



Uncle Vanya

Anton Chekhov

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Famous play by the Russian short story writer and playwright. His major plays are frequently revived in modern productions.

Uncle Vanya Details

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"Vanya [to Sonya]: *My child, how heavy my heart is! Oh if you only knew how heavy my heart is!*

Sonya: *What's to be done, we must go on living! We shall go on living, Uncle Vanya. We shall live through a long, long chain of days and endless evenings; we shall patiently bear the trials fate sends us; we'll work for others, now and in our old age, without ever knowing rest, and when our time comes, we shall die submissively; and there, beyond the grave, we shall say that we have suffered, that we have wept, and have known bitterness, and God will have pity on us; and you and I, Uncle, dear Uncle, shall behold a life that is bright, beautiful, and fine. We shall rejoice and look back on our present troubles with tenderness, with a smile—and we shall rest. I have faith, Uncle, I have fervent, passionate faith.... We shall rest!*

We shall rest! We shall hear the angels, and see the heavens all sparkling like jewels; we shall see all earthly evil, all our sufferings, drowned in a mercy that will fill the whole world, and our life will grow peaceful, gentle, sweet as a caress. I have faith.... Poor, poor Uncle Vanya, you're crying.... You have had no joy in your life, but wait, Uncle Vanya, wait.... We shall rest.... We shall rest.... We shall rest!" - Last paragraphs of the play.

(Read this play as a part of The Major Plays)

Lea says

Similar themes as in Three Sisters, but I liked Three Sisters better than Uncle Vanya, even though I really enjoyed this play also.

We have three male characters in existential, middle-life crisis and two females unsatisfied with their lives, but seeking consolation in love, faith in God and ideals. The melancholic and nostalgic atmosphere is present throughout the whole play as well as the sense of tiredness of life.

ASTROFF. ... And then, existence is tedious, anyway; it is a senseless, dirty business, this life, and goes heavily.

HELENA. What a fine day! Not too hot. [A pause.]

VOITSKI. A fine day to hang oneself.

SEREBRAKOFF. I have spent my life working in the interests of learning. I am used to my library and the lecture hall and to the esteem and admiration of my colleagues. Now I suddenly find myself plunged in this wilderness, condemned to see the same stupid people from morning till night and listen to their futile conversation. I want to live; I long for success and fame and the stir of the world, and here I am in exile! Oh, it is dreadful to spend every moment grieving for the lost past, to see the success of others and sit here with nothing to do but to fear death. I cannot stand it!

Liked the contrast between endurance and persistence of nature vs. oblivion of human life that was pointed out a few times. More than in Three Sisters, the resolution of suffering is found in faith in God and the afterlife, and the female characters were the carriers of that world-view. I think a lot of people could resonate to that longing for eternity and fear of being forgotten.

ASTROFF. ... I sat down and closed my eyes—like this—and thought: will our descendants two hundred years from now, for whom we are breaking the road, remember to give us a kind word? No, nurse, they will forget.

MARINA. Man is forgetful, but God remembers.

Existential themes of meaning found in one's work were present as in Three Sisters, with an addition of

discussing the nature of passion as the escape of feelings of boredom, idleness, laziness, and absence of finding the meaning in life. The self-deception we do when we tell ourselves that we love someone is very much real, and we tend to often call love the shallow feelings of romance and give them a significance which they do not have by themselves. The physical attraction based just on someone external beauty or other superficial characteristics is just way too lightly called love.

ASTROFF. ... Stay, I implore you! Confess that there is nothing for you to do in this world. You have no object in life; there is nothing to occupy your attention, and sooner or later your feelings must master you. It is inevitable.

ASTROFF. I love no one, and never shall! Beauty alone has the power to touch me still. I am deeply moved by it. Helena could turn my head in a day if she wanted to, but that is not love, that is not affection—

HELENA.... I swear to you I married him for love. I was fascinated by his fame and learning. I know now that it was not real love, but it seemed real at the time....

In Uncle Vanya I also adored the revelation of the hypocrisy of men in the high position of power that they had due to their privilege, and not their outstanding talents, qualities or creativity. We have to look past someone position in society and think by ourselves critically about their work.

