

Information on the Characters in *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*

(Note: Although it helps, you do not *have* to be the age of the character; you have to be able to play the character believably.)

MASHA (age: 45 - 65)

- a Hollywood actress who has met with box office success but now her career is fading with her youth and looks
- still attractive, but unable to hold onto a husband...she has had five!
- achieved her success by being cast in a series of films as a nymphomaniac serial killer
- she regrets never having a role in a classic film or on the stage that would have showcased what she sees as her real acting talents
- self-absorbed, egoistic, often unaware of the feelings of others
- dramatic, grand, can make an entrance and dominate the room
- her boy-toy, Spike, is one way she clings to her youth
- she has supported Vanya and Sonia, her brother and adopted sister, and has paid off the mortgage on the family house which she has now come home to sell.

VANYA (age: 45 - 60)

- Masha's brother
- stayed at home to care for their aging parents.
- thinks he has sacrificed his chance at a fulfilling life.
- stoically accepts the idea that he has no hope for anything better in life.
- secretly harbours the desire to be a playwright
- he is gay but has not lived as a gay man choosing abstinence instead.
- passively accepts that his life has been a sad waste

SONIA (age: 40 - 55)

- Masha and Vanya's adopted sister
- poor self-image; a melancholy, regretful woman
- fears that she too has lost a chance at a happy life by forgoing a career and a life of her own to care for her adoptive parents.
- not as passive or accepting of her life as is Vanya. She is willing to try to find something and/or someone for herself in life.

Note: the above three characters are named after characters in the plays of the Russian playwright, Anton Chekhov, who was a favourite of their parents.

SPIKE: (age: 29)

- a Hollywood actor whose greatest claim to fame is that he was "almost cast" in *Entourage 2*, the sequel to HBO's *Entourage*.
- not very bright, very superficial.
- perpetually cheerful even about the negative things in his life partly because of his youthful persona but mostly because the more serious things in life escape him.
- very aware of his good looks and his six-pack abs and well-toned body that he flaunts by shedding his clothes down to his underwear every chance he gets.
- at 29 he is about to turn 30 but acts as though he is still an energetic and immature 18.
- he flaunts his sexuality and often is locked in passionate embraces with Masha in front of her rather shocked siblings.
- throws himself impulsively and energetically into things.
- can't resist doing calisthenics (push-ups, chin-ups etc) many of which take on a very sexual look ... especially if he has an audience.

Note: If you are reading for this character please wear your tightest "muscle shirt"!!!! You MAY be asked to remove your shirt.

CASSANDRA (age: 30 - 70)

- a cleaning lady
- considers herself a fortune teller/prophet/soothsayer
- a wacky, strange individual, very colourfully dressed
- very over-the-top in her wild prophetic warnings to people about disasters that lie in their future.
- on the Broadway stage she was played as a Jamaican with some of the voodoo customs of that island. We might play her as that or as a gypsy-like character with perhaps a Romanian accent or perhaps as Irish or even Cajun. You should be able to do one of these accents.

NINA (age: 20's)

- a next-door neighbour and wannabe actress
- a huge fan of Masha's
- pretty,
- comes across as a wide-eyed innocent
- loves being with artistic people
- kind, unselfish, enthusiastic, cheerful, positive, optimistic