

The image features a central text block surrounded by elaborate, symmetrical decorative flourishes in a dark brown color. These flourishes include large, sweeping scrolls and smaller, intricate swirls that frame the text. The background is a solid, muted teal color.

# THE RULES OF THEATRE

important things you need to know  
and use in the drama classroom for  
effective performances

# 1. NO BACK TO AUDIENCE

Any guesses why this would be a rule of theatre?

It's the first rule because it's a really *really* important one!



# 1. NO BACK TO AUDIENCE

What is the actor with her back to the audience feeling?  
What's one emotion she's trying to convey?  
What is this scene about?





# 1. NO BACK TO AUDIENCE

By completely closing yourself off to the audience, **they can't see...**

- your facial expressions
- your body expressions
- your re-actions

...all the key things for a performance

The actor in the suit is in **full frontal position**. This is the opposite of “no back to audience”



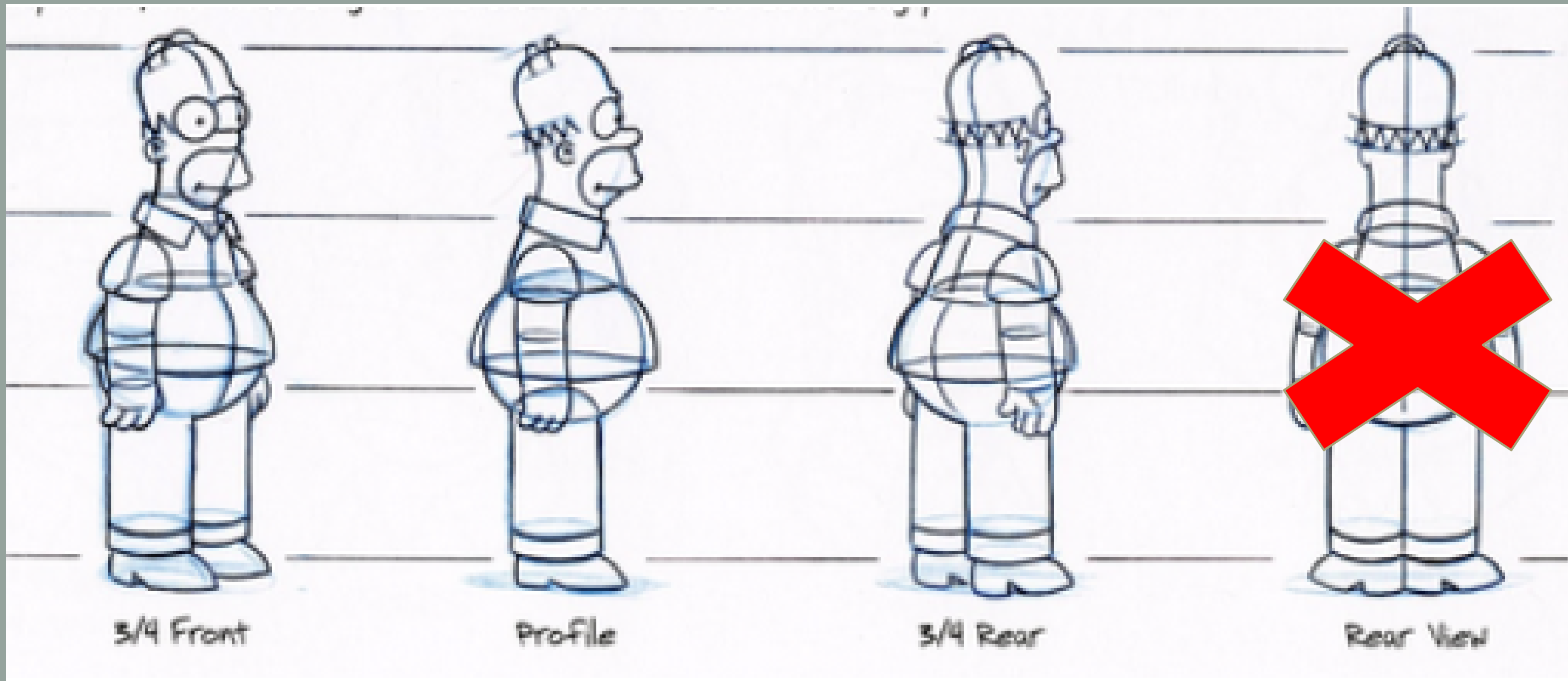
# 1. NO BACK TO AUDIENCE

There will be times when you break this rule when blocking (ex. you won't just awkwardly walk upstage backwards to prevent it), but it's just a general rule to become aware of.

For this scene, by the actors having their back to the audience, what is now emphasized?  
...so the rule *can* be broken for dramatic effect.

