

# Scene One

Vanya  
Sonia

## VANYA AND SONIA AND MASHA AND SPIKE

### ACT ONE

#### Scene 1

*A farmhouse in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Not enormous, but comfortable, on a hill, many trees, a barn nearby, a pond in the near distance. There used to be a shed for peacocks, but the peacocks are long gone.*

*The Morning Room. Sunny, a sitting place with a nice window and comfortable wicker chairs. There is a grassy section next to the morning room, and characters can enter or leave the room to the outdoors.*

*Vanya, 55 to 60, in a nightshirt, walks in, carrying coffee. He sits, staring out at the pond. (Note: the actors should look at the back of the theater when they are looking at the pond. The windows are imagined.) Vanya sips the coffee, which tastes good. He feels somewhat contented. He stares a bit more. Sonia enters, age 50 or so, with coffee for him. Perhaps has a diet soda for herself. She is unsure of herself, melancholy, though keeps hoping for impossible things.*

Start  
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SONIA. I brought you coffee, dearest Vanya.

VANYA. I have some.

SONIA. Oh. But I bring you coffee every morning.

VANYA. Well, yes, but you weren't available.

SONIA. Well, I was briefly in the bathroom, you couldn't wait?  
VANYA. I don't know. The coffee was made, you weren't there, I'm capable of pouring coffee into a cup.  
SONIA. But I like bringing you coffee in the morning.  
VANYA. Fine. Here, take this cup and give me that one.  
SONIA. Alright. (*Vanya hands her his coffee and takes the coffee she's brought.*)  
SONIA. Now I feel better.  
VANYA. I'm glad. (*Sonia sits. They both look out, staring in the distance.*)  
SONIA. Has the blue heron been at the pond yet this morning?  
VANYA. Not yet. Or it was here before I was.  
SONIA. It'll probably come later. It's such a beautiful bird.  
VANYA. Yes, it is. (*Sips the coffee.*) I'm afraid the other cup tasted better.  
SONIA. Well it's the same coffee.  
VANYA. Well maybe I put in more milk than you did. Maybe that's why it tastes better.  
SONIA. Don't I usually put in the right amount of milk?  
VANYA. Well, yes. I don't usually think about it. It's just that I was drinking one coffee, and liking it, and then suddenly there's a different cup of coffee, and I'm liking it slightly less. It's no big deal. I'm just making pleasant conversation.  
SONIA. That's not making pleasant conversation. It's first thing in the morning, and you're implying I don't do anything right.  
VANYA. I didn't say that.  
SONIA. Yes, you did.  
VANYA. I didn't.  
SONIA. Well you implied it.  
VANYA. Forget it! The coffee's delicious, I love it!  
SONIA. Oh, for God's sake. Here take the original cup back.  
VANYA. No, no, it's not that different. I'm sorry I said anything. (*Sonia forces him to take his original coffee cup back, the one he preferred. She takes the second cup back herself.*)  
SONIA. I mean I have two pleasant moments every day in my fucking life, and one of them is bringing you coffee.  
VANYA. Sonia, I'm sorry I said anything. Really the two cups are almost identical. I should have said nothing.  
SONIA. Alright.  
VANYA. I'm sorry. Really.

SONIA. That's alright. (*She suddenly takes the cup she's holding and smashes it on the floor, in the direction of the kitchen. Silence.*)  
VANYA. Is this how you're going to be today?  
SONIA. I don't know what you mean.  
VANYA. YOU JUST THREW THE FUCKING COFFEE AGAINST THE WALL!  
SONIA. I DIDN'T!  
VANYA. You didn't??? What kind of idiot response is that?  
SONIA. I don't know. It's an angry "I hate my life and I hate you" response.  
VANYA. Well, it was effective then, good for you!  
SONIA. Thank you! (*Silence.*) I'm sorry. I shouldn't have thrown the cup.  
VANYA. That's alright.  
SONIA. It's just I had bad dreams last night.  
VANYA. Oh?  
SONIA. I dreamt I was fifty-two and I wasn't married.  
VANYA. Were you dreaming in the documentary form?  
SONIA. That's not funny.  
VANYA. Really, I thought it was. You are fifty-two, and you're not married.  
SONIA. Whose fault is that?  
VANYA. Is the answer supposed to be me?  
SONIA. There isn't any answer. And if I pine for you, that's my business.  
VANYA. Don't pine for me. That's ridiculous. I'm fifty-seven and I've told you for many years, I'm not interested in you in that way. I ... march to a different drummer.  
SONIA. Why must you march to a drummer at all? Why couldn't we both ... walk to the sounds of a piccolo?  
VANYA. What? I don't know what that metaphor means. Besides, you're my sister.  
SONIA. We're not blood relations. I am your adopted sister. So I can pine if I want to.  
VANYA. Look I think your pining after me is a tired reflex. I don't think you even like me anymore.  
SONIA. I agree with you. It's a reflex with me now. It comes from our living together. There's no one else in the house. Ever since mother and father died. And Masha left me and you to take care of them while she was off gallivanting, having a life. Don't you feel

angry at Masha, that she's had a life?

VANYA. Yes, I do. But it's too late now to do anything about it. I must say, I always admired you for doing your duty and taking care of our elderly parents, even though you were adopted. You put Masha to shame, in my opinion.

SONIA. Thank you, I appreciate that.

VANYA. Of course she had a successful acting career, and you basically didn't have anything *else* to do.

SONIA. Well, a moment ago you gave me a lovely compliment. And now ... oh let's not talk. I'll keep my sadness to myself.

VANYA. Alright, you do that. *(Brief silence. After a while she sighs very heavily, once, twice, maybe three times. Vanya ignores it for a while, but then doesn't.)* Your sadness is very heavy this morning, Sonia. Can you lighten it any?

SONIA. No.

