

# **ONE TIME**

by

Richard Lyons Conlon

## ONE TIME

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## ONE TIME

**ONE TIME** premiered on April 5, 2012 at Next Act Theatre, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The production was directed by David Cecsarini.

Scenic Design by Rick Rasmussen, Lighting Design by Mike Van Dreser,

Costume Design by Elsa Hiltner, Properties Design by Nikki Kulas,

Sound Design by David Cecsarini, Jessica Connelly was Stage Manager.

The play featured the following cast:

**Linda Stephens\* as Sonia**

**Jonathan Gillard Daly\* as Mason**

\*Member of Actors' Equity Association

All productions of this play must include the following three credits:

Originally produced by **Next Act Theatre**, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Developed in part at **Chicago Dramatists**, Chicago, Illinois

Developed in part at **Urban Stages**, New York, New York

## ONE TIME

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

SONIA – “One time . . . when I was nineteen . . . I posed in the nude.”

MASON – “One time . . . I had . . . an honest-to-goodness religious epiphany.”

Both Sonia and Mason are in their sixties or older — both are vital, youthful, yearning.

### SETTING

An unspecified location. It could be a couple of outdoor chairs at a coffee house or, more likely, a bench or two in a park.

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# ONE TIME

ACT I  
SCENE I

*MASON is sitting, waiting. SONIA arrives. She begins:*

**SONIA.** One time . . . when I was nineteen, I posed . . . in the nude.

**MASON.** *(Seems startled at first.)* Nude? *(She nods.)* Really. *(A beat.)*  
How nude?

**SONIA.** Pretty nude.

**MASON.** But, exactly how much –

**SONIA.** Does it make a difference?

**MASON.** *(Thinks about it.)* Hell yeah, it makes a difference.

**SONIA.** *(A little offended.)* Well, what would be the –

**MASON.** The degree of explicitness. *(No reply.)* The . . . activity.  
*(No reply.)* Positions. *(Changes tack:)* Photographs or drawings?

**SONIA.** No, it's your turn.

**MASON.** Oh, no-no, I want to hear the rest.

**SONIA.** Maybe. It's your turn now.

**MASON.** You know, I'm surprised you never . . .

*(Pauses, considers. Gathers himself up as if for an announcement:)*

One time . . . I almost very nearly shot someone.

**SONIA.** What! Oh my god! Why?

**MASON.** "Why?"

**SONIA.** Why did you – ?

**MASON.** There was no "why". It was an accident.

**SONIA.** All right – how?

**MASON.** Your turn. How . . . nude?

**SONIA.** No, tell me what happened.

**MASON.** Tell me how nude.

**SONIA.** Completely.

**MASON.** Who'd you pose for?

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**SONIA.** Who'd you shoot?

**MASON.** Almost shoot. Carl Albioni.

**SONIA.** What happened?

**MASON.** Your turn. Photography?

**SONIA.** Yes.

**MASON.** Alone?

**SONIA.** (*A beat.*) Yes.

**MASON.** Really?

**SONIA.** Well . . .

**MASON.** Oh, you got to tell me now.

**SONIA.** No, the shooting story – the whole shooting story.

**MASON.** And you'll give me . . . the whole nudy story?

**SONIA.** Crass. Yes, I will.

**MASON.** (*Takes a moment.*) High school. Carl, and John Schusch, couple so-so friends of mine, owned pistols. They asked me to go target-shooting with them in this old quarry. Naturally, we were drinking.

**SONIA.** Naturally.

**MASON.** After a few rounds we were going up to set up some more bottles.

**SONIA.** For the shooting or the drinking?

**MASON.** Uh-huh. Carl was walking ahead of me. I had his pistol.

I was happily swinging my arm.

**SONIA.** Uh-huh.

**MASON.** And off it went.

**SONIA.** Oh my.

**MASON.** The bullet went right between Carl's legs – exploded into the dirt in front of him.

**SONIA.** Oh my God!

**MASON.** Oh my God is right. I laid the gun down and I've never picked one up since.

**SONIA.** And Carl?

**MASON.** He never turned his back to me again. I can tell you that.

**SONIA.** I should think not.

**MASON.** Well, come on, he knew it was an accident.

**SONIA.** Who knows what else you might attack him with.

**MASON.** (*Stares at her in annoyance.*) I did not attack him.

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**SONIA.** Says you.