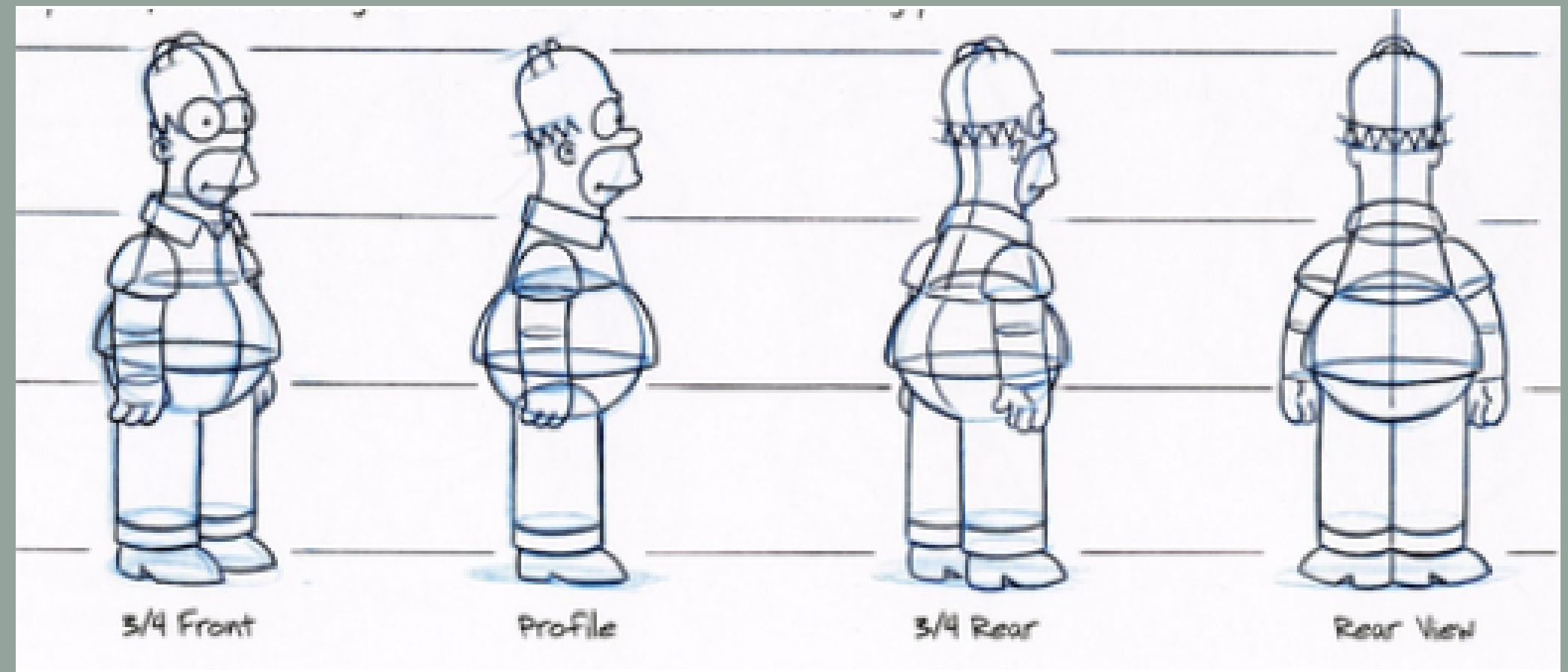


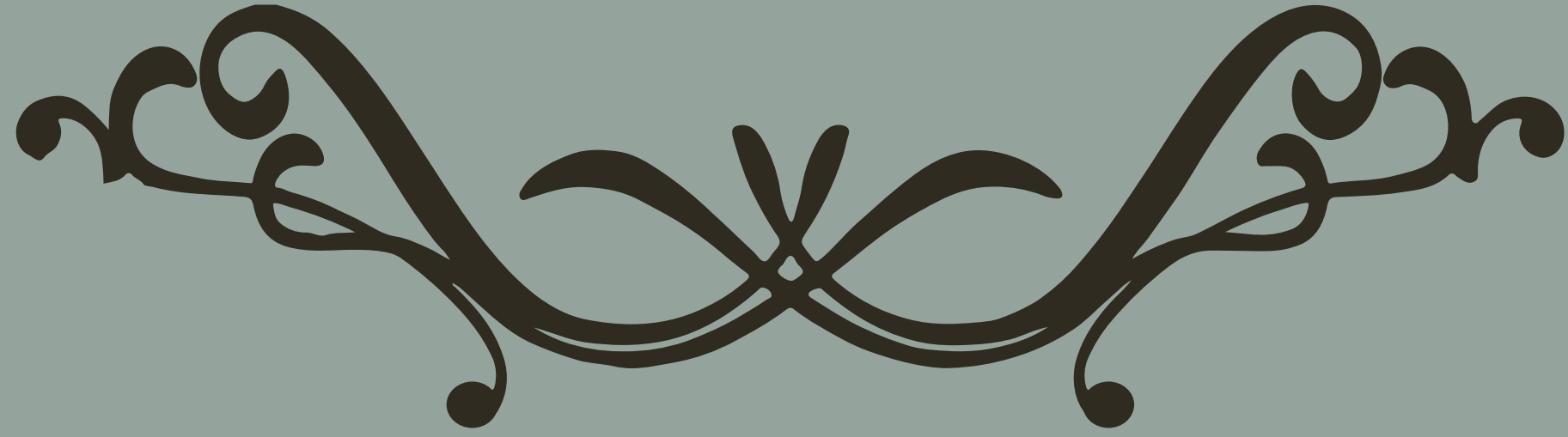
# 1. NO BACK TO AUDIENCE



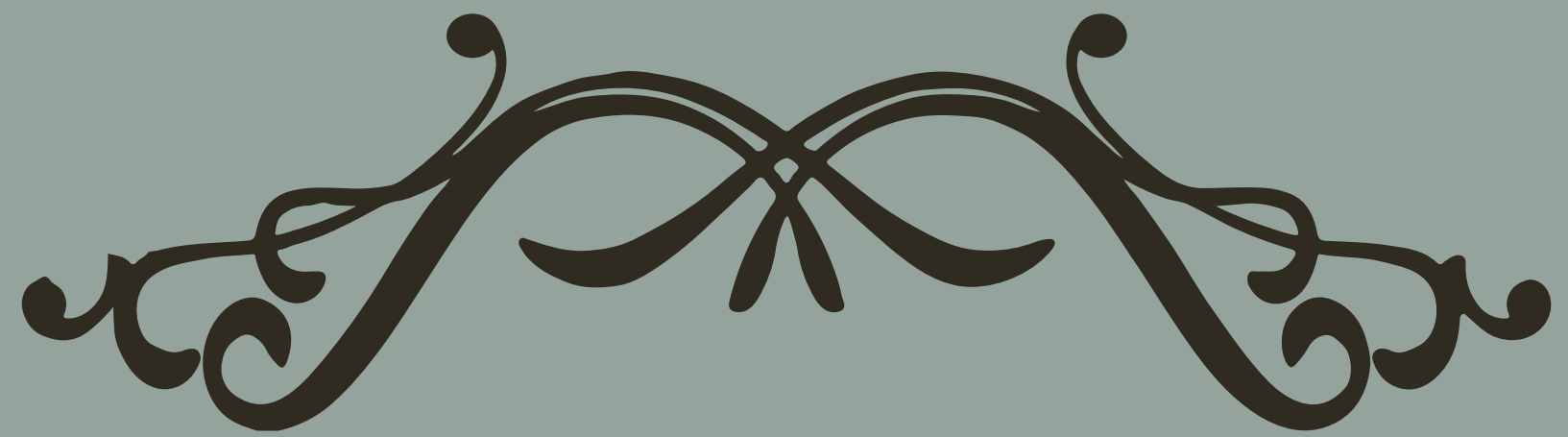


Which one of these would be the **best** position on stage besides full frontal? Why?