VANYA. Could you go to a different room?

SONIA. Leave the morning room? But I'm in mourning for my life.

VANYA. I hope you're not going to make Chekhov references all day.

SONIA. If they come up, I may.

VANYA. It's been our cross to bear that our parents gave us names from Chekhov plays. The other children made such fun of us with our mysterious names. Such was the burden of having two professor parents and so active in community theatre as well. Remember how good they were in *The Reluctant Debutante*? I don't think they were very good in the *Oresteia*, though, did you?

SONIA. No. But I don't think community theatre should do Greek tragedy.

VANYA. I don't either. Having professors for parents had its drawbacks. Father was so angry when you didn't know something. But what seven-year-old knows who wrote *The Imaginary Invalid*? Father became so enraged when I said Neil Simon. I mean, I was seven.

SONIA. And they were very, very difficult once they went mental in old age. Oh but when they were young, how wonderful our parents were, don't you think? Mother was so elegant. And Father showed affection for me often, he called me his little artichoke.

VANYA. And he liked artichokes. So it was probably a nice thing he called you that.

SONIA. Yes, I think so. And he never molested me.

VANYA. That's nice.

SONIA. God knows who my actual parents were. I have a feeling

they were two drunken Irish people who left me alone every night while they went to the pub. Until one night they were so bombed out of their minds, they walked off a cliff. ← End

~~VANYA. Do you have any nice fantasies of who your parents were?~~

~~SONIA. No.~~

~~VANYA. I see. *(Sips the coffee.)* This has gone quite cold now.~~

~~SONIA. You're just determined to fight over the coffee, aren't you?~~

~~VANYA. No, I'm really not. I'm debating whether to go microwave the coffee.~~

~~SONIA. Do you want me to do it?~~

~~VANYA. Would you? That would be very nice of you. *(He hands her the cup. She seems calm but all of a sudden she smashes the cup onto the floor, near where the other one was smashed.)* What is the matter with you???~~

~~SONIA. Do I have to do everything?~~

~~VANYA. But you offered to take it. Are you bipolar now?~~

~~SONIA. Yes!~~

~~VANYA. Some people claim antidepressants help them.~~

~~SONIA. If everyone took antidepressants, Chekhov would have had nothing to write about.~~

~~VANYA. I'm not going to clean up the broken cups, you know.~~

~~SONIA. Me neither.~~

~~VANYA. Well, obviously there's no solution.~~

~~SONIA. The housekeeper comes today. We'll ask her to clean it up.~~

~~VANYA. What if she refuses?~~

~~SONIA. We'll fire her.~~

~~VANYA. Alright. We'll never ever pick the cups up, and instead we'll sell the house.~~

~~SONIA. You can't sell it. You don't own it. Masha owns it.~~

~~VANYA. I know Masha owns it! But if we leave broken cups and coffee smells all over the house, I'm sure she'll decide she *has* to sell it. And you and I can finally live separately since we hate each other.~~

~~SONIA. What a good idea!~~

~~VANYA. A very good idea! *(Short pause. They both look out, where presumably there is a picture window.)* It's comforting to have a pond to look at, isn't it? Pretty.~~

~~SONIA. Yes. I hope the blue heron comes later.~~

~~VANYA. I hope so too. It's like a good omen.~~

~~SONIA. Of course, it eats frogs, so it's not a good omen for them.~~

~~VANYA. No. Nature is cruel. But pretty. And for some reason I think~~

## Scene Two

## Cassandra / Vanya / Sonia

of the blue heron as a harbinger of good luck. (Enter Cassandra. She's 30 to 60, dressed comfortably for cleaning. Or maybe a colorful dress, an exotic style, something she actually looks good in.)

CASSANDRA. Beware the ides of March!

VANYA. What?

CASSANDRA. Beware the ides of March!

SONIA. March? Isn't it late August?

CASSANDRA. Beware the middle of the month! Beware of Greeks bearing gifts! (Suddenly she feels inspiration from above, or from somewhere — her psychic powers suddenly turn on, maybe her head moves, or her eyes flutter; she is visited by visions/thoughts, and what she says she dramatically intones, sounding a bit like a speech in Greek tragedy. We should hear her words, she should make sense of them, but they should also be said fast, her mind and psyche are receiving thoughts quickly.)

O wretches!

into the Land of Darkness we sail

in a pea green boat;

all around us is full of fire,

and the Delaware River overflows its bank,

and dismal moans rise from Bucks County,

where amity and enmity intermingle.

Portents of dismay

and calamity

yawn beneath the yonder cliff.

O fools looking behind but not looking ahead,

Dost thou not sense thy attendant doom?

VANYA. Cassandra, I have asked you repeatedly to please just say "good morning." Alright?

CASSANDRA. I see visions. Shadows of what lies ahead. It is my curse to see these shadows and my duty to warn you.

VANYA. Cassandra, I think you take your name too seriously.

CASSANDRA. My name? What do you mean?

VANYA. You know. Greek mythology. Apollo gave Cassandra second sight, but then cursed her so no one ever believed her.

CASSANDRA. Oh I know that. (Sudden psychic thought pops into her head.) Oh my God! I see something imminent. It's going to happen any moment. One of you is going to take two cups of coffee, and smash them onto the floor. (She looks between them.) It will be you, Vanya. Don't do it!

SONIA. It already happened.

CASSANDRA. Then I was right!

SONIA. No, you said it was GOING to happen, and it already has happened.

CASSANDRA. But I am correct you will want me to clean it up.

Right? Where are the broken cups?

SONIA. (Pointing.) Right over there.

CASSANDRA. (Looks.) Oh my God! I was right. You did this, you, Vanya, broke the cups.

SONIA. That's right, he did.

VANYA. Just clean it up, would you please?

SONIA. Clean it up, clean it up!!!

