The Cherry Orchard

by Anton Chekhov

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Act I

A room, which has always been called the nursery. One of the doors leads into Anya's room. Dawn, sun rises during the scene. May, the cherry trees in flower, but it is cold in the garden with the frost of early morning. Windows closed.

Enter Dunyasha with a candle and Lopahin with a book in his hand.

Lopahin: The train's in, thank God. What time is it?

Dunyasha: Nearly two o'clock puts out the candle. It's daylight already.

Lopahin: The train's late! Two hours, at least yawns and stretches. I'm a pretty one; what a fool I've been. Came here on purpose to meet them at the station and dropped asleep. … Dozed off as I sat in the chair. It's annoying. … You might have waked me.

Dunyasha: I thought you had gone listens. There, I do believe they're coming!

Lopahin: Listens. No, what with the luggage and one thing and another a pause. Lyubov Andreyevna has been abroad five years; I don't know what she is like now. … She's a splendid woman. A good-natured, kindhearted woman. I remember when I was a lad of fifteen, my poor father—he used to keep a little shop here in the village in those days—gave me a punch in the face with his fist and made my nose bleed. We were in the yard here, I forget what we'd come about—he had had a drop. Lyubov Andreyevna—I can see her now—she was a slim young girl then—took me to wash my face, and then brought me into this very room, into the nursery. "Don't cry, little peasant," says she, "it will be well in time for your wedding day" … a pause. Little peasant. … My father was a

peasant, it’s true, but here am I in a white waistcoat and brown shoes, like a pig in a bun shop. Yes, I’m a rich man, but for all my money, come to think, a peasant I was, and a peasant I am turns over the pages of the book. I’ve been reading this book and I can’t make head or tail of it. I fell asleep over it a pause.

Dunyasha: The dogs have been awake all night, they feel that the mistress is coming.

Lopahin: Why, what’s the matter with you, Dunyasha?

Dunyasha: My hands are all of a tremble. I feel as though I should faint.

Lopahin: You’re a spoilt soft creature, Dunyasha. And dressed like a lady too, and your hair done up. That’s not the thing. One must know one’s place.

Enter Epihodov with a nosegay; he wears a pea-jacket and highly polished creaking top-boots; he drops the nosegay as he comes in.

Epihodov: Picking up the nosegay. Here! the gardener’s sent this, says you’re to put it in the dining-room gives Dunyasha the nosegay.

Lopahin: And bring me some kvass.

Dunyasha: I will goes out.

Epihodov: It’s chilly this morning, three degrees of frost, though the cherries are all in flower. I can’t say much for our climate sighs. I can’t. Our climate is not often propitious to the occasion. Yermolay Alexeyevitch, permit me to call your attention to the fact that I purchased myself a pair of boots the day before yesterday, and they creak, I venture to assure you, so that there’s no tolerating them. What ought I to grease them with?

Lopahin: Oh, shut up! Don’t bother me.

Epihodov: Every day some misfortune befalls me. I don’t complain, I’m used to it, and I wear a smiling face.

Dunyasha comes in, hands Lopahin the kvass.

Epihodov: I am going stumbles against a chair, which falls over. There! As though

triumphant. There you see now, excuse the expression, an accident like that among others. … It's positively remarkable goes out.

Dunyasha: Do you know, Yermolay Alexeyevitch, I must confess, Epihodov has made me a proposal.

Lopahin: Ah!

Dunyasha: I'm sure I don't know. … He's a harmless fellow, but sometimes when he begins talking, there's no making anything of it. It's all very fine and expressive, only there's no understanding it. I've a sort of liking for him too. He loves me to distraction. He's an unfortunate man; every day there's something. They tease him about it—two and twenty misfortunes they call him.

Lopahin: Listening. There! I do believe they're coming.

Dunyasha: They are coming! What's the matter with me? … I'm cold all over.

Lopahin: They really are coming. Let's go and meet them. Will she know me? It's five years since I saw her.

Dunyasha: In a flutter. I shall drop this very minute. … Ah, I shall drop.

There is a sound of two carriages driving up to the house. Lopahin and Dunyasha go out quickly. The stage is left empty. A noise is heard in the adjoining rooms. Firs, who has driven to meet Madame Ranevsky, crosses the stage hurriedly leaning on a stick. He is wearing old-fashioned livery and a high hat. He says something to himself, but not a word can be distinguished. The noise behind the scenes goes on increasing. A voice: "Come, let's go in here." Enter Lyubov Andreyevna, Anya, and Charlotta Ivanonva with a pet dog on a chain, all in travelling dresses, Varya in an outdoor coat with a kerchief over her head, Gaev, Semyonov-Pishtchik, Lopahin, Dunyasha with bag and parasol, servants with other articles. All walk across the room.

Anya: Let's come in here. Do you remember what room this is, mamma?

Lyubov: Joyfully, through her tears. The nursery!

Varya: How cold it is, my hands are numb. To Lyubov Andreyevna. Your rooms, the white room and the lavender one, are just the same as ever, mamma.

Lyubov: My nursery, dear delightful room. … I used to sleep here when I was little … cries. And here I am, like a little child … kisses her brother and Varya, and then her brother again. Varya's just the same as ever, like a nun. And I knew Dunyasha kisses Dunyasha.

Gaev: The train was two hours late. What do you think of that? Is that the way to do things?

Charlotta: To Pishtchik. My dog eats nuts, too.

Pishtchik: Wonderingly. Fancy that!

They all go out except Anya and Dunyasha.

Dunyasha: We've been expecting you so long takes Anya's hat and coat.

Anya: I haven't slept for four nights on the journey. I feel dreadfully cold.

Dunyasha: You set out in Lent, there was snow and frost, and now? My darling! Laughs and kisses her. I have missed you, my precious, my joy. I must tell you … I can't put it off a minute. …

Anya: Wearily. What now?

Dunyasha: Epihodov, the clerk, made me a proposal just after Easter.

Anya: It's always the same thing with you … straightening her hair. I've lost all my hairpins … she is staggering from exhaustion.

Dunyasha: I don't know what to think, really. He does love me, he does love me so!

Anya: Looking towards her door, tenderly. My own room, my windows just as though I had never gone away. I'm home! Tomorrow morning I shall get up and run into the garden. … Oh, if I could get to sleep! I haven't slept all the journey, I was so anxious and worried.

Dunyasha: Pyotr Sergeyevitch came the day before yesterday.

Anya: Joyfully. Petya!

Dunyasha: He's asleep in the bath house, he has settled in there. I'm afraid of being in their way, says he. Glancing at her watch. I was to have waked him, but Varvara Mihalovna told me not to. Don't you wake him, says she.

Enter Varya with a bunch of keys at her waist.

Varya: Dunyasha, coffee and make haste. … Mamma's asking for coffee.

Dunyasha: This very minute goes out.

Varya: Well, thank God, you've come. You're home again petting her. My little darling has come back! My precious beauty has come back again!

Anya: I have had a time of it!

Varya: I can fancy!

Anya: We set off in Holy Week—it was so cold then, and all the way Charlotta would talk and show off her tricks. What did you want to burden me with Charlotta for?

Varya: You couldn't have travelled all alone, darling. At seventeen!

Anya: We got to Paris at last, it was cold there—snow. I speak French shockingly. Mamma lives on the fifth floor, I went up to her, and there were a lot of French people, ladies, an old priest with a book. The place smelt of tobacco and so comfortless. I felt sorry, oh! so sorry for mamma all at once, I put my arms round her neck, and hugged her and wouldn't let her go. Mamma was as kind as she could be, and she cried. …

Varya: Through her tears. Don't speak of it, don't speak of it!

Anya: She had sold her villa at Mentone, she had nothing left, nothing. I hadn't a farthing left either, we only just had enough to get here. And mamma doesn't understand! When we had dinner at the stations, she always ordered the most

expensive things and gave the waiters a whole rouble. Charlotta's just the same. Yasha too must have the same as we do; it's simply awful. You know Yasha is mamma's valet now, we brought him here with us.

Varya: Yes, I've seen the young rascal.

Anya: Well, tell me—have you paid the arrears on the mortgage?

Varya: How could we get the money?

Anya: Oh, dear! Oh, dear!

Varya: In August the place will be sold.

Anya: My goodness!

Lopahin: Peeps in at the door and moo's like a cow. Moo! Disappears.

Varya: Weeping. There, that's what I could do to him shakes her fist.

Anya: Embracing Varya, softly. Varya, has he made you an offer? Varya shakes her head. Why, but he loves you. Why is it you don't come to an understanding? What are you waiting for?

Varya: I believe that there never will be anything between us. He has a lot to do, he has no time for me … and takes no notice of me. Bless the man, it makes me miserable to see him. … Everyone's talking of our being married, everyone's congratulating me, and all the while there's really nothing in it; it's all like a dream. In another tone. You have a new brooch like a bee.

Anya: Mournfully. Mamma bought it. Goes into her own room and in a lighthearted childish tone. And you know, in Paris I went up in a balloon!

Varya: My darling's home again! My pretty is home again!

Dunyasha returns with the coffeepot and is making the coffee.

Varya: Standing at the door. All day long, darling, as I go about looking after the house, I keep dreaming all the time. If only we could marry you to a rich man, then I should feel more at rest. Then I would go off by myself on a pilgrimage to Kiev, to

Moscow … and so I would spend my life going from one holy place to another. … I would go on and on. … What bliss!

Anya: The birds are singing in the garden. What time is it?

Varya: It must be nearly three. It's time you were asleep, darling going into Anya's room. What bliss!

Yasha enters with a rug and a travelling bag.

Yasha: Crosses the stage, mincingly. May one come in here, pray?

Dunyasha: I shouldn't have known you, Yasha. How you have changed abroad.

Yasha: H'm! … And who are you?

Dunyasha: When you went away, I was that high shows distance from floor. Dunyasha, Fyodor's daughter. … You don't remember me!

Yasha: H'm! … You're a peach! Looks round and embraces her: she shrieks and drops a saucer. Yasha goes out hastily.

Varya: In the doorway, in a tone of vexation. What now?

Dunyasha: Through her tears. I have broken a saucer.

Varya: Well, that brings good luck.

Anya: Coming out of her room. We ought to prepare mamma: Petya is here.

Varya: I told them not to wake him.

Anya: Dreamily. It's six years since father died. Then only a month later little brother Grisha was drowned in the river, such a pretty boy he was, only seven. It was more than mamma could bear, so she went away, went away without looking back shuddering. … How well I understand her, if only she knew! A pause. And Petya Trofimov was Grisha's tutor, he may remind her.

Enter Firs: he is wearing a pea-jacket and a white waistcoat.

Firs: Goes up to the coffe-pot, anxiously. The mistress will be served here puts on

white gloves. Is the coffee ready? Sternly to Dunyasha. Girl! Where's the cream?

Dunyasha: Ah, mercy on us! Goes out quickly.

Firs: Fussing round the coffeepot. Ech! you good-for-nothing! Muttering to himself. Come back from Paris. And the old master used to go to Paris too … horses all the way laughs.

Varya: What is it, Firs?

Firs: What is your pleasure? Gleefully. My lady has come home! I have lived to see her again! Now I can die weeps with joy.

Enter Lyubov Andreyevna, Gaev and Semyonov-Pishtchik; the latter is in a short-waisted full coat of fine cloth, and full trousers. Gaev, as he comes in, makes a gesture with his arms and his whole body, as though he were playing billiards.

Lyubov: How does it go? Let me remember. Cannon off the red!