VOITSKI. But I'll tell you something; the man has been writing on art for twenty-five years, and he doesn't know the very first thing about it. For twenty-five years he has been chewing on other men's thoughts about realism, naturalism, and all such foolishness; for twenty-five years he has been reading and writing things that clever men have long known and stupid ones are not interested in; for twenty-five years he has been making his imaginary mountains out of molehills. And just think of the man's self-conceit and presumption all this time! For twenty-five years he has been masquerading in false clothes and has now retired absolutely unknown to any living soul; and yet see him! stalking across the earth like a demi-god!

Sonja was the most successful in finding hope and endurance against all odds and disadvantages and I really felt for her. Her final speech was the great ending to the play. Lots of material to think about for sure.

SONIA. What can we do? We must live our lives. Yes, we shall live, Uncle Vanya. We shall live through the long procession of days before us, and through the long evenings; we shall patiently bear the trials that fate imposes on us; we shall work for others without rest, both now and when we are old; and when our last hour comes we shall meet it humbly, and there, beyond the grave, we shall say that we have suffered and wept, that our life was bitter, and God will have pity on us. Ah, then dear, dear Uncle, we shall see that bright and beautiful life; we shall rejoice and look back upon our sorrow here; a tender smile—and—we shall rest. I have faith, Uncle, fervent, passionate faith. We shall rest. We shall rest. We shall hear the angels. We shall see heaven shining like a jewel. We shall see all evil and all our pain sink away in the great compassion that shall enfold the world. Our life will be as peaceful and tender and sweet as a caress. I have faith; I have faith. [She wipes away her tears] My poor, poor Uncle Vanya, you are crying! You have never known what happiness was, but wait, Uncle Vanya, wait! We shall rest. We shall rest. We shall rest.

The curtain slowly falls.

Nayra.Hassan says

original work ~ in Chekhov's time.

Chekhov and Mamet both write characters that are loaded with life. Both write about contemporary, life in its simultaneous simplicity and complexity. I highly recommend Mamet's translation of **Uncle Vanya**. He has written a beautiful translation.

Mohammed-Makram says

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Jason says

Another great Anton Chekhov play. I'm not really sure what it is I love about Chekhov, though if I had to narrow it down I might attribute that love to some of his more pitiable characters—think Lubov Andreyevna, for example, or Treplev from *The Seagull*. Or I might say that there's a kind of *understatedness* to his plots that bring his plays to life in a way that is often unmatched. There are recurring themes, also, that unify his four major works. The characters in *Uncle Vanya* discuss at length the destructive nature of idleness, as the sisters do in *Three Sisters*. Chekhov was all about dedicating one's life to his or her work, making oneself useful to some degree. There's also a recurring theme of accepting one's station in life and carrying on in the face of adversity. The show must go on; it is the only way we can survive.

I still think *The Cherry Orchard* is his best work, though this one may come in at a close second. Here is my list of Chekhov plays, ranked:

1. *The Cherry Orchard*
2. *Uncle Vanya*
3. *The Seagull*
4. *Three Sisters*

What do *you* think?

david says

Ennui.

From serf to aristocrat, the incessant race to outrun boredom, insignificance, futility.

Insert- histrionics, war, accusation, blame, infatuation, certification, profession, materialism, religion, faith, posterity, captiousness, dependence.

Life. The fabricated rationalizations that constantly strive to alchemize vacuity to consequence.

Ahmad Sharabiani says

???? ???? = Dyadya Vanya = Uncle Vanya, Anton Chekhov

Uncle Vanya (Russian: ????? ?????, translit. Dyadya Vanya) is a play by the Russian playwright Anton Chekhov. It was first published in 1898 and received its Moscow première in 1899 in a production by the Moscow Art Theatre, under the direction of Konstantin Stanislavski. The play portrays the visit of an elderly professor and his glamorous, much younger second wife, Yelena, to the rural estate that supports their urban lifestyle. Two friends—Vanya, brother of the professor's late first wife, who has long managed the estate, and Astrov, the local doctor—both fall under Yelena's spell, while bemoaning the ennui of their provincial existence. Sonya, the professor's daughter by his first wife, who has worked with Vanya to keep the estate going, suffers from her unrequited feelings for Dr. Astrov. Matters are brought to a crisis when the professor announces his intention to sell the estate, Vanya and Sonya's home, with a view to investing the proceeds to achieve a higher income for himself and his wife

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Baktash Mohammadian says

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Davide says

Perturbare assopiti acquerelli

I quattro atti di *Djadja Vanja* sono definiti *Scene di vita di campagna* (e rielaborano qualcosa che ?echov aveva scritto quando non aveva ancora trent'anni, nel 1889).