**MASON.** Okay . . . your turn.

**SONIA.** Not much to tell.

**MASON.** You always say that. (*A beat.*) Were you alone or not?

**SONIA.** Not.

**MASON.** (*Surprised, interested.*) Man or woman?

**SONIA.** (*Pause.*) Well, both.

**MASON.** (*Very interested.*) Really? (*She doesn't speak.*) Well, come on. What happened?

**SONIA.** I was in college, of course. Our grad assistant requested three students to help on his final project.

**MASON.** Did you have a crush on him?

**SONIA.** No! Maybe a little.

**MASON.** Did you touch? The other two models?

**SONIA.** You're a dirty old man, you know that?

**MASON.** You're the one who posed nude.

**SONIA.** And so did you.

**MASON.** (*This catches him up.*) What are you talking about?

**SONIA.** You told me.

**MASON.** I told you? I told you what?

**SONIA.** It was a figure-drawing class. You don't remember?

**MASON.** When?

**SONIA.** You were just out of college.

**MASON.** No, when did I tell you?

**SONIA.** A while back.

**MASON.** You're sure?

**SONIA.** I never forget anything.

**MASON.** A fine trait in a woman.

**SONIA.** Not what William thought.

**MASON.** I'm not William. I thought I was saving that story. For a special occasion.

**SONIA.** Nope, you told me.

**MASON.** So, anyway, when do I get to see these erotic photos? You bring them with you?

**SONIA.** You'll never get to see them.

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**MASON.** Why not?

**SONIA.** You've proven yourself to be a dirty old man.

**MASON.** Sonia, you've told me just about everything I could possibly imagine about yourself.

**SONIA.** No.

**MASON.** Who were the other two?

**SONIA.** Hmm? Oh, just a couple from my same class. They were "a couple".

**MASON.** And what kind of poses did your little ménage à trois indulge in?

**SONIA.** They were very artistic. Very tasteful.

**MASON.** So, you won't mind showing them off.

**SONIA.** You did it for money.

**MASON.** Yes, I did. So? *(A beat.)* I really told you?

**SONIA.** How else would I know? You got twenty bucks.

**MASON.** You saying I was a whore? That was a lot of money in those days.

**SONIA.** You said you had copies.

**MASON.** I do. I'll show you mine if you show me yours.

**SONIA.** I can't believe you don't remember telling me.

**MASON.** Well, Christ, Sonie, we've told each other a lot of things.

**SONIA.** Yes. Yes, we have. But that's kind of . . . *(A beat.)* I – I got paid, too.

**MASON.** Ah, how much?

**SONIA.** He bribed us with pizza and beer – all we could eat.

**MASON.** You sleep with him?

**SONIA.** I can't believe you asked me that.

**MASON.** Did you? *(No reply.)* Did you sleep with them?

**SONIA.** *(Looks shocked, then smiles ever-so-slightly.)* When did you become such a dirty old man?

**MASON.** I –

**SONIA.** You've always been a gentleman before.

**MASON.** I have not. A gentleman wouldn't listen to some of your lurid stories.

**SONIA.** My lurid stories?

**MASON.** Hey! How come you didn't tell me about this before – like when I told you (which I'm still not sure I did)?

**SONIA.** Why would I?

**MASON.** Seems like a natural thing.

**SONIA.** *(Pauses, becomes solemn.)* It was the time I told you about Emily.



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I had to dig deep for that one.

**MASON.** Yeah, I suppose so. Sorry.

**SONIA.** Sorry for what?

**MASON.** For bringing up Emily.

**SONIA.** You didn't bring her up. I did.

**MASON.** Yeah, I guess that's right. *(A beat. To brighten things up:)*

So, seriously, what happened to the pictures? Anyone else see them? William? Your mother? Sister?

**SONIA.** Oh my God, no. Nobody ever knew about it. And I have no idea what became of the others.

**MASON.** Well, you could probably find them on the Internet now.

**SONIA.** Everybody's on the Internet.

**MASON.** The pictures.

**SONIA.** *(Pauses, a little distressed.)* No! They're ancient.

No one would want to look at an old lady without her clothes on.

**MASON.** You were a young lady then. *(Waits, no response.)*

And I daresay, a mighty fetching young lady at that.

**SONIA.** Fetching – what a strange word to use to call someone attractive.

**MASON.** The point is, I bet you were a pretty hot number.

**SONIA.** Why would you say that?

**MASON.** Because you were the hottest number in the neighborhood when I knew you. And you're still a hot number, baby. And that's the truth. *(A short, sweet silence. She's both slightly offended and slightly flattered. He waits.)*

**SONIA.** I've got another.

**MASON.** Another one-time?

**SONIA.** Yes. I do.

**MASON.** You know the policy.

**SONIA.** Well, to make up for next week.

**MASON.** Why? What's happening next week?

**SONIA.** I'll be gone?

**MASON.** Oh right. Well, I really don't think we need to change things. Just save it.

**SONIA.** It's a good one.

**MASON.** Is it?

**SONIA.** Could be.

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**MASON.** I sense that you really want to tell me.