Gaev: That's it—in off the white! Why, once, sister, we used to sleep together in this very room, and now I'm fifty-one, strange as it seems.

Lopahin: Yes, time flies.

Gaev: What do you say?

Lopahin: Time, I say, flies.

Gaev: What a smell of patchouli!

Anya: I'm going to bed. Good night, mamma kisses her mother.

Lyubov: My precious darling kisses her hands. Are you glad to be home? I can't believe it.

Anya: Good night, uncle.

Gaev: Kissing her face and hands. God bless you! How like you are to your mother! To his sister. At her age you were just the same, Lyuba.

Anya shakes hands with Lopahin and Pishtchik, then goes out, shutting the door

after her.

Lyubov: She’s quite worn out.

Pishtchik: Aye, it’s a long journey, to be sure.

Varya: To Lopahin and Pishtchik. Well, gentlemen? It’s three o’clock and time to say goodbye.

Lyubov: Laughs. You’re just the same as ever, Varya draws her to her and kisses her. I’ll just drink my coffee and then we will all go and rest. Firs puts a cushion under her feet. Thanks, friend. I am so fond of coffee, I drink it day and night. Thanks, dear old man kisses Firs.

Varya: I’ll just see whether all the things have been brought in goes out.

Lyubov: Can it really be me sitting here? Laughs. I want to dance about and clap my hands. Covers her face with her hands. And I could drop asleep in a moment! God knows I love my country, I love it tenderly; I couldn’t look out of the window in the train, I kept crying so. Through her tears. But I must drink my coffee, though. Thank you, Firs, thanks, dear old man. I’m so glad to find you still alive.

Firs: The day before yesterday.

Gaev: He’s rather deaf.

Lopahin: I have to set off for Harkov directly, at five o’clock. … It is annoying! I wanted to have a look at you, and a little talk. … You are just as splendid as ever.

Pishtchik: Breathing heavily. Handsomer, indeed. … Dressed in Parisian style … completely bowled me over.

Lopahin: Your brother, Leonid Andreyevitch here, is always saying that I’m a lowborn knave, that I’m a moneygrubber, but I don’t care one straw for that. Let him talk. Only I do want you to believe in me as you used to. I do want your wonderful tender eyes to look at me as they used to in the old days. Merciful God! My father

was a serf of your father and of your grandfather, but you—you—did so much for me once, that I've forgotten all that; I love you as though you were my kin … more than my kin.

Lyubov: I can't sit still, I simply can't … jumps up and walks about in violent agitation. This happiness is too much for me. … You may laugh at me, I know I'm silly. … My own bookcase kisses the bookcase. My little table.

Gaev: Nurse died while you were away.

Lyubov: Sits down and drinks coffee. Yes, the Kingdom of Heaven be hers! You wrote me of her death.

Gaev: And Anastasy is dead. Squinting Petrushka has left me and is in service now with the police captain in the town takes a box of caramels out of his pocket and sucks one.

Pishtchik: My daughter, Dashenka, wishes to be remembered to you.

Lopahin: I want to tell you something very pleasant and cheering glancing at his watch. I'm going directly … there's no time to say much … well, I can say it in a couple of words. I needn't tell you your cherry orchard is to be sold to pay your debts; the 22nd of August is the date fixed for the sale; but don't you worry, dearest lady, you may sleep in peace, there is a way of saving it. … This is what I propose. I beg your attention! Your estate is not twenty miles from the town, the railway runs close by it, and if the cherry orchard and the land along the river bank were cut up into building plots and then let on lease for summer villas, you would make an income of at least 25,000 roubles a year out of it.

Gaev: That's all rot, if you'll excuse me.

Lyubov: I don't quite understand you, Yermolay Alexeyevitch.

Lopahin: You will get a rent of at least twenty-five roubles a year for a three-acre plot from summer visitors, and if you say the word now, I'll bet you what you like

there won't be one square foot of ground vacant by the autumn, all the plots will be taken up. I congratulate you; in fact, you are saved. It's a perfect situation with that deep river. Only, of course, it must be cleared—all the old buildings, for example, must be removed, this house too, which is really good for nothing, and the old cherry orchard must be cut down.

Lyubov: Cut down? My dear fellow, forgive me, but you don't know what you are talking about. If there is one thing interesting—remarkable indeed—in the whole province, it's just our cherry orchard.

Lopahin: The only thing remarkable about the orchard is that it's a very large one. There's a crop of cherries every alternate year, and then there's nothing to be done with them, no one buys them.

Gaev: This orchard is mentioned in the Encyclopaedia.

Lopahin: Glancing at his watch. If we don't decide on something and don't take some steps, on the 22nd of August the cherry orchard and the whole estate too will be sold by auction. Make up your minds! There is no other way of saving it, I'll take my oath on that. No, no!

Firs: In old days, forty or fifty years ago, they used to dry the cherries, soak them, pickle them, make jam too, and they used—

Gaev: Be quiet, Firs.

Firs: And they used to send the preserved cherries to Moscow and to Harkov by the wagon-load. That brought the money in! And the preserved cherries in those days were soft and juicy, sweet and fragrant. … They knew the way to do them then. …

Lyubov: And where is the recipe now?

Firs: It's forgotten. Nobody remembers it.

Pishtchik: To Lyubov Andreyevna. What's it like in Paris? Did you eat frogs there?

Lyubov: Oh, I ate crocodiles.

Pishtchik: Fancy that now!

Lopahin: There used to be only the gentlefolks and the peasants in the country, but now there are these summer visitors. All the towns, even the small ones, are surrounded nowadays by these summer villas. And one may say for sure, that in another twenty years there'll be many more of these people and that they'll be everywhere. At present the summer visitor only drinks tea in his verandah, but maybe he'll take to working his bit of land too, and then your cherry orchard would become happy, rich and prosperous. …

Gaev: Indignant. What rot!

Enter Varya and Yasha.

Varya: There are two telegrams for you, mamma takes out keys and opens an old-fashioned bookcase with a loud crack. Here they are.

Lyubov: From Paris tears the telegrams, without reading them. I have done with Paris.

Gaev: Do you know, Lyuba, how old that bookcase is? Last week I pulled out the bottom drawer and there I found the date branded on it. The bookcase was made just a hundred years ago. What do you say to that? We might have celebrated its jubilee. Though it's an inanimate object, still it is a book case.

Pishtchik: Amazed. A hundred years! Fancy that now.

Gaev: Yes. … It is a thing … feeling the bookcase. Dear, honoured, bookcase! Hail to thee who for more than a hundred years hast served the pure ideals of good and justice; thy silent call to fruitful labour has never flagged in those hundred years, maintaining in tears in the generations of man, courage and faith in a brighter future and fostering in us ideals of good and social consciousness a pause.

Lopahin: Yes. …

Lyubov: You are just the same as ever, Leonid.

Gaev: A little embarassed. Cannon off the right into the pocket!

Lopahin: Looking at his watch. Well, it’s time I was off.

Yasha: Handing Lyubov Andreyevna medicine. Perhaps you will take your pills now.

Pishtchik: You shouldn’t take medicines, my dear madam … they do no harm and no good. Give them here … honoured lady takes the pillbox, pours the pills into the hollow of his hand, blows on them, puts them in his mouth and drinks off some kvass. There!

Lyubov: In alarm. Why, you must be out of your mind!

Pishtchik: I have taken all the pills.

Lopahin: What a glutton! All laugh.

Firs: His honour stayed with us in Easter week, ate a gallon and a half of cucumbers … mutters.

Lyubov: What is he saying?

Varya: He has taken to muttering like that for the last three years. We are used to it.

Yasha: His declining years!

Charlotta Ivanovna, a very thin, lanky figure in a white dress with a lorgnette in her belt, walks across the stage.

Lopahin: I beg your pardon, Charlotta Ivanovna, I have not had time to greet you tries to kiss her hand.

Charlotta: Pulling away her hand. If I let you kiss my hand, you’ll be wanting to kiss my elbow, and then my shoulder.

Lopahin: I’ve no luck today! All laugh. Charlotta Ivanovna, show us some tricks!

Lyubov: Charlotta, do show us some tricks!

Charlotta: I don’t want to. I’m sleepy goes out.

Lopahin: In three weeks’ time we shall meet again kisses Lyubov Andreyevna’s hand. Goodbye till then—I must go. To Gaev. Goodbye. Kisses Pishtchik. Goodbye. Gives his hand to Varya, then to Firs and Yasha. I don’t want to go. To Lyubov Andreyevna. If you think over my plan for the villas and make up your mind, then let me know; I will lend you 50,000 roubles. Think of it seriously.

Varya: Angrily. Well, do go, for goodness sake.

Lopahin: I’m going, I’m going goes out.

Gaev: Lowborn knave! I beg pardon, though … Varya is going to marry him, he’s Varya’s fiancé.

Varya: Don’t talk nonsense, uncle.

Lyubov: Well, Varya, I shall be delighted. He’s a good man.

Pishtchik: He is, one must acknowledge, a most worthy man. And my Dashenka … says too that … she says … various things snores, but at once wakes up. But all the same, honoured lady, could you oblige me … with a loan of 240 roubles … to pay the interest on my mortgage tomorrow?

Varya: Dismayed. No, no.

Lyubov: I really haven’t any money.

Pishtchik: It will turn up laughs. I never lose hope. I thought everything was over, I was a ruined man, and lo and behold—the railway passed through my land and … they paid me for it. And something else will turn up again, if not today, then tomorrow … Dashenka’ll win two hundred thousand … she’s got a lottery ticket.

Lyubov: Well, we’ve finished our coffee, we can go to bed.

Firs: Brushes Gaev, reprovingly. You have got on the wrong trousers again! What am I to do with you?

Varya: Softly. Anya's asleep. Softly opens the window. Now the sun's risen, it's not a bit cold. Look, mamma, what exquisite trees! My goodness! And the air! The starlings are singing!

Gaev: Opens another window. The orchard is all white. You've not forgotten it, Lyuba? That long avenue that runs straight, straight as an arrow, how it shines on a moonlight night. You remember? You've not forgotten?

Lyubov: Looking out of the window into the garden. Oh, my childhood, my innocence! It was in this nursery I used to sleep, from here I looked out into the orchard, happiness waked with me every morning and in those days the orchard was just the same, nothing has changed laughs with delight. All, all white! Oh, my orchard! After the dark gloomy autumn, and the cold winter; you are young again, and full of happiness, the heavenly angels have never left you. … If I could cast off the burden that weighs on my heart, if I could forget the past!

Gaev: H'm! and the orchard will be sold to pay our debts; it seems strange. …

Lyubov: See, our mother walking … all in white, down the avenue! Laughs with delight. It is she!

Gaev: Where?

Varya: Oh, don't, mamma!

Lyubov: There is no one. It was my fancy. On the right there, by the path to the arbour, there is a white tree bending like a woman. …

Enter Trofimov wearing a shabby student's uniform and spectacles.

Lyubov: What a ravishing orchard! White masses of blossom, blue sky. …

Trofimov: Lyubov Andreyevna! She looks round at him. I will just pay my respects to you and then leave you at once kisses her hand warmly. I was told to wait until morning, but I hadn't the patience to wait any longer. …

Lyubov Andreyevna looks at him in perplexity.

Varya: Through her tears. This is Petya Trofimov.

Trofimov: Petya Trofimov, who was your Grisha's tutor. … Can I have changed so much?

Lyubov Andreyevna embraces him and weeps quietly.

Gaev: In confusion. There, there, Lyuba.

