

# Vanya + Sonia

**VANYA** Really, I thought it was. You are 52, 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 57 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 All right, 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.*

VANYA 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 theater 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 theater 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 7-year-old knows who wrote *The Imaginary Invalid*? Father became so enraged when I said Neil Simon. I mean, I was 7.

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.

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.*

VANYA 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.