**SONIA.** No. It's just I feel bad.

**MASON.** Bad?

**SONIA.** About next week.

**MASON.** What have we done other times?

**SONIA.** I don't know that we've ever missed before.

**MASON.** (*Considers a second.*) Okay, let's have it.

**SONIA.** Just like that? "Let's have it!"?

**MASON.** You told me you posed nude before you even sat down.

**SONIA.** (*Pauses.*) Very well.

**MASON.** (*Slightly mocking her.*) "Very well."

**SONIA.** I'm not going to tell you anything if you're going to be like that.

**MASON.** Like what? (*A beat.*) All right.

**SONIA.** Are you ready? (*He nods. She takes a moment; proudly:*)

One time . . . I gave a waiter a hundred dollar tip.

**MASON.** Well, good for you. Outstanding service?

**SONIA.** Average.

**MASON.** Then, why . . . ?

**SONIA.** (*Explains it all:*) William.

**MASON.** Oh! Okay.

**SONIA.** It was our anniversary. Things were already starting to . . .

But, he claimed he had something very special planned.

**MASON.** Claimed?

**SONIA.** I knew he was taking me out for dinner, but I knew I'd be the one who'd have to "make it special".

**MASON.** You are a good woman, Sonia.

**SONIA.** We didn't have much money. It took me three months to save a hundred dollars. That was a lot back then.

**MASON.** It's still a lot.

**SONIA.** The place he took me to – surprise surprise – was not that great. Saint John's Barbeque Heaven. I was not pleased.

**MASON.** I should think not.

**SONIA.** Well, we started bickering, of course – fighting. And I let it slip I had a hundred dollars with me. I had planned a lovely carriage ride and drinks and dessert at Chez Paul.

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**MASON.** Very nice.

**SONIA.** Yes, it was. Very nice. Well, he got very angry. He couldn't believe I was going to "throw away" a hundred dollars. We were saving for a down-payment – for the house on Crescent, as a matter of fact. He wanted me to give him the money, but I refused. (*A beat.*) So, I slipped it to the waiter on the way out.

**MASON.** I can't imagine what he did when he found out.

**SONIA.** (*Smiling slightly.*) Just wait.

**MASON.** Did you tell him?

**SONIA.** When we got home, I said I'd made the whole thing up. That I'd never had a hundred dollars.

**MASON.** (*Considers this.*) And he believed you?

**SONIA.** Good God, no. He went berserk. Started going through my purse. All my things. He ripped my clothes right off me trying to find that hundred dollars.

**MASON.** Jesus – that's horrible.

**SONIA.** What's horrible is I thought we were going to end up having some lovin'. For once. You know --

**MASON.** Wait. He ripped your clothes off.

**SONIA.** He hadn't touched me in months. I wanted some action!

**MASON.** Sonia, a man just cannot do that. It's not allowed.

**SONIA.** No judgments.

**MASON.** I'm not judging.

**SONIA.** You are.

**MASON.** I can't believe you stayed with him after that.

**SONIA.** I don't want to talk about it anymore.

**MASON.** So, what happened? He just finally give up?

**SONIA.** It was after three in the morning when I finally told him I'd given it to the waiter.

**MASON.** And?

**SONIA.** And, he went back the next day, demanding it back. Made a complete ass of himself. They denied they'd gotten a tip like that.

**MASON.** Hmm. So he thought you did make it up?

**SONIA.** (*Slyly.*) He didn't know what to think.

**MASON.** So, did you tip the waiter a C-note? Or did you make it up?

**SONIA.** He never figured it out.

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**MASON.** You never told him?

**SONIA.** Nope.

**MASON.** And, which was it?

**SONIA.** *(She rises.)* I have to go.

**MASON.** Sonia!

**SONIA.** I'll see you, Mason, in two weeks.

**MASON.** Oh, so you're not going to tell me?

**SONIA.** Have a good two weeks.

**MASON.** Wait. What are you doing?

**SONIA.** Just some things.

**MASON.** "Just some things", huh? Is it something you're going to share with me? Some day? Something unique . . . interesting?

**SONIA.** *(Checking her watch, standing.)* Oh, I really have to be going.

**MASON.** You're really not going to tell me, are you?

**SONIA.** You'll owe me two next time.

**MASON.** I will?

**SONIA.** I gave you two today. Pictures and Tip. You just had your one Shooting.

**MASON.** Sonia, I really think you need to show me those pictures.

**SONIA.** Just stop it. That was an entirely different woman.

**MASON.** Exactly. So, why have qualms now? *(A beat.)* Look, I'll start bringing mine . . . every week. You bring yours sometime and then we can swap.

**SONIA.** I'll see you in two weeks, Mason. *(Sonia exits. Mason looks after her for a moment. Lights out.)*

## SCENE 2

*Same location. Mason is already there. Sonia appears.  
Two weeks have passed. Mason is slightly cantankerous.*

**MASON.** I missed you last time.

**SONIA.** You knew I wasn't going to make it.

**MASON.** I was right here, right on time.

**SONIA.** But –

**MASON.** Where were you?

**SONIA.** You don't remember? I told you I wasn't –

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**MASON.** Of course, I remember. All I said was I missed you, I was here, and where were you? None of which implies I forgot you weren't coming.