Varya: Crying. I told you, Petya, to wait till tomorrow.

Lyubov: My Grisha … my boy … Grisha … my son!

Varya: We can't help it, mamma, it is God's will.

Trofimov: Softly through his tears. There … there.

Lyubov: Weeping quietly. My boy was lost … drowned. Why? Oh, why, dear Petya? More quietly. Anya is asleep in there, and I'm talking loudly … making this noise. … But, Petya? Why have you grown so ugly? Why do you look so old?

Trofimov: A peasant-woman in the train called me a mangy-looking gentleman.

Lyubov: You were quite a boy then, a pretty little student, and now your hair's thin—and spectacles. Are you really a student still? Goes towards the door.

Trofimov: I seem likely to be a perpetual student.

Lyubov: Kisses her brother, then Varya. Well, go to bed. … You are older too, Leonid.

Pishtchik: Follows her. I suppose it's time we were asleep. … Ugh! my gout. I'm staying the night; Lyubov Andreyevna, my dear soul, if you could … tomorrow morning … 240 roubles.

Gaev: That's always his story.

Pishtchik: 240 roubles … to pay the interest on my mortgage.

Lyubov: My dear man, I have no money.

Pishtchik: I'll pay it back, my dear … a trifling sum.

Lyubov: Oh, well, Leonid will give it you. … You give him the money, Leonid.

Gaev: Me give it him! Let him wait till he gets it!

Lyubov: It can't be helped, give it him. He needs it. He'll pay it back.

Lyubov Andreyevna, Trofimov, Pishtchik and Firs go out. Gaev, Varya and Yasha remain.

Gaev: Sister hasn't got out of the habit of flinging away her money. To Yasha. Get away, my good fellow, you smell of the henhouse.

Yasha: With a grin. And you, Leonid Andreyevitch, are just the same as ever.

Gaev: What's that? To Varya. What did he say?

Varya: To Yasha. Your mother has come from the village; she has been sitting in the servants' room since yesterday, waiting to see you.

Yasha: Oh, bother her!

Varya: For shame!

Yasha: What's the hurry? She might just as have come tomorrow goes out.

Varya: Mamma's just the same as ever, she hasn't changed a bit. If she had her own way, she'd give away everything.

Gaev: Yes a pause. If a great many remedies are suggested for some disease, it means that the disease is incurable. I keep thinking and racking my brains; I have many schemes, a great many, and that really means none. If we could only come in for a legacy from somebody, or marry our Anya to a very rich man, or we might go to Yaroslavl and try our luck with our old aunt, the Countess. She's very, very rich, you know.

Varya: Weeps. If God would help us.

Gaev: Don't blubber. Aunt's very rich, but she doesn't like us. First, sister married a

lawyer instead of a nobleman. …

Anya appears in the doorway.

Gaev: And then her conduct, one can't call it virtuous. She is good, and kind, and nice, and I love her, but, however one allows for extenuating circumstances, there's no denying that she's an immoral woman. One feels it in her slightest gesture.

Varya: In a whisper. Anya's in the doorway.

Gaev: What do you say? A pause. It's queer, there seems to be something wrong with my right eye. I don't see as well as I did. And on Thursday when I was in the district Court …

Enter Anya.

Varya: Why aren't you asleep, Anya?

Anya: I can't get to sleep.

Gaev: My pet kisses Anya's face and hands. My child weeps. You are not my niece, you are my angel, you are everything to me. Believe me, believe …

Anya: I believe you, uncle. Everyone loves you and respects you … but, uncle dear, you must be silent … simply be silent. What were you saying just now about my mother, about your own sister? What made you say that?

Gaev: Yes, yes … puts his hand over his face. Really, that was awful! My God, save me! And today I made a speech to the bookcase … so stupid! And only when I had finished, I saw how stupid it was.

Varya: It's true, uncle, you ought to keep quiet. Don't talk, that's all.

Anya: If you could keep from talking, it would make things easier for you, too.

Gaev: I won't speak kisses Anya's and Varya's hands. I'll be silent. Only this is about business. On Thursday I was in the district Court; well, there was a large party of us there and we began talking of one thing and another, and this and that, and do you know, I believe that it will be possible to raise a loan on an I.O.U. to pay the

arrears on the mortgage.

Varya: If the Lord would help us!

Gaev: I'm going on Tuesday; I'll talk of it again. To Varya. Don't blubber. To Anya. Your mamma will talk to Lopahin; of course, he won't refuse her. And as soon as you're rested you shall go to Yaroslavl to the Countess, your great-aunt. So we shall all set to work in three directions at once, and the business is done. We shall pay off arrears, I'm convinced of it puts a caramel in his mouth. I swear on my honour, I swear by anything you like, the estate shan't be sold excitedly. By my own happiness, I swear it! Here's my hand on it, call me the basest, vilest of men, if I let it come to an auction! Upon my soul I swear it!

Anya: Her equanimity has returned, she is quite happy. How good you are, uncle, and how clever! Embraces her uncle. I'm at peace now! Quite at peace! I'm happy!

Enter Firs.

Firs: Reproachfully. Leonid Andreyevitch, have you no fear of God? When are you going to bed?

Gaev: Directly, directly. You can go, Firs. I'll … yes, I will undress myself. Come, children, bye-bye. We'll go into details tomorrow, but now go to bed kisses Anya and Varya. I'm a man of the eighties. They run down that period, but still I can say I have had to suffer not a little for my convictions in my life. It's not for nothing that the peasant loves me. One must know the peasant! One must know how …

Anya: At it again, uncle!

Varya: Uncle dear, you'd better be quiet!

Firs: Angrily. Leonid Andreyevitch!

Gaev: I'm coming. I'm coming. Go to bed. Potted the shot—there's a shot for you! A beauty! Goes out, Firs hobbling after him.

Anya: My mind's at rest now. I don't want to go to Yaroslavl, I don't like my

great-aunt, but still my mind's at rest. Thanks to uncle sits down.

Varya: We must go to bed. I'm going. Something unpleasant happened while you were away. In the old servants' quarters there are only the old servants, as you know—Efimyushka, Polya and Yevstigney—and Karp too. They began letting stray people in to spend the night—I said nothing. But all at once I heard they had been spreading a report that I gave them nothing but pease pudding to eat. Out of stinginess, you know. … And it was all Yevstigney's doing. … Very well, I said to myself. … If that's how it is, I thought, wait a bit. I sent for Yevstigney … yawns. He comes. "How's this, Yevstigney," I said, "you could be such a fool as to? …" Looking at Anya. Anitchka! A pause. She's asleep puts her arm round Anya. Come to bed … come along! Leads her. My darling has fallen asleep! Come … They go.

Far away beyond the orchard a shepherd plays on a pipe. Trofimov crosses the stage and, seeing Varya and Anya, stands still.

Varya: 'Sh! She's asleep, asleep. Come, my own.

Anya: Softly, half asleep. I'm so tired. Still those bells. Uncle … dear … mamma and uncle. …

Varya: Come, my own, come along.

They go into Anya's room.

Trofimov: Tenderly. My sunshine! My spring!

Curtain.

Act II

The open country. An old shrine, long abandoned and fallen out of the perpendicular; near it a well, large stones that have apparently once been tombstones, and an old garden seat. The road to Gaev's house is seen. On one side

rise dark poplars; and there the cherry orchard begins. In the distance a row of telegraph poles and far, far away on the horizon there is faintly outlined a great town, only visible in very fine clear weather. It is near sunset. Charlotta, Yasha and Dunyasha are sitting on the seat. Epihodov is standing near, playing something mournful on a guitar. All sit plunged in thought. Charlotta wears an old forage cap; she has taken a gun from her shoulder and is tightening the buckle on the strap.

Charlotta: Musingly. I haven't a real passport of my own, and I don't know how old I am, and I always feel that I'm a young thing. When I was a little girl, my father and mother used to travel about to fairs and give performances—very good ones. And I used to dance salto mortale and all sorts of things. And when papa and mamma died, a German lady took me and had me educated. And so I grew up and became a governess. But where I came from, and who I am, I don't know. … Who my parents were, very likely they weren't married … I don't know takes a cucumber out of her pocket and eats. I know nothing at all a pause. One wants to talk and has no one to talk to … I have nobody.

Epihodov: Plays on the guitar and sings. "What care I for the noisy world! What care I for friends or foes!" How agreeable it is to play on the mandoline!

Dunyasha: That's a guitar, not a mandoline looks in a hand-mirror and powders herself.

Epihodov: To a man mad with love, it's a mandoline. Sings. "Were her heart but aglow with love's mutual flame." Yasha joins in.

Charlotta: How shockingly these people sing! Foo! Like jackals!

Dunyasha: To Yasha. What happiness, though, to visit foreign lands.

Yasha: Ah, yes! I rather agree with you there yawns, then lights a cigar.

Epihodov: That's comprehensible. In foreign lands everything has long since reached full complexion.

Yasha: That's so, of course.

Epihodov: I'm a cultivated man, I read remarkable books of all sorts, but I can never make out the tendency I am myself precisely inclined for, whether to live or to shoot myself, speaking precisely, but nevertheless I always carry a revolver. Here it is … shows revolver.

Charlotta: I've had enough, and now I'm going puts on the gun. Epihodov, you're a very clever fellow, and a very terrible one too, all the women must be wild about you. Brrr! Goes. These clever fellows are all so stupid; there's not a creature for me to speak to. … Always alone, alone, nobody belonging to me … and who I am, and why I'm on earth, I don't know walks away slowly.

Epihodov: Speaking precisely, not touching upon other subjects, I'm bound to admit about myself, that destiny behaves mercilessly to me, as a storm to a little boat. If, let us suppose, I am mistaken, then why did I wake up this morning, to quote an example, and look round, and there on my chest was a spider of fearful magnitude … like this shows with both hands. And then I take up a jug of kvass, to quench my thirst, and in it there is something in the highest degree unseemly of the nature of a cockroach a pause. Have you read Buckle? A pause. I am desirous of troubling you, Dunyasha, with a couple of words.

Dunyasha: Well, speak.

Epihodov: I should be desirous to speak with you alone sighs.

Dunyasha: Embarrassed. Well—only bring me my mantle first. It's by the cupboard. It's rather damp here.

Epihodov: Certainly. I will fetch it. Now I know what I must do with my revolver takes guitar and goes off playing on it.

Yasha: Two and twenty misfortunes! Between ourselves, he's a fool yawns.

Dunyasha: God grant he doesn't shoot himself! A pause. I am so nervous, I'm

always in a flutter. I was a little girl when I was taken into our lady's house, and now I have quite grown out of peasant ways, and my hands are white, as white as a lady's. I'm such a delicate, sensitive creature, I'm afraid of everything. I'm so frightened. And if you deceive me, Yasha, I don't know what will become of my nerves.

Yasha: Kisses her. You're a peach! Of course a girl must never forget herself; what I dislike more than anything is a girl being flighty in her behaviour.

Dunyasha: I'm passionately in love with you, Yasha; you are a man of culture—you can give your opinion about anything a pause.

Yasha: Yawns. Yes, that's so. My opinion is this: if a girl loves anyone, that means that she has no principles a pause. It's pleasant smoking a cigar in the open air listens. Someone's coming this way … it's the gentlefolk. Dunyasha embraces him impulsively. Go home, as though you had been to the river to bathe; go by that path, or else they'll meet you and suppose I have made an appointment with you here. That I can't endure.

Dunyasha: Coughing softly. The cigar has made my head ache … goes off.

