

DANCING PANDAS

(Note – The names and gender of each character is left up to the actors to choose. Actors may make up their own names and are encouraged to translate the scene into the language that is most comfortable for them. Translations should try to follow the same lines but some flexibility is permitted.)

A – Are you ready?

B – Just a second.

A – Where are your bags?

B – Do you have that emoji of the two pandas dancing? You know the one I'm talking about.

A – ____, where are your bags? Our train leaves in less than an hour.

B – I can't go. I really need the dancing pandas for this message.

A – I hate it when you do this to me. Are they shooting another season of your web series or is this a new project?

B – New project. Another web series.

A – Let me guess. This one has something to do with dancing pandas.

B – How'd you guess? Two guys get transformed into pandas and travel back in time to the Ming dynasty then fall in love with the same princess.

A – Sounds fascinating.

B – It's hilarious.

A – I'll have to find someone to play your part in my show. Any suggestions?

B – Just cut my part. No one will notice.

A – I'll notice. I wrote that part for you. No one else can play it like you.

B – You're sweet. But really, only about 10 people are going to show up to watch it so you don't need to worry about replacing me.

A – There will be more than 10 people.

B – The theater only seats 15.

A – It has 99 seats. And they have a very dedicated, sophisticated audience who will appreciate a play with substance like mine.

B – I'm sure everyone will cry and then retire to the nearby coffee house for a long discussion on the dramatic significance of a blind woman picking imaginary flowers.

A – Well, that will be about the only thing they will be able to discuss if there is no one there to play the male lead like you promised me you would do.

B – Do you really expect me to turn down a web series to perform in a play that no one will see. This is my career we're talking about.

A – Dancing pandas?

B – That's right. Dancing pandas watched by 25 million people.

A – And then what?

B – And then maybe it will be my big break.

A – Your big break. What? So you'll get cast in some super-hero big budget special effects movies playing some smart-aleck guy who can, what, take your pick - run super fast, fly through the air, turn invisible and walk through walls, pick up and throw really heavy things around, on and on. Is that why you became an actor?

B – And why did you become a director? So you can spend your life in some cellar theater helping 10 pseudo-intellectuals find the deeper meaning of life?

A – At least I won't be responsible for promoting the decline of the entire human species.

B – It's harmless entertainment. Something that actors have been providing for thousands of years, since people first gathered around the campfire at the end of another long day of struggling to survive on this hostile planet and some silly guy like me got up and said, hey, I have a story to tell you that will take your mind off this miserable life we are living. That's what actors do. That's what we do. We tell stories to take people's minds off this miserable life we are all living.

A – I think that maybe we aren't just apes that walk on two legs, that we now have brains and a soul, that we had progressed a little in the last few thousand years.

B – Not really. I haven't at least.

A – I guess not.

B – No, I guess not.

A – How did you and I ever work together?

B – I was beginning to wonder the same thing.

A – Now that I think about it, you're not right for that part in my play.

B – No, I never had much feeling for it. _____ would be a better choice.

A – That's a good suggestion. _____ has a lot more depth.

B – _____ has always been able to cry on cue.

A – Yes, you never could do that, could you?

B – No, watching a blind girl picking imaginary flowers. No tears for me.

A – I should go. I don't want to miss the train. If I find the dancing pandas emoji, I'll send it to you.

B – Thanks.

A – I guess this is goodbye.

B – I guess so. I still think you are the most brilliant person I have ever met.

A – And I still think you are the only person who could ever make me smile.

B – Yeah. It was the only way I could get you to leave the theater.

A – What?

B – Whenever we finished rehearsal, you would always talk for hours. It was like your mind wouldn't shut down. And I would be so tired but I didn't want to leave because I knew you needed the company. I didn't want to leave you alone. And then I discovered that if I could make you smile or laugh, you would finally relax. Sometimes you even fell asleep, right there in the theater, on the couch onstage.

A – I remember that. You made me feel safe.

B – In my arms asleep.

A – Yes, your heart beat. That helped me. Thank you for that. I'm going now.

B – I know.

A – This is harder than I thought.

B – Dancing pandas.

A – What?

B – Just think of dancing pandas and it will be a lot easier to leave.

A – You're right.