

MANA

By Amalia Balanou

Characters

Sophia. Middle aged woman

Marianne. College student

George. Man near his sixties

Setting

A spacious apartment in Athens

Summary: The play portrays the everyday life of a couple waiting for their drug addict daughter to return home. The memory loss of the mother after the last fight with the daughter does not allow her to remember that she is the one who killed her own child. After a nightmare/ flashback the mother recovers part of her memory and the father reveals the hidden truth to her.

Scene 1

Lights come up.

Onstage. A living room. A couch and chairs gathered together around a table. On the table, there is a bottle of whiskey and two glasses. On the left there is a bedroom with a wooden bed. A picture of the family is hanged on the wall. On the right, there is a big door.

SOPHIA. It's been late. Too late. Why is she always so late?

GEORGE. Sophia relax. She will be back soon.

SOPHIA. Doesn't she know that I'm waiting for her? That I'm worried?

GEORGE. Of course she knows. Let's just go to bed.

SOPHIA. So this is the way, your way, of dealing with this situation? Do you think that this is the typical behavior of a father waiting for his daughter to come back? What if something happened to her?

GEORGE. We would know. Bad news spreads within seconds.

SOPHIA. I'm a mother. Do you think that all these cheap excuses can relax me?

GEORGE. I know that they don't. But it's the only way.

SOPHIA. No, it's not the only way. Or, at least the right one. That's what you always did. Your family, our Marianne, is the last thing that deserves your attention. And you just sit here, in front of me, trying to persuade me that you care. But you don't! So ironic.

GEORGE. You're not the only one who loves her.

SOPHIA. Then why don't you prove your love? Have you ever thought that she might be afraid of you, of your reaction? You have never accepted who she really is. She is our daughter. And she is a drug addict. And we should love her for her weaknesses. She needs our love and compassion.

GEORGE. I show my love. But in a different way.

SOPHIA. Your way doesn't seem to work. I'm going to talk to her. I know... sometimes she's overreacting to your remarks. But a father and a daughter should be united. Do it for me, if not for her. For once, be gentle with our fragile girl. When she arrives, don't fight with her. At least not tonight.

GEORGE. And what if she asks for money?

SOPHIA. Then give her!!!!

GEORGE. Did you forget that she robbed our bakery? Our own family business? When all the money will be wasted, she will leave us alone.

SOPHIA. You're so cruel. My Marianne needs help. And I'm willing to offer her whatever she needs. I would sacrifice my life for her. It's your fault that she's not visiting us anymore.

GEORGE. Well, you can't always protect her from everything. Before going to college, she was living in a bubble. Even drugs seemed like a joke to her. She has no idea what real life is.

SOPHIA. So what do you suggest? To leave her alone?

GEORGE. Of course not. We're doing our best. You're a great mother. Now... let's just go to bed.

SOPHIA. I'm not going anywhere. Let's wait for her (*She sits on the couch*). Together. Just for tonight.

GEORGE. We've been waiting for her for the last six months. Every night the same thing.

SOPHIA. Please George, not the same story again. I'll make breakfast for you and Marianne just like the old good times. Just wait.

GEORGE. I'm tired of this...

SOPHIA. What's wrong with you? She will be back. I know. She loves me.

GEORGE. (*He stands up*) Honey you're tired. Let's just...

SOPHIA. Wait! I think that I can hear her steps on the stairs.

GEORGE. It's not our daughter.

SOPHIA. But last time she forgot her keys. What if the same thing happened tonight?

GEORGE. Knocking on the door and shouting like crazy in the middle of the night is probably the easiest thing for her to do.

SOPHIA. She is a child. She makes mistakes. I am here to forgive her.

GEORGE. You're mistaken. She's not a child anymore. She is an adult and she needs to take care of herself. Anyway... *(He moves to the table. He grabs a glass and he pours whiskey)*. I'll have a glass of whiskey and I'll go to bed. I want to relax. I want to forget. It's just another night. Another one of these senseless nights.

SOPHIA. Glass of whiskey? It's been so long since the last time you had one.

GEORGE. It helps me to forget.

SOPHIA. Strange... this bottle reminds me of something absolutely repulsive. I don't know why.

GEORGE. You're too tired. You don't know what you are saying.

SOPHIA. Maybe you're right. Please, if Marianne comes, wake me up. I want to see her.

GEORGE. Don't worry. I will.

(Sophia moves to the bedroom. After a few moments, George follows her. She has nightmare).

Scene 2

(Marianne knocks on the door. Darkness in the living room).

MARIANNE. Open the door! Is anybody in here? Can you hear me?

(lights on)

GEORGE. Who is it?

SOPHIA. Marianne, our daughter. She forgot her keys. I'll open the door.