Yasha remains sitting near the shrine. Enter Lyubov Andreyevna, Gaev and Lopahin.

Lopahin: You must make up your mind once for all—there's no time to lose. It's quite a simple question, you know. Will you consent to letting the land for building or not? One word in answer: Yes or no? Only one word!

Lyubov: Who is smoking such horrible cigars here? Sits down.

Gaev: Now the railway line has been brought near, it's made things very convenient sits down. Here we have been over and lunched in town. Cannon off the white! I should like to go home and have a game.

Lyubov: You have plenty of time.

Lopahin: Only one word! Beseechingly. Give me an answer!

Gaev: Yawning. What do you say?

Lyubov: Looks in her purse. I had quite a lot of money here yesterday, and there's scarcely any left today. My poor Varya feeds us all on milk soup for the sake of economy; the old folks in the kitchen get nothing but pease pudding, while I waste my money in a senseless way drops purse, scattering gold pieces. There, they have all fallen out! Annoyed.

Yasha: Allow me, I'll soon pick them up collects the coins.

Lyubov: Pray do, Yasha. And what did I go off to the town to lunch for? Your restaurant's a wretched place with its music and the tablecloth smelling of soap. … Why drink so much, Leonid? And eat so much? And talk so much? Today you talked a great deal again in the restaurant, and all so inappropriately. About the era of the 'seventies, about the decadents. And to whom? Talking to waiters about decadents!

Lopahin: Yes.

Gaev: Waving his hand. I'm incorrigible; that's evident. Irritably to Yasha. Why is it you keep fidgeting about in front of us!

Yasha: Laughs. I can't help laughing when I hear your voice.

Gaev: To his sister. Either I or he …

Lyubov: Get along! Go away, Yasha.

Yasha: Gives Lyubov Andreyevna her purse. Directly hardly able to suppress his laughter. This minute … goes off.

Lopahin: Deriganov, the millionaire, means to buy your estate. They say he is coming to the sale himself.

Lyubov: Where did you hear that?

Lopahin: That's what they say in town.

Gaev: Our aunt in Yaroslavl has promised to send help; but when, and how much she will send, we don’t know.

Lopahin: How much will she send? A hundred thousand? Two hundred?

Lyubov: Oh, well! … Ten or fifteen thousand, and we must be thankful to get that.

Lopahin: Forgive me, but such reckless people as you are—such queer, unbusiness-like people—I never met in my life. One tells you in plain Russian your estate is going to be sold, and you seem not to understand it.

Lyubov: What are we to do? Tell us what to do.

Lopahin: I do tell you every day. Every day I say the same thing. You absolutely must let the cherry orchard and the land on building leases; and do it at once, as quick as may be—the auction’s close upon us! Do understand! Once make up your mind to build villas, and you can raise as much money as you like, and then you are saved.

Lyubov: Villas and summer visitors—forgive me saying so—it’s so vulgar.

Gaev: There I perfectly agree with you.

Lopahin: I shall sob, or scream, or fall into a fit. I can’t stand it! You drive me mad! To Gaev. You’re an old woman!

Gaev: What do you say?

Lopahin: An old woman! Gets up to go.

Lyubov: In dismay. No, don’t go! Do stay, my dear friend! Perhaps we shall think of something.

Lopahin: What is there to think of?

Lyubov: Don’t go, I entreat you! With you here it’s more cheerful, anyway a pause. I keep expecting something, as though the house were going to fall about our ears.

Gaev: In profound dejection. Potted the white! It fails—a kiss.

Lyubov: We have been great sinners. …

Lopahin: You have no sins to repent of.

Gaev: Puts a caramel in his mouth. They say I've eaten up my property in caramels laughs.

Lyubov: Oh, my sins! I've always thrown my money away recklessly like a lunatic. I married a man who made nothing but debts. My husband died of champagne—he drank dreadfully. To my misery I loved another man, and immediately—it was my first punishment—the blow fell upon me, here, in the river … my boy was drowned and I went abroad—went away forever, never to return, not to see that river again … I shut my eyes, and fled, distracted, and he after me … pitilessly, brutally. I bought a villa at Mentone, for he fell ill there, and for three years I had no rest day or night. His illness wore me out, my soul was dried up. And last year, when my villa was sold to pay my debts, I went to Paris and there he robbed me of everything and abandoned me for another woman; and I tried to poison myself. … So stupid, so shameful! … And suddenly I felt a yearning for Russia, for my country, for my little girl … dries her tears. Lord, Lord, be merciful! Forgive my sins! Do not chastise me more! Takes a telegram out of her pocket. I got this today from Paris. He implores forgiveness, entreats me to return tears up the telegram. I fancy there is music somewhere listens.

Gaev: That's our famous Jewish orchestra. You remember, four violins, a flute and a double bass.

Lyubov: That still in existence? We ought to send for them one evening, and give a dance.

Lopahin: Listens. I can't hear. … Hums softly. "For money the Germans will turn a Russian into a Frenchman." Laughs. I did see such a piece at the theatre yesterday! It was funny!

Lyubov: And most likely there was nothing funny in it. You shouldn't look at plays,

you should look at yourselves a little oftener. How grey your lives are! How much nonsense you talk.

Lopahin: That's true. One may say honestly, we live a fool's life pause. My father was a peasant, an idiot; he knew nothing and taught me nothing, only beat me when he was drunk, and always with his stick. In reality I am just such another blockhead and idiot. I've learnt nothing properly. I write a wretched hand. I write so that I feel ashamed before folks, like a pig.

Lyubov: You ought to get married, my dear fellow.

Lopahin: Yes … that's true.

Lyubov: You should marry our Varya, she's a good girl.

Lopahin: Yes.

Lyubov: She's a good-natured girl, she's busy all day long, and what's more, she loves you. And you have liked her for ever so long.

Lopahin: Well? I'm not against it. … She's a good girl pause.

Gaev: I've been offered a place in the bank: 6,000 roubles a year. Did you know?

Lyubov: You would never do for that! You must stay as you are.

Enter Firs with overcoat.

Firs: Put it on, sir, it's damp.

Gaev: Putting it on. You bother me, old fellow.

Firs: You can't go on like this. You went away in the morning without leaving word looks him over.

Lyubov: You look older, Firs!

Firs: What is your pleasure?

Lopahin: You look older, she said.

Firs: I've had a long life. They were arranging my wedding before your papa was

born … laughs. I was the head footman before the emancipation came. I wouldn't consent to be set free then; I stayed on with the old master … a pause. I remember what rejoicings they made and didn't know themselves what they were rejoicing over.

Lopahin: Those were fine old times. There was flogging anyway.

Firs: Not hearing. To be sure! The peasants knew their place, and the masters knew theirs; but now they're all at sixes and sevens, there's no making it out.

Gaev: Hold your tongue, Firs. I must go to town tomorrow. I have been promised an introduction to a general, who might let us have a loan.

Lopahin: You won't bring that off. And you won't pay your arrears, you may rest assured of that.

Lyubov: That's all his nonsense. There is no such general.

Enter Trofimov, Anya and Varya.

Gaev: Here come our girls.

Anya: There's mamma on the seat.

Lyubov: Tenderly. Come here, come along. My darlings! Embraces Anya and Varya. If you only knew how I love you both. Sit beside me, there, like that. All sit down.

Lopahin: Our perpetual student is always with the young ladies.

Trofimov: That's not your business.

Lopahin: He'll soon be fifty, and he's still a student.

Trofimov: Drop your idiotic jokes.

Lopahin: Why are you so cross, you queer fish?

Trofimov: Oh, don't persist!

Lopahin: Laughs. Allow me to ask you what's your idea of me?

Trofimov: I'll tell you my idea of you, Yermolay Alexeyevitch: you are a rich man, you'll soon be a millionaire. Well, just as in the economy of nature a wild beast is of use, who devours everything that comes in his way, so you too have your use.

All laugh.

Varya: Better tell us something about the planets, Petya.

Lyubov: No, let us go on with the conversation we had yesterday.

Trofimov: What was it about?

Gaev: About pride.

Trofimov: We had a long conversation yesterday, but we came to no conclusion. In pride, in your sense of it, there is something mystical. Perhaps you are right from your point of view; but if one looks at it simply, without subtlety, what sort of pride can there be, what sense is there in it, if man in his physiological formation is very imperfect, if in the immense majority of cases he is coarse, dull-witted, profoundly unhappy? One must give up glorification of self. One should work, and nothing else.

Gaev: One must die in any case.

Trofimov: Who knows? And what does it mean—dying? Perhaps man has a hundred senses, and only the five we know are lost at death, while the other ninety-five remain alive.

Lyubov: How clever you are, Petya!

Lopahin: Ironically. Fearfully clever!

Trofimov: Humanity progresses, perfecting its powers. Everything that is beyond its ken now will one day become familiar and comprehensible; only we must work, we must with all our powers aid the seeker after truth. Here among us in Russia the workers are few in number as yet. The vast majority of the intellectual people I know, seek nothing, do nothing, are not fit as yet for work of any kind. They call themselves intellectual, but they treat their servants as inferiors, behave to the

peasants as though they were animals, learn little, read nothing seriously, do practically nothing, only talk about science and know very little about art. They are all serious people, they all have severe faces, they all talk of weighty matters and air their theories, and yet the vast majority of us—ninety-nine percent—live like savages, at the least thing fly to blows and abuse, eat piggishly, sleep in filth and stuffiness, bugs everywhere, stench and damp and moral impurity. And it's clear all our fine talk is only to divert our attention and other people's. Show me where to find the crèches there's so much talk about, and the reading-rooms? They only exist in novels: in real life there are none of them. There is nothing but filth and vulgarity and Asiatic apathy. I fear and dislike very serious faces. I'm afraid of serious conversations. We should do better to be silent.

Lopahin: You know, I get up at five o'clock in the morning, and I work from morning to night; and I've money, my own and other people's, always passing through my hands, and I see what people are made of all round me. One has only to begin to do anything to see how few honest, decent people there are. Sometimes when I lie awake at night, I think: "Oh! Lord, thou hast given us immense forests, boundless plains, the widest horizons, and living here we ourselves ought really to be giants."

Lyubov: You ask for giants! They are no good except in storybooks; in real life they frighten us.

Epihodov advances in the background, playing on the guitar.

Lyubov: Dreamily. There goes Epihodov.

Anya: Dreamily. There goes Epihodov.

Gaev: The sun has set, my friends.

Trofimov: Yes.

Gaev: Not loudly, but, as it were, declaiming. O nature, divine nature, thou art bright with eternal lustre, beautiful and indifferent! Thou, whom we call mother, thou dost

unite within thee life and death! Thou dost give life and dost destroy!

Varya: In a tone of supplication. Uncle!

Anya: Uncle, you are at it again!

Trofimov: You'd much better be cannoning off the red!

Gaev: I'll hold my tongue, I will.

All sit plunged in thought. Perfect stillness. The only thing audible is the muttering of Firs. Suddenly there is a sound in the distance, as it were from the sky—the sound of a breaking harp-string, mournfully dying away.

Lyubov: What is that?

Lopahin: I don't know. Somewhere far away a bucket fallen and broken in the pits. But somewhere very far away.

Gaev: It might be a bird of some sort—such as a heron.

Trofimov: Or an owl.

Lyubov: Shudders. I don't know why, but it's horrid a pause.

Firs: It was the same before the calamity—the owl hooted and the samovar hissed all the time.

Gaev: Before what calamity?