CASSANDRA. Fie on you both! I see doom and destruction swirling around you.

VANYA. No, just say good morning. Try it.

CASSANDRA. Good morning.

VANYA. Thank you. Good morning.

SONIA. Good morning.

CASSANDRA. And yet, what's good about it? Beware of Hootie Pie.

SONIA. Who?

CASSANDRA. I don't know. Just beware of her. Or it.

VANYA. Hootie Pie. We need to keep a small notebook nearby and write all these things down. For your sanity hearing later.

SONIA. Hootie Pie. Is that a first name, "Hootie Pie"? Or is "Hootie" the first name, and "Pie" the last name?

VANYA. Or maybe Hootie Pie is a pie. And you can order it at a restaurant.

CASSANDRA. I don't know what Hootie Pie is. I just know you must beware it. (She feels another psychic message. Maybe her head moves or maybe her eyes flutter. Something.) And also beware of something happening to this house. (Walks toward them, or walks in a bit of a circle.) The house, beware. Be wary. Something bad is coming. You may lose the house.

VANYA. Lose it?

CASSANDRA. Someone will sell the house right from under you and you will become homeless. You will walk many miles to the poor house.

SONIA. Surely someone would give us a ride.

CASSANDRA. No, you will walk.

VANYA. And I don't think there are such things as the poor house anymore.

think it's occasional. I mean I sleep with other people, too. I want to be successful, I can't just sleep with one old broad all the time. Oh, I'm sorry, don't cry. I think of "old broad" as a term of affection. (*Listens.*) Oh yeah? Well fuck you! (*He bows, smiles.*)

MASHA. Wasn't that good? (*Masha leads the applause. Nina is sincere and thinks it was good. Vanya and Sonia are a touch shell-shocked but applaud anyway.*)

NINA. Oh that was wonderful. I can sense great things in your future.

SPIKE. Yeah, cool. Thanks. (*Enter Cassandra.*)

CASSANDRA. Luncheon is served. It's Campbell soup and tuna fish sandwiches. I was only asked to make lunch for four, but I did stretch it to five, though the sandwiches are a little skimpy with the tuna fish. (*Exits.*)

MASHA. Well, the lunch sounds repellent, but shall we go in?

NINA. (*To Masha.*) Oh you're so kind to invite me to lunch, but I mustn't impose any further. And you did invite me to the costume party, so I'll come back for that, shall I?

MASHA. Yes, dear. That would be lovely. Why don't you come over at seven-thirty, it's just a little ways away, at the Dorothy Parker house.

NINA. Wonderful. I'll see you later. It was a pleasure to meet you all. (*To Masha.*) And a special honor to meet you, Miss Hardwicke. (*Nina exits. Bit of a pause from everyone.*)

MASHA. Well. That was ... fun. I need to go lie down. I think I'll forgo the tuna fish sandwiches.

SONIA. And I need to drive to Upper Black Eddy, and find a costume.

MASHA. Spike, do you want to take a nap with me?

SPIKE. I think I'll have the soup and sandwich.

MASHA. I think I'm getting a headache. Excuse me.

SPIKE. I'll come up in a bit and give you a massage.

MASHA. That would be lovely, thank you. (*Exits to upstairs.*)

SONIA. Vanya, do you want to come with me?

VANYA. You know, the soup and sandwich doesn't sound so bad to me. I think maybe I'll stay and have lunch.

SONIA. Alright. See you later then. Goodbye, Spike. (*Exits.*)

SPIKE. So it's just you and me, pal.

VANYA. Yes.

SPIKE. Time to tie on the old feed bag, right? (*Friendly, but has a flirtatious vibe; he sort of does with everyone.*)

VANYA. Oh yes, right.

# Scene Three

Vanya / Nina  
Masha /

SPIKE. Tell me, did you like my audition? Feel free to be honest.

VANYA. Um ... I liked it very much. I don't see why HBO didn't cast you. I think they must be ... muddled.

SPIKE. Yeah, screwed up, huh? Come on, old guy, let's go chow down, and you can tell me more of what you thought. (*They start to exit to the dining room.*)

VANYA. (*Not sure what else he can say.*) Tell you more? Alright ... (*They exit to the dining room.*)

Start  
↓

## Scene 2

*Sound of a doorbell.*

MASHA. (*Calling from offstage.*) Come in! The door is open. (*Enter Masha dressed like Snow White, and carrying a shepherd's crook. Her costume is based on the old Walt Disney cartoon: she has a bright blue bodice, with puffy sleeves around her shoulders. She has a big yellow skirt to the floor, and a red bow in her hair. She looks good, but it's a somewhat dominating costume. It is possible she is still putting parts of the costume on. Meanwhile Nina has let herself in and enters the morning room. She is dressed like a princess. She holds a fairy wand.*)

NINA. Hello. Oh my, you look beautiful.

MASHA. Oh dear, I didn't talk to you about costumes, did I? Whatever are you dressed as?

NINA. I didn't have anything, but my aunt and uncle took me to K-Mart, and I'm a princess.

MASHA. Oh you are? I see. I didn't get it. I thought you were a child dressed in her mother's clothes.

NINA. I'm sorry. I wasn't expecting to go to a costume party.

MASHA. No, that's quite evident.

NINA. What are you dressed as?

MASHA. What am I dressed as? You can't tell?

NINA. I think so. Are you that silent screen actress from the old movie who lives in a mansion and says, "I'm ready for my close-up, Mr. DeMille"? What's her name?

MASHA. No, I'm not Norma Desmond. Although when I'm

around you, I feel like her. You must be reading my aura.

NINA. I never really saw the movie. I just saw the clip where she says, "ready for my close-up." So who are you dressed as?

MASHA. I'm dressed as Snow White. The Walt Disney version.

