

ELLA/VANYA

Okay. Great.

Now... You don't have to raise your hands for this one, but...

How many of you were lying? Either because of who you are here with, or how you want to be thought of in the world, or because of my feelings, or...

Okay, here's my point:

As far as I can tell, we're all just in a twisty, impossible, fucked up... yes, okay, *perdurable miasma* of "unmanageable urges" vs. "moral imperatives", and instead of being able to just... *connect*... just be in a kind and loving communion with our fellow human beings, we're forever wrapped up in this... *sexual dance macabre*... this *ridiculous relational gavotte*... this endless pursuit (and retreat) of *unexpressed, unfulfilled, unexplored, unknowable needs and desires and frustrations and*

↓ START

3.2.

A WAY

[VANYA appears with manic, twisted energy. He is frantic and determined, now that he knows she is assailable, to win her for himself...]

VANYA Okay, look—

ELLA Oh, no...

VANYA [Launching right in...] So there has to be a way, right? A a a a

ELLA Vanya....

VANYA no no, hold on... a a a a magic word... a gesture or or or *something* so compelling that you'll suddenly see me in a whole new light, and just *begin* to *imagine* the that there's the merest possibility of you... *loving me back*.

ELLA [To audience] You see what I mean?

VANYA There must be. Some... *avenue*? Some... amazingly persuasive argument...

ELLA Argument?

VANYA Or story? Or or or... *insight*? A view into the previously locked room of my soul that will touch some new place in you, put my finger on your button...

ELLA ...Vanya...

VANYA ...I mean... A story or or or anecdote that will make what at this moment seems... you know... the usual... *pathetic* and *repellant* and whatnot... suddenly seem *moving* and *endearing* and so wonderfully human that your icy heart will / melt and and and

ELLA [A tiny sarcastic toss away...] "Icy heart" is nice...

VANYA you will see me as I am on the inside, and / begin to--

ELLA And what is that?

VANYA What?

ELLA What is that? What are you like on the inside that is so different from what you are like on the outside?

VANYA Uh...

ELLA You've said / this over and

VANYA It's not that--

ELLA No wait, let me talk. You've said this over and over in all kinds of odd little ways. "The *real* me." "What I'm really like on the inside." "Who I *really* am." So fine, great, I'm ready, I'm all ears. And eyes. And... whatever: *What are you? What is so fucking different about you on the inside...?*

VANYA Well, I can't just suddenly explain—

ELLA Why not? Why the hell not?

I've listened to you talk and talk and whine and moan off and on for... a decade or so... and you know, I think I have a pretty good idea of who you are and how you operate and what you think and feel and want, and how you... present yourself in the world. By all the standard, accepted measures, I Know You. I know you pretty darn well.

Not *intimately*, maybe, but... pretty darn well.

So... I've rambled here. I've given you some time to gather your addled and surprised wits. So... enlighten me. What are you like inside?

What is going on in there that is SO different that you want me to know?

[A fairly protracted pause...]

VANYA

Oh my God.

Nothing.

↑END

That's your answer.

Not a thing.

You're absolutely right. *This* is the "real me". This is it. This is all there is. This is me. And if I were you... I wouldn't be interested in me either.

ELLA

Vanya...

VANYA

I swear to God it all just hit me. Just *now*. For the first time...

I think my whole life I've been saying to myself—not just about you, but all the way back as far as this kind of thing goes, I've always thought "she" would choose me if only she really *knew me*. If she understood me. If only she knew what I'm really like, what I'm like deep down inside. How I mean so well. How much I want to do the right thing. How good my heart is.

How much I hurt. How confused and lost I am... How hopeful... And maybe those are even true, maybe... But those are no more the "real me" than the lonely, whining, dissatisfied, pathetic *putz* who pesters you constantly with his inconvenient love.

I swear I've always thought that the internal me was the "real me" and this guy—the one in the world, the one just "doing things" was... I don't know... a facsimile. Not important. Just "the guy out there doing things"...

But now... I mean, Jesus, if I'm *that* guy, that *external* guy— just the sum total of the shit I *do*— then Christ, I just want to scrape out what left of my heart with a grapefruit spoon... Because it's what you *DO* that matters, right? That's actually what I've always liked best about Jewish theology. No sinning in your heart. No being punished for your thoughts. It's actions! Not what you say, or think, or *feel*, but what you *DO*. And if the real me is this guy, this *schmuck* who just wanders through the world bothering people... Then I am so royally fucked I don't what to do.