

WALK, DON'T WALK

A short play

by

Matthew Konkel

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JOHN – 30s, lower-middle class.

STEVE – 30s, business executive.

TIME: Present day. Early spring. Morning.

PLACE: A currently inactive street corner in a Midwestern city.

(At rise John stands patiently on the corner. Distant street sounds. John gives a look down the street to oncoming traffic then goes back to waiting.)

(After a moment Steve enters. He's in a casual hurry. He carries a newspaper in one hand and a valise at his side. He reads the front page of the paper. When he gets to the corner, he stops, looks across the street and then looks both ways for any oncoming cars.)

(John speaks just as Steve looks in the second direction.)

JOHN

Excuse me. Would you mind terribly if I were to look at your employment section?

STEVE

Hm? Oh. Not at all. Here you go.

JOHN

Thank you.

STEVE

You can keep it.

JOHN

Thank you.

STEVE

You bet. It's a tough game.

JOHN

What?

STEVE

I said that's a tough game.

JOHN

What is?

STEVE

Looking for a job.

JOHN

Looking for a job is not a game. It's very serious. It's not something to be treated as a frivolous pastime.

STEVE

No. It's not. You're right. Good luck. (*looks both ways*) Have a good day.

JOHN

Don't walk.

STEVE

Hm?

JOHN

Don't walk.

STEVE

What do you mean?

JOHN

I mean don't walk. You can't cross now.

STEVE

Well, there's no cars so—

JOHN

Red light. Don't walk signal. That means: Don't walk.

STEVE

But, there's no cars coming.

JOHN

There aren't any cars coming.

STEVE

Right.

JOHN

You said: there's no cars. 'There's' is a contraction of 'there is'. 'No' is singular. You meant: there aren't any cars coming.

STEVE

Yes. Right, okay, that's what— There aren't any cars coming, so I'm crossing the street now.

JOHN

You never know.

Never know what?

STEVE

Some car could come barreling around that corner and race through the intersection.

JOHN

I guess, yeah. Sooo, I'll run.

STEVE

(Steve starts to go.)

Soooo, don't do it.

JOHN

Why not?

STEVE

You'll get in trouble.

JOHN

What? In trouble?

STEVE

Yes.

JOHN

What, you mean—? There's cam— There are cameras around or something?

STEVE

No. Not here.

JOHN

(disappointed)

Then why—

STEVE

The sign indicates don't walk. That means: Don't walk.

JOHN

Oh, come on. You're not serious.

STEVE

Yes. I am.

JOHN

STEVE

But, there's— there aren't any cars coming. Not from any direction. Why should I wait here?

JOHN

Because the sign says don't walk.

STEVE

Just because there's a sign doesn't mean— Okay, there. The signal has changed to walk. May I go now, your majesty?

JOHN

Of course.

STEVE

Thank you.

JOHN

You're welcome. But I'm not your king.

STEVE

What?

JOHN

You called me your majesty. But I'm not a king. We don't live in a monarchy.

STEVE

Of course we don't, I was just—

JOHN

No.

STEVE

Enjoy your day and good luck on the— Never mind. Have a good day.

JOHN

I'll try.

STEVE

Here.

(Steve offers John a business card.)

STEVE

If you're looking for work you might try my offices. Talk to my people. Mention my name and they'll let you know if there's any openings. I'm not sure how desperate you are.

Desperate? JOHN

Yeah. STEVE

You think I'm desperate? JOHN

Well, I don't know, I— STEVE

That takes a lot of nerve. JOHN

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to imply— I'm just trying to help. STEVE

You're right. I'm sorry. JOHN

S'okay. STEVE

Thanks. I'll give them a call. Thanks. JOHN

No problem. STEVE

(Steve turns to cross and sees that the light has changed again. He looks back at John. Satisfied that John is not looking, Steve tries to sneak across.)

Don't walk. JOHN

And why not? STEVE

Because the sign says don't walk. JOHN

Don't walk, yeah. STEVE

So, don't walk. JOHN

Look, I gotta get to a meeting. STEVE

A meeting. JOHN

Yeah. STEVE

(anticipating) JOHN
A very important meeting.

Yeah. So, I'm gonna cross, okay? STEVE

How much difference is it going to make? JOHN

What? STEVE

JOHN
How much difference is it going to make for you to wait less than a minute and cross with the light rather than against it?

Potentially a great difference. STEVE

Why? JOHN

STEVE
Because. Because there's some very important clients that— I don't have time to explain why. I just have to get to my meeting.

JOHN
You had an opportunity to cross with the light.

STEVE
I was talking to you, trying to
help you—

JOHN
You can cross this way.

STEVE
You're like some urban troll
under the bridge.

JOHN
So now you think that makes
it okay for you to—?

STEVE
I can't cross that way, it—

JOHN
It's like you want to break
the law.

STEVE
Obviously these lights need some
adjustment in their timing.

JOHN
I don't know what to tell you

STEVE
I'm just trying to—

JOHN
That's not for you to decide.

I have to cross the street.

STEVE

JOHN
That's fine. But don't cross on a don't walk signal.

STEVE
And what if I do? Huh? What if I do cross? What'll happen? Will you tackle me?

JOHN
No. Tackling you would be assault. That would make me just as guilty as you for crossing
against the light. I wouldn't do that.

STEVE
So? What will you do? How are you going to prevent me from crossing the street?

JOHN
I'll call nine one one and report you.

(Beat.)

STEVE
Nine one one.

STEVE

JOHN
Hmm-hm.

JOHN