RULE #2  
CHEAT





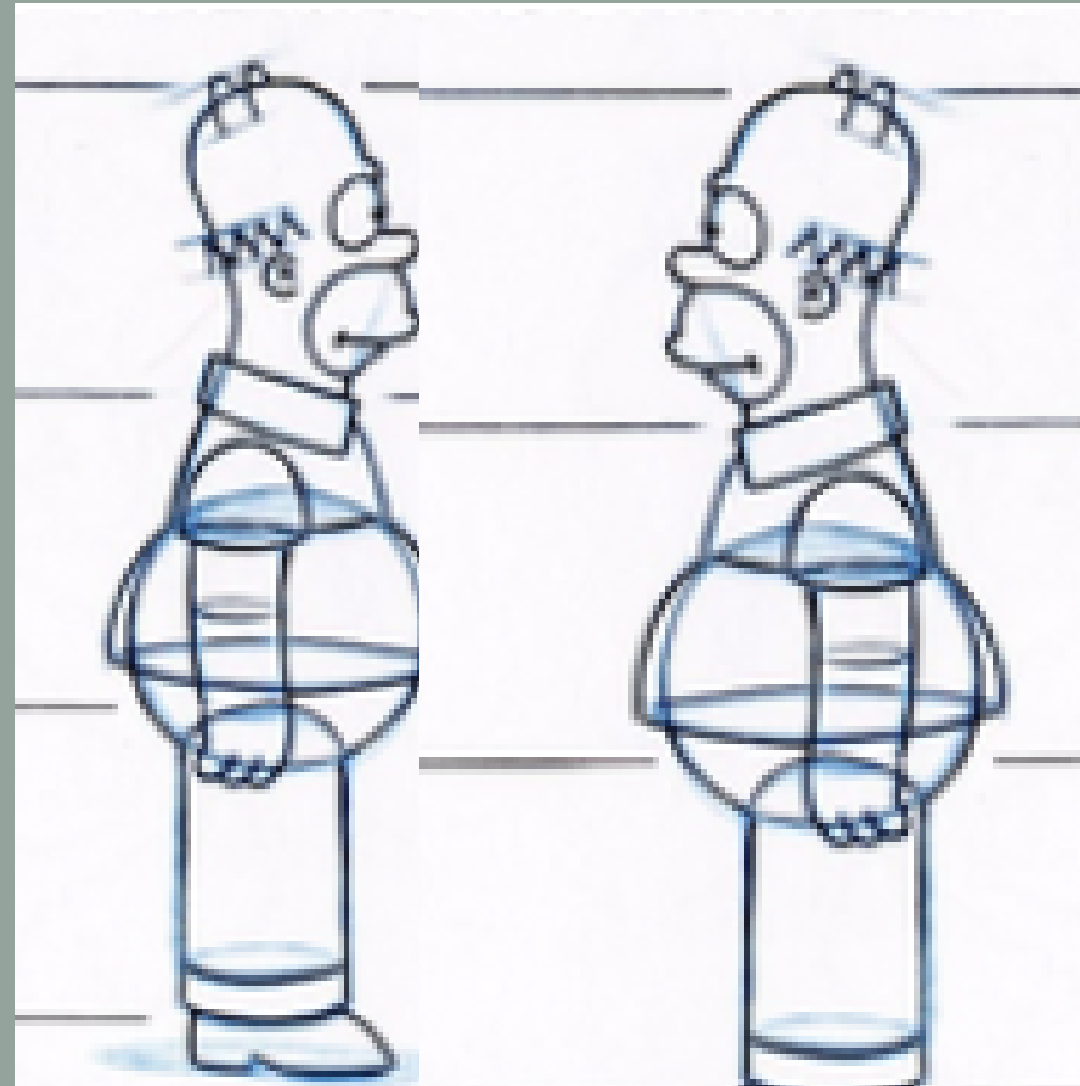
# 2. CHEAT

=Keep body open  
to the audience  
=Use  $\frac{3}{4}$  frontal  
body stance



# 2. CHEAT

Normally when you talk to someone in real life, you face each other directly. With acting, this will put you in “profile” position which closes off half your body. So you must cheat your body and stay open.



These actors are cheating and using  $\frac{3}{4}$  frontal so we can see them



