

SCENE 1

A rehearsal room. Nine chairs are set up in a semicircle.

At *LIGHTS UP*, MARY enters with FRANK.

FRANK

God, how long's it been since My Fair Lady?

MARY

Would you mind, darling? I'm feeling a bit unsteady today.

Frank offers his arm and helps her to the seat furthest stage right.

FRANK

There you go, sweetie.

Mary sits. Frank sits in the chair beside her.

MARY

I'm not sure, darling. My Fair Lady? Must have been five or six years.

FRANK

More like eight, I think.

MARY

Really? Well, it was fun wasn't it?

FRANK

I had fun with you. And Ralph. Not so much with Eliza.

MARY

Oh, dear god. She had a lovely singing voice, but... Well, as I said at the time, I suspect the casting couch came into play. She did get better.

FRANK

After you took her in hand. You were the real Pygmalion in that production.

MARY

Thank you, darling.

HARRY enters, spots Mary.

HARRY

Darling! How are you?

Harry bends over and he and Mary exchange air kisses.

MARY

Darling! It's been too long. I was so pleased when I heard you were going to be in this. *(She gestures towards Frank.)* Do you know each other?

FRANK

Only by reputation.

HARRY

Nothing good I hope.

Frank stands and holds out his hand.

HARRY

Are we allowed to do that again?

FRANK

Oh, maybe not.

Frank drops his hand, then raises an elbow to be bumped. Harry ignores him and sits down beside Mary, leaving Frank to take the seat on the other side of him.

MARY

Who do you have to murder to get a cup of tea around here? I'm parched.

HARRY

Jane's on it.

MARY

Who?

HARRY

Anne Hathaway?

MARY

Oh, right.

HARRY

I saw that old car of yours outside, so I knew you were already here. Sent her straight to the kettle.

MARY

Have you worked with her before?

HARRY

Worked? No, not worked. *(He winks at her.)*

MARY

Oh, darling, not another one. Your poor wife.

HARRY

Haven't you heard, darling? She gave me the chop.

MARY

Good riddance. I never liked her.

HARRY

Really? She spoke so highly of you, especially after –

FRANK

(interrupting)

I saw the two of you in –

Frank is interrupted by the arrival of MICK, who is followed by PETER, who heads towards the seat furthest stage left, sits and begins reading his script.

MICK

Sweetie! *(He bends over and exchanges air kisses with Mary.)*
About time we were in something together.

MARY

I know, darling. Such a shame we're not actually in the same scenes.

MICK

Yes, but we're going to have some fun. Aren't we?

MARY

Indeed we are, darling. *(She glances towards Peter.)* Peter?

PETER

(not looking up from his script)

Mary.

HARRY

I don't think he's forgiven you.

MARY

Christ, that was thirty years ago.

FRANK

Well, you did –

MARY

Oh, for god's sake. I didn't trip him on purpose.

MICK

Memory like an elephant, that one.

Mick moves stage left and sits down beside Peter as JANE enters, carrying a tray with three mugs.

HARRY

You're a star, darling. Her Majesty's parched.

Jane holds out the tray. Mary and Harry take mugs. DEAN enters, looks around uncertainly.

DEAN

Oh, is there tea?

Jane takes the third mug, holds the tray out towards Dean.

JANE

In the pot. In the kitchen.

Jane nods in the direction of the kitchen. Dean exits. Jane sits down beside Frank.

PETER

Well, he could have asked if anyone else wanted any.

MICK

You don't drink tea.

PETER

He could have asked.

MICK

Do you want tea?

PETER

No.

Mick and Peter go back to their scripts.

FRANK
(to Jane)

I gather you're my wife.

JANE

Yes, it would seem so.

FRANK

You're doing great work in that soap of yours.

JANE

Oh, you've seen it?

FRANK

I don't have a television

JANE

Oh.

FRANK

But I've heard great things. You're up for a daytime award, aren't you?

JANE

I am. But my heart's always been in the theatre, of course.

FRANK

Of course.

PETER
(muttering)

Why is there always a goddamn soap star in things these days?

MICK

You know why. Brings in a wider audience.

PETER

Christ.

Dean returns with a mug, sits down beside Mick.

DEAN

Hello, I'm -

PETER

Any tea left in the pot?

DEAN

Oh, yes. Yes, there is.

PETER

Milk, no sugar.

Dean puts his mug down, gets up, exits.

MICK

What the hell?

PETER

He should have asked.

MARY

Does anyone know who that one is?

HARRY

No idea, darling, but her ladyship tells me he was fantastic at the auditions.

FRANK

Bit eager.

MARY

(under her breath, glancing at Jane)

Not the only one.

HARRY

Well, look at us. Wouldn't you be?

FRANK

Fair enough.

HARRY

(quietly to Mary)

Did you say something?

MARY

"My heart's always been in the theatre." Christ.

HARRY

Now, now. Play nice, darling.

MARY

Always, darling.

Dean returns with mug, hands it to Peter, who hands it to Mick.

PETER

That's how you take it, isn't it?

MICK

Yes. *(to Dean)* Thanks.

DEAN

Um. You're welcome.

Dean sits.

PETER

You'd think she'd be here by now.

MARY

Well, she *is* the director, darling, and the author.