**SONIA.** Actually, it . . . How have you been?

**MASON.** Don't change the subject.

**SONIA.** What is the subject?

**MASON.** Where you were. You said you'd tell me.

**SONIA.** No, I didn't.

**MASON.** Well, tell me anyway.

**SONIA.** Maybe someday.

**MASON.** Why not today?

**SONIA.** You'd better go first.

**MASON.** What? Why?

**SONIA.** You owe me two.

**MASON.** Two? You know, Sonia, it's getting pretty damn hard to think of something I haven't already told you.

**SONIA.** Tell me why you were here last week when you knew I wouldn't be.

**MASON.** What, I can't leave the house unless it's to meet you?

**SONIA.** Well, go on. Tell me something unique. One time . . .

**MASON.** (*Thinks about it.*) One time . . . I had . . . an honest-to-goodness religious epiphany. Leading to a period of my life when I was going to become a priest.

**SONIA.** You? A priest?

**MASON.** Yes, me a priest. Why not?

**SONIA.** It just doesn't seem like . . . you.

**MASON.** Thanks a lot. I suffered from divine inspiration.

**SONIA.** Mason, I had no idea. Well, what happened?

**MASON.** We'd been having horrible weather for days. Bad storms — no let-up. It seemed like the end of the world — like we'd never see the sun again. One day, I was walking down this alley on my way home. This was when the clouds decide to break. The sun emerges and the entire sky explodes with magnificent colors I'd never even dreamed of before. As if that wasn't inspiring enough, several shafts of light suddenly pierce through openings in the clouds, producing divinely shaped pillars of awesomeness.

**SONIA.** Oh my. That does sound inspiring.

**MASON.** I don't mind telling you, it took my breath away. Well, I knew —

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suddenly knew – that I was being called, that God wanted me to be a priest. And I knew – suddenly knew – that nothing could stop me from my noble calling.

**SONIA.** Mason, you do still surprise me.

**MASON.** Do I?

**SONIA.** What happened?

**MASON.** “What happened?”?

**SONIA.** What’d you do next?

**MASON.** Next? I went home.

**SONIA.** I mean, how far did you get to becoming a priest?

**MASON.** How far? That was it.

**SONIA.** I don’t understand. That was it?

**MASON.** Yes. How much more do you need?

**SONIA.** What did you do when you got home?

**MASON.** *(Thinks.)* Think I ate some cereal and read comics.

**SONIA.** How old were you?

**MASON.** Seven or eight.

**SONIA.** Are you saying you never thought about becoming a priest beyond that moment?

**MASON.** Why? Does that disappoint you?

**SONIA.** Yes.

**MASON.** Well, Christ, Sonia, I was just a kid.

**SONIA.** You said there was a “period of your life” when you were going to be a priest.

**MASON.** That was it!

**SONIA.** Thirty seconds is hardly “a period”.

**MASON.** It was more like thirty minutes. But there was more intensity and spirituality in those thirty minutes than most divinely called people feel in a lifetime.

**SONIA.** How do you know that?

**MASON.** I know it.

**SONIA.** *(Sits silently, seemingly mulling it over.)* I must say, Mason, you’ve had better stories.

**MASON.** That’s a great story. *(No reaction.)* I’ve had worse.

**SONIA.** Such as?

**MASON.** *(He stares at her for a beat.)* You weren’t thrilled when I told

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you about my old man having diarrhea and vomiting at the same time and flushing his teeth down the toilet.

**SONIA.** That wasn't even about you.

**MASON.** Of course it was. He was my father. (*No answer.*) Are you ready?

**SONIA.** I'll go, but you still owe me two.

**MASON.** I do not.

**SONIA.** Do too. (*Mason sits waiting for her. She decides to proceed.*)

One time . . . when I was a little girl –

**MASON.** (*Reacts with disappointment.*) Aahhhh!

**SONIA.** What is the matter with you?

**MASON.** I was hoping for something a little . . . racy.

**SONIA.** Since when is "racy" a requirement?

**MASON.** Since you mentioned you have nude photos of yourself.

**SONIA.** You see, this is probably why I never told you that before.

**MASON.** Why?

**SONIA.** It was first grade. The first week of first grade. All the kids put their little brown paper lunch bags on top of the coat rack – as instructed – as I'd done the first couple of days. When it came time for lunch, I couldn't find mine. All the other kids got theirs and moved to the lunchroom. I found myself alone and all the bags were gone.