NINA. I've never seen *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Is it like *The Little Mermaid*?

MASHA. (*A touch annoyed.*) No. One's about a mermaid, and the other's about dwarfs.

NINA. I see.

MASHA. Now since I'm Snow White, I feel all the other people going to the party with me must *relate* to Snow White. (*Enter Vanya dressed like one of the seven dwarfs. Big floppy knit cap, and a pumpkin-colored shirt with a belt around and brown pants.*) You see — like that. That's Grumpy, one of the seven dwarfs.

VANYA. Doc.

MASHA. Right. Doc. Another one of the seven dwarfs.

VANYA. You look lovely, Nina.

MASHA. No she doesn't. She looks like a child dressed for Halloween. I'm afraid I can't have it.

NINA. (*Sad but obedient.*) Oh. Well maybe I can't go then. I'm sorry I didn't have the right costume.

VANYA. Masha ...

MASHA. No, no, Nina. I'm not saying you can't go to the party. I'm so sorry. I'm really being a bully, but when you're my age — whatever that age is — you get used to having your way. I suppose I'm monstrous, but lovable monstrous, I hope. Besides, the good news is I have an extra costume that DOES relate to *Snow White*, and if you'll just put it on, then we'll all be very happy. Now wait here, I have to ask Spike where he put it.

NINA. Oh I can't wait to see what he's wearing.

MASHA. Really? Why?

NINA. Well, I can't wait to see what everyone's wearing.

MASHA. Okay.

VANYA. What is he going as?

MASHA. He's going as Prince Charming. It took a long time to convince him, so everyone tell him he looks sexy. Not you, Nina. Vanya, you tell him. I'll be right back. (*Masha suddenly takes both of Nina's hands.*) Thank you, Nina, for being so cooperative. (*Ends the moment, moves on, exits to the second floor.*)

NINA. I wonder what costume she has for me.

VANYA. I'm afraid I know. I believe you're going to be a dwarf like me. Dopey.

NINA. I'm just so happy to be included. I love to be around artistic people, who create things, who act, who value the arts.

VANYA. Well Masha obviously fits that. I'm afraid Sonia and I are just ... two lumps on a log.

NINA. Oh I don't think so. I feel you both have hidden reservoirs that just haven't been tapped. Or maybe you're secretly creating things, and not telling anyone.

VANYA. That's remarkable that you say that. I have been writing something ... I haven't told anyone, not even Sonia.

NINA. I thought so. I sensed it. Is it a TV pilot?

VANYA. No, it's a play. In progress. And I was thinking of that play Konstantin writes in *The Seagull*. And it's very experimental and mysterious, and I can never tell if it's meant to be a play ahead of its time or just a play that's ... rotten. And so I thought I might like to write my own version of that play, but relate it to now and see if it would ... be good or not.

NINA. Oh I'm so honored you told me this. I feel certain it's good. I always feel so sorry for Konstantin when I read that play, they were so mean to him.

VANYA. Well, life is hard for everyone, I guess.

NINA. You remind me of my uncle, only nicer and more artistic. He burps a lot and doesn't speak much. But you don't burp that I've noticed, and you're quiet but then you speak when spoken to. May I call you Uncle Vanya?

VANYA. If you like.

NINA. Why don't I do a reading of your play tomorrow for everyone?

VANYA. Oh I don't know if I want the others to hear it. It may be terrible. I wrote something when I was little, and my father joked and said it was pathetic.

NINA. How is that a joke?

VANYA. Good question.

NINA. Let me read it tomorrow. Either privately for you. Or, the braver choice, for everyone.

VANYA. Alright. I didn't expect to befriend you.

NINA. I'm glad you did.

VANYA. I thought you were going to be more Spike's friend.

NINA. He is awfully handsome.

VANYA. Yes I imagine he is.

← End

# Scene Four - Vanya / Sonia Masha / Spike

## ACT TWO

### Scene 1

Start  
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*After the party. Sounds of a car driving up.*

*Sonia and Vanya come in and go to the morning room.*

VANYA. What's the matter with Masha?

SONIA. *(In a good mood, enjoying that Masha isn't in a good mood.)*

I don't think she had a good time.

VANYA. She was talking to lots of people. I assumed she was enjoying herself.

SONIA. Sssssh. Here she comes. *(Masha comes in, in a bad mood.)*

MASHA. Oh for God's sake. *(Calls out to the car.)* I don't see why she can't walk home. Doesn't she just live next door? *(Spike, also annoyed, follows her in.)*

SPIKE. It's dark out. She could fall in a ditch.

MASHA. She's young, it wouldn't hurt her.

SPIKE. Masha, stop calling out the door that it's alright if Nina falls in a ditch.

MASHA. I didn't wish it on her. I just thought ... well, if you were going to drive her to her door, why didn't you drop her off first, when you and I were in the car ... and now ... you're going out on a second trip.

SPIKE. Masha, I just drove back here first, not thinking. What are you afraid of? Do you want to drive *with* me, as I drive Nina to her door?

MASHA. No. Certainly not. And I'm not afraid of anything. Just don't be long.

SPIKE. Alright. I'll see you in a bit.

MASHA. Alright, darling.

SPIKE. *(Thrown away, bit hard to hear.)* Don't wait up. *(Exits.)*

MASHA. *(To Vanya and Sonia.)* I just don't see why he didn't drop her off first. You know what I mean?

VANYA. None of us thought of it. I mean she left from here, so it seemed logical to bring her back here.

MASHA. Wait a minute. Did he just say "don't wait up"?

VANYA. Did he? I'm not sure.

SONIA. Yes, he did say that. I was surprised you didn't fall to the ground and hold on to his foot.

MASHA. What?

SONIA. When he said "don't wait up." I thought you would say something.

MASHA. No he must have said something that sounded like that. I mean he's just taking her next door. It couldn't take longer than five minutes.