Firs: Before the emancipation a pause.

Lyubov: Come, my friends, let us be going; evening is falling. To Anya. There are tears in your eyes. What is it, darling? Embraces her.

Anya: Nothing, mamma; it's nothing.

Trofimov: There is somebody coming.

The Wayfarer appears in a shabby white forage cap and an overcoat; he is slightly drunk.

Wayfarer: Allow me to inquire, can I get to the station this way?

Gaev: Yes. Go along that road.

Wayfarer: I thank you most feelingly coughing. The weather is superb. Declaims. My brother, my suffering brother! … Come out to the Volga! Whose groan do you hear? … To Varya. Mademoiselle, vouchsafe a hungry Russian thirty kopecks.

Varya utters a shriek of alarm.

Lopahin: Angrily. There's a right and a wrong way of doing everything!

Lyubov: Hurriedly. Here, take this looks in her purse. I've no silver. No matter—here's gold for you.

Wayfarer: I thank you most feelingly! Goes off.

Laughter.

Varya: Frightened. I'm going home—I'm going … Oh, mamma, the servants have nothing to eat, and you gave him gold!

Lyubov: There's no doing anything with me. I'm so silly! When we get home, I'll give you all I possess. Yermolay Alexeyevitch, you will lend me some more … !

Lopahin: I will.

Lyubov: Come, friends, it's time to be going. And Varya, we have made a match of it for you. I congratulate you.

Varya: Through her tears. Mamma, that's not a joking matter.

Lopahin: "Ophelia, get thee to a nunnery!"

Gaev: My hands are trembling; it's a long while since I had a game of billiards.

Lopahin: "Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons be all my sins remember'd."

Lyubov: Come, it will soon be suppertime.

Varya: How he frightened me! My heart's simply throbbing.

Lopahin: Let me remind you, ladies and gentlemen: on the 22nd of August the

cherry orchard will be sold. Think about that! Think about it!

All go off, except Trofimov and Anya.

Anya: Laughing. I'm grateful to the wayfarer! He frightened Varya and we are left alone.

Trofimov: Varya's afraid we shall fall in love with each other, and for days together she won't leave us. With her narrow brain she can't grasp that we are above love. To eliminate the petty and transitory which hinders us from being free and happy—that is the aim and meaning of our life. Forward! We go forward irresistibly towards the bright star that shines yonder in the distance. Forward! Do not lag behind, friends.

Anya: Claps her hands. How well you speak! A pause. It is divine here today.

Trofimov: Yes, it's glorious weather.

Anya: Somehow, Petya, you've made me so that I don't love the cherry orchard as I used to. I used to love it so dearly. I used to think that there was no spot on earth like our garden.

Trofimov: All Russia is our garden. The earth is great and beautiful—there are many beautiful places in it a pause. Think only, Anya, your grandfather, and great-grandfather, and all your ancestors were slave-owners—the owners of living souls—and from every cherry in the orchard, from every leaf, from every trunk there are human creatures looking at you. Cannot you hear their voices? Oh, it is awful! Your orchard is a fearful thing, and when in the evening or at night one walks about the orchard, the old bark on the trees glimmers dimly in the dusk, and the old cherry trees seem to be dreaming of centuries gone by and tortured by fearful visions. Yes! We are at least two hundred years behind, we have really gained nothing yet, we have no definite attitude to the past, we do nothing but theorise or complain of depression or drink vodka. It is clear that to begin to live in the present we must first expiate our past, we must break with it; and we can expiate it only by

suffering, by extraordinary unceasing labour. Understand that, Anya.

Anya: The house we live in has long ceased to be our own, and I shall leave it, I give you my word.

Trofimov: If you have the house keys, fling them into the well and go away. Be free as the wind.

Anya: In ecstasy. How beautifully you said that!

Trofimov: Believe me, Anya, believe me! I am not thirty yet, I am young, I am still a student, but I have gone through so much already! As soon as winter comes I am hungry, sick, careworn, poor as a beggar, and what ups and downs of fortune have I not known! And my soul was always, every minute, day and night, full of inexplicable forebodings. I have a foreboding of happiness, Anya. I see glimpses of it already.

Anya: Pensively. The moon is rising.

Epihodov is heard playing still the same mournful song on the guitar. The moon rises. Somewhere near the poplars Varya is looking for Anya and calling “Anya! where are you?”

Trofimov: Yes, the moon is rising a pause. Here is happiness—here it comes! It is coming nearer and nearer; already I can hear its footsteps. And if we never see it—if we may never know it—what does it matter? Others will see it after us.

Varya’s Voice: Anya! Where are you?

Trofimov: That Varya again! Angrily. It’s revolting!

Anya: Well, let’s go down to the river. It’s lovely there.

Trofimov: Yes, let’s go. They go.

Varya’s Voice: Anya! Anya!

Curtain.

Act III

A drawing-room divided by an arch from a larger drawing-room. A chandelier burning. The Jewish orchestra, the same that was mentioned in Act II, is heard playing in the anteroom. It is evening. In the larger drawing-room they are dancing the grand chain. The voice of Seyonov-Pishtchik: “Promenade à une paire!” Then enter the drawing-room in couples, first Pishtchik and Charlotta Ivanovna, then Trofimov and Lyubov Andreyevna, thirdly Anya with the Post-Office Clerk, fourthly Varya with the Station Master, and other guests. Varya is quietly weeping and wiping away her tears as she dances. In the last couple is Dunyasha. They move across the drawing-room. Pishtchik shouts: “Grand rond, balancez!” and “Les Cavaliers à genou et remerciez vos dames.”

Firs in a swallowtail coat brings in seltzer water on a tray. Pishtchik and Trofimov enter the drawing-room.

Pishtchik: I am a full-blooded man; I have already had two strokes. Dancing’s hard work for me, but as they say, if you’re in the pack, you must bark with the rest. I’m as strong, I may say, as a horse. My parent, who would have his joke—may the Kingdom of Heaven be his!—used to say about our origin that the ancient stock of the Semyonov-Pishtchiks was derived from the very horse that Caligula made a member of the senate sits down. But I’ve no money, that’s where the mischief is. A hungry dog believes in nothing but meat … snores, but at once wakes up. That’s like me … I can think of nothing but money.

Trofimov: There really is something horsy about your appearance.

Pishtchik: Well … a horse is a fine beast … a horse can be sold.

There is the sound of billiards being played in an adjoining room. Varya appears in the arch leading to the larger drawing-room.

Trofimov: Teasing. Madame Lopahin! Madame Lopahin!

Varya: Angrily. Mangy-looking gentleman!

Trofimov: Yes, I am a mangy-looking gentleman, and I'm proud of it!

Varya: Pondering bitterly. Here we have hired musicians and nothing to pay them! Goes out.

Trofimov: To Pishtchik. If the energy you have wasted during your lifetime in trying to find the money to pay your interest, had gone to something else, you might in the end have turned the world upside down.

Pishtchik: Nietzsche, the philosopher, a very great and celebrated man … of enormous intellect … says in his works, that one can make forged banknotes.

Trofimov: Why, have you read Nietzsche?

Pishtchik: What next … Dashenka told me. … And now I am in such a position, I might just as well forge banknotes. The day after tomorrow I must pay 310 roubles—130 I have procured feels in his pockets, in alarm. The money's gone! I have lost my money! Through his tears. Where's the money? Gleefully. Why here it is behind the lining. … It has made me hot all over.

Enter Lyubov Andreyevna and Charlotta Ivanovna.

Lyubov: Hums the Lezginka. Why is Leonid so long? What can he be doing in town? To Dunyasha. Offer the musicians some tea.

Trofimov: The sale hasn't taken place, most likely.

Lyubov: It's the wrong time to have the orchestra, and the wrong time to give a dance. Well, never mind sits down and hums softly.

Charlotta: Gives Pishtchik a pack of cards. Here's a pack of cards. Think of any card you like.

Pishtchik: I've thought of one.

Charlotta: Shuffle the pack now. That's right. Give it here, my dear Mr. Pishtchik. Ein, zwei, drei—now look, it's in your breast pocket.

Pishtchik: Taking a card out of his breast pocket. The eight of spades! Perfectly right! Wonderingly. Fancy that now!

Charlotta: Holding pack of cards in her hands, to Trofimov. Tell me quickly which is the top card.

Trofimov: Well, the queen of spades.

Charlotta: It is! To Pishtchik. Well, which card is uppermost?

Pishtchik: The ace of hearts.

Charlotta: It is! Claps her hands, pack of cards disappears. Ah! what lovely weather it is today!

A mysterious feminine voice which seems coming out of the floor answers her. “Oh, yes, it’s magnificent weather, madam.”

Charlotta: You are my perfect ideal.

Voice: And I greatly admire you too, madam.

Station Master: Applauding. The lady ventriloquist—bravo!

Pishtchik: Wonderingly. Fancy that now! Most enchanting Charlotta Ivanovna. I’m simply in love with you.

Charlotta: In love? Shrugging shoulders. What do you know of love, guter Mensch, aber schlechter Musikant.

Trofimov: Pats Pishtchik on the shoulder. You dear old horse. …

Charlotta: Attention, please! Another trick! Takes a travelling rug from a chair. Here’s a very good rug; I want to sell it shaking it out. Doesn’t anyone want to buy it?

Pishtchik: Wonderingly. Fancy that!

Charlotta: Ein, zwei, drei! Quickly picks up rug she has dropped; behind the rug stands Anya; she makes a curtsey, runs to her mother, embraces her and runs back

into the larger drawing-room amidst general enthusiasm.

Lyubov: Applauds. Bravo! Bravo!

Charlotta: Now again! Ein, zwei, drei! Lifts up the rug; behind the rug stands Varya, bowing.

Pishtchik: Wonderingly. Fancy that now!

Charlotta: That's the end throws the rug at Pishtchik, makes a curtsey, runs into the larger drawing-room.

Pishtchik: Hurries after her. Mischievous creature! Fancy! Goes out.

Lyubov: And still Leonid doesn't come. I can't understand what he's doing in the town so long! Why, everything must be over by now. The estate is sold, or the sale has not taken place. Why keep us so long in suspense?

Varya: Trying to console her. Uncle's bought it. I feel sure of that.

Trofimov: Ironically. Oh, yes!

Varya: Great-aunt sent him an authorisation to buy it in her name, and transfer the debt. She's doing it for Anya's sake, and I'm sure God will be merciful. Uncle will buy it.

Lyubov: My aunt in Yaroslavl sent fifteen thousand to buy the estate in her name, she doesn't trust us—but that's not enough even to pay the arrears hides her face in her hands. My fate is being sealed today, my fate …

Trofimov: Teasing Varya. Madame Lopahin.

Varya: Angrily. Perpetual student! Twice already you've been sent down from the University.

Lyubov: Why are you angry, Varya? He's teasing you about Lopahin. Well, what of that? Marry Lopahin if you like, he's a good man, and interesting; if you don't want to, don't! Nobody compels you, darling.

Varya: I must tell you plainly, mamma, I look at the matter seriously; he's a good

man, I like him.

Lyubov: Well, marry him. I can't see what you're waiting for.

Varya: Mamma, I can't make him an offer myself. For the last two years, everyone's been talking to me about him. Everyone talks; but he says nothing or else makes a joke. I see what it means. He's growing rich, he's absorbed in business, he has no thoughts for me. If I had money, were it ever so little, if I had only a hundred roubles, I'd throw everything up and go far away. I would go into a nunnery.

Trofimov: What bliss!

