

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 re-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.

DO THE ACTION

SPIKE

plays of Anton Chekhov and Irina in *Three Sisters* is always saying "it's my name day."

MASHA. Ah, well. It's lovely to meet you. You're so very pretty and luminous, and full of youthful hope and enthusiasm. I wonder if it makes it hard for older people to be around you.

NINA. I'm sorry, what?

MASHA. Nothing. My unconscious was speaking, pay no mind. Happy name day. What is your name by the way?

NINA. I'm Nina.

MASHA. (*Furious.*) GOD DAMN IT!

VANYA. What's the matter?

MASHA. That crazy psychic in the kitchen told me to "Beware of Nina" and now her fucking name is Nina!!!

NINA. What? I'm sorry, what?

SONIA. Hello, Nina, I have a feeling no one is going to introduce me, I'm kind of like furniture in the room rather than a person. But I'm Sonia, Masha's sister. Although I'm adopted and don't really belong here. Or anywhere. And this is my brother Vanya.

VANYA. Hello, Nina. Happy name day.

NINA. How lovely to meet you. And what a funny joke about the furniture. (*Everyone looks confused.*)

SPIKE. I told Nina I'd introduce her to my manager. And I invited her to the costume party.

MASHA. (*Taking that in.*) You invited her. How nice. I have an idea! Spike, why don't we skip the party and hop in the car and race back to New York City right this minute. I suddenly want to see a Broadway show. How late is the half-price ticket booth open, does anyone know?

SPIKE. No, I wanna go to the party. And Nina is so excited to meet you. She just worships you. (*A bit flirtatiously.*) As do I.

MASHA. (*Taking in what he said, a bit mollified.*) Well, that's sweet of you to say, Spike. I... uh... am flattered Nina looks up to me. Hello, Nina. Happy name day.

NINA. Thank you. (*Enter Cassandra.*)

CASSANDRA. Lunch will be a little delayed. I dropped the omelets on the floor. I'm going to have to start over. (*Sees Nina, points at her.*) What did I say? BEWARE OF NINA!

MASHA. Cassandra, Nina is visiting from next door, and she's a lovely aspiring actress.

CASSANDRA. Well, I warned you, but the curse of Apollo keeps

↓
CASSANDRA

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everyone from acting on my warnings. (*Feels drawn to make a bit of a speech.*)

Oh mystery and misery, descends upon me like a thunder cloud,
Pregnant with rain and Jupiter's arrows.

The terrible burden of true prophecy, of my unwanted but
unstoppable prelude.

Look out, look out — all around us are lions and tigers and bears.
Oh my, the omelette is a failure, I crush it beneath my foot.

The libation bearers bring guts and entrails
And parents' children chopped up and served in a shepherd's pie.
Something tastes wrong with it — little wonder!
Next time you won't go killing Agamemnon, will you?
He's already dead. My car needs to be inspected,
How can I keep all these facts in my head when I see calamity
and colossus

Lumbering up the walkway?

Oh wretches, oh misery, oh magical mystery tour.

Beware the future. I know you will not abide me,

You ignore because I am not tall.

But I am right! I see disaster ahead for all of you!

Lunch in about twenty minutes! (*She strides out.*)

NINA. Oh she's a wonderful actress, too. What was that from,
what she just recited?

MASHA. It was from one of the Greek tragedies, I think. But I
believe she embellished it slightly.

NINA. Tell me ... I wonder if this is a stupid question. But what is
the difference between acting in a movie and acting onstage?

MASHA. No, it's not stupid at all. In film, you are acting in front of
a camera, and you need to speak in a normal voice. And onstage, you
are in a sort of wooden box in front of people who are looking at you
and you must speak more loudly. So that they can hear you.

NINA. I see, yes. What was your favorite role onstage?

MASHA. My favorite role onstage. Well I loved all the Ibsen I did,
and the Chekhov, and the Shakespeare. Google me when you go
home. Besides I'm not the only actor in the room. Spike is wonder-
fully talented. He was almost cast in *Entourage 2*.

NINA. Yes, he told me.

MASHA. Spike, why don't you ... (*Suddenly notices he's still in his un-
derwear.*) Goodness, you're still in your underwear. Spike, dear, why

CASSANDRA



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!

CASSANDRA

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

NINA

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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.

NINA

SONIA. Our lives are over, aren't they?

VANYA. Yes I think so.

SONIA. Still, I'll go to the party. And I won't go dressed as a dwarf. *(Reenter Masha with a big pot and a big metal serving spoon.)*

MASHA. I had to struggle with her to get a pot out of the kitchen. And she started to do all that "Beware this" and "Beware that" business. She's very difficult. *(Masha goes outside again and makes very loud noises banging the pot. Calling.)* Spike! Spike! We need you! Spike!

VANYA. Oh look, he's seen her. He's waving.

MASHA. *(Calling.)* Lunch is almost ready. *(Seeing something.)* No, don't bring the girl. There's not enough lunch. Tell her to go home.

VANYA. Oh, the girl's coming with him. *(Masha comes back into the house, angry.)*

MASHA. I don't know if he can't hear me or is pretending he can't. Oh God. She's very pretty. And she's very young.

SONIA. Masha, I'm sure the power of your money and your connections will keep Spike at your side for a long time.

MASHA. Oh. That's a comforting point. Thank you. I shouldn't be intimidated by a young girl, should I? Plus I don't actually know how pretty she is, maybe she's hideous. *(Enter Spike and Nina. Nina is in her early 20s, and is very pretty and luminous.)*

SPIKE. Look who I met at the pond.

MASHA. Oh did you meet someone?

SPIKE. Yes. She's visiting her aunt and uncle who live next door. And you're her favorite actress, and she came over here hoping to meet you.