SONIA. Maybe he'll go in and meet her family. Maybe she'll offer him a cup of tea. Or a brandy. And it can take a very long time to sip a brandy. And they'll have a long, long conversation.

MASHA. What is the matter with you today? You're so hostile to me.

VANYA. Don't fight, you two.

MASHA. I just feel nervous about if he said "don't wait up" or not.

VANYA. Maybe he didn't say it. I don't know what he said.

MASHA. Everything seems wrong today. And I'm going to give Hootie Pie a piece of my mind. The Snow White costume was a big bust. Nobody knows the Walt Disney version anymore, so they had no idea who I was supposed to be. And Nina, that nasty, grasping young girl, asked me if I was Norma Desmond. And someone else said Little Bo Peep. And several people thought I was a Hummel figurine.

SONIA. People seemed to like my costume.

MASHA. Well, Sonia, don't be so happy about it. You're happy at my expense.

SONIA. Am I? Am I allowed to be happy ONLY when you're happy? Is that one of the rules of being around Masha?

VANYA. Let's unwind and not argue. I'm going to go make tea for all of us. Stop talking about upsetting things. Think calming thoughts.

SONIA. Can it be Sleepytime tea?

VANYA. Yes, it can. *(Vanya exits. Masha and Sonia sit down. They're quiet for a bit.)*

SONIA. I love Sleepytime tea.

MASHA. I prefer caffeinated tea.

SONIA. I'm sorry about what I said about Spike taking Nina home. Actually, he mumbled, I'm not sure what he said. And I

hope he'll be back very soon. I don't want you to be unhappy.

MASHA. Thank you. *(A moment of peace.)*

SONIA. Though you don't care whether I'm unhappy since you want to sell the house out from under us.

MASHA. I PAY ALL THE BILLS AND IT'S TOO EXPENSIVE!

SONIA. Fine! Vanya and I will get prescription sleeping pills and kill ourselves. Will that make you happy?

MASHA. You enjoy complaining too much to kill yourself. You'll go to your grave complaining. And you cheated on your costume tonight. You said you were going as the Evil Queen but no one got "Mirror Mirror" from you, they got Dame Maggie Smith winning a fucking Oscar. If you had gone as a dwarf, my costume would have worked. Snow White needs at least three dwarfs for the costume to make sense.

SONIA. Oh stop talking about your costume, I'm sick of hearing about it.

MASHA. I should have called up Equity and hired seven Equity actors to be all seven dwarfs, and then you and Vanya could've just stayed home.

SONIA. I'm glad we went to the party. And people liked me. *(Does Maggie Smith voice.)* Yes they did. I had a good time. Didn't I, Sidney?

MASHA. I should've known better than to let you choose your own costume. Anyone who wears a tiara and sequins is always going to be the winner.

SONIA. Masha, you have won in so many ways throughout your entire life, can you REALLY not survive one night where I wore a costume that people liked more than the one you wore? Not even for *one night* are you willing for me to outshine you?

MASHA. You often outshine me.

SONIA. When?

MASHA. I don't know. When I'm not here, you outshine me. Besides, it's unimportant who preferred whose costume at some stupid party. I'm just having a hard time. Do you mind? I'm getting older, my five marriages didn't work out, I had this young man, I thought, but he seems to be lusting after Nina, and at least five other women at the party. He's clearly over-sexed. And I just feel old and vulnerable. Forgive me for having feelings.

SONIA. Well I have feelings too! I'm unhappy too! I haven't lived. You've had five marriages, they failed, but you had them. My

relationships with men have been limited to "here's your change, ma'am," at the supermarket. I took care of YOUR parents, Vanya and I did, and then we never left because ... we didn't know how to leave. We became numb during those fifteen years taking care of them.

MASHA. Well I'm sorry you felt numb, but I was working so I could pay the bills.

SONIA. And then when they both got Alzheimer's! His was worse, he was always taking off his clothes, and going to the neighbors' garage where he'd sit naked in their car until they came out to use it. We were always apologizing for him.

MASHA. This is all in the past. Get over it.

SONIA. You just left us here. If I tried to reach you, you were always filming in Morocco or something. After a while they stopped recognizing me. But they talked about you constantly. "Where is Masha?" they'd say to me. "She's making a fucking movie," I said. And they'd say, "Isn't that wonderful. She's so pretty and delightful." And then I'd change their diapers, all the while thinking, why isn't Masha here?

MASHA. I was paying the bills! I was paying *your* bills. I paid for the house, the doctors, the food. I paid for the snow plowing. I paid for the lawn care. I paid for the heat, the electricity, I sent you both a monthly stipend because I knew you couldn't work and what you were doing was hard. And I'm sorry if you hated taking care of them, but someone had to earn the money to pay for it all, and it was ME! — End

~~SONIA. I didn't hate taking care of them. I just said it was hard. And sometimes I liked it. They needed me, they needed Vanya. When they died, I felt sad ... sadder than you. You didn't cry once at the funerals.~~

~~MASHA. I hide my feelings.~~

~~SONIA. Nonsense, you parade your feelings. You put them on display onstage and in the movies. It's exhausting to be around you.~~

~~MASHA. And you exhaust me. Your self-pity exhausts me!~~

~~SONIA. And I'm glad my costume stole your thunder, and that people liked me as Maggie Smith, and thought I was fun, I liked that. But so what? My life is pointless. I haven't lived! I haven't lived! *(She cries.)*~~

~~MASHA. *(While Sonia is crying.)* Well I *have* lived and made my money and messed up all my relationships, and now I have nothing!~~



~~don't you do the opposite of a strip tease, and put your clothes back on, and then you can show Nina the audition you did. I coached him.~~

