

# THE 27 CLUB

By,

Rita Anderson

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**\*CHARACTERS**

ANNE SEXTON	American Confessional poet. Plays 46.
SYLVIA PLATH	American poet, peers with Sexton. Plays 30.
AMY WINEHOUSE	troubled British singer. Plays 27.

\*This is a fictionalization of real artists and casting is open in regards to race, and a diverse cast is preferred.

**SETTING:** Waiting Room of the Afterlife.

**TIME:** Limbo

**SCRIPT NOTE:**

/(dialogue)/ = Dialogue overlaps. Characters each start before the other finishes.

One. Limbo. 60s music plays while ANNE SEXTON reads an old LIFE magazine.

Limbo resembles the bright reception area at a dentist's office with rubber-looking couches or orange chairs. Two doors are staged or implied: one leads to interior (INT) offices. The other is exterior (EXT).

The music changes to "REHAB" by Amy Winehouse. ANNE looks up, puzzled.

A new magazine about AMY WINEHOUSE is slid under EXT door.

ANNE jumps to retrieve it and moves to EXT door to catch the messenger.

ANNE (to OS)

Hello?!

*(She peers out.)*

I said, Hello? Is anybody out there? (to self) I don't know how they do that . . .

Silence.

ANNE

And, what is taking Sylvia so long? "The Plath hath disappear-eth."

ANNE moves to INT door.

ANNE (yells OS)

Hello, Sylvia, darling! Are you alright?

Nothing.

ANNE shrugs, sitting again to study the new magazine.

ANNE

Magazines are so vapid these days—and who is this "Amy Winehouse"? Suppose I could try the crossword, while I'm waiting. But I've lost my pen. Where is my pen?

SYLVIA PLATH enters from INT door.

[Both women wear vintage dress.]

SYLVIA

Anne Sexton, what are you doing on all fours?! Have you finally and totally lost your marbles?

ANNE jumps up and bumps her head.

ANNE

No, my pen. What good is a writer without a pen! –And don't you "Anne Sexton" me, Sylvia Plath! Where have *you* been?

SYLVIA

I went to look for someone in charge, Anne. As we discussed!

ANNE

That was 12 years ago, Sylvia.

SYLVIA

No way. –Was it really?

ANNE

I have been waiting for your return for 12 years now.

SYLVIA

Well, we've been waiting here for so long *with no word* that I had to take matters into my own hands.

ANNE

*And??* I don't see anyone with you, Sylvia. --You didn't find an administrator?!

SYLVIA

I found zero people of any kind—anywhere.

ANNE

Then just who is running this place? And, where are we, anyways?

ANNE climbs the furniture, looking for cameras or spy equipment.

SYLVIA

We've been through this, Anne. The magazines date back to the 60s, our time.

ANNE lifts the new magazine.

ANNE

Then what do you make of this? It's from the year (change to year you're in) 2019.

SYLVIA  
“2019”?!

ANNE  
It just arrived.

ANNE and SYLVIA study the magazine.

SYLVIA  
*That’s* what year it is? (reading) “Amy Winehouse Wins Another Posthumous Award for Sales.” --This saucy tart is what passes for entertainment now?

ANNE  
She’s like a slutty skeleton with plastic bazooms! –But, look.  
The beehive is still in fashion.

ANNE pats her own hairdo.

SYLVIA  
So, what do you think all this means?

ANNE smokes and paces.

ANNE  
What is the last thing you remember, Sylvia?

SYLVIA  
I don’t want to go through this again.

ANNE  
It’s painful—but important. What is the last thing you remember before waking up *here*?

SYLVIA  
I had two children, a boy and a girl.

ANNE  
In the early 1960s, yes. –You and I met at a poetry event, the only ladies in with Boston’s best!

SYLVIA  
That’s right. I found your work too “confessional” and you encouraged me to write more like a “woman.”

ANNE  
You weren’t feeling well/

SYLVIA

*/Again* no. Things were over between Ted and me.

ANNE

Oh, back then, many of us were depressed/

SYLVIA

*/Sedated/*

ANNE

*/Or* in therapy. I was the “triple threat” of all three! (laughs)  
But there was a lot to be depressed about.