Varya: To Trofimov. A student ought to have sense! In a soft tone with tears. How ugly you've grown, Petya! How old you look! To Lyubov Andreyevna, no longer crying. But I can't do without work, mamma; I must have something to do every minute.

Enter Yasha.

Yasha: Hardly restraining his laughter. Epihodov has broken a billiard cue! Goes out.

Varya: What is Epihodov doing here? Who gave him leave to play billiards? I can't make these people out goes out.

Lyubov: Don't tease her, Petya. You see she has grief enough without that.

Trofimov: She is so very officious, meddling in what's not her business. All the summer she's given Anya and me no peace. She's afraid of a love affair between us. What's it to do with her? Besides, I have given no grounds for it. Such triviality is not in my line. We are above love!

Lyubov: And I suppose I am beneath love. Very uneasily. Why is it Leonid's not here? If only I could know whether the estate is sold or not! It seems such an incredible calamity that I really don't know what to think. I am distracted … I shall scream in a minute … I shall do something stupid. Save me, Petya, tell me

something, talk to me!

Trofimov: What does it matter whether the estate is sold today or not? That's all done with long ago. There's no turning back, the path is overgrown. Don't worry yourself, dear Lyubov Andreyevna. You mustn't deceive yourself; for once in your life you must face the truth!

Lyubov: What truth? You see where the truth lies, but I seem to have lost my sight, I see nothing. You settle every great problem so boldly, but tell me, my dear boy, isn't it because you're young—because you haven't yet understood one of your problems through suffering? You look forward boldly, and isn't it that you don't see and don't expect anything dreadful because life is still hidden from your young eyes? You're bolder, more honest, deeper than we are, but think, be just a little magnanimous, have pity on me. I was born here, you know, my father and mother lived here, my grandfather lived here, I love this house. I can't conceive of life without the cherry orchard, and if it really must be sold, then sell me with the orchard embraces Trofimov, kisses him on the forehead. My boy was drowned here weeps. Pity me, my dear kind fellow.

Trofimov: You know I feel for you with all my heart.

Lyubov: But that should have been said differently, so differently takes out her handkerchief, telegram falls on the floor. My heart is so heavy today. It's so noisy here, my soul is quivering at every sound, I'm shuddering all over, but I can't go away; I'm afraid to be quiet and alone. Don't be hard on me, Petya … I love you as though you were one of ourselves. I would gladly let you marry Anya—I swear I would—only, my dear boy, you must take your degree, you do nothing—you're simply tossed by fate from place to place. That's so strange. It is, isn't it? And you must do something with your beard to make it grow somehow laughs. You look so funny!

Trofimov: Picks up the telegram. I've no wish to be a beauty.

Lyubov: That's a telegram from Paris. I get one every day. One yesterday and one today. That savage creature is ill again, he's in trouble again. He begs forgiveness, beseeches me to go, and really I ought to go to Paris to see him. You look shocked, Petya. What am I to do, my dear boy, what am I to do? He is ill, he is alone and unhappy, and who'll look after him, who'll keep him from doing the wrong thing, who'll give him his medicine at the right time? And why hide it or be silent? I love him, that's clear. I love him! I love him! He's a millstone about my neck, I'm going to the bottom with him, but I love that stone and can't live without it presses Trofimov's hand. Don't think ill of me, Petya, don't tell me anything, don't tell me …

Trofimov: Through his tears. For God's sake forgive my frankness: why, he robbed you!

Lyubov: No! No! No! You mustn't speak like that covers her ears.

Trofimov: He is a wretch! You're the only person that doesn't know it! He's a worthless creature! A despicable wretch!

Lyubov: Getting angry, but speaking with restraint. You're twenty-six or twenty-seven years old, but you're still a schoolboy.

Trofimov: Possibly.

Lyubov: You should be a man at your age! You should understand what love means! And you ought to be in love yourself. You ought to fall in love! Angrily. Yes, yes, and it's not purity in you, you're simply a prude, a comic fool, a freak.

Trofimov: In horror. The things she's saying!

Lyubov: I am above love! You're not above love, but simply as our Firs here says, "You are a good-for-nothing." At your age not to have a mistress!

Trofimov: In horror. This is awful! The things she is saying! Goes rapidly into the larger drawing-room clutching his head. This is awful! I can't stand it! I'm going!

Goes off, but at once returns. All is over between us! Goes off into the anteroom.

Lyubov: Shouts after him. Petya! Wait a minute! You funny creature! I was joking! Petya! There is a sound of somebody running quickly downstairs and suddenly falling with a crash. Anya and Varya scream, but there is a sound of laughter at once.

Lyubov: What has happened?

Anya runs in.

Anya: Laughing. Petya's fallen downstairs! Runs out.

Lyubov: What a queer fellow that Petya is!

The Station Master stands in the middle of the larger room and reads "The Magdalene," by Alexey Tolstoy. They listen to him, but before he has recited many lines strains of a waltz are heard from the anteroom and the reading is broken off. All dance. Trofimov, Anya, Varya and Lyubov Andreyevna come in from the anteroom.

Lyubov: Come, Petya—come, pure heart! I beg your pardon. Let's have a dance! Dances with Petya.

Anya and Varya dance. Firs comes in, puts his stick down near the side door. Yasha also comes into the drawing-room and looks on at the dancing.

Yasha: What is it, old man?

Firs: I don't feel well. In old days we used to have generals, barons and admirals dancing at our balls, and now we send for the post-office clerk and the station master and even they're not overanxious to come. I am getting feeble. The old master, the grandfather, used to give sealing-wax for all complaints. I have been taking sealing-wax for twenty years or more. Perhaps that's what's kept me alive.

Yasha: You bore me, old man! Yawns. It's time you were done with.

Firs: Ach, you're a good-for-nothing! Mutters.

Trofimov and Lyubov Andreyevna dance in the larger room and then on to the stage.

Lyubov: Merci. I'll sit down a little sits down. I'm tired.

Enter Anya.

Anya: Excitedly. There's a man in the kitchen has been saying that the cherry orchard's been sold today.

Lyubov: Sold to whom?

Anya: He didn't say to whom. He's gone away.

She dances with Trofimov, and they go off into the larger room.

Yasha: There was an old man gossiping there, a stranger.

Firs: Leonid Andreyevitch isn't here yet, he hasn't come back. He has his light overcoat on, demi-saison, he'll catch cold for sure. Ach! Foolish young things!!

Lyubov: I feel as though I should die. Go, Yasha, find out to whom it has been sold.

Yasha: But he went away long ago, the old chap laughs.

Lyubov: With slight vexation. What are you laughing at? What are you pleased at?

Yasha: Epihodov is so funny. He's a silly fellow, two and twenty misfortunes.

Lyubov: Firs, if the estate is sold, where will you go?

Firs: Where you bid me, there I'll go.

Lyubov: Why do you look like that? Are you ill? You ought to be in bed.

Firs: Yes ironically. Me go to bed and who's to wait here? Who's to see to things without me? I'm the only one in all the house.

Yasha: To Lyubov Andreyevna. Lyubov Andreyevna, permit me to make a request of you; if you go back to Paris again, be so kind as to take me with you. It's positively impossible for me to stay here looking about him; in an undertone. There's no need to say it, you see for yourself—an uncivilised country, the people

have no morals, and then the dullness! The food in the kitchen's abominable, and then Firs runs after one muttering all sorts of unsuitable words. Take me with you, please do!

Enter Pishtchik.

Pishtchik: Allow me to ask you for a waltz, my dear lady. Lyubov Andreyevna goes with him. Enchanting lady, I really must borrow of you just 180 roubles dances, only 180 roubles. They pass into the larger room.

Yasha: Hums softly. "Knowest thou my soul's emotion."

In the larger drawing-room, a figure in a grey top hat and in check trousers is gesticulating and jumping about. Shouts of "Bravo, Charlotta Ivanovna."

Dunyasha: She has stopped to powder herself. My young lady tells me to dance. There are plenty of gentlemen, and too few ladies, but dancing makes me giddy and makes my heart beat. Firs, the post-office clerk said something to me just now that quite took my breath away.

Music becomes more subdued.

Firs: What did he say to you?

Dunyasha: He said I was like a flower.

Yasha: Yawns. What ignorance! Goes out.

Dunyasha: Like a flower. I am a girl of such delicate feelings, I am awfully fond of soft speeches.

Firs: Your head's being turned.

Enter Epihodov.

Epihodov: You have no desire to see me, Dunyasha. I might be an insect sighs. Ah! life!

Dunyasha: What is it you want?

Epihodov: Undoubtedly you may be right sighs. But of course, if one looks at it from that point of view, if I may so express myself, you have, excuse my plain speaking, reduced me to a complete state of mind. I know my destiny. Every day some misfortune befalls me and I have long ago grown accustomed to it, so that I look upon my fate with a smile. You gave me your word, and though I—

Dunyasha: Let us have a talk later, I entreat you, but now leave me in peace, for I am lost in reverie plays with her fan.

Epihodov: I have a misfortune every day, and if I may venture to express myself, I merely smile at it, I even laugh.

Varya enters from the larger drawing-room.

Varya: You still have not gone, Epihodov. What a disrespectful creature you are, really! To Dunyasha. Go along, Dunyasha! To Epihodov. First you play billiards and break the cue, then you go wandering about the drawing-room like a visitor!

Epihodov: You really cannot, if I may so express myself, call me to account like this.

Varya: I'm not calling you to account, I'm speaking to you. You do nothing but wander from place to place and don't do your work. We keep you as a countinghouse clerk, but what use you are I can't say.

Epihodov: Offended. Whether I work or whether I walk, whether I eat or whether I play billiards, is a matter to be judged by persons of understanding and my elders.

Varya: You dare to tell me that! Firing up. You dare! You mean to say I've no understanding. Begone from here! This minute!

Epihodov: Intimidated. I beg you to express yourself with delicacy.

Varya: Beside herself with anger. This moment! get out! away! He goes towards the door, she following him. Two and twenty misfortunes! Take yourself off! Don't let me set eyes on you! Epihodov has gone out, behind the door his voice, "I shall lodge

a complaint against you.” What! You’re coming back? Snatches up the stick Firs has put down near the door. Come! Come! Come! I’ll show you! What! you’re coming? Then take that! She swings the stick, at the very moment that Lopahin comes in.

Lopahin: Very much obliged to you!

Varya: Angrily and ironically. I beg your pardon!

Lopahin: Not at all! I humbly thank you for your kind reception!

Varya: No need of thanks for it moves away, then looks round and asks softly. I haven’t hurt you?

Lopahin: Oh, no! Not at all! There’s an immense bump coming up, though!

Voices from Larger Room: Lopahin has come! Yermolay Alexeyevitch!

Pishtchik: What do I see and hear? Kisses Lopahin. There’s whiff of cognac about about you, my dear soul, and we’re making merry here too!

Enter Lyubov Andreyevna.

Lyubov: Is it you, Yermolay Alexeyevitch? Why have you been so long? Where’s Leonid?

Lopahin: Leonid Andreyevitch arrived with me. He is coming.

Lyubov: In agitation. Well! Well! Was there a sale? Speak!

Lopahin: Embarrassed, afraid of betraying his joy. The sale was over at four o’clock. We missed our train—had to wait till half-past nine. Sighing heavily. Ugh! I feel a little giddy.

Enter Gaev. In his right hand he has purchases, with his left hand he is wiping away his tears.

Lyubov: Well, Leonid? What news? Impatiently, with tears. Make haste, for God’s sake!

