

The three sisters summary



The part of Masha is a female who starts at the age of 21 and in act 3 aged 35. Her clothes are in the colour black so we learn from this she is a melancholy and mysterious character. She is the middle sister out of the three and is married to Kulygin. Kulygin is a high schoolteacher.

She starts by reading a book, whilst whistling. This gives the immediate impression she is quite solemn and subdued. She then says a quote which she repeats later in the play.

" By a curving shore stands a green oak trees, Bound with the golden chain Bound with the golden chain...."

Her character seems down at the point because she feels trapped in her marriage to Kulygin. She married him at a young age of 18 and thought he was quite a wise clever man but now she feels stuck in her relationship with him.

We learn this later in the play, but at the moment, the character of Masha is dull and unenthusiastic.

I would act the part as if I was uninterested in my surroundings and what is going on. I would act unfocused towards the fact it is my sister's name day and I would be indulged in my own pity. She feels trapped in her marriage to him, and is depressed by the reality of life, that she is stuck in this marriage, and in Moscow.

I would say lines quite pessimistically and would move around the stage slowly and with my head slightly tilted up as in to be looking to the heavens for help. This would show the audience I am unhappy, and am feeling low.

The audience would learn I am unhappy, and would learn soon that it is from my surroundings by which I feel this.

Masha does not mind showing her emotions, so I would not hold back my feelings whilst saying my lines and acting in general.

The audience would learn straight away that Masha is sad and unhappy with her life.

Also in act 1, we find out Masha's thoughts of Protopopov.

" I can't stand Protopopov..... You shouldn't invite him."

I would say this line with quite passion, as Masha's character seems quite open with what she thinks. I would seem quite angered at the thought of him. Also, because Masha is already in a bad mood, the mention of someone who she doesn't like upsets her more than usually. I would show this if I was playing the part.

This shows the audience she is quite a good judge of character as she later on learns about the affair he is having with Natalya, her brother's to-be wife.

They also learn a lot from Masha's derelict that she is to the point and honest with her thoughts.

When the part of Veshinin enters, I would make a dramatic change in Masha's tone of voice, and presence on stage. This is because Veshinin is from Moscow, so the 3 sisters are automatically drawn to him. Also, Masha is interested in Veshinin as more than a friend from the beginning, and I would portray this from the moment he walks on stage.

We learn this when she becomes excited by having a conversation with Veshinin about Moscow.

" The both laugh delightedly.

Masha (animatedly) Ah, I remember!....."

I would act this very animated as it says in the directions, and be intrigued about learning about Veshinin. I would forget about the others on stage around me, especially my husband, and stay interested in Veshinin.

My face would now be lifted, and focused on Veshinin, my eyes widely opened and a smile on my face.

All three sisters have an obsession with Moscow and this would come across in her keenness towards Veshinin.

The audience would see that Veshinin's entrance has changed Masha's feelings. They have changed from feeling depressed and down to animated and awake.

She emphasises this point when she says:

" I'll stay for lunch."

I would say this line quite abruptly as I want everyone to know I am staying. Also it shows the audience how strong my interest is in Veshinin.

The audience would also see me take my hat off, which emphasises the fact I'm staying.

Near the end of the act she tells Kulygin she is not going. When he asks why she says:

" Oh right, I'll ho. Just leave me alone, please."

I would say this line whilst not looking at Kulygin, to show that I don't care about him. I will say it with no animation on my face and would be getting cross with him. I feel he is a burden to me so I show this by getting annoyed with him. My tone of voice would sound aggressive and angered, and I would be speaking a little louder than usually. I would pause between saying " alone" and " please", to emphasise the please. This would also so my frustration with him to the audience. This tells the audience Kulygin doesn't interest Masha any more, and she no longer is in love with him.

At the end of act1 she repeats the quote:

" By curving shore stands a green oak tree, bound with a golden chain..."

Masha is about to be leaving and going back to her house with her husband whom she does not love any more. I would show this by looking depressed and saying this line quite slowly and be thinking of a better life for me as Masha.