~~SPIKE. Oh, okay. (He starts to put his clothes back on. But it's immediately sexual, as if he's in a strip club.) First I have to take my shoes off, so I can put my pants back on. (He takes his shoes off.) And now it's time for the jeans. (He pulls on his jeans, but very seductively; gyrating his body.) But I'm not going to zip the zipper up all the way. Not just yet. (Everyone has been staring at him, not quite sure what else to do. Vanya moves closer and sits on the floor, watching him unabashedly.)~~

~~MASHA. Maybe we don't need to watch Spike while he's dressing.~~

~~SPIKE. No it's alright, I don't mind. (Masha gets focused on arranging some of the furniture for the upcoming audition. Spike is getting into his reverse strip tease.) I'm going to leave the zipper a little undone. Because I know I'm going to tuck in my shirt when I get to putting that on.~~

~~SONIA. Should we leave the room until he's finished?~~

~~SPIKE. No, I'm almost done. Now I could do the shirt first, or I could do the belt first. I think I'll do the belt. (He kind of plays with the belt before putting it on. Or he puts it on, but makes a big deal of it. Masha focuses on him as he does more sexual gyrating ...)~~

~~MASHA. What are you doing? Are you insane?~~

~~SPIKE. (He was just obeying.) You told me to do a reverse strip tease.~~

~~MASHA. Did I? Well I'm sure I didn't mean it. Just get dressed for God's sake.~~

~~SPIKE. Okay, okay. (To Nina.) The older generation is all uptight about their bodies.~~

~~MASHA. Okay, now your clothes are back on, very good, thank you. We all had a lovely time.~~

~~SPIKE. Gosh, you're in a weird mood today.~~

~~NINA. Well maybe I should be going.~~

~~SPIKE. No. I was going to show you my audition. Unless you don't want to see.~~

~~NINA. No, I'd love to see. (Everyone sits down to watch him.)~~

~~SPIKE. The original series *Entourage* is about this young actor who's making it big in the movies, and it's about the guys who hang around him — his friends, his manager, his agent. Everyone wants a piece of him.~~

~~NINA. I'd be so nervous if I ever had to audition. But I'd be so thrilled, too.~~

SPIKE. Yeah, it's tough to audition. I was real lucky to have a pro like Masha coach me.

MASHA. Yes, let's get to the audition now.

SPIKE. So I was auditioning for the spin-off series *Entourage 2*. And it has a different setup because in this one there's an up-and-coming actor who's starting to make it big in the movies, but he's played by somebody else, so the implication is it's another character.

MASHA. It's not an implication. He is another character.

SPIKE. (Kind of laughs, realizes he got confused.) Right. I know that. His name is Bradley Wood, and he's the lead. And in *this* version, his entourage is this old dame who's his agent, and this young guy on coke who's his manager, and his best friend from high school who's a girl who has a crush on him but she has this disease that gives her convulsions so she can never kiss anybody, 'cause she gets convulsions. And I live next door to a rabbi who's played by Judd Hirsch. But he's not on every week.

MASHA. Yes, yes. Let's move it along, pacing, pacing.

SPIKE. Okay, and he's been having an affair with his older agent lady, but he's thinking of moving on to another agent. So the scene is between Bradley Wood and his lady agent.

NINA. I see.

SPIKE. Okay he comes into the room, and the manager is there. "Hey, good-looking. How's tricks?" And Masha used to read the other lines. Do you remember them, Masha?

MASHA. Kind of. But I think you should try to do it as a monologue ... we'll all intuit what the other lines are.

SPIKE. Oh, okay. (He likes the challenge. He changes his body language, and begins the scene, maybe unbuttons his top three shirt buttons.) Hey, good-looking. How's tricks? (Dutifully ad-libs listening to make it a monologue.) What? Who told you that? Hey, don't cry. Come on, give me a smile. Besides it's not definite. (Pointedly listens.) Well ...

yeah, it's true, I did meet with some agents at CAA. I thought they were real impressive. I mean, they can call up Sandy Bullock, they can call up Julia Roberts. You gotta face it, you don't know that caliber of person. What? (He listens.) What about loyalty? What about my career? What about my getting ahead? Yeah, I know you put in a lot of time with me. But I put a lot time in with you, too. And I don't know ... I think I might like CAA better. What? (Listens.) Oh, that. Well, yeah, just 'cause I go to another agent doesn't mean we have to stop sleeping together occasionally. Well I

Start  
→

Scene Five

Masha/Spike/Nina  
28  
Sonia/Cassandra/Vanya

think it's occasional. I mean I sleep with other people, too. I want to be successful, I can't just sleep with one old broad all the time. Oh, I'm sorry, don't cry. I think of "old broad" as a term of affection. *(Listens.)* Oh yeah? Well fuck you! *(He bows, smiles.)*

MASHA. Wasn't that good? *(Masha leads the applause. Nina is sincere and thinks it was good. Vanya and Sonia are a touch shell-shocked but applaud anyway.)*

NINA. Oh that was wonderful. I can sense great things in your future.

SPIKE. Yeah, cool. Thanks. *(Enter Cassandra.)*

CASSANDRA. Luncheon is served. It's Campbell soup and tuna fish sandwiches. I was only asked to make lunch for four, but I did stretch it to five, though the sandwiches are a little skimpy with the tuna fish. *(Exits.)*

MASHA. Well, the lunch sounds repellent, but shall we go in?

NINA. *(To Masha.)* Oh you're so kind to invite me to lunch, but I mustn't impose any further. And you did invite me to the costume party, so I'll come back for that, shall I?

MASHA. Yes, dear. That would be lovely. Why don't you come over at seven-thirty, it's just a little ways away, at the Dorothy Parker house.