Gaev: Makes her no answer, simply waves his hand. To Firs, weeping. Here, take

them; there's anchovies, Kertch herrings. I have eaten nothing all day. What I have been through! Door into the billiard room is open. There is heard a knocking of balls and the voice of Yasha saying "Eighty-seven." Gaev's expression changes, he leaves off weeping. I am fearfully tired. Firs, come and help me change my things goes to his own room across the larger drawing-room.

Pishtchik: How about the sale? Tell us, do!

Lyubov: Is the cherry orchard sold?

Lopahin: It is sold.

Lyubov: Who has bought it?

Lopahin: I have bought it. A pause. Lyubov is crushed; she would fall down if she were not standing near a chair and table.

Varya takes keys from her waistband, flings them on the floor in middle of the drawing-room and goes out.

Lopahin: I have bought it! Wait a bit, ladies and gentlemen, pray. My head's a bit muddled, I can't speak laughs. We came to the auction. Deriganov was there already. Leonid Andreyevitch only had fifteen thousand and Deriganov bid thirty thousand, besides the arrears, straight off. I saw how the land lay. I bid against him. I bid forty thousand, he bid forty-five thousand, I said fifty-five, and so he went on, adding five thousands and I adding ten. Well … So it ended. I bid ninety, and it was knocked down to me. Now the cherry orchard's mine! Mine! Chuckles. My God, the cherry orchard's mine! Tell me that I'm drunk, that I'm out of my mind, that it's all a dream stamps with his feet. Don't laugh at me! If my father and my grandfather could rise from their graves and see all that has happened! How their Yermolay, ignorant, beaten Yermolay, who used to run about barefoot in winter, how that very Yermolay has bought the finest estate in the world! I have bought the estate where my father and grandfather were slaves, where they weren't even admitted into the kitchen. I am asleep, I am dreaming! It is all fancy, it is the work

of your imagination plunged in the darkness of ignorance picks up keys, smiling fondly. She threw away the keys; she means to show she's not the housewife now jingles the keys. Well, no matter. The orchestra is heard tuning up. Hey, musicians! Play! I want to hear you. Come, all of you, and look how Yermolay Lopahin will take the axe to the cherry orchard, how the trees will fall to the ground! We will build houses on it and our grandsons and great-grandsons will see a new life springing up there. Music! Play up!

Music begins to play. Lyubov Andreyevna has sunk into a chair and is weeping bitterly.

Lopahin: Reproachfully. Why, why didn't you listen to me? My poor friend! Dear lady, there's no turning back now. With tears. Oh, if all this could be over, oh, if our miserable disjointed life could somehow soon be changed!

Pishtchik: Takes him by the arm, in an undertone. She's weeping, let us go and leave her alone. Come takes him by the arm and leads him into the larger drawing-room.

Lopahin: What's that? Musicians, play up! All must be as I wish it. With irony. Here comes the new master, the owner of the cherry orchard! Accidentally tips over a little table, almost upsetting the candelabra. I can pay for everything! Goes out with Pishtchik. No one remains on the stage or in the larger drawing-room except Lyubov, who sits huddled up, weeping bitterly. The music plays softly. Anya and Trofimov come in quickly. Anya goes up to her mother and falls on her knees before her. Trofimov stands at the entrance to the larger drawing-room.

Anya: Mamma! Mamma, you're crying, dear, kind, good mamma! My precious! I love you! I bless you! The cherry orchard is sold, it is gone, that's true, that's true! But don't weep, mamma! Life is still before you, you have still your good, pure heart! Let us go, let us go, darling, away from here! We will make a new garden, more splendid than this one; you will see it, you will understand. And joy, quiet, deep joy, will sink into your soul like the sun at evening! And you will smile,

mamma! Come, darling, let us go!

Curtain.

Act IV

Scene: Same as in First Act. There are neither curtains on the windows nor pictures on the walls: only a little furniture remains piled up in a corner as if for sale. There is a sense of desolation; near the outer door and in the background of the scene are packed trunks, travelling bags, etc. On the left the door is open, and from here the voices of Varya and Anya are audible. Lopahin is standing waiting. Yasha is holding a tray with glasses full of champagne. In front of the stage Epihodov is tying up a box. In the background behind the scene a hum of talk from the peasants who have come to say goodbye. The voice of Gaev: “Thanks, brothers, thanks!”

Yasha: The peasants have come to say goodbye. In my opinion, Yermolay Alexeyevitch, the peasants are good-natured, but they don’t know much about things.

The hum of talk dies away. Enter across front of stage Lyubov Andreyevna and Gaev. She is not weeping, but is pale; her face is quivering—she cannot speak.

Gaev: You gave them your purse, Lyuba. That won’t do—that won’t do!

Lyubov: I couldn’t help it! I couldn’t help it!

Both go out.

Lopahin: In the doorway, calls after them. You will take a glass at parting? Please do. I didn’t think to bring any from the town, and at the station I could only get one bottle. Please take a glass a pause. What? You don’t care for any? Comes away from the door. If I’d known, I wouldn’t have bought it. Well, and I’m not going to drink it. Yasha carefully sets the tray down on a chair. You have a glass, Yasha, anyway.

Yasha: Good luck to the travellers, and luck to those that stay behind! Drinks. This

champagne isn't the real thing, I can assure you.

Lopahin: It cost eight roubles the bottle a pause. It's devilish cold here.

Yasha: They haven't heated the stove today—it's all the same since we're going laughs.

Lopahin: What are you laughing for?

Yasha: For pleasure.

Lopahin: Though it's October, it's as still and sunny as though it were summer. It's just right for building! Looks at his watch; says in doorway. Take note, ladies and gentlemen, the train goes in forty-seven minutes; so you ought to start for the station in twenty minutes. You must hurry up!

Trofimov comes in from out of doors wearing a greatcoat.

Trofimov: I think it must be time to start, the horses are ready. The devil only knows what's become of my goloshes; they're lost. In the doorway. Anya! My goloshes aren't here. I can't find them.

Lopahin: And I'm getting off to Harkov. I am going in the same train with you. I'm spending all the winter at Harkov. I've been wasting all my time gossiping with you and fretting with no work to do. I can't get on without work. I don't know what to do with my hands, they flap about so queerly, as if they didn't belong to me.

Trofimov: Well, we're just going away, and you will take up your profitable labours again.

Lopahin: Do take a glass.

Trofimov: No, thanks.

Lopahin: Then you're going to Moscow now?

Trofimov: Yes. I shall see them as far as the town, and tomorrow I shall go on to Moscow.

Lopahin: Yes, I daresay, the professors aren't giving any lectures, they're waiting

for your arrival.

Trofimov: That's not your business.

Lopahin: How many years have you been at the University?

Trofimov: Do think of something newer than that—that's stale and flat hunts for goloshes. You know we shall most likely never see each other again, so let me give you one piece of advice at parting: don't wave your arms about—get out of the habit. And another thing, building villas, reckoning up that the summer visitors will in time become independent farmers—reckoning like that, that's not the thing to do either. After all, I am fond of you: you have fine delicate fingers like an artist, you've a fine delicate soul.

Lopahin: Embraces him. Goodbye, my dear fellow. Thanks for everything. Let me give you money for the journey, if you need it.

Trofimov: What for? I don't need it.

Lopahin: Why, you haven't got a halfpenny.

Trofimov: Yes, I have, thank you. I got some money for a translation. Here it is in my pocket, anxiously but where can my goloshes be!

Varya: From the next room. Take the nasty things! Flings a pair of goloshes on to the stage.

Trofimov: Why are you so cross, Varya? h'm! … but those aren't my goloshes.

Lopahin: I sowed three thousand acres with poppies in the spring, and now I have cleared forty thousand profit. And when my poppies were in flower, wasn't it a picture! So here, as I say, I made forty thousand, and I'm offering you a loan because I can afford to. Why turn up your nose? I am a peasant—I speak bluntly.

Trofimov: Your father was a peasant, mine was a chemist—and that proves absolutely nothing whatever. Lopahin takes out his pocketbook. Stop that—stop that. If you were to offer me two hundred thousand I wouldn't take it. I am an

independent man, and everything that all of you, rich and poor alike, prize so highly and hold so dear, hasn't the slightest power over me—it's like so much fluff fluttering in the air. I can get on without you. I can pass by you. I am strong and proud. Humanity is advancing towards the highest truth, the highest happiness, which is possible on earth, and I am in the front ranks.

Lopahin: Will you get there?

Trofimov: I shall get there a pause. I shall get there, or I shall show others the way to get there.

In the distance is heard the stroke of an axe on a tree.

Lopahin: Goodbye, my dear fellow; it's time to be off. We turn up our noses at one another, but life is passing all the while. When I am working hard without resting, then my mind is more at ease, and it seems to me as though I too know what I exist for; but how many people there are in Russia, my dear boy, who exist, one doesn't know what for. Well, it doesn't matter. That's not what keeps things spinning. They tell me Leonid Andreyevitch has taken a situation. He is going to be a clerk at the bank—6,000 roubles a year. Only, of course, he won't stick to it—he's too lazy.

Anya: In the doorway. Mamma begs you not to let them chop down the orchard until she's gone.

Trofimov: Yes, really, you might have the tact walks out across the front of the stage.

Lopahin: I'll see to it! I'll see to it! Stupid fellows! Goes out after him.

Anya: Has Firs been taken to the hospital?

Yasha: I told them this morning. No doubt they have taken him.

Anya: To Epihodov, who passes across the drawing-room. Semyon Pantaleyevitch, inquire, please, if Firs has been taken to the hospital.

Yasha: In a tone of offence. I told Yegor this morning—why ask a dozen times?

Epihodov: Firs is advanced in years. It's my conclusive opinion no treatment would do him good; it's time he was gathered to his fathers. And I can only envy him puts a trunk down on a cardboard hatbox and crushes it. There, now, of course—I knew it would be so.

Yasha: Jeeringly. Two and twenty misfortunes!

Varya: Through the door. Has Firs been taken to the hospital?

Anya: Yes.

Varya: Why wasn't the note for the doctor taken too?

Anya: Oh, then, we must send it after them goes out.

Varya: From the adjoining room. Where's Yasha? Tell him his mother's come to say goodbye to him.

Yasha: Waves his hand. They put me out of all patience! Dunyasha has all this time been busy about the luggage. Now, when Yasha is left alone, she goes up to him.

Dunyasha: You might just give me one look, Yasha. You're going away. You're leaving me weeps and throws herself on his neck.

Yasha: What are you crying for? Drinks the champagne. In six days I shall be in Paris again. Tomorrow we shall get into the express train and roll away in a flash. I can scarcely believe it! Vive la France! It doesn't suit me here—it's not the life for me; there's no doing anything. I have seen enough of the ignorance here. I have had enough of it drinks champagne. What are you crying for? Behave yourself properly, and then you won't cry.

Dunyasha: Powders her face, looking in a pocket-mirror. Do send me a letter from Paris. You know how I loved you, Yasha—how I loved you! I am a tender creature, Yasha.

Yasha: Here they are coming!

Busies himself about the trunks, humming softly. Enter Lyubov Andreyevna, Gaev,

Anya and Charlotta Ivanovna.

Gaev: We ought to be off. There's not much time now looking at Yasha. What a smell of herrings!

Lyubov: In ten minutes we must get into the carriage casts a look about the room. Farewell, dear house, dear old home of our fathers! Winter will pass and spring will come, and then you will be no more; they will tear you down! How much those walls have seen! Kisses her daughter passionately. My treasure, how bright you look! Your eyes are sparkling like diamonds! Are you glad? Very glad?

