Dear casting director,

I may not see, but I feel the disqualification in the look on your face when I come into the audition. Perhaps you will sprout some platitudes about how inspiring I am, how amazing I must be, and how brave, for pursuing a career in the performing arts. But if you are truly the innovative, outside-the-box director you claim to be, you will consider the following before throwing my resume in the discard pile.

My blindness is a characteristic that I possess, which gives me a number of advantages in this career field. You see disadvantages, but your sight is short and narrow. By dismissing me without a second glance, you dismiss a segment of the population who have an untapped potential and an unforeseen depth to bring to characters from unique life experiences.

Let’s begin with the most obvious, shall we. Unlike you, I am not light dependent. The dark does not stop me, scare me, or slow me down. In fact, one might say that I perform best in the dark. I am used to lighting changes either because they do not phase me or because I have been forced to deal with them as a part of my blindness. My other senses guide me along the stage. I make myself familiar with what’s on the stage by touch, sound, and my memory. I can literally map the stage with my eyes closed, and that’s after a mere few hours of experience on any particular stage.

Are you looking for a cast member who memorizes quickly? Since I read Braille, I find myself memorizing more quickly than a print reader, since it is cumbersome to bring a giant Braille script or score on stage. My body must be free to move, and I want to focus on the blocking and take a recording to remind me of it later on my own time. Speaking of movement, you may be apprehensive about showing me how I should move on stage, or you may presume that my knowledge of gesture is quite limited. On the contrary, I have developed a repertoire of gesture based on the natural movement of my body, responding to my emotions. Yes, my gestures are unique. When you hire me, you did not sign on a mechanical doll or puppet. Mold my natural gestures, and fine-tune my movements to suit the production. The blending of my talent and charm and your larger ideas of the work will undoubtedly lead to something beautiful.

Because of my blindness, I have grown into a highly creative person. You may not find someone with more expertise as a problem solver or creative thinker. Since we live in a visual world, I have learned through adapting activities, finding other methods for completing work, and inserting myself into groups in which no other member has a task for me. I excel in teams and often work with others to get tasks done, such as reading the mail or managing transportation. Likewise, I bring this creativity to the interpretation of my characters, and interact with the cast as a leader and innovative thinker.

I shall end this letter by thanking you for considering my words. You may not hire me; perhaps my words, though seen, remain unheard. But I promise you that I do not plan to sit quietly in the audience while others take the stage. I plan to be up there myself, acting, singing, portraying characters, and entertaining my own audiences. If you choose not to avail yourself of my distinct talents, I assure you that someone else will.

Sincerely,

The auditioner, who happens to be blind