

# ***SMILE LIKE A KNIFE***

(a full-length one act in ten scenes; ninety-five minutes)

**TIME:** The imminent future and distant future: the year 2120

**PLACE:** New York City, on an avenue of prestigious shops: a stylized set represents Saxenburg Watches: the shop's interior, an office, and display window.

## **CHARACTERS:**

MONA, a roboticized mannequin that speaks with a British accent, age 20s

GUNTHER LEOPOLD SACHS, the Austrian born shop owner and manager, age 30s

MAGDALENA (LENA) SACHS, Gunther's American cousin, a robotics engineer, age 30s

ANNALIESE (ANNA) GLAZER, the shop clerk and window dresser, age 20s

DETECTIVE ROBIN BAINES, a civilian attired New York City police officer

TOVA VARONE, an androgynous transhuman tour guide from the year 2120

*Note: Smile Like a Knife* can be played by a cast of five with Magdalena Sachs and Detective Robin Baines played by the same actor.

## **PLOT SYNOPSIS:**

One hundred years from now, an androgynous guide is speaking to an audience of tourists. They have evolved as a fusion of the organic and mechanic and are visiting the notable landmarks of the shrinking island of Manhattan. What they are seeing is a simulated habitat of a drama that took place in the early decades of the twenty first century: In the heart of the city's most prestigious shopping district stands Saxenburg's Watches, specializing in hand crafted mechanical time pieces. The shop is located directly across from a renown residential building where powerful corporate plutocrats convene and conspire to control global conflicts and economies. In the watch shop window stands Mona, an alluring robotic mannequin equipped with a camera that spies on the constant stream of marchers protesting the country's dysfunctional plutocracy. The shop owner and manager, Gunther Sachs, hires Anna Glazer, a proficient clerk and struggling writer who charms him and his cousin, Lena, into romantic rivalries. Lena is an electrical engineer who left the Defense Department to design robots and whose outrage at the country's corrupt leadership inspires her to equip Mona with an undetectable acoustical beam. Although the beam is aimed at the corporate penthouse, it inadvertently afflicts innocent tenants, causing a pernicious and fatal form of insomnia. The police pursue Lena who flees the country while Gunther is suspected of being an accomplice and seeks asylum in Austria. Anna is left to manage the shop while writing prophetic dystopian novels that become required reading at future universities.

**THEMES:** The play explores the corrosive effects of a divisive government as well as the human capacity for invention, redemption and romance.