.

KAREN: Well, I did the application online (hands it over), and of course I have my old ID (hands that over, too) but I managed to lose my social security card somewhere inside my house, but your website said I could bring my W-2, so I did that, and...

MARCI: That's fine. We just need to verify your social security number. (She spends several seconds typing into her computer.) You don't drive?

KAREN: No, like I said, it's just ID. I have... I have issues with depth perception, and tracking moving obj –

MARCI (cutting her off): Oh, that's fine, I'm just confirming. You don't have to do an eye-test since this is just ID.

KAREN: Well, yes, I knew that.

MARCI (pushing a device across the desk): Okay, I need you to put your thumbs on here so we can scan your thumb-prints.

*KAREN follows MARCI's instructions. Overhead, we see on a monitor that the left thumbprint is accepted immediately, and the right one takes longer.*

MARCI: Can you press harder with your right thumb? (beat, as that print is also accepted) Great! Thanks! (Goes back to typing)

KAREN (filling the space): By the way, I love your hair.

MARCI (absently): Thanks.

KAREN: I mean, I've tried to dye my own hair purple *so* many times, but something about that color doesn't work on me. It just slides right out of my hair.

MARCI: Oh... sorry. It's a fun color.

KAREN: Yes, it is.

MARCI: Okay, now I need the proof of your social security.

KAREN (hands over W-2): Here. Your website said, this was fine.

MARCI: Oh, yeah, it should be. (Types in a number, wrinkles her nose at the computer, types it in again). Huh. That's weird.

KAREN (confused): What's weird?

MARCI: Let me try one more time... nope.

KAREN (worried); Nope? Nope what?

MARCI: I can't get a match on the computer.

KAREN: But that's my social. It's the same number I've had since I was five. I had to have it to get a passport. (Fishes through her bag) See, I have a US passport.

MARCI: I'm sorry, I need to be able to match it. Do you have your card with you?

KAREN (frustrated): No, I can't find it. I work from home, and haven't had to show it to anyone for *years*.

MARCI: Well, do you have any other names.

KAREN (sarcastically): Yes, yes I do. I'm an international spy and have seventeen identities. (beat) No, well... sort of.

MARCI: Sort of?

KAREN: Well, I never bothered to change my name with social security. When I got married. You know? But, I have my birth certificate and marriage license showing that I'm me. You have a paper trail. (Shows MARCI several more documents.)

MARCI: How long have you been married?

KAREN: Twenty-three years.

MARCI: Well, you had ample time to make that change.

KAREN: It's never been required before.

MARCI: I'm sorry. I can't go any further. (Hands Karen's stuff back to her) You'll have to go to the social security office and get that changed – you don't actually need the new card, just have them change it in the system and then come back.

KAREN (annoyed): Do you have a supervisor. I have enough documentation here to get a *passport*, including my *actual passport*. Just because your computer can't do a match doesn't mean I don't exist.

MARCI: I'm sorry, our supervisors can't override anything. It's just the way the system works now.

KAREN (too tired to push it). Fine. But know that I'll be complaining to the Department of Public Safety. It says nothing on the website about name matching.

MARCI: Well, most people don't have to...

KAREN: Most people?

MARCI (sheepish): Well, men.

KAREN (getting up) This is absurd. Thank you for *nothing*. I feel like you've just told me I don't exist.

MARCI: You kind of... don't.

KAREN: But I have a passport, and a birth certificate, and ten years of tax returns, and my marriage license, and my lanyard from ComicCon with my VIP ID and...

MARCI (cutting her off): I'm sorry, you'll have to leave now.

KAREN: But...

MARCI: If you don't leave now, I'll have to call security.

KAREN gathers her belongings and walks out through the double doors at stage left. Or rather, she heads that way. Half way there, she disappears (a trap door in the stage floor) leaving nothing but her bag and her stack of documentation.

JANITOR (approaching pile, shaking head): We lost another one today. Stupid system. (bends over to retrieve the tote bag). Nice bag though.

LOUDSPEAKER (off stage): Now serving number C-Sixteen thousand, nine hundred, thirty-six at station number eight. (beat) Ahora sirviendo numero dieciseis mil novecientas treinta y seis en la estacion numero ocho.

BLACKOUT