

Cassandra

VANYA What if she refuses?

SONIA We'll fire her.

VANYA All right. 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.

VANYA 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 of the blue heron as a harbinger of good luck.

Start

Enter CASSANDRA. She's 30-60, 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.” All right?

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.