

## SCENE ONE

[Curtains open. Two office desks sit onstage—one Center, one Stage Left—facing the audience, with a rolling chair, files, and office supplies at each. A long table sits Stage Right with notebooks, calculators, etc. and three chairs pulled up to it. A sign on the wall reads “Masters & Co.” in large, professional lettering. As curtains open, KATE enters Stage Left, carrying her purse and keys as if coming from her car.]

**Kate:** *[cheerfully glancing at her watch as she moves to the Center Stage desk]* Made good time today. *[sets down her purse, looking around]* Am I the first one here? *[a bit louder]* Mr. Masters? *[waits for an answer but hears none]* Hm. *[noticing a note on her desk]* Oh, is this.... *[picks it up and reads]* “Dear Kate, please don’t be concerned....” *[drifts into reading silently, looking confused and surprised at first, then starting to understand]*

**Frank:** *[as KATE is reading to herself, enters briskly carrying a briefcase]* Morning, Kate. *[sets down his briefcase by the Stage Left desk]*

**Kate:** *[A few seconds of silence as she finishes reading, then realizes FRANK spoke.]* Oh hi, Frank. Um, did you know Mr. Masters was leaving for his trip today?

**Frank:** *[baffled]* Today?

**Kate:** Yeah, he’s already gone. I’ve heard him mention going but I had no idea it would be this soon.

**Frank:** Yeah, same here. *[taking in the news]* Wow. How long will he be gone?

**Kate:** I don’t know. *[looks at the note]* He left me a note but he doesn’t say when he’s coming back.

**Frank:** *[glances over his desk, sees a similar note and picks it up]* Oh, I got one too. *[reads it silently]*

**Kate:** He says he’ll be back soon.

**Frank:** *[after a moment]* But he calls it a “long trip.” *[KATE ponders this, and FRANK looks up after he finishes reading.]* What’s that supposed to mean? *[OLIVER enters Stage Left.]*

**Kate:** *[shrugs helplessly]* Long but not too long? *[OLIVER walks briskly across the stage, exchanging brief hellos with KATE and FRANK as he passes by. He exits Stage Right.]*

**Frank:** *[looking over Mr. Masters’ note grimly]* Well, Boss has made sure we’ll stay busy without him.

**Kate:** *[cheering up]* Yeah, his instructions are clear.

**Frank:** *[half-heartedly]* Yeah. *[puts down the note, speaking half-jokingly]* Would’ve been kinda nice if he’d given us some time off. *[chuckling, sort of uncomfortably]* I mean, he’s vacationing and we’re stuck here writing reports and trying to wade through the busiest season of the year.

**Kate:** Which is why time off is out of the question—for any of us. His trip is not vacation, you know, it’s business. *[FRANK shrugs and makes air quotes, and KATE frowns at him. ANTONIA and BRIAN enter Stage Left, chatting amiably.]*

**Brian:** Good morning, guys!

**Frank:** Morning.

**Kate:** Hi there! *[glancing at her watch]* Have you seen Rob yet?

**Brian:** I think he’s right behind us.

**Kate:** Okay, great. We have a...surprising change today.

**Antonia:** Oh?

**Kate:** Well— *[hesitates]* I'll wait till Rob comes and explain it all at once.

**Brian:** Okay. You know, I noticed Mr. Masters' car isn't here. He's not running late, is he?

**Antonia:** No way, he's always the first one at work.

**Kate:** He's not late, but...he's not here. *[ROB enters Stage Left hurriedly]*

**Brian:** *[surprised]* Really, why not? *[glances over, seeing ROB]*

**Kate:** *[to ROB]* Oh good, there you are.

**Rob:** Sorry, guys, I swear I caught every red light.

**Kate:** It's fine, Rob, don't worry. I just have a kind of announcement. Mr. Masters has left on a business trip. *[All express astonishment.]*

**Rob:** *[taken aback]* Where to?

**Kate:** Um, I don't know, actually. He left this morning and...we're not sure when he'll be back.

**Brian:** What do you mean?

**Rob:** He got a one-way ticket? He's abandoning us?!

**Kate:** No, no, calm down. He left a note saying he'll be back soon, and he explained what we need to do while he's gone, so we'll be fine. Frank and I will do our best to keep things organized. *[As they continue talking, ELAINE and NOELLE enter Stage Left, cross the stage, and exit Stage Right.]*

