

### SCENE 3. MASHA SONIA VANYA

MASHA: I want to make a noise, do you have a gong?

SONIA: We don't have a gong. You probably could take a big pot and bang it with a metal spoon.

MASHA: Oh what a good idea, thank you, Sonia. (goes off to kitchen) Cassandra! I need a heavy pot and a BIG spoon.

SONIA: (not confrontational; being honest)

I don't think you believe I'll meet anyone at this party. I think you looked at me with pity as I said that.

VANYA: (trying to be kind)

No, not at all. One should stay open to unexpected possibilities. I think you could meet someone there tonight.

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.

(Re-enter 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 noise banging the pot.)

MASHA: (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 20's, and is very pretty, 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 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 does the half-price ticket booth stay 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? BEWAREOFNINA!

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 everyone from acting on my warnings.