

Vanya Cassandra Sonia  
pages 12,13

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.

#2, Vanya Masha Sonia  
pages 19 20 21

*finds it strange. Spike happily exits onto the grass, looking forward to wading and frogs ... )*

MASHA. The younger generation is like that. They strip to their underwear right in front of everybody.

VANYA. Did he do that because he knows I'm gay?

MASHA. I rather think he did that because he knows I'm straight.

VANYA. Well it's very peculiar. Did you tell him I'm gay?

MASHA. No, why would I? And are you gay? I'm sorry, did we have some conversation I forgot?

VANYA. No, I guess we didn't. I just ... assumed you assumed.

MASHA. Oh, I did. I just thought maybe you were still in denial. Or had become asexual from so many years of abstinence. Oh, I've been a bad sister. I'm sorry, darling. Where is Sonia? Oh that's right, I upset her. Well I'll apologize later.

VANYA. I must say, I'm a trifle surprised to see you with this young, young man. How old is he?

MASHA. *(Takes his hand.)* Oh, Vanya dear, I'm so happy I'm with Spike. He's so adventurous and free, he gives me energy. We've been together three months.

VANYA. Well he's handsome. Is he a good idea?

MASHA. Don't be judgmental. I've been very lonely for several years ever since Robert left me for Angelina Jolie.

VANYA. Angelina Jolie?

MASHA. I just say that to make myself feel better. He left me for someone who looked a little like Angelina Jolie. So I comfort myself with saying it was she. Still I haven't been able to hold on to my husbands, I don't know why. I'm talented, charming, successful — and yet they leave me. They must be insane. *(Enter Sonia.)*

SONIA. Why is that young man naked in the pond?

VANYA. He's naked? *(Looks out the window, interested.)* Sonia, he's wearing underpants. That's not naked.

SONIA. Well, underpants, naked, it's the same to me.

VANYA. You need glasses.

SONIA. I need a life. I need a friend. I need a change. But nothing ever changes.

MASHA. Now, now, please don't get down in the dumps.

SONIA. That's easy for you to say. You have a life, you have a career.

MASHA. Oh, I wish you wouldn't feel jealous of me. It just exhausts me. Even if you were an actress, God forbid, we wouldn't ever go up for the same parts. I'm a leading lady, while you are much more of a ...

VANYA. Masha, I don't think you should finish that sentence.

SONIA. Thank you, Vanya.

VANYA. You're welcome, Sonia.

MASHA. Well, it's not as if my career has been without disappointments, just like your life, Sonia. I've suffered too. I'm a movie star, but am I known as a classical actress on the stage?

SONIA. No you're not.

MASHA. Exactly! That's a path I didn't get to take. Remember when that famous acting teacher was going to cast me as Masha in *Three Sisters*. He said I was born to play that role. Imagine how wonderful I would've been. (*To Vanya and Sonia, suddenly acting the lines:*) "Oh my sisters, let us go to Moscow! To Moscow, let us go." I would have said that with an ache in my voice and my soul, and it would have been heartbreaking. I feel the public doesn't know how heartbreaking I can be. (*Genuinely.*) Oh missed opportunities! Regret, regret, regret!

SONIA. Regret, regret!

MASHA. Please don't change the focus to yourself, Sonia. I'm talking now. You can talk later.

SONIA. When?

MASHA. Four-thirty. (*Back to her story.*) Oh that famous acting teacher said I was born to play the classics. And that once I did *Three Sisters*, he said I would have one classical triumph after another. I'd be the American Judi Dench. But I had to go do that movie about the nymphomaniac serial killer. It was a terrible script, but I was so good in it that it became this enormous hit and, of course, we made five of them eventually. Did you see all of them?

VANYA. Oh yes, we certainly did. We liked you very much. They were extremely violent though. Sonia had to look away from the screen a lot.

SONIA. Yes I did.

MASHA. Oh darling, sensitive, tedious Sonia. You can't face life, can you? (*Sonia begins to respond, but Masha stops her.*) No, don't answer. You can talk at four-thirty.

SONIA. Why four-thirty?

MASHA. That's my nap time. (*When Sonia looks horrified.*) I'm kidding, I'm kidding. Four-thirty is the cocktail hour, a half an hour early. I usually have a Black Russian. And a drink as well. Oh, I'm amusing myself, sorry. (*Focuses back on her story.*) Anyway, as I

was saying, that movie, *Sexy Killer*, really changed my life — it took me from being a respected actress to being a global celebrity. And there is a difference. “Fame, thou glittering bauble.” Who said that?

VANYA. Captain Hook.

MASHA. The real Captain Hook?

VANYA. There wasn't a real Captain Hook. He was just in *Peter Pan*.

MASHA. “Fame, thou glittering bauble.” Such an interesting thing for a pirate to say. And then they begged me to do a sequel, and it seemed inescapable to me. We made five of them. And those movies made me millions. But my point was the theatre lost a great tragic classical actress when I didn't play my namesake Masha in that famous acting teacher's production of *Three Sisters*. That's my point!

SONIA. You keep talking about this famous acting teacher. Who are you referring to?

MASHA. Derek Seretsky.

SONIA. Who?

MASHA. Derek Seretsky. Maybe he wasn't famous. He was famous to me.

VANYA. When did you study with him?

MASHA. Oh, many years ago, I can't remember dates or decades. I just live. I recall I had three fabulous sessions with him. He taught a combination of Stanislavskian sense memory mixed with Meisner repetition technique. I'd say, “Oh, Olga, let's go to Moscow,” and he'd say back to me, “Oh, Olga, let's go to Moscow?” And I'd say, “Oh Olga — let's GO to Moscow.” And he'd say, “Oh, oh, oh, Olga, let's go to MosCOW.” And then I said, “Ho, ho, ho, let's go to Moscow, Olga. Moscow, Moscow, Olga. Oh, Oh, Olga, let's go!” I'm sorry, this is sounding incredibly false as I'm saying it. It makes one think I would've been horrible in *Three Sisters*. Maybe I would have been. (*Suddenly shouts emphatically.*) No, no, I would've been great! Let's not talk about it anymore. Let's talk about something else. Sonia, what's new with you?