# 2. CHEAT

This goes for set pieces too. Keep things angled to keep them/the actors using them open to the audience.

What parts of this set are cheated?





# 2. CHEAT

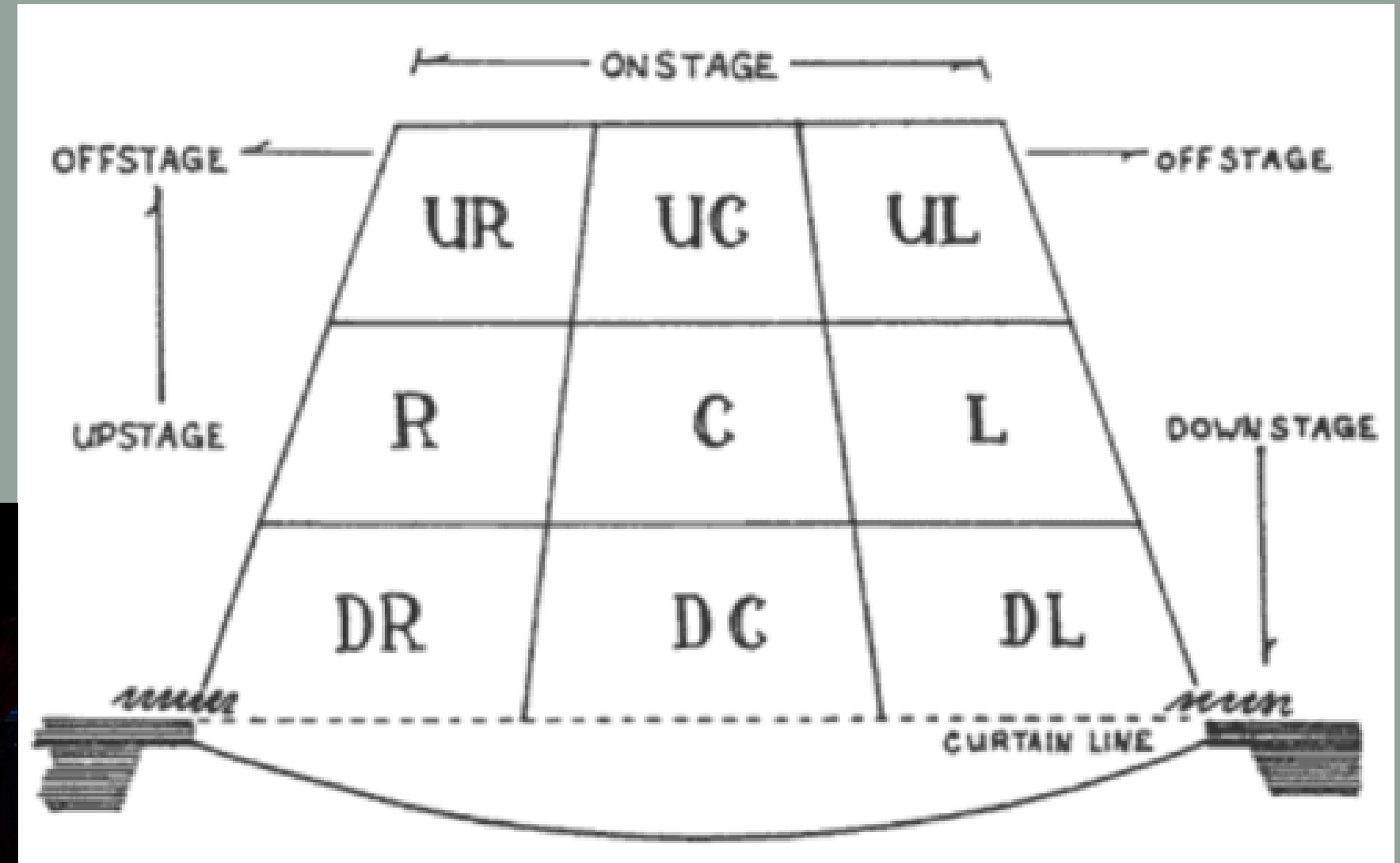
Pay attention to this in TV shows! Actors **cheat to the camera** all the time. In reality TV shows, actors will sit only on one side of the table to avoid back to audience/closing off