**MASON.** Someone had taken yours.

**SONIA.** Gee, you think?

**MASON.** Sarcasm does not become you. I've told you that.

**SONIA.** Well, I panicked. Not only would I not have lunch but I knew I'd be in trouble with the nuns. My God, they were terrifying.

**MASON.** I can attest to that.

**SONIA.** So, I just took off. I ran out of the school and all the way home. Had to be over two miles. I couldn't breathe, and I got one of those pains in my side. That really scared me. My mother was so angry when she saw me. She yelled at me: "What are you doing here? Can't I be alone for two minutes?"

**MASON.** How sympathetic.

**SONIA.** It was a different time.

**MASON.** Today, the parents would be calling their attorneys. (*A beat.*) So, what happened?

**SONIA.** She gave me a spanking, then a peanut butter and jelly sandwich,

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and then sent me back to school.

**MASON.** You had to walk back? By yourself?

**SONIA.** Of course. When I got back, my lunch bag was on the coat rack, right where I'd left it.

**MASON.** What did the nuns have to say?

**SONIA.** They hadn't even noticed I was gone.

**MASON.** Really.

**SONIA.** But I had to tell them what happened. My mother said I had to.

**MASON.** And?

**SONIA.** And I got one of the worst spankings of my entire life.

**MASON.** *(Shaking his head, laughing.)* Oh Christ, Sonia, that's really terrible.

**SONIA.** It's not funny.

**MASON.** No, not at all. Sorry. Oh you poor kid. Panic, terror, hunger, physical exhaustion and, on top of it all, two spankings.

**SONIA.** It was not a good day.

**MASON.** God, those nuns were awful.

**SONIA.** Don't say that! They were wonderful, dedicated women.

**MASON.** Come on, they were evil, sexually frustrated, old – .

**SONIA.** *(Appalled, angry.)* Stop it! *(Stares at him unhappily for a beat.)*

They were good women, with tough jobs. They had to be tough.

Anyway, I hope you're happy with that. Sorry there were no sexy parts.

**MASON.** It was fine, Sonia. Just fine.

**SONIA.** Your turn.

**MASON.** *(Excited.)* Okay. One time – this isn't what I'd planned, but your story reminded me – one time . . . Oh, this is great – actually, this was first grade, too.

*(Stops, wants to tell it well.)* I was a wild hellion. My terrifying nun – Sister Angelica – beat the living crap out of me. Daily. But I just couldn't help myself. Today, I'd be diagnosed as –

**SONIA.** Hyperactive.

**MASON.** Right. And they'd have me all drugged out on –

**SONIA.** Ritalin.

**MASON.** Right. Anyway, one day she calls Sister Turkey into the room –

**SONIA.** Sister Turkey?

**MASON.** That's what we called her. She was the scariest nun of the bunch. Or do they come in flocks? A flock of nuns?



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**SONIA.** Mason, what happened?

**MASON.** She didn't say a word. Just set a jelly jar on Sister Angelica's desk and crossed her arms. The jar had a couple lettuce leaves in it.

**SONIA.** Lettuce?

**MASON.** Sister Angelica leaned over to me – I'll never forget her rancid nun breath – and said, "If you don't start behaving yourself, Sister Turkey is going to miniaturize you and keep you in this jar on her desk."

**SONIA.** Wait. She said what?

**MASON.** She was going to miniaturize me.

**SONIA.** *(Laughing.)* Oh my God! That's terrible. Did it work?

**MASON.** Hell yeah, it worked. I was the best little Catholic boy goody two-shoes you ever saw . . . for about two weeks. I was terrified of being trapped in that jar with that giant turkey face staring at me every day.

**SONIA.** That was really imaginative of the good sister.

**MASON.** Imaginative nothing. I still believe she could do it.

**SONIA.** *(Laughs.)* You never know.

**MASON.** Besides, I hate lettuce. *(Someters down. Then, almost accusingly:)* So, where were you?

**SONIA.** It bothers you, doesn't it?

**MASON.** You've never kept anything from me before.

**SONIA.** You really think that?

**MASON.** Oh, cruel woman.

*(SONIA turns away, takes a few steps, opens her purse and removes a photograph. She turns, faces MASON, the photo pressed against her bosom.)*

**SONIA.** I brought you something.

**MASON.** *(Keenly interested.)* Is that what I think it is?

**SONIA.** What do you think it is?

**MASON.** Oh please, don't play coy with me.

**SONIA.** Do you want to see it?

*(He simply gives her a look. She hesitates, walks around a bit.*

*Finally, she places it face-down near him. She sits – away from him – and watches and waits. He takes his time about it – maybe to savor the moment, maybe to drive her crazy. Finally, he slides it toward him and picks it up, holding it down without looking at it. Sonia is growing agitated and is about to speak, when he finally looks at the photo. Mason has little or no*

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*reaction for some time – again, Sonia is anxious.)*