**Brian:** But—it's weird not knowing where he is or when he'll come home. Things'll be very different here without him.

**Rob:** *[still concerned]* Has he been planning this trip for a while?

**Frank:** *[shrugs]* Yeah, but he never shared details. *[holds up the note]* Just a memo.

**Kate:** *[glances at her note]* He does have special instructions for you three. *[picking up the top file from her desk, specially labeled]* He said he gave me a folder with everyone's assignments.... *[scanning the pages inside]* Right. So with Boss gone, we need people supervising each of the company's departments. I think he's assigned certain ones to each of you. *[ANTONIA, BRIAN, and ROB look at each other, impressed, though ROB appears dubious.]*

**Brian:** Wow, what an honor! *[raises his eyebrows]* And...responsibility.

**Kate:** That's for sure. *[consulting the file]* So, Brian, Mr. Masters has you managing Production & Operations, as well as IT. *[She hands him a sheet of paper from the file, then glances at FRANK, who's just watching, arms folded, doing nothing. She returns to the file.]* Antonia, you're in charge of Employment & Human Resources. And, you may know, Boss usually hires some extra help in the Shipping Office about now, so you might look into that. *[hands ANTONIA a sheet of paper]* And Rob, Mr. Masters wants you to supervise the Marketing department. *[encouragingly, as she hands him the last sheet of paper]* I bet your design know-how will come in handy there. *[The three new department heads scan their instructions with curiosity—and with distaste, in ROB's case.]*

**Brian:** *[wryly, but pleasantly]* Well, that's that.

**Antonia:** *[smiles]* I think some of us may be doing some overtime in the near future.

**Brian:** *[chuckles and nods]* Yeah, count on that. *[more seriously, as he, ANTONIA, and ROB move Stage Right to their table and sit down]* But what an honor that Mr. Masters trusts us with this!

**Antonia:** *[with sincere enthusiasm]* Absolutely, it's worth some extra work.

**Kate:** *[again looks uncomfortably at FRANK, who's still loafing, then glances at her watch]* Um, Frank. You want to go make sure the receptionists are in? We should tell them what's going on, and they can help spread the word around the office.

**Frank:** Oh. Sure. *[lazily exits Stage Left, while KATE looks doubtfully after him]*

**Brian:** By the way, Kate, I assume someone's looking after the Finance department? *[quickly and adamantly]* I'm *not* asking for it—I just didn't hear it mentioned.

**Kate:** *[nods]* Yeah, that's my assignment. Boss wants Frank to cover as office manager while I supervise Finance. Although, Frank seems— *[looks at FRANK's desk, then sighs]* Maybe he hasn't had his coffee yet. *[PAULA and LORI enter Stage Left, walking slowly while chatting.]*

**Paula:** And then I told him, if he was gonna refuse to buy me a new cat for our 22-month anniversary, then he could just file for divorce.

**Lori:** Oh, you tell him, girl. That's how you manage your man.

**Paula:** *[They unconsciously slow to a stop as they talk.]* I know! Because I'm telling you, I *need* another furry container of love in my life, and Jake was just being *totally* unreasonable.

**Lori:** Totally.

**Kate:** Um...hi, girls.

**Paula:** *[hardly noticing her]* Hi, Kate.

**Lori:** *[to PAULA, ignoring KATE]* So *then* what'd you do?

**Kate:** *[quickly interrupting]* Um, it is 8:03, and the other clerks are all here, so....

**Lori:** *[clueless]* What?

**Paula:** Ohhh, right. *[laughs airily]* Work. *[pulls LORI along]* Hey, Lori, did I see a new protein drink in your Instagram stories?

**Lori:** *[as they exit Stage Right]* Oh, girl, yes, it will change your *life*....

**Rob:** *[after they leave]* Look, guys, I know this managing a department thing is an honor and all that, but can we please be real: aren't any of you...concerned?

**Antonia:** About what?

**Rob:** I mean, I don't know what Boss wants us to do, and, frankly, I wish he hadn't dumped the responsibility on us. So many things could go wrong. I don't know how to run a department!