GEORGE. Wait! Don't you even dare! She remembered to come home after a whole week that she is missing... I bet everyone has heard her screams.

SOPHIA. What should I do then? Leave her outside? That is not what parents do.

(Marianne's loud voice is heard in the background)

GEORGE. Maybe it's time to give her a lesson. I know that the only reason of her visit is money.

SOPHIA. But she's our daughter. This is the last time we are doing this. Please...

(Sophia opens the door hesitantly).

MARIANNE. Locking me outside? Not a good idea!

SOPHIA. Dear please sit down. Have you eaten anything? Where have you been?

I've been waiting for y...*(Marianne interrupts her).*

MARIANNE. Stop it. It's none of your business.

GEORGE. If you don't care about me, then show some respect to your mother who's waiting for you every single night. If you are about to stay, you will follow our rules.

MARIANNE. You, old man! I'm tired of this place. I'm just going to take some stuff and some money and I'm leaving this hell forever!

GEORGE. That's what you said last time. But here you are again. Do you think that you can fool me? I'm not like your mother.

SOPHIA. Please sweetheart don't!

(Marianne starts looking for money. She throws everything down. She breaks things).

MARIANNE. Where did you hide the money this time?

GEORGE. No money for you. Not tonight.

MARIANNE. Mum... where is the money?

SOPHIA. I... I don't have any left.

MARIANNE. Don't lie to me.

SOPHIA. Please don't make it that difficult.

MARIANNE. So you're on his side? Against your own child?

SOPHIA. This is for your own good. Trust me.

MARIANNE. You don't know what's good for me. Just give me the money or I will break everything in the house.

GEORGE. This is your own house as well

MARIANNE. This place? With you over our heads? Telling us what to do? I can't breathe in here!

GEORGE. You have taken advantage of everything and now you are taking advantage of your own blood. No money for you.

(Marianne keeps breaking things. After a few moments she takes a knife and she attacks her father).

SOPHIA. Oh God!!! What are you doing? Put that knife down!

MARIANNE. Give me the money and you will never see me again!

SOPHIA. My dear child... You took it all. Remember? Our bakery that you robbed last week?

MARIANNE. I know nothing.

SOPHIA. I know. Now leave your father. For God's sake!

GEORGE. She won't do this. I know her.

MARIANNE. Maybe I was not clear enough. You give me the money or I kill you!

(George tries to get away. Sophia and Marianne fight. Sophia takes the bottle of whiskey. Darkness. Only the sound of the glass breaking signifies the death of Marianne).

Scene 3

(Bedroom. Sophia wakes up from her nightmare shouting.)

GEORGE. What's the matter? Are you alright?

SOPHIA. What's that smell? Have you been drinking?

GEORGE: A little... Another nightmare?

(Sophia remains still).

SOPHIA. Did Marianne come back?

GEORGE. Not tonight.

SOPHIA. I hate this smell. It reminds me of blood.

GEORGE. Nonsense. Go back to sleep.

SOPHIA. But the nightmare was so vivid... so cruel.

GEORGE. You can tell me.

SOPHIA. What would you do for money? Would you sacrifice a person you love?

GEORGE. I don't get all these things.

SOPHIA. What if Marianne asked for money? Would you give her?

GEORGE. It depends.

SOPHIA. Depends on what? She's our daughter.

GEORGE. You know... Even if she had all the money, it would not have been enough.

SOPHIA. Is that an excuse?

GEORGE. Let's just sleep.

SOPHIA. You're so selfish. I know that you wouldn't give her a penny, even if her life depended on that.

GEORGE. You're so stubborn. Just tell me more about your nightmare.

SOPHIA. It seemed like a flashback. I killed my daughter and you did nothing to stop me.

GEORGE. So...

SOPHIA. Tell me that this was only a nightmare. That I hate the smell of whiskey for any other reason.

GEORGE. Maybe it's time to tell you the truth. You are now prepared for that. I've been waiting for this moment for so long.

SOPHIA. I don't want to hear you!

GEORGE. You will. Marianne is not coming back. You know better than anyone else that we tried to keep her alive. But it was not enough. Her passion for drugs was bigger than her passion for life. I assure you that you did your best. And you saved our lives.

SOPHIA. So my nightmare is a memory?

GEORGE. Yes... unfortunately during the fight you hit your head and you lost a part of your memory. Since then, every night you wait for Marianne.

SOPHIA. Why didn't you give her the money?

GEORGE. There is no coming back.

(Sophia falls on the fall. She's desperate).

SOPHIA. Why didn't you tell me earlier? How could you leave me here waiting for her...

GEORGE. I was afraid that you would reveal the truth. Then I would lose the only person that I have in my life.

SOPHIA. You have lost me anyway.

(Sophia exits).

(Darkness).

End