NINA. Wonderful. I'll see you later. It was a pleasure to meet you all. *(To Masha.)* And a special honor to meet you, Miss Hardwicke. *(Nina exits. Bit of a pause from everyone.)*

MASHA. Well. That was ... fun. I need to go lie down. I think I'll forgo the tuna fish sandwiches.

SONIA. And I need to drive to Upper Black Lickly, and find a costume.

MASHA. Spike, do you want to take a nap with me?

SPIKE. I think I'll have the soup and sandwich.

MASHA. I think I'm getting a headache. Excuse me.

SPIKE. I'll come up in a bit and give you a massage.

MASHA. That would be lovely, thank you. *(Exits to upstairs.)*

SONIA. Vanya, do you want to come with me?

VANYA. You know, the soup and sandwich doesn't sound so bad to me. I think maybe I'll stay and have lunch.

SONIA. Alright. See you later then. Goodbye, Spike. *(Exits.)*

SPIKE. So it's just you and me, pal.

VANYA. Yes.

SPIKE. Time to tie on the old feed bag, right? *(Friendly, but has a flirtatious vibe; he sort of does with everyone.)*

VANYA. Oh yes, right.

SPIKE. Tell me, did you like my audition? Feel free to be honest.

VANYA. Um ... I liked it very much. I don't see why HBO didn't cast you. I think they must be ... muddled.

SPIKE. Yeah, screwed up, huh? Come on, old guy, let's go chow down, and you can tell me more of what you thought. *(They start to exit to the dining room.)*

VANYA. *(Not sure what else he can say.)* Tell you more? Alright ... *(They exit to the dining room.)*

Scene 2

*Sound of a doorbell.*

MASHA. *(Calling from offstage.)* Come in! The door is open. *(Enter Masha dressed like Snow White, and carrying a shepherd's crook. Her costume is based on the old Walt Disney cartoon: she has a bright blue bodice, with puffy sleeves around her shoulders. She has a big yellow skirt to the floor, and a red bow in her hair. She looks good, but it's a somewhat dominating costume. It is possible she is still putting parts of the costume on. Meanwhile Nina has let herself in and enters the morning room. She is dressed like a princess. She holds a fairy wand.)*

NINA. Hello. Oh my, you look beautiful.

MASHA. Oh dear, I didn't talk to you about costumes, did I? Whatever are you dressed as?

NINA. I didn't have anything, but my aunt and uncle took me to K-Mart, and I'm a princess.

MASHA. Oh you are? I see. I didn't get it. I thought you were a child dressed in her mother's clothes.

NINA. I'm sorry. I wasn't expecting to go to a costume party.

MASHA. No, that's quite evident.

NINA. What are you dressed as?

MASHA. What am I dressed as? You can't tell?

NINA. I think so. Are you that silent screen actress from the old movie who lives in a mansion and says, "I'm ready for my close-up, Mr. DeMille"? What's her name?

MASHA. No, I'm not Norma Desmond. Although when I'm

Tomorrow more chunks are gonna fall into the ocean. So move to the center of the state if you can. Or hover above it all in a helicopter if you can do that.

Arizona and Texas have finished their 320th day without rain, and the entire two states are now on fire. And that's the weather.

NINA. It was a horror. Horror, horror, horror. The world was like a patient who desperately needed the intensive care unit. And yet there was no intensive care to be had. Those who had pills, any pills, took them all at once and hoped to die. *(Spike who started out finding the play a pleasant distraction, is losing interest and is getting fidgety. Masha tries to get him to stop acting so arsy.)*

Luckily, three simultaneous meteorites came crashing out of the sky and put everybody out of their misery.

And just like that the earth was no more.

And what of a brother and sister who used to sit in a morning room and watch a pond out the window?

*(Nina motions for Vanya and Sonia to come up. They stand side by side and have typed pages with them.)*

VANYA. Good morning, Sonia.

SONIA. Good morning, Vanya.

VANYA. Did you sleep well?

SONIA. I don't know. Are we alive or are we dead?

VANYA. We are molecules but we're remembering the past, and mourning its end.

SPIKE. I don't understand this play!!!

MASHA. Ssssssssh. *(The people reading the play are aware of the interruption but ignore it, move on.)*

SONIA. I remember looking out the window at the pond for years and years. Sometimes it was boring, but I miss it.

NINA. I miss washing my hair.

CASSANDRA. I miss iced tea. I don't like that line. I miss *Law and Order: SVU*.

SONIA. I miss my self-pity. It was fun. *(Gives Vanya a look, not entirely liking this line.)*

NINA. I miss ... having plans for the future.

VANYA. I miss boring chores which in retrospect seem wonderful.

Putting the dishes away. Making a list of things to do. Licking the mail, and driving to town to ...

SPIKE. "Licking the male"! *(Laughs.)* That's kind of raunchy, old man.

VANYA. *(A bit thrown, annoyed.)* Licking the mail one is about to

bring to the post office. Letters one has written. Licking the stamp that goes on the letter.

SPIKE. Licking the stamp? *(Doesn't understand.)*

VANYA. Forget it, I'll rewrite it. Maybe we should stop.

MASHA. No, I like it. Keep going. *(Crosses to Vanya to encourage him.)* It's much better than Konstantin's play. It's more varied.

VANYA. Okay. Whose line is it? *(Masha is nearer to a chair by Sonia, so she sits there. She doesn't return to her seat on the couch.)*

NINA. Mine. I miss baby powder.

VANYA. I'm sorry, the "I miss" section is going on too long. Let's jump to the top of the next page. *(Vanya can't return to his seat by Sonia, since Masha is in it. He is forced to sit next to Spike on the couch.)*

NINA. Alright. How sad to be a molecule! How sad to be a speck. *(Spike's cell phone makes a small tinkle sound — a "you have a text message" sound, brief. Spike without hesitation reads the message, smiles, and starts to type a text back. He is truly unaware that it might be inappropriate to do this now. His texting goes on for a while ... Masha gives him a signal to stop, but he holds up his finger indicating "give me a sec." Nina feels a good actress should just carry on, so she continues, and mostly pretends not to notice.)* How did the world come to end? Were there Cassandras we didn't listen to? Did we keep an oil burner too long?