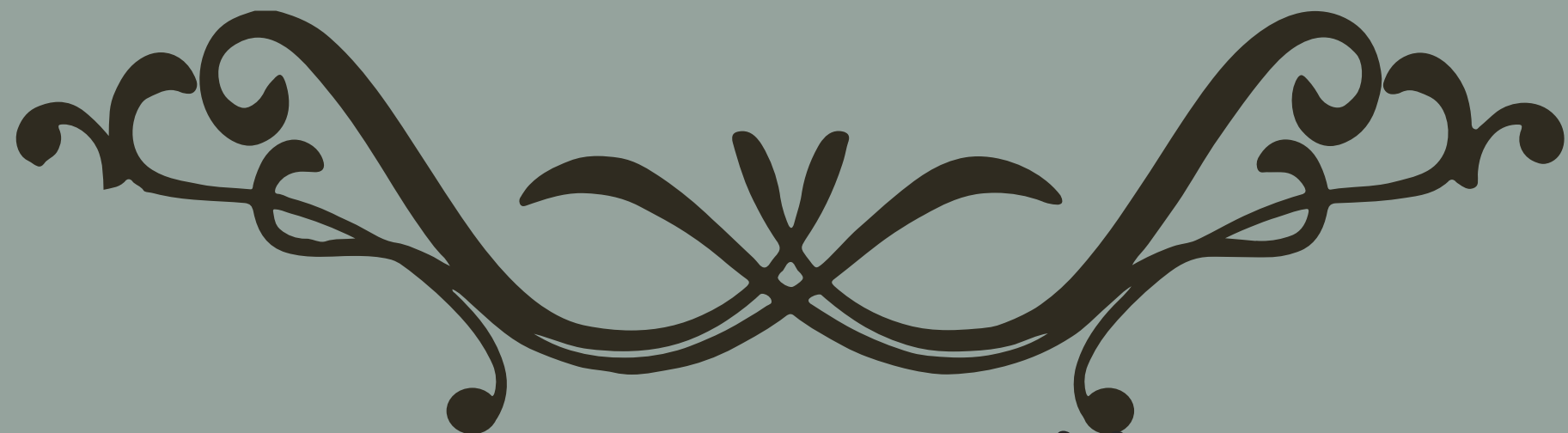




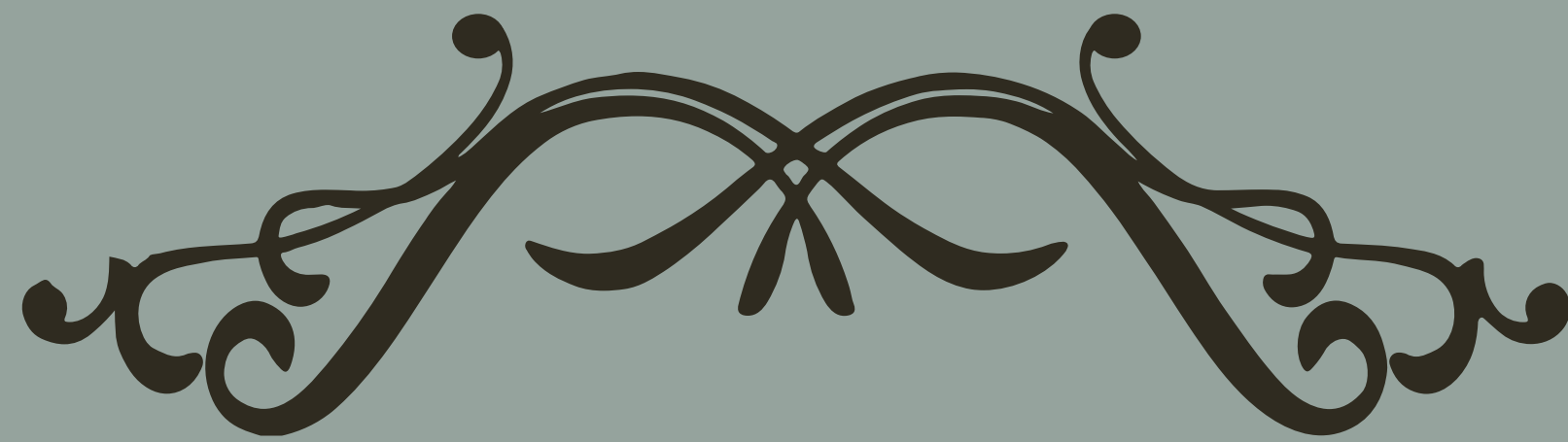
# 2. CHEAT

Always pay attention to the audience's vantage point no matter where you are on stage and STAY OPEN





RULE #3  
USE STAGE  
HANDS &  
STAGE FEET





# 3. USE STAGE HANDS/FEET

This relates to cheating because it also is a technique for staying open to the audience



# 3. USE STAGE HANDS/FEET

Let's say this actor is going to pick up the water bottle on the stool in this scene.

1. Which **hand** should he use?
2. Which **leg** should he use to step closer?



# 3. USE STAGE HANDS/FEET

ANSWER:

