

## ACT I

## Scene 1

*(All Act I action (except Scenes 8 and 9) takes place backstage in a typical community theatre. The centre part is clearly backstage. When the curtain rises, there is a small props table upstage centre left in the backstage area. Before KATHERINE and JANE enter, real stage crew are seen placing the following things on it: wine jug, goblets, rolled up documents, and candles. Real stage crew can also walk across the stage carrying things meant for somewhere else, to provide a bit of action. Upstage right is the costume sewing and fitting area. There is a table in the centre of that area with a sewing machine and some costumes on it, waiting to be worked on, a rolling costume rack with various shirts and pants hanging on it. Downstage left area is the props room. It includes two desks: a main downstage one with a computer, a large binder beside it, and an intricate/fragile prop partially under construction lying on the table; and a smaller upstage table covered in various props, some half-made. Beside the upstage one there are some large pull-out drawers that house smaller props. One has the letter "M" on it. These different areas onstage can be delineated by lighting. Alternatively/preferably, partial walls onstage and full upstage walls for each side area – with entry doors in each full wall – to form the dividing lines among these three areas. Other than that, the stage is empty as the scene opens.)*

start

HOWARD. *(Via the intercom.)* Good evening cast and crew and welcome to the opening of tonight's show *Henry VIII, Wives VI*. This is Howard your stage manager, here in the wings. And this is your one-hour call to curtain, dudes. Have a great one. *(To KATHERINE, who is apparently beside him.)* Hey Katherine, what's happening?

KATHERINE. *(This exchange is heard over the intercom until KATHERINE walks onstage.)* Howard, why didn't you tell Jane or me about Earl an hour ago? And *just now* I find out that Arthur is missing too? Grace could have had that much more time to contact them.

HOWARD. Arthur always shows, why would he not do that tonight? It's the opening, man.

KATHERINE. *Exactly*, it's the opening and Arthur is not here! *(Pause.)* Howard, why does your sign-in sheet say: "To be signed by cast member no later than two hours before show time?"

HOWARD. I really don't know Katherine. Seems kind of radical to me.

KATHERINE. Geez. Tell me the *instant* he arrives!

HOWARD. You got it.

KATHERINE. (*KATHERINE, now obviously irate, enters upstage centre, talking more or less to herself and walking down to centre of backstage area, followed by JANE, still carrying the clipboard and furiously making notes.*) Arthur has been such a jerk to work with. Never again. (*To JANE.*) That is not a note Jane.

JANE. I understand. I was just writing down: "Agreed". Did you know that he actually tried to hit on me? Twice.

KATHERINE. What? (*Pause.*) Why am I not surprised? Sorry, but I can't deal with this now. Tell me more about this after the show tonight. We'll get the Board to deal with that once the production is over.

JANE. Okay. I probably should have told you about that earlier, but there just didn't seem to be the time or place to...

KATHERINE. (*Despite this next line, KATHERINE needs to be careful to build the anger and to get increasingly exasperated as the scene progresses. She can pace around backstage and JANE can try to keep up with her. She should also check her watch periodically.*) So, WHERE THE HELL IS ARTHUR?! I had specifically asked Howard to make sure I knew immediately if...Howard (*Realizing this involved HOWARD.*)...never mind.

JANE. Yes, yes I know and we *are* looking for him everywhere, and Arthur's *never* been this late before.

KATHERINE. (*Dripping with sarcasm.*) Well, THAT helps. (*Shakes her head.*) Have you spoken to Anne?

JANE. Yes, and as soon as she finishes changing, she wants to talk to you about it. She told me he seemed fine this morning. She said they were both looking forward to the opening and that Arthur enjoyed being onstage with her.

KATHERINE. That's been a bit of a melodrama in itself, hasn't it? Does she have any idea where he is?

JANE. No. (*Pause.*) She did sound a bit rattled though. I think that something may be wrong.

KATHERINE. Yes Jane, like he's not here! ~~Have you tried his cell?~~

~~JANE. We've left so many messages his voice mailbox is full.~~

~~KATHERINE. Has anyone gone to their apartment?~~