

**VANYA AND SONIA AND  
MASHA AND SPIKE**

**BY CHRISTOPHER DURANG**



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VANYA AND SONIA AND MASHA AND SPIKE was commissioned by McCarter Theatre Center (Emily Mann, Artistic Director; Timothy J. Shields, Managing Director; Mara Isaacs, Producing Director) in Princeton, N.J. and received its world premiere with previews beginning on September 7, 2012 and opening on September 14, 2012. The Associate Producer was Adam Immerwahr; the Director of Production was David York; the Literary Director was Carrie Hughes; and the production stage manager was Cheryl Mintz. McCarter Theatre Center co-produced VANYA AND SONIA AND MASHA AND SPIKE with Lincoln Center Theater (André Bishop, Artistic Director; Bernard Gersten, Executive Producer; Adam Siegel, Managing Director). The play received its New York City premiere at Lincoln Center Theater with previews beginning on October 25, 2012 and opening on November 12, 2012. The dramaturg was Anne Cattaneo; the stage manager was Jane Grey; and the assistant stage manager was Denise Yaney.

VANYA AND SONIA AND MASHA AND SPIKE received its Broadway premiere at the John Golden Theater on March 14, 2013. All three productions were directed by Nicholas Martin; the set design was by David Korins; the costume design was by Emily Rebholz; the lighting design was by Justin Townsend; the original music and sound design were by Mark Bennett; casting was by Daniel Swee; and the assistant director was Bryan Hunt. On Broadway, the production stage manager was Denise Yaney, and the stage manager was M.A. Howard. The cast for all three productions was as follows:

VANYA.....	David Hyde Pierce
SONIA .....	Kristine Nielsen
CASSANDRA.....	Shalita Grant
MASHA.....	Sigourney Weaver
SPIKE .....	Billy Magnussen
NINA .....	Genevieve Angelson

Understudies: Keith Reddin (Vanya), Linda Marie Larson (Sonia, Masha), Heather Alicia Simms (Cassandra), Creed Garnick (Spike), Liesel Allen Yeager (Nina). Miss Yeager played Nina for part of the Broadway run. Mr. Garnick played Spike for the final month.

## **CHARACTERS**

VANYA — 50s, living in Bucks County. Resigned to his life, more or less, at least compared to Sonia.

SONIA — his adopted sister, early 50s, living with him in Bucks County. Discontent, upset, regretful.

MASHA — his sister, 50s, glamorous and successful actress who goes gallivanting around the world.

SPIKE — an aspiring actor, 29 or younger, Masha's new companion. Sexy, self-absorbed, but otherwise outgoing and friendly.

NINA — lovely, sincere would-be actress, early 20s, visiting her aunt and uncle next door. Star struck, earnest and energetic.

CASSANDRA — cleaning lady and soothsayer, any age, any race. In the original production, she was played by an African-American actress in her 20s.

## **PLACE**

A lovely farmhouse in Bucks County.

## **TIME**

Set in the present.

# 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.

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.

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

# VANYA AND SONIA AND MASHA AND SPIKE

by Christopher Durang

WINNER OF THE 2013 TONY AWARD

2M, 4W

Middle-aged siblings Vanya and Sonia share a home in Bucks County, PA, where they bicker and complain about the circumstances of their lives. Suddenly, their movie-star sister, Masha, swoops in with her new boy toy, Spike. Old resentments flare up, eventually leading to threats to sell the house. Also on the scene are sassy maid Cassandra, who can predict the future, and a lovely young aspiring actress named Nina, whose prettiness somewhat worries the imperious Masha.

*“Broad comic acting is raised to the level of high art ... deliriously funny ... a heedless good time.”*  
—**The New York Times**

*“... riotous ... the show’s a ton of fun even if you can’t tell your Seagull from your Uncle Vanya ... This is the kind of full-on comedy that’s sadly rare on Broadway.”*  
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*“Everyone has a monologue that is nothing short of hilarious. (You’ll find yourself using that word a lot.) ... You’ve only spent a weekend with these people, but you might want to spend the rest of your life with Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike.”*  
—**HuffingtonPost.com**

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