**His left hand**

**His left leg**

If he uses his right hand or foot ,  
he will close himself off to the  
audience and be  $\frac{3}{4}$  BACK.

Just try it. Place an object on a  
table/chair on stage and practice  
grabbing it. See what keeps you open to  
the audience.





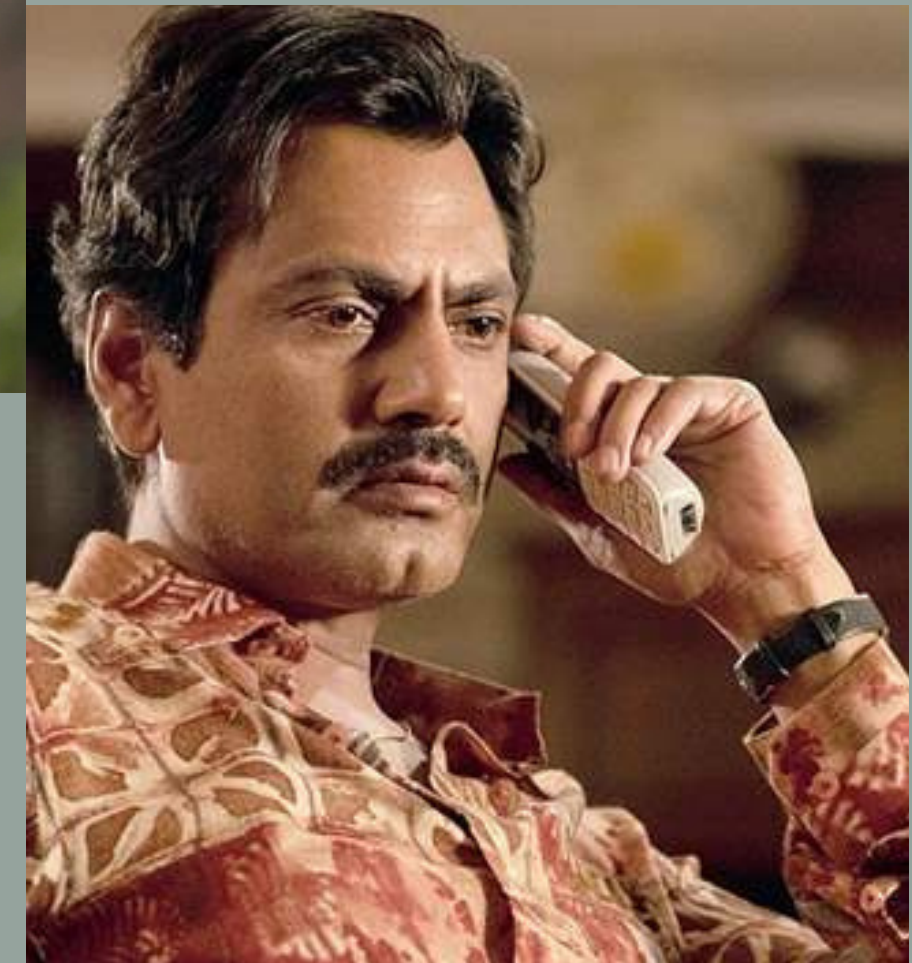
# 3. USE STAGE HANDS/FEET


It takes practice and once again, is a rule that *can be broken* for the sake of blocking, but it helps to think about using STAGE HANDS and STAGE FEET to cheat at all times



# 3. USE STAGE HANDS/FEET

Again, pay attention to this in TV shows! Actors will always try to use stage hands and stage feet where it works.