**MASON.** What the hell do you call this?

**SONIA.** You said you wanted to see it.

**MASON.** You're completely covered.

**SONIA.** I was nude.

**MASON.** You're covered by a – a – curtain!

**SONIA.** Scarf!

**MASON.** And where are the other two? The couple?

**SONIA.** *(Hurt, angry.)* We took a lot of pictures.

**MASON.** And?

**SONIA.** And this is the one I felt comfortable sharing with you.

**MASON.** *(Staring a beat.)* Thank you. Thank you so very much.

**SONIA.** You don't like it?

**MASON.** No.

**SONIA.** *(Reaching for it.)* Give it to me.

**MASON.** *(Pulls it out of her reach.)* No, it was a gift.

**SONIA.** I was not giving it to you. I was just letting you see it.

**MASON.** Oh? "Letting me see it"? How nice of you. You were deigning to let the dirty old man see a picture of you wearing a curtain.

**SONIA.** It's a scarf. *(He stares at the picture in silence.)* You don't recognize it?

**MASON.** *(Puzzled.)* Recognize it?

**SONIA.** You don't.

**MASON.** Why on Earth would I recognize a scarf?

**SONIA.** It's the scarf I wore at the Hendersons – the time they hosted the block party and the entire neighborhood got blotto.

**MASON.** Hendersons?

**SONIA.** In the cul de sac? *(He shrugs.)* You don't remember that party? *(Shakes his head no.)* You don't remember the scarf? *(Shakes his head no.)* Oh. *(Silence.)*

**MASON.** Are you going to tell me?

**SONIA.** Tell you what?

**MASON.** Jesus.

**SONIA.** What's wrong?

**MASON.** Wrong? Nothing's wrong. Why would anything be wrong?

**SONIA.** *(Stung to silence for a bit.)* You act like something's wrong.

**MASON.** First, you won't tell me where you were last week. Then, you

## ONE TIME

show up with this Sunday school picture. Then, you make a big deal out of some scarf and refuse to tell me why.

**SONIA.** I didn't make a big deal out of it. You did.

**MASON.** You know what you've been acting like, Sonie?

Like a teenage girl, trying out her teasing skills for the first time.

**SONIA.** I don't have to stay here and be insulted.

**MASON.** I thought we had an adult friendship.

**SONIA.** We do when you act like an adult.

**MASON.** When I act like an adult?

**SONIA.** I thought you wanted more than friendship.

**MASON.** *(This brings him up short.)* Jesus. I thought we agreed we weren't going to talk about that again.

**SONIA.** Did we?

**MASON.** You shut me down pretty good, as I recall. Many years ago.

A couple more times now.

**SONIA.** Maybe we should just call it a day.

**MASON.** Fine. *(Neither moves to leave.)*

**SONIA.** May I have my picture please?

**MASON.** No, I'm keeping it.

**SONIA.** It's not yours. It doesn't belong to you.

**MASON.** You promised me.

**SONIA.** I promised no such thing.

**MASON.** Well, I'm keeping it.

**SONIA.** Mason . . . *(A beat. Raising her voice:)* I want my property back – right now!

**MASON.** Sonie!

**SONIA.** You have no right to keep my property!

**MASON.** Jesus! Okay. Keep your voice down. Here. *(She takes it. Looks at it. Puts it away in her bag. Takes a few steps away, hesitates, then exits. He watches her without expression, then:)* We're on for next week, though, right? I'll be here, Sonia. Next week?

ONE TIME

**SCENE 3**

*Mason enters . . . tentatively. He wanders around, sits for a bit, then stands and walks around a little more. He is off to one side, looking away, when Sonia arrives on the other side. He turns and they look at each other a moment. He smiles; she doesn't.*

**MASON.** You came.

**SONIA.** Of course.

**MASON.** I wasn't sure if you – .

**SONIA.** *(A beat.)* Why wouldn't I?

**MASON.** Well, I'm very happy you did.

**SONIA.** *(A beat.)* Me too. Just another one-time, isn't it?

**MASON.** Well, after last time . . .

**SONIA.** Once in all this time. That's not so bad.

**MASON.** Beats my marriage – once every four and a half minutes.

**SONIA.** Both our marriages.

**MASON.** Look, can we just forget about – ? Just go back to – ?  
Like nothing happened?

**SONIA.** Like nothing happened . . . *(She seems lost in thought. Then she speaks.)* One time, I . . .

**MASON.** Sonia, please, before you . . . I want to apologize. I had no right to – .

**SONIA.** It's forgotten, Mason.

**MASON.** I really hate the idea of your being upset with me.

**SONIA.** Me too.

**MASON.** Well, I'm sorry.

**SONIA.** Okay.

**MASON.** *(A beat.)* You were about to . . .

**SONIA.** Yes, well . . . hmm, are you ready? I'm ready. *(He nods yes.)*  
One time . . . I . . . broke someone's nose – a man's nose.