**Brian:** Well, Mr. Masters disagrees. I mean, he wouldn't have given us these tasks if he didn't think we could handle them. Sure, it's...a burden, maybe, but with some effort, I think we'll pull through.

**Rob:** *[dubious]* I wish I had your confidence.

**Kate:** Well— *[encouragingly]* —let's get to work and see if we can't build up that confidence.

**Antonia:** Sounds good to me!

**Brian:** Teamwork, guys. We can't let Mr. Masters down. *[BRIAN and ANTONIA get to work with the files, calculators, etc. on their desk, while ROB still looks skeptical and reluctant to start working.]*

**Kate:** Let's see. *[sitting down at her desk, figuring out where to start, scans the note from Boss]* I need to see Justine. *[FRANK reenters Stage Left, strolling in casually.]* Frank. Everyone in?

**Frank:** Yep. I told the girls that Mr. Masters is away on business and to report to me if they had any questions. *[sits down leisurely in his desk chair]*

**Kate:** Great. *[hesitates]* So...you're comfortable handling the calendar and writing up last week's reports and stuff?

**Frank:** Oh, yeah. I've got it.

**Kate:** Great. *[unconvinced but deciding not to worry, picks up her phone, dials, and waits for a moment]* Hey, Justine? Yeah, could you come into the office for a minute? Mr. Masters gave me a message for you. *[listens]* Thanks. *[puts her phone down]*

**Frank:** *[looks at KATE curiously]* Something wrong with Justine?

**Kate:** No, nothing's wrong. *[As he pulls out his laptop, KATE glances doubtfully at him, then looks around the room.]* Although...I think I'll talk to her in Boss's office.

**Justine:** *[enters Stage Left, looking apprehensive]* Um, Kate?

**Kate:** *[warmly]* Justine, come in. *[stands up and moves Stage Right]* Let's talk in Mr. Masters' office.

**Justine:** *[fearing the worst]* Okay. Sure. *[to herself]* Might as well get it over with. *[following KATE, they exit Stage Right]*

**Frank:** *[looking after them]* Hm. *[leans back in his chair and yawns]* I could do with a caffeine boost right now. *[An idea strikes him, and he sits up and glances around. BRIAN, ANTONIA, and ROB are working quietly, not paying attention to him. FRANK stands, saunters over to KATE's desk and picks up her phone]* Oliver, please come in here. *[replaces phone and ambles back to his desk]*

**Oliver:** *[enters Stage Right a few moments later]* You need something?

**Frank:** Well, as a matter of fact.... *[choosing his words carefully and motioning for OLIVER to approach]* Come over here. I want to commend you, Oliver.

**Oliver:** *[surprised, not unpleasantly]* Oh. How so? *[approaching FRANK at his desk]*

**Frank:** *[gaining confidence, almost becomes condescending]* You're a good employee. You come early and stay late, and you do fine work. You're dependable.

**Oliver:** Thank you, sir.

**Frank:** Of course. *[puts his hand firmly on OLIVER's shoulder]* You do whatever is asked of you.

**Oliver:** *[warily]* I try.

**Frank:** Good. *[pulling his wallet from his pocket, takes out a few dollars]* So you can run to Starbucks for me, can't you?

**Oliver:** Um...I'm not—

**Frank:** Soy latte. Venti. *[puts the bills in OLIVER's hand and smiles]* It's down at the corner.

**Oliver:** *[confused, though still trying to be polite]* Frank...I'm working. I can't just take off for 20 minutes.

**Frank:** *[cheerily]* So please be quick about it. *[turning back toward his desk]*

**Oliver:** *[troubled]* This isn't my job!

**Frank:** *[looks at OLIVER meaningfully]* While Boss is gone, your job is to do whatever I tell you to do. And I'd like you to bring me a latte. *[smiles]* Thank you very much.

**Oliver:** *[after a moment, reluctantly decides he has to obey, but feels disgusted]* Yes, sir.

**Frank:** Please hurry.

**Oliver:** *[significantly]* Of course. I have my own work to do. *[exits Stage Left]*

[Curtain. End of Scene One.]

**End of script preview.**

OLIVER  
SAWS