A decorative border of dark brown scrollwork surrounds the text. It features symmetrical flourishes at the top and bottom, and elegant, curved scrolls on the left and right sides.

RULE #4  
DON'T BREAK  
THE FOURTH  
WALL

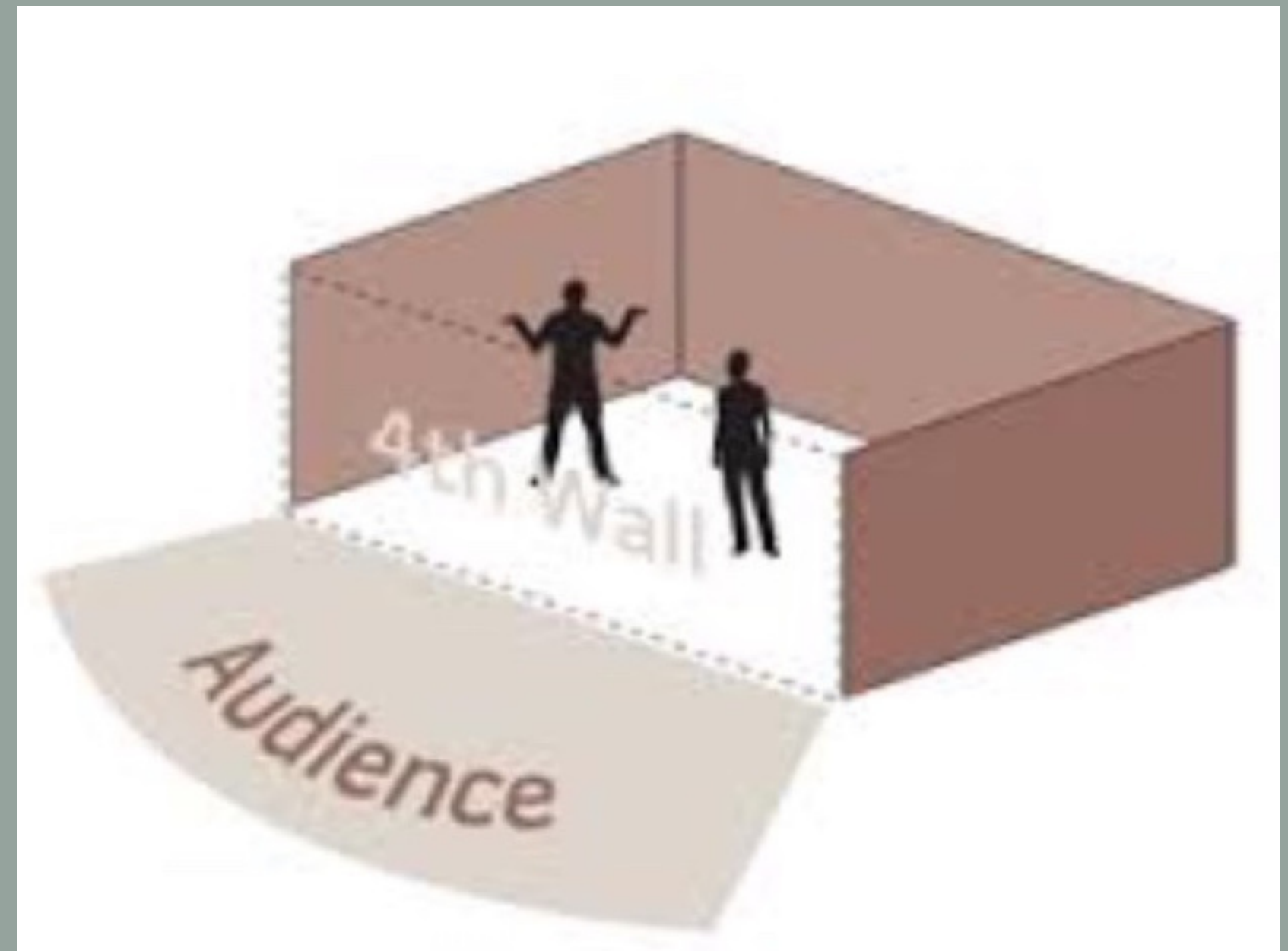


# 4. DON'T BREAK THE 4TH WALL

The 4<sup>th</sup> wall is an imaginary barrier between the audience and the actors.

The audience doesn't exist to the actors.