Anya: Very glad! A new life is beginning, mamma.

Gaev: Yes, really, everything is all right now. Before the cherry orchard was sold, we were all worried and wretched, but afterwards, when once the question was settled conclusively, irrevocably, we all felt calm and even cheerful. I am a bank clerk now—I am a financier—cannon off the red. And you, Lyuba, after all, you are looking better; there's no question of that.

Lyubov: Yes. My nerves are better, that's true. Her hat and coat are handed to her. I'm sleeping well. Carry out my things, Yasha. It's time. To Anya. My darling, we shall soon see each other again. I am going to Paris. I can live there on the money your Yaroslavl auntie sent us to buy the estate with—hurrah for auntie!—but that money won't last long.

Anya: You'll come back soon, mamma, won't you? I'll be working up for my examination in the high school, and when I have passed that, I shall set to work and be a help to you. We will read all sorts of things together, mamma, won't we? Kisses her mother's hands. We will read in the autumn evenings. We'll read lots of books, and a new wonderful world will open out before us dreamily. Mamma, come soon.

Lyubov: I shall come, my precious treasure embraces her.

Enter Lopahin. Charlotta softly hums a song.

Gaev: Charlotta's happy; she's singing!

Charlotta: Picks up a bundle like a swaddled baby. Bye, bye, my baby. A baby is heard crying: "Ooah! ooah!" Hush, hush, my pretty boy! Ooah! ooah! Poor little thing! Throws the bundle back. You must please find me a situation. I can't go on like this.

Lopahin: We'll find you one, Charlotta Ivanovna. Don't you worry yourself.

Gaev: Everyone's leaving us. Varya's going away. We have become of no use all at once.

Charlotta: There's nowhere for me to be in the town. I must go away. Hums. What care I …

Enter Pishtchik.

Lopahin: The freak of nature!

Pishtchik: Gasping. Oh! … let me get my breath. … I'm worn out … my most honoured … Give me some water.

Gaev: Want some money, I suppose? Your humble servant! I'll go out of the way of temptation goes out.

Pishtchik: It's a long while since I have been to see you … dearest lady. To Lopahin. You are here … glad to see you … a man of immense intellect … take … here gives Lopahin money 400 roubles. That leaves me owing 840.

Lopahin: Shrugging his shoulders in amazement. It's like a dream. Where did you get it?

Pishtchik: Wait a bit … I'm hot … a most extraordinary occurrence! Some Englishmen came along and found in my land some sort of white clay. To Lyubov Andreyevna. And 400 for you … most lovely … wonderful gives money.
The rest later sips water. A young man in the train was telling me just now that a great philosopher advises jumping off a housetop. "Jump!" says he; "the whole gist

of the problem lies in that." Wonderingly. Fancy that, now! Water, please!

Lopahin: What Englishmen?

Pishtchik: I have made over to them the rights to dig the clay for twenty-four years … and now, excuse me … I can't stay … I must be trotting on. I'm going to Znoikovo … to Kardamanovo. … I'm in debt all round sips. … To your very good health! … I'll come in on Thursday.

Lyubov: We are just off to the town, and tomorrow I start for abroad.

Pishtchik: What! In agitation. Why to the town? Oh, I see the furniture … the boxes. No matter … through his tears … no matter … men of enormous intellect … these Englishmen. … Never mind … be happy. God will succour you … no matter … everything in this world must have an end kisses Lyubov Andreyevna's hand. If the rumour reaches you that my end has come, think of this … old horse, and say: "There once was such a man in the world … Semyonov-Pishtchik … the kingdom of heaven be his!" … most extraordinary weather … yes. Goes out in violent agitation, but at once returns and says in the doorway. Dashenka wishes to be remembered to you goes out.

Lyubov: Now we can start. I leave with two cares in my heart. The first is leaving Firs ill. Looking at her watch. We have still five minutes.

Anya: Mamma, Firs has been taken to the hospital. Yasha sent him off this morning.

Lyubov: My other anxiety is Varya. She is used to getting up early and working; and now, without work, she's like a fish out of water. She is thin and pale, and she's crying, poor dear! A pause. You are well aware, Yermolay Alexeyevitch, I dreamed of marrying her to you, and everything seemed to show that you would get married whispers to Anya and motions to Charlotta and both go out. She loves you—she suits you. And I don't know—I don't know why it is you seem, as it were, to avoid each other. I can't understand it!

Lopahin: I don't understand it myself, I confess. It's queer somehow, altogether. If

there's still time, I'm ready now at once. Let's settle it straight off, and go ahead; but without you, I feel I shan't make her an offer.

Lyubov: That's excellent. Why, a single moment's all that's necessary. I'll call her at once.

Lopahin: And there's champagne all ready too looking into the glasses. Empty! Someone's emptied them already. Yasha coughs. I call that greedy.

Lyubov: Eagerly. Capital! We will go out. Yasha, allez! I'll call her in. At the door. Varya, leave all that; come here. Come along! Goes out with Yasha.

Lopahin: Looking at his watch. Yes.

A pause. Behind the door, smothered laughter and whispering, and, at last, enter Varya.

Varya: Looking a long while over the things. It is strange, I can't find it anywhere.

Lopahin: What are you looking for?

Varya: I packed it myself, and I can't remember a pause.

Lopahin: Where are you going now, Varvara Mihailova?

Varya: I? To the Ragulins. I have arranged to go to them to look after the house—as a housekeeper.

Lopahin: That's in Yashnovo? It'll be seventy miles away a pause. So this is the end of life in this house!

Varya: Looking among the things. Where is it? Perhaps I put it in the trunk. Yes, life in this house is over—there will be no more of it.

Lopahin: And I'm just off to Harkov—by this next train. I've a lot of business there. I'm leaving Epihodov here, and I've taken him on.

Varya: Really!

Lopahin: This time last year we had snow already, if you remember; but now it's so

fine and sunny. Though it's cold, to be sure—three degrees of frost.

Varya: I haven't looked a pause. And besides, our thermometer's broken a pause.

Voice at the door from the yard: "Yermolay Alexeyevitch!"

Lopahin: As though he had long been expecting this summons. This minute!

Lopahin goes out quickly. Varya sitting on the floor and laying her head on a bag full of clothes, sobs quietly. The door opens. Lyubov Andreyevna comes in cautiously.

Lyubov: Well? A pause. We must be going.

Varya: Has wiped her eyes and is no longer crying. Yes, mamma, it's time to start. I shall have time to get to the Ragulins today, if only you're not late for the train.

Lyubov: In the doorway. Anya, put your things on.

Enter Anya, then Gaev and Charlotta Ivanovna. Gaev has on a warm coat with a hood. Servants and cabmen come in. Epihodov bustles about the luggage.

Lyubov: Now we can start on our travels.

Anya: Joyfully. On our travels!

Gaev: My friends—my dear, my precious friends! Leaving this house forever, can I be silent? Can I refrain from giving utterance at leave-taking to those emotions which now flood all my being?

Anya: Supplicatingly. Uncle!

Varya: Uncle, you mustn't!

Gaev: Dejectedly. Cannon and into the pocket … I'll be quiet. …

Enter Trofimov and afterwards Lopahin.

Trofimov: Well, ladies and gentlemen, we must start.

Lopahin: Epihodov, my coat!

Lyubov: I'll stay just one minute. It seems as though I have never seen before what

the walls, what the ceilings in this house were like, and now I look at them with greediness, with such tender love.

Gaev: I remember when I was six years old sitting in that window on Trinity Day watching my father going to church.

Lyubov: Have all the things been taken?

Lopahin: I think all. Putting on overcoat, to Epihodov. You, Epihodov, mind you see everything is right.

Epihodov: In a husky voice. Don't you trouble, Yermolay Alexeyevitch.

Lopahin: Why, what's wrong with your voice?

Epihodov: I've just had a drink of water, and I choked over something.

Yasha: Contemptuously. The ignorance!

Lyubov: We are going—and not a soul will be left here.

Lopahin: Not till the spring.

Varya: Pulls a parasol out of a bundle, as though about to hit someone with it. Lopahin makes a gesture as though alarmed. What is it? I didn't mean anything.

Trofimov: Ladies and gentlemen, let us get into the carriage. It's time. The train will be in directly.

Varya: Petya, here they are, your goloshes, by that box. With tears. And what dirty old things they are!

Trofimov: Putting on his goloshes. Let us go, friends!

Gaev: Greatly agitated, afraid of weeping. The train—the station! Double baulk, ah!

Lyubov: Let us go!

Lopahin: Are we all here? Locks the side-door on left. The things are all here. We must lock up. Let us go!

Anya: Goodbye, home! Goodbye to the old life!

Trofimov: Welcome to the new life!

Trofimov goes out with Anya. Varya looks round the room and goes out slowly. Yasha and Charlotta Ivanovna, with her dog, go out.

Lopahin: Till the spring, then! Come, friends, till we meet! Goes out.

Lyubov Andreyevna and Gaev remain alone. As though they had been waiting for this, they throw themselves on each other's necks, and break into subdued smothered sobbing, afraid of being overheard.

Gaev: In despair. Sister, my sister!

Lyubov: Oh, my orchard!—my sweet, beautiful orchard! My life, my youth, my happiness, goodbye! goodbye!

Voice of Anya: Calling gaily. Mamma!

Voice of Trofimov: Gaily, excitedly. Aaoo!

Lyubov: One last look at the walls, at the windows. My dear mother loved to walk about this room.

Gaev: Sister, sister!

Voice of Anya: Mamma!

Voice of Trofimov: Aaoo!

Lyubov: We are coming. They go out.

The stage is empty. There is the sound of the doors being locked up, then of the carriages driving away. There is silence. In the stillness there is the dull stroke of an axe in a tree, clanging with a mournful lonely sound. Footsteps are heard. Firs appears in the doorway on the right. He is dressed as always—in a pea-jacket and white waistcoat, with slippers on his feet. He is ill.

Firs: Goes up to the doors, and tries the handles. Locked! They have gone … sits

down on sofa. They have forgotten me. … Never mind … I'll sit here a bit. … I'll be bound Leonid Andreyevitch hasn't put his fur coat on and has gone off in his thin overcoat sighs anxiously. I didn't see after him. … These young people … mutters something that can't be distinguished. Life has slipped by as though I hadn't lived. Lies down. I'll lie down a bit. … There's no strength in you, nothing left you—all gone! Ech! I'm good for nothing lies motionless.

A sound is heard that seems to come from the sky, like a breaking harp-string, dying away mournfully. All is still again, and there is heard nothing but the strokes of the axe far away in the orchard.

Curtain.

Characters in the Play

Madame Ranevsky (Lyubov Andreyevna) (the owner of the Cherry Orchard)

Anya (her daughter, aged 17)

Varya (her adopted daughter, aged 24)

Gaev (Leonid Andreyevitch) (brother of Madame Ranevsky)

Lopahin (Yermolay Alexeyevitch) (a Merchant)

Trofimov (Pyotr Sergeyevitch) (a Student)

Semyonov-Pishtchik (a Landowner)

Charlotta Ivanovna (a Governess)

Epihodov (Semyon Pantaleyevitch) (a Clerk)

Dunyasha (a Maid)

Firs (an old Valet, aged 87)

Yasha (a young Valet)

A Vagrant

The Station Master

A Post-Office Clerk

Visitors, Servants

The action takes place on the estate of Madame Ranevsky.