**MASON.** What? Really! You did not.

**SONIA.** Oh, I did. And knocked him unconscious.

**MASON.** Accident?

**SONIA.** Not in the least. Well, partly.

**MASON.** Okay . . . William?

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**SONIA.** *(A beat. A sly smile.)* How'd you guess?

**MASON.** Wishful thinking.

**SONIA.** Really?

**MASON.** Well, let's hear the bloody details.

**SONIA.** Oh, it was bloody all right. He had quite the gusher.

**MASON.** What'd you hit him with? Right cross? Uppercut? Frying pan?

**SONIA.** Elbow.

**MASON.** Deadly.

**SONIA.** Not quite.

**MASON.** Well, let's have it.

**SONIA.** He was being angry and unreasonable and had a hold of me.

**MASON.** He had a hold of you?

**SONIA.** In the kitchen on Crescent. Do you remember how that was set up?

**MASON.** Not remotely.

**SONIA.** We had a butcher's block in the middle. I was grabbing at it to pull away from him, but every time I thought I was out of his grasp, he still had me.

**MASON.** Sums up the marriage overall. Doesn't it?

**SONIA.** I suppose it does.

**MASON.** Then what?

**SONIA.** He was making me so angry, I just wanted to punch him right in his ugly face. I got in some scrapes as a kid, you know. I was a pretty tough cookie.

**MASON.** I have no doubt.

**SONIA.** So, I had my arms up – *(She holds up her bent arms, elbows out.)* -- and was flinging them about, like this and – *(She jams her elbow behind her.)* -- bam! right in the ole proboscis.

**MASON.** Bam! Oh man! That's great. Just what that asshole deserved.

**SONIA.** Well, wait.

**MASON.** There's more?

**SONIA.** *(She nods, gets ready to tell the rest.)* He starts screaming bloody murder. He grabs one of my nice, new dish towels and shoves it in his bloody face. I knew I was in for it. One lucky punch –

**MASON.** Elbow.

**SONIA.** – but once he collected himself, there was going to be hell to pay.

**MASON.** Oh dear God, Sonia, I could have helped. I was just –

**SONIA.** I wasn't going to wait around to have the shit kicked out of me.

## ONE TIME

Pardon my French. *(Pauses, expecting a comment. Then, laughing:)*

So, I did actually pick up the frying pan.

**MASON.** You really did? The frying pan?

**SONIA.** It was right there. Cast iron – heavy. Old school.

**MASON.** Uh-huh.

**SONIA.** He was bending over holding his nose and I just let him have it – both hands on the handle – right up the side of the head, as they say.

**MASON.** Jesus Christ!

**SONIA.** He just . . . dropped like, you know . . . a sack of potatoes.

**MASON.** Oh my God, Sonia – that is the best thing I’ve ever heard! Was he out? Of course, he was out. How long was he out for? *(She is lost in thought.*

*He calms down.)* Sonia? Sonia, are you all right? How long was he – Sonia?

**SONIA.** What? Oh, I have no idea. I – I left.

**MASON.** You left?

**SONIA.** I did.

**MASON.** You left him lying there?

**SONIA.** Of course not. I went to my sister’s and she called for an ambulance.

**MASON.** Sonie, my dear, that is the best you’ve ever given me.

**SONIA.** Is it?

**MASON.** I don’t know how I never heard about it. Didn’t anyone know?

In the neighborhood? *(She is affected by her own story, lost in thought. She answers his question with a shrug, or by throwing up her hands slightly.)*

Sonie . . . *(No answer.)* Sonie? Well, that was the end, wasn’t it?

**SONIA.** The end?

**MASON.** Of you and William?

**SONIA.** I never saw him again.

**MASON.** Never?

**SONIA.** I came back two days later – with Sylvia – and – I had no idea what to expect . . .

**MASON.** And?

**SONIA.** And, the kitchen was covered with blood – the floor, the butcher block. Some on the counters, the cabinets. Of course, it was mostly dry by then.

Sylvia was very upset when she saw it.

**MASON.** I’m sure you were, too.

**SONIA.** What surprised me was how completely he was cleaned out. All his stuff.

## ONE TIME

Clothes, toiletries, some furniture. He was gone. I mean, GONE! (*Silence.*)

**MASON.** That's amazing.

**SONIA.** What is?

**MASON.** Everything. (*She lowers her head shyly.*) So, how long till you – ?

**SONIA.** I never heard from him again.

**MASON.** So you said. (*Pause.*) I remember when I heard you two were splitting. It was a shock. I mean, I was glad you wouldn't be with William anymore, but I never hoped you two would . . .