MASHA. Oh how charming. Welcome, lovely little nymph.

NINA. Hello. Oh, it's so thrilling to meet you. My aunt and uncle said to me you mustn't go bother them, and plus she's never ever there, but then we had our binoculars out and we saw your car drive up, and I thought, I can't believe she's here! I can meet Masha Hardwicke. A woman who has achieved fame and success in theatre and in motion pictures. I LONG to make theatre my life, and you're an idol to me. And I'm only here for three days, and I hoped I could meet you, but then I didn't dare think it would actually happen. But it has.

MASHA. *(Sort of friendly.)* Yes, you're meeting me. Hello. Hello.

NINA. And today is my name day, can you imagine? Americans like to say "birthday," but I like to say "name day" because I love the

NINA

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plays of Anton Chekhov and Irina in *Three Sisters* is always saying "it's my name day."

MASHA. Ah, well. It's lovely to meet you. You're so very pretty and luminous, and full of youthful hope and enthusiasm. I wonder if it makes it hard for older people to be around you.

NINA. I'm sorry, what?

MASHA. Nothing. My unconscious was speaking, pay no mind. Happy name day. What is your name by the way?

NINA. I'm Nina.

MASHA. (*Furious.*) GOD DAMN IT!

VANYA. What's the matter?

MASHA. That crazy psychic in the kitchen told me to "Beware of Nina" and now her fucking name is Nina!!!

NINA. What? I'm sorry, what?

SONIA. Hello, Nina, I have a feeling no one is going to introduce me, I'm kind of like furniture in the room rather than a person. But I'm Sonia, Masha's sister. Although I'm adopted and don't really belong here. Or anywhere. And this is my brother Vanya.

VANYA. Hello, Nina. Happy name day.

NINA. How lovely to meet you. And what a funny joke about the furniture. (*Everyone looks confused.*)

SPIKE. I told Nina I'd introduce her to my manager. And I invited her to the costume party.

MASHA. (*Taking that in.*) You invited her. How nice. I have an idea! Spike, why don't we skip the party and hop in the car and race back to New York City right this minute. I suddenly want to see a Broadway show. How late is the half-price ticket booth open, does anyone know?

SPIKE. No, I wanna go to the party. And Nina is so excited to meet you. She just worships you. (*A bit flirtatiously.*) As do I.

MASHA. (*Taking in what he said, a bit mollified.*) Well, that's sweet of you to say, Spike. I ... uh ... am flattered Nina looks up to me. Hello, Nina. Happy name day.

NINA. Thank you. (*Enter Cassandra.*)

CASSANDRA. Lunch will be a little delayed. I dropped the omelets on the floor. I'm going to have to start over. (*Sees Nina, points at her.*) What did I say? BEWARE OF NINA!

MASHA. Cassandra, Nina is visiting from next door, and she's a lovely aspiring actress.

CASSANDRA. Well, I warned you, but the curse of Apollo keeps

NINA

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.

VANYA

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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 say-

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, 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.)*

VANYA
LEAD IN TO
7:58
background,
not reading

(Cassandra slams the phone down violently. Laughs and laughs. Maybe waves that Mardi Gras streamer thing around, joyously. Sonia walks downstairs.)

SONIA. Goodness, who did you yell at?

CASSANDRA. It was a wrong number. I got coffee and other stuff. *(Phone rings again. Cassandra looks angry, and picks up the phone.)* I TOLD YOU NOT TO CALL BACK! *(Listens.)* Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you were someone else. Who did you want to talk to? Well, she's right here. *(Cassandra offers Sonia the phone.)*

SONIA. Who is it?

CASSANDRA. *(To phone.)* Who's calling please? *(To Sonia.)* Joe.

SONIA. I don't know who that is.

CASSANDRA. *(To phone.)* She doesn't know you. *(To Sonia.)* Should I hang up angry or polite?

SONIA. Wait, I'll take the call. *(Answers the phone.)* Hello, this is Sonia. Who is this please? *(Cassandra exits with her bags off to the kitchen.)* Joe? I'm afraid I don't ... Oh yes, Joe from last night! The party, yes. What? Yes, this is Sonia. My voice sounds different? Oh. Uh. *(Thinks quickly.)* Wait a minute, I have a frog in my throat. *(Pretends to cough, and then switches to using her Maggie Smith voice.)* Hello, Joe. How are you today? Oh your head hurts a little. I hope you're not an alcoholic. You're not. That's good! But you like to get drunk sometimes. Well, it's a good man's failing. I'm a crack addict. No, darling ... I'm just teasing. It was very nice to meet you last night. Remind me, what was your costume? A raincoat. Uh-huh. Anything else? A fedora. Uh-huh. So you were pretending it was raining in 1946, is that right? Oh — you were Sam Spade. The detective. I'm sorry, I should have remembered that. And Maggie Smith was actually in a movie where Peter Falk played Sam Spade, and she played Nora Charles. From *The Thin Man*. *(Frowning, kind of changing her mind, still in the Maggie Smith voice.)* You know, Joe, I have to go back to my own voice for a little while, do you mind? *(Switches back to her normal voice.)* I'm sorry, I'm a little confused. Did you really think that was my voice last night? Oh I see. Well I must have forgotten to give you the proper explanation last night. I was telling everyone I was the Evil Queen as played by Maggie Smith. But I guess by the time I met you, I had gotten tired of explaining, and you just assumed that was my real voice.

But this is my real voice, actually. It's sort of boring compared to Maggie Smith. But nonetheless, I am who I am and I'm stuck

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.

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.

VANYA
+
SONIA

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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.

VANYA
+
SONIA

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

VANYA
+
SONIA

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 re-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.

DO THE ACTION

SPIKE

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

SPIKE