SONIA. I'm not allowed to speak until four-thirty.

MASHA. Everyone's so touchy here. No, you can talk.

SONIA. How old is Spike exactly?

MASHA. Let's talk about something fun. We're going to a party tonight, and a costume one at that. I love costume parties.

SONIA. We don't have any costumes to wear, Masha.

MASHA. Yes, you do. I asked Hootie Pie to organize some costumes for both of you, and they're in the car.

#3, Spike Masha Cassandra Nina Vanya  
pages 29 30



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

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.

#4, Nina Vanya  
page 33

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.

#5, Sonia Masha  
page 41

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!

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!

#6, Sonia Cassandra  
pages 52 53

*(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



with it. I'm remembering the person who was Sam Spade. You have a very nice face. Oh I'm remembering, you said you were a widower. Is that right? I'm sorry. Two years. No, I'm not a widow. I'm a ... *(Stops for a second, chooses not to say she's never been married.)* ... I've been picky. Uh-huh. Glamorous?? *(Laughs.)* Oh, I must be honest and assure you I'm NOT glamorous. I look a fright most of the time. Daily, in fact. And except for last night, I've never gotten all dolled up. Alright, you think of me as glamorous, I guess I should just accept it. I admit it, I'm glamorous. Do your glasses need a new prescription, Joe? They don't, alright, that's good to know. Um ... *(Thinks a second.)* ... I'm a little confused. Why are you calling me today? *(Listens.)* Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Oh. Because you like me. How odd. What? I said, how nice. Thank you. Although maybe it's my imitation of Maggie Smith you like. I don't do any other imitations, I'm afraid.

Uh-huh. Go to dinner? Um ... well ... I ... maybe. Saturday? Well I'm not sure, let me check my book. *(She moves the phone away from her mouth and frowns; thinks for a while; she feels nervous about saying yes, wonders what to say, makes a decision.)* I'm sorry, Joe. I'm not free Saturday. Yes, it's too bad. Another time. Yes, well. Hold on a minute, would you? *(She holds the phone away, trying to think through if it makes sense to not accept this man's invitation; she's finding it very hard to make a decision; then.)* Joe. I looked at my book again, and I made a mistake. It's Sunday I'm busy. I am free Saturday. The day that you mentioned. *(He apparently took a second to take it in.)* Yes, I am free. *(Makes a face to herself, oh Lord, now she's said yes.)* Yes, Saturday. That would be lovely. *(Listens, repeats back.)* Weekends are best for you. Oh that means you have a job then. Nothing. Just I was trying to think what's the matter with you, and I couldn't come up with anything. *(As Maggie Smith.)* Maybe you're mentally deficient. *(Surprised at his response; goes back to her own voice.)* Oh you laughed. Oh well good.

So Saturday at six P.M., you'll pick me up. I'm at Fifty-five Hollyhock Road. Yes very near where the party was. Yes, it was a nice party. Oh, and you know, if you need to cancel, I'll certainly understand. Well, alright, I just mean in case you *had* to. No, I would like to go. You don't mind if I don't use my Maggie Smith voice, do you? Oh that's good. I'll just use it for emphasis. Otherwise just ... this voice. Thank you, Joe. *(A compliment.)* Oh. Nice of you to say. I'll see you Saturday. *(She hangs up the phone. She is extremely*

#7, Nina Vanya Cassandra Spike  
page 55

for you. Although I apologize. It's silly to take up your time with something that is probably no good at all.

NINA. Uncle Vanya, you mustn't tell the audience that what they're about to hear is no good.

VANYA. Yes, I suppose that's taking self-effacement to an unnecessary extreme.

SONIA. Vanya, dear, we want to hear it.

SPIKE. Yeah, sounds interesting.

MASHA. I have a splitting headache, but I too wish to be supportive.

VANYA. Well thank you. Now I wrote it for one voice, but Nina and I conferred and we decided that certain sections should be read by other people. So just know that some of us may pop up from our seats from time to time. The setting is the universe once the earth no longer exists. Enter a molecule. (*Vanya sits with the audience. A bit nervous, but serious about it all. Sonia is seated next to Vanya. Vanya gestures to Cassandra push the button on the MP3 player; she does and mysterious music begins. Nina begins.*)

NINA. People, lions, eagles, partridges, raccoons, porpoises, opossums, hedgehogs, woodchucks, geese, spiders, octopuses, foxes, wild turkeys, frogs, and blue herons.

All living creatures are dead. The earth is no more. It split apart into atoms, cells, tiny molecules.

I am one such molecule. And I am lonely.

I miss people, animals, books, oatmeal.

But they're all gone now.

The world ended sometime in the twenty-first century.

In the final days, it was frightening to turn on the morning weather report. (*The mysterious music ends. Cassandra stands, and reads from her piece of paper.*)

CASSANDRA. Good morning, welcome to the weather. Carol Erickson couldn't be here today, so I'm filling in.

This morning Berks County is getting a tornado.

This afternoon Bucks County will have an earthquake.

This evening Berks, Bucks and Montgomery Counties will have a thunderstorm and you may find you have survived the tornado and the earthquake, but after the insane record rainfall we had in July, all the trees are going to fall over and squash your house and your car and maybe you.

And now the national forecast. Chunks of Florida fell into the ocean yesterday. It was kind of funny, except people died.

#8, Vanya  
page 58

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.