SYLVIA

I wasn't handling the break up well but I'd gotten in touch with my anger.  
–Do you know, I'd worn myself out getting Ted published? I submitted *his* work,  
at the expense of my own. Who does that? And did he appreciate my efforts?  
No, he got bored and moved on to someone else.

ANNE

Well. He did it to *her* too! That girl became his new wife, and she followed  
you into the--. Nevermind.

SYLVIA

*Assia* did? She followed me where?

ANNE

Oh, it's too tragic to mention. “Amore, Roma”!

SYLVIA

“Amore, Roma”?

ANNE

It's a palindrome. The same words forward and back.

SYLVIA

I spill my guts and you spout gibberish?

ANNE

Thought the expression fit. Like goodbye to love.

SYLVIA

Well. It's rude to ask a question and not listen to the answer.

ANNE

Ooh, just one more: “RATS LIVE ON NO EVIL STAR”!

SYLVIA

“Rats”? Are you saying, Ted was a rat?

ANNE

It’s another palindrome, my favorite. “Rats live on no evil star.”  
I was proud of that one.

*(SYLVIA sits, defeated.)*

Don’t stop, Sylvia. We were getting somewhere! Your memory  
hasn’t been this sharp in decades.

*(SYLVIA shakes her head.)*

“--A dog! A panic in a pagoda.” Sorry!  
My mind plays word games when stressed.

SYLVIA

Well, you’d better make it stop.

ANNE

*(nods)*

So, what do you remember about, say, 1963?

ANNE looks expectantly at SYLVIA.

SYLVIA

1963? I don’t know, why?

ANNE pulls out a magazine but hides it  
behind her back.

ANNE

Okay then, what’s the first year you remember being here?

SYLVIA jumps up, pacing.

SYLVIA

Didn’t the Beatles come from England? No, wait! --Those men landed on the moon.

ANNE

That happened, yes. But *after* you came here.

SYLVIA

Then why do I remember it?

ANNE points at the magazines.

ANNE

Because you read about those events. Here.

SYLVIA

Are you saying, I've been here, waiting at the dentist's office—since 1963?!

ANNE

Yes and no.

SYLVIA

“Yes and no”?

ANNE

You *have* been here since '63. But this isn't the dentist's—although the resemblance is uncanny.

SYLVIA

Tell me where we are.

ANNE

Can you recall how long you were here? Before I arrived?

SYLVIA

*Before* you arrived? But you were here first!

(*ANNE shakes, No.*)

But you're older than me, no offense.

ANNE

I lasted longer, yes. But I didn't get here until 1974. 11 years after you.

ANNE hands SYLVIA the magazine about Sylvia's death in 1963.

SYLVIA

I died in 1963? I'm *dead*?!

ANNE

Welcome to the club.

SYLVIA

That can't be. Here, feel this. That's flesh. That's bone.

ANNE

Yeah? What's the last thing you ate?

(*SYLVIA can't answer.*)

Haven't had a plump blueberry or the sweet taste of steak in--.  
Well, in the 40 years I've been in limbo here.

SYLVIA

Are you saying I haven't eaten in 50 years? That I'd be over 80 years old?

ANNE

Those are the positives! We stay thin without hunger. And time stands still, which is great because I hated aging.

SYLVIA

I've been waiting *here* longer than I was alive?

ANNE

I know. And I'm not quite sure what the hold up is.

ANNE lifts an old fur coat.

SYLVIA

My coat!

ANNE

It's my coat. Well, Mother's originally. I wore it on *arrival*.

SYLVIA

Not *my* coat? But, I remember it being cold./

ANNE

/Winter of '63 was the coldest it had been in 100 years/

SYLVIA  
(proud)

/We lived in Yeats' house!/

ANNE

/You had no phone. And the kids were sick./

SYLVIA

/The pipes froze. I was cold. --That must be why I turned on the oven./

ANNE

--The *oven*?! If you remember the oven, Sylvia, then we are really cooking with steam now, aren't we?

SYLVIA

But I didn't bake anything. And, why would I remove the oven racks?

ANNE

Just keep trying, Sylvie! (big revelation) I think remembering is our way out.