L'ambientazione è una proprietà di campagna russa (la villa di Serebrjakòv), dove la normalità della «noiosa, stupida, sudicia» vita di provincia (così la definisce uno dei personaggi) è stata sovvertita da qualche tempo dalla presenza del professore di arte in pensione, Aleksàndr Serebrjakòv, capriccioso e dispotico, accompagnato dalla giovane seconda moglie, Elèna Andrèevna, che ha solo ventisette anni.

Normalmente il professore vive in città, e in campagna rimangono Sonja, la figlia avuta dalla prima moglie, e appunto zio Vanja, cioè Ivàn Petròvi? Vojnìzkij, fratello della defunta prima moglie, con la madre Maria Vasílievna (personaggio di contorno, sempre immersa nella lettura di opuscoli, con la senile volontà di

istruirsi, che idolatra il professore e chiama il figlio Jean). Il personaggio esterno, ma amico di famiglia è il dottore, Michaíl Lvòvic Àstrov, fin da subito presentato nel dialogo con la vecchia balia Marina come bello, interessante, ma ormai invecchiato, provato dal duro lavoro che da anni trascina in quella provincia e dalla coscienza di essere diventato anche lui un “bislacco” come quelli che disprezza intorno a sé; anzi arriva a sostenere che «la condizione normale dell'uomo è di esser bislacco».

Il dottore è impegnato nel preservare le foreste e dalle sue parole soprattutto emerge l'immagine di un enorme sfacelo che incombe tutt'intorno all'ambito chiuso della scena nella villa: un mondo di malattie e di lavoratori poveri, ma anche di distruzione dell'ambiente causata da miope sopravvivenza, senza nemmeno la spinta di un'evoluzione “industriale”. Si sta distruggendo tutto, natura e animali; l'uomo non crea nulla ma distrugge quello che gli viene affidato.

C'è infine ancora un personaggio di contorno, il parassita Telèghin, proprietario impoverito, debole, che ha perdonato la moglie che l'ha lasciato per un altro e ha mantenuto i figli non suoi.

In questo microcosmo provvisorio di rapporti interpersonali, assediato dall'interno dalla forza ineluttabile della delusione e dall'esterno da questi accenni catastrofici, si srotola una catena di innamoramenti impossibili: Vanja ama Elena; Sonja, brutta e devota, è innamorata del dottore, il quale a sua volta si invaghisce della bella Elena, che definisce una «rusalca» (rusalka, divinità femminile legata fiumi e laghi; una “ondina”).

rusalche secondo Ivan Kramskoi, 1871

Da qui la lettura di Ripellino, tutta in chiave di opposizione tra gli angeli (Sonja, Vanja) e i demoni (Elena, il professore): «Così un clown e una rusalca perturbano un assopito acquerello».

Ho già fatto fin troppo riassuntone e ovviamente non dirò nulla su come si evolve questa situazione potenziale.

Dico solo che l'attrazione, ciò che si desidera, più ancora che l'amore in sé, è l'immagine di una vita piena, sensata, che riscatti ogni delusione:

«capisci, se fosse possibile vivere il resto della vita in qualche modo, in un modo nuovo. Svegliarsi in un limpido, quieto mattino e sentire che la vita ricomincia di nuovo, che tutto il passato è dimenticato e si è dissolto come il fumo (Piange)».

A questo risponderà la tirata finale di Sonja, di un'efficace eloquenza un po' ubriaca, dove troviamo le parole più famose della pièce in risposta alla domanda «Che fare?»

Ma non le trascrivo...

Ci sono rivelazioni e scontri. Ci sono atti mancati. E c'è il ritorno. Ma è un ritorno all'inizio che sta fuori dal testo, a un prima precedente.

[aggiunta estiva 2017: ieri sera, per strada: ?echov rappresenta the human truth, life itself... e penso: che entusiasmo per la perfezione della quieta disperazione!]