In act2, Masha is on stage with Veshinin. They are alone, talking about how unhappy they both are. Masha says

"... terribly learned, clever and important, so I thought. And now I don't..."

I would say this so Veshinin would feel sorry for me and know that I am welcome for something to happen between the two of us.

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I would look into his eyes when I talk which would show the audience I love him, and look coldly when I talk of my husband so he knows I don't have any feelings towards Kulygin any more.

This shows the audience Masha is interested in Veshinin but doesn't want any one to hear to see, as this conversation takes place in the dining room of the Prozorov's house.

Later on in this conversation Veshinin tells Masha he loves her. When he kisses her hand she moves as she knows what she is doing is wrong. When he says it, she says:

" When you speak like that, I laugh, I don't know why....."

If I was playing Masha, I would make my face look brighter, and I would star into his eyes lovingly. Because of her character, I feel she is the type who cannot hide her true emotions, so at this precise moment of intensity between the two of them, she probably wouldn't care what she looked like. The audience would see the love Masha feels for Veshinin through how she looks at him.

When Veshinin leaves during the act, Masha becomes aggressive.

" Oh, get away! Stop pestering me, leave me in peace...."

As I mentioned earlier, her character is quite open with her emotions. Because Veshinin, has left Masha is now upset and angered. I would say this line very snappy and loudly as my whole frame of mind has moved from love to anger. The tone of my voice would have completely changed. They would

now be shorter and snappier. This is so the audience can see Masha is upset with Veshinin's exit.

When Masha enters Olga and Irina's room during act3, after Veshinin's speech about how wonder he feel life is, her and Veshinin echo each others line:

" Tram-tam-tam..."

But this part in the play, Veshinin and Masha both like one another, and this small conversation is a special language they are speaking to each other.

Masha is very happy as Veshinin is present in the room, and that he loves her back. From her entrance, I would play the part as if I am happy, quite dreamy, calmly. I would act quite excited as I would be having this secret language with the man I love, but no one else in the room knows what we are talking about.

The audience would see the secret verbal affair going on, and would see how no one knows anything is going on.

After Veshinin exit's Masha becomes bored, and low again.

"... I'm so very, very bored!.."

And then she brings up how her brother Andrei is in dept from his gambling problem. Due to Veshinins's exit, Masha focuses on the bad parts of her life again. I would start saying the lines now to the point, and as if I don't care who hears. She is bored now as Veshinin has now left, and so she feels depressed now, and as she is depressed she is thinking of depressing things.

I would tell them about Andrei's gambling problem quite bluntly. This would show the audience the effect Veshinin's presence has on Masha.

A little later on in the act, after Kulygin has exited, she confesses to her sisters about her love to Veshinin.

" I've a confession to make.... I can't keep it any longer...."

I would say this conversation with a huge passion as Masha is very in love with Veshinin, and so even talking about him would excite her. I feel she wants something to happen and so coming clean with it to her sisters may hopefully mean that something good may come of it, but this is not so. It's the first bit of happiness any of the 3 sisters have had since they have moved away from Moscow, and that is a reason why this short conversation with Olga and Masha is very important to Masha's part in the play. She is the only 1 out of the 3 sisters who experiences true happiness during the duration of the play. The fact that she is actually in love with someone, and for them to love her back, is extraordinary to them. Ironically, Masha is the only one who cannot move back to Moscow, as she is married to Kulygin, who works in the school in the area they live in now.

This upsets Masha more, and is another reason why her love for Veshinin is so important, because it is the only happiness she has had since she has moved. But the reality kicks in when they hear someone approaching the room. She has to now go back to her husband who she doesn't love and pretend she hasn't shared any of this information with her sisters. I would now act solemn and upset again, as once again, I, as Masha, would have to be putting up with sharing my life with a man who I do not love. The

audience would see how much Masha loves Veshinin by the passion in her voice and actions when telling her sisters about her feelings.

In Act4, it is time for Veshinin to say good bye, as this is the day when all the soldiers are leaving. The atmosphere on stage during this act is a lot calmer than the other 3, as everyone on stage knows the stage in their lives with the soldiers it is nearly over.