MASHA. Spike, stop that. *(Spike again gestures "give me a minute," and goes back to texting.)*

NINA. Why didn't we switch to solar panels? Why didn't we buy an electric car? Why didn't we ... *(Vanya has had enough.)*

VANYA. Excuse me. What are you doing? It's very rude.

SPIKE. I'm still listening. I can multitask. I can drive and text, or watch a movie and tweet.

VANYA. You can multitask, how wonderful. You can tweet. You twitter and tweet, you email and text, your life is abuzz with electrical communication. *(Brief breath.)* I know older people always think the past was better, but really — instead of a text with all these lower case letters, and no punctuation, what about a nicely crafted letter, sent through the post office? Or a thank you note.

SPIKE. Yeah, it was real elegant back then, I get it. You had to wait five days for a letter, but it was real nice. Time marches on, dude.

*(Vanya is fed up with Spike, but he's also upset about the weather, about losing the house, about his life, and about so many awful changes in the world and country. He explodes, his thoughts are almost ahead of him.)*

Mono  
Vanya  
Junk  
↓

VANYA. WE USED TO LICK POSTAGE STAMPS BACK THEN. Obviously you've never heard of that. They didn't just peel off ready-made with sticky stuff on the back — the sticky stuff had to be triggered by your wet tongue. It took time. If you were sending out many letters, you could be licking postage stamps for ten minutes or so.

We used typewriters back then. And white-out for corrections. And carbon paper for copies.

We had telephones and we had to dial the number by putting our index finger in a round hole representing two to zero. If the number was 909-9999, it could take *hours* just to dial the number. We had to have PATIENCE then. And we used to lick postage stamps. It was unpleasant, but it had to be done.

We didn't multitask. Doing one thing at a time seemed appropriate. But I guess *you* can *sort* of listen to a play and *sort* of send a message and *sort* of play a video game ... all at once. It must be wonderful ... (*Spike is starting to get uncomfortable with Vanya's upset, and he gets up from the couch to walk away, but Vanya steps in front of him.*) I know I sound like a crank, but I don't like change. My play is about scary change in the weather. But there are other changes too that have happened. (*Vanya is starting to address everyone in the room, not always specifically, but sometimes. Sonia and Masha are interested by what he's saying, but also a bit concerned that he is having an outburst. Cassandra and Nina both like Vanya and pay attention, but worry a bit for him too.*) There are 785 television channels. You can watch the news report that matches what you already think. In the '50s there were only three or four channels, and it was all in black and white. And there were no child stars who became drug addicts like Lindsay Lohan. I mean, Hayley Mills was in the original *Parent Trap*, and she grew up to be a sensible, nice woman.

There was no *South Park*. We saw *Howdy Doody* starring a puppet. Then there was *Kukla, Fran and Ollie* — starring two more puppets and a sweet lady named Fran. We watched puppets back then! (*Sonia crosses to Vanya sympathetically and tries to get him to sit down. He is on a roll, and barely senses her; and gently encourages her to sit down instead. He doesn't stop talking, he keeps going.*) There was the *Perry Como Show*. He was soothing. *The Dinah Shore Show*. She was charming.

~~The Bishop Sheen Show was on Sunday evening. A Catholic Bishop had his own TV show. And he gave SERMONS. On TV.~~

~~We weren't Catholic, but we watched him anyway. He said sensible things. On television.~~

~~The *Ed Sullivan Show* was on before *Bishop Sheen*, and he had opera singers on. And performers from current Broadway shows. Richard Burton and Julie Andrews would sing songs from *Camelot*. It was wonderful. It helped theatre be part of the national consciousness, which it isn't any more.~~

~~And he had Señor Wences on, who had a Spanish accent and was a ventriloquist. And he painted a mouth on his fist, and he would make it speak. (*He speaks in funny voice — high one, very low one, high one — and uses his hand and thumb to imitate the way Señor Wences used his hand as a speaking puppet. High.*) "Hello," (*Low.*) "Hello," (*High.*) "Hello." (*Low.*) Hello. His act lasted about ... seven hours. As a child I thought to myself, this must be what eternity feels like. And yet that's a good concept for a child to have. SPIKE. I thought you were talking about things you liked in the past. VANYA. You're right. I'm inconsistent. I don't know what I'm saying. Be quiet. BE QUIET.~~

~~We licked postage stamps, and we sent letters.~~

~~I preferred Bishop Sheen to Señor Wences. Bishop Sheen was a good speaker, and he used his real mouth rather than one drawn onto his fist, and this made me take him more seriously. I remember him talking about the seed falling on the good soil, falling on the bad soil, the seed falling on rock. In other words, build your life on a strong foundation.~~

~~Of course, I haven't done that. But I meant to. Bishop Sheen said I should. I guess I got lost. But it was interesting to hear him talk that way. It was *articulate*. I don't think much is articulate in the world anymore.~~

~~And I'm saying this all in retrospect. I didn't think it when I was ten. I was just trying to get through life one day at a time when I was ten. (*To Spike.*) And I didn't have a life ahead of me where I was going to be almost cast in *Entourage 2*. But I guess you're having a good life, and I had foolish one.~~

~~Tell me, do they have any older characters on *Entourage*? Do they need someone in their late 50s, who has had a useless life and is looking back feeling bitter? Might I audition for that part? Could you check? (*Masha is worried about Vanya. She crosses to him.*) MASHA. Vanya, darling, you seem overwrought, and you're talking way more than usual. Do you not want to go lie down somewhere?~~