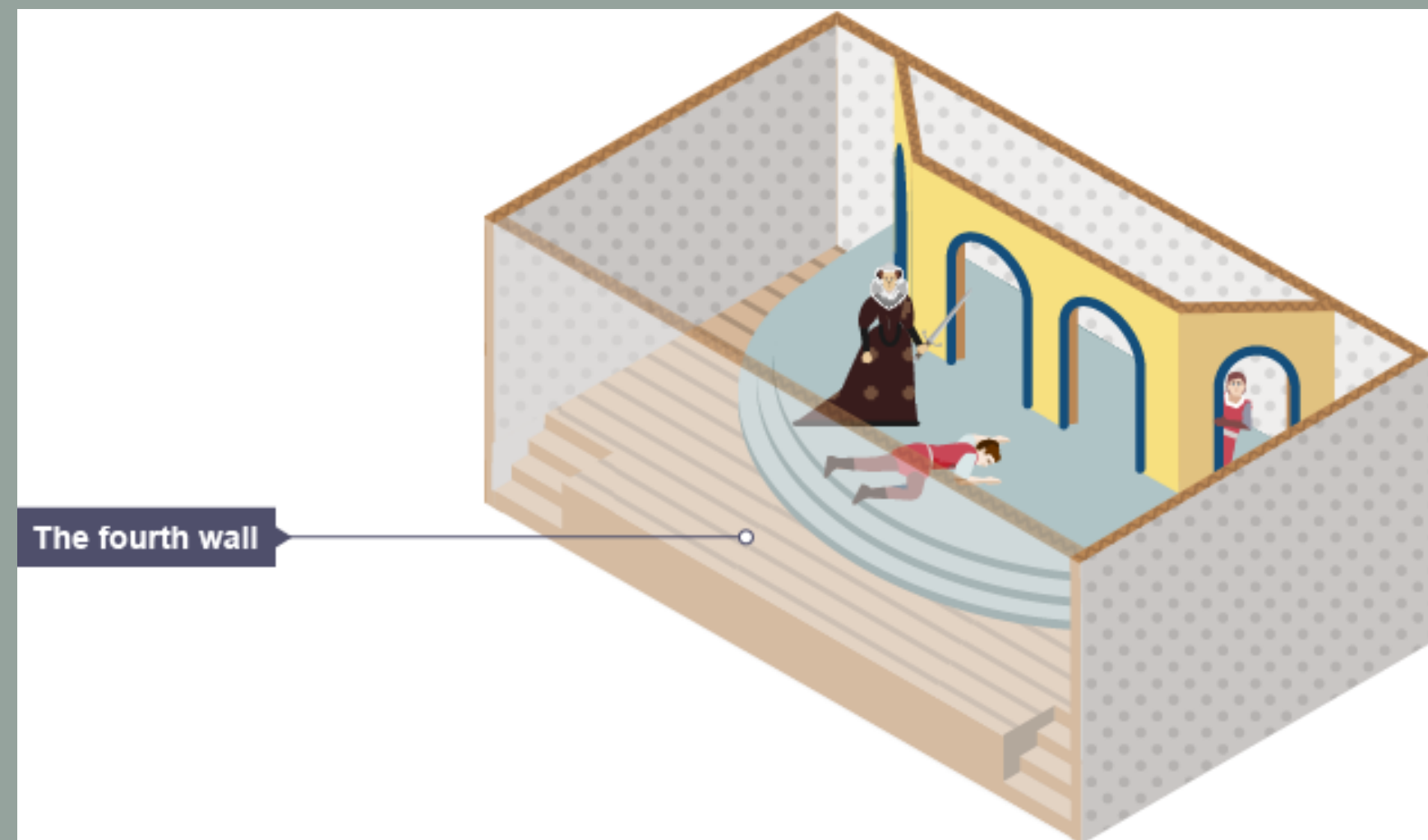
So what are some ways that an actor could break the 4<sup>th</sup> wall?



# 4. DON'T BREAK THE 4TH WALL

Looking directly at the audience or **talking** directly to the audience are both examples of breaking the 4<sup>th</sup> wall.

Essentially you're *breaking the illusion* and bringing the audience into the performance. **DO NOT DO THIS!**



# 4. DON'T BREAK THE 4TH WALL



...but (yet again) t's a rule that can be broken for comedic effect or for dramatic purposes if the scene fits it

\*In TV shows and movies, breaking the 4<sup>th</sup> wall means looking directly into the camera.







Those are the 4 main  
rules of theatre:

1. No back to audience
2. Cheat
3. Stage hands/stage feet
4. Don't break the 4<sup>th</sup> wall

A decorative border made of dark brown scrollwork and floral motifs, framing the central text. The border consists of four main sections: a top and bottom section with symmetrical floral designs, and two side sections with vertical scrollwork.

Some other rules  
to consider

# DON'T CHEW GUM

## DON'T CHEW GUM DURING A PERFORMANCE

(or before, since it can negatively impact your articulation, which in a performance is *everything*)





# MUSIC + SOUND CUES BEFORE THE LIGHTS GO ON

-CUE MUSIC

-CUE SOUND

(this sets the scene before the audience  
even sees anything)

-THEN CUE LIGHTS



# BOW AT THE END OF A PERFORMANCE

This shows gratitude to your audience and also lets them know that the performance is indeed over so they're not left hanging




# CAN ALSO SAY “SCENE” WHEN A SCENE IS FINISHED

Again, this gives the audience a sense that the performance is over





And perhaps the most  
repeated words during any  
rehearsal



QUIET

BACKSTAGE