**SONIA.** "Never hoped"?

**MASON.** Well, I have to admit . . .

**SONIA.** What?

**MASON.** Never mind.

**SONIA.** Admit what? Mason?

**MASON.** It's not important.

**SONIA.** Now who's being a tease?

**MASON.** (*A pause.*) Well, obviously . . . there was something appealing about you two breaking up.

**SONIA.** That's really awful.

**MASON.** I know, I know. (*A beat.*) But, it's not like you were happy – either of you. (*A beat.*) So . . . I have to admit, I did . . . fantasize a bit about you, being available.

**SONIA.** You did?

**MASON.** You can't be surprised.

**SONIA.** (*With anger.*) I believe you were still married at the time.

**MASON.** Look, I'm just talking a reflexive male fantasy here.

No harm in it. I never acted on it, did I?

**SONIA.** Didn't you?

**MASON.** That was before you decked him. (*A beat.*) I'm sorry if this offends you. I suppose I thought you'd find it amusing.

**SONIA.** Amusing?

**MASON.** That I fantasized about you.

**SONIA.** I suppose I don't.

**MASON.** Sorry. (*Silence.*)

**SONIA.** What did you fantasize about me?

**MASON.** Well, come on, Sonie, you and I were always – .

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**SONIA.** And now I was going to be the hot-to-trot divorcee.  
So I'd fall into your arms.

**MASON.** That's not what I –

**SONIA.** What was your fantasy about me?

**MASON.** Look, Sonie –

**SONIA.** That I'd ask you to come in to fix a squeaky mattress?  
In the master bedroom?

**MASON.** Sonie, come on.

**SONIA.** Or that you'd catch me sunbathing nude?

**MASON.** Look, I really don't deserve this.

**SONIA.** What gave you the right to have fantasies about me?

**MASON.** Jesus, what is wrong with you?

**SONIA.** Nothing's wrong. I'm fine. Can't you tell?

**MASON.** Not really. *(A pause.)* Well, should I go?

**SONIA.** Yes, I think we're done.

**MASON.** No, should I go ahead with my one-time?

**SONIA.** Oh. *(A beat.)* I suppose so.

**MASON.** *(Trying to lighten things up:)* I've got to tell you, though,  
I've got nothing nearly as good as yours.

**SONIA.** I'm sure it's fine. As long as it's not some lurid fantasy.

**MASON.** *(A beat.)* Why did you tell me this now? After all this time?

**SONIA.** I didn't think of it. *(Thinks.)* I suppose I simply wasn't ready.

**MASON.** You weren't ready?

**SONIA.** I suppose not.

**MASON.** So, what made you ready now?

**SONIA.** Go.

**MASON.** Wait – wait – wait – wait – wait! *(She waits. He takes a moment.)*  
What was William angry about, anyway?

**SONIA.** What?

**MASON.** *(A little exasperated.)* Why was he so pissed off?

**SONIA.** *(Pause.)* That is a whole other one-time . . . for another time.

**MASON.** Oh come on. Just tell me – not the whole story. Just a synopsis.  
Or a five-word description. How about a title? Give it a title.

**SONIA.** A title?

**MASON.** Of course. Why didn't we ever think of that before?



## ONE TIME

**SONIA.** What?

**MASON.** We should give them titles.

**SONIA.** Why?

**MASON.** Why not? They're our little short stories, aren't they? Short stories have titles. What's the title, Sonia? "William's Anger"? "Sonia's Revenge"? What had you done to make him so very angry?

**SONIA.** (*Annoyed.*) I didn't do anything.

**MASON.** All right. Just the title. We're doing titles now, right?

**SONIA.** (*Angry.*) No, we are not – that's the stupidest idea I've ever heard. Just go, Mason. Let's just get it over with. Give it a title if you want. I'm done for the day.

**MASON.** (*Angry.*) Okay. One time – when I was a married man – I made a pass at a friend of mine – she was a married woman.

**SONIA.** Stop it. I'm not listening to this.

**MASON.** It's my story. You have to listen.

**SONIA.** I've heard it before.

**MASON.** She rebuffed my advance. (*She glares at him.*) End of story. (*A beat.*) Title: "Mason Rebuffed".

**SONIA.** (*A pause.*) That's a horrible title.

**MASON.** It's my first attempt.

**SONIA.** (*Making to go.*) Make another. It was a horrible story, too. I'm going. I won't be here next week, by the way.

**MASON.** What do you mean, you won't be here? Why not?

**SONIA.** (*A few steps away.*) I just won't.

**MASON.** And you weren't going to tell me? "By the way"? At least last time I had some warning.

**SONIA.** A week is a pretty good warning. Good-bye. (*She starts walking away.*)

**MASON.** Are you going to tell me what you're doing? (*Calling after her.*)

Well, maybe I won't be here in two weeks! (*She's gone; he watches after her.*) Jesus, did I just say that? (*Sits.*) Jesus, do you ever stop being a teenager?

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ONE TIME

ONE TIME