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Cast of Characters

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA RANYEVSKAYA (LYUBA), owner of a country estate

ANYA (ANYICHKA), her daughter, 17 years old

VARYA (VARVARA MIKHAILOVNA), her adopted daughter, 24 years old

LEONID ANDREYEVICH GAYEV (LYONYA), Ranyevskaya's brother, 51 years old

YERMOLAY ALEKSEYEVICH LOPAKHIN, a man of the new entrepreneurial class

PYOTR SERGEYEVICH TROFIMOV (PETYA), a student, approaching 30 years old

BORIS BORISOVICH SEMYONOV-PISHCHIK, owner of a country estate

CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA, a governess

SEMYON PANTELEYEVICH YEPIKHODOV, an office clerk

DUNYASHA (AVDOTYA FYODOROVNA KOZOYEDOV), a housemaid

FEERS NIKOLAYEVICH, a servant, 87 years old

YASHA, a young servant

PASSER-BY

STATIONMASTER

MAN FROM THE POST OFFICE

GUESTS

SERVANTS

Setting

The play takes place at the estate of Lyubov Andreyevna Ranyevskaya.

THE CHERRY ORCHARD
(VISHNYOVY SAD)

translated by Nicholas Saunders and Frank Dwyer

FROM THE PLAY BY ANTON CHEKHOV

ACT I

(A room that everyone still calls the nursery. One door leads off to Anya's room. The sun is just beginning to rise. It's already May and the cherry trees are blooming, but it's still cold outside, with a morning frost. The windows are closed. DUNYASHA enters with a candle, followed by LOPAKHIN holding a book.)

LOPAKHIN. It's here, thank God. The train is finally here. What time is it?

DUNYASHA. Almost two. *(She blows out the candle.)* Day is dawning.

LOPAKHIN. They're so late. They were supposed to be here two hours ago. *(He yawns and stretches.)* What a fool I am! I came all this way so I could meet them at the station, but I sat down and fell asleep. How could I do that? So stupid!...Why didn't you wake me?

DUNYASHA. I thought you had gone. *(She listens.)* Listen...I think they're coming...

LOPAKHIN. *(Listening:)* No, not yet...they'll have to gather up all their things, their luggage, you know...load it...

(Pause.)

Lyubov Andreyevna...she's been gone a long time now, five years. I wonder if she's still the same, or if living abroad has changed her... She was so good, so kind, and natural, she didn't hold herself apart... Once, when I was a little boy, only five or six, my father—he had a shop in the village then—he hit me. Right in the face. My nose was bleeding...We had just come into this courtyard, I don't remember why—and he was drunk. Well, Lyubov Andreyevna...I remember this as if it were yesterday...she was hardly more than a girl herself, young and slender...she brought me inside, into this very room, the nursery, and led me to the washstand..."Don't cry," she said, "Don't cry, little muzhik, it will heal before your wedding."

(Pause.)

"Little muzhik," she called me...And my father was a muzhik, it's true, but look at me now, in my white vest and fancy shoes. Oh, who

am I trying to fool? I'm like a little pig poking his snout into a pastry shop. I'm rich, yes, I've got plenty of money, but so what? A muzhik's a muzhik... *(He leafs through his book.)* I was trying to read this book—but it's all a blur to me—I fell asleep...

(Pause.)

DUNYASHA. The dogs were restless, all night long...they know that their mistress is coming.

LOPAKHIN. Are you all right, Dunyasha? You seem a little...

DUNYASHA. I'm trembling...I think I'm going to faint.

LOPAKHIN. Oh, stop. Pretending to be so delicate. Dressing like a lady, fussing with your hair. Stop it, Dunyasha. Remember your place.

(YEPIKHODOV comes in with a bouquet of flowers. He is wearing a jacket and shiny new boots, which squeak loudly with every step he takes. The bouquet slips out of his hands.)

YEPIKHODOV. *(Picking up the flowers:)* This is from the gardener. For the dining room, he said.

(YEPIKHODOV gives the bouquet to DUNYASHA. She starts to leave.)

LOPAKHIN. And bring me some kvass.

DUNYASHA. Right away. *(She leaves.)*

YEPIKHODOV. It's twenty-eight degrees out there, with frost on the ground, but the cherry trees are blooming. I don't have one good thing to say about this climate. *(He sighs.)* I really don't. It's incommensurable. Contra-salubrious. It really is. And what makes things worse, Yermolay Alekseyich, if you'll allow me to go on...is these boots. I acquired these boots three days ago and, it's the God's truth, they squeak so much they're driving me out of my mind. Oh, I know, I should grease them with something, but what, that's the question? What do you recommend?

LOPAKHIN. Leave me alone. You're wearing me out.

YEPIKHODOV. Every day something bad happens to me, every single day. But I'm not complaining, I'm used to it, look, I'm even smiling.

(DUNYASHA comes in with LOPAKHIN's kvass.)

I'd better go. *(He turns and bumps into a chair, which falls over. Triumphantly:)* Aha! There! You see? ...Sorry, sorry, but...it's unbelievable!... *(He goes out.)*

DUNYASHA. Oh, Yermolay Alekseyich, I can't keep it secret any longer: Yepikhodov has asked me to marry him.

LOPAKHIN. Well, well!

DUNYASHA. But I don't know what to...He's nice, it's true, and he's not just a...he knows how to conduct himself...but sometimes I can't understand a word he says. He sounds like he's making sense, but I have no idea what he's talking about. I like him, and he's crazy about me, but he's so unlucky. Something bad does happen to him every day. And then everybody laughs. They call him the Walking Accident.

LOPAKHIN. (*Listening:*) Wait, I think they're here...

DUNYASHA. They're here! Oh, what's come over me? I'm so cold.

LOPAKHIN. Yes, they're here. Let's go and greet them. I wonder if she'll remember me. Five years is a long time.

DUNYASHA. I think I'm going to faint...I am, I'm fainting!

(The sound of two carriages approaching the house. LOPAKHIN and DUNYASHA hurry out. The stage is empty. There is a sudden bustle on the other side of the door. FEERS, who went to meet Lyubov Andreyevna's train, comes in, leaning on a cane. He's wearing old-fashioned servant's livery with a top hat and muttering to himself, though it's impossible to make out a single word. He crosses quickly and goes out. The sounds of people approaching. Someone says, "Wait! Let's go in here." LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA, ANYA, and CHARLOTTA enter. They are all dressed in traveling clothes. CHARLOTTA has a little dog on a leash. They are followed by VARYA, wearing a coat and scarf; GAYEV; SEMYONOV-PISHCHIK; LOPAKHIN; and DUNYASHA, who carries a parcel and an umbrella. Various servants carrying luggage pass through the room.)

ANYA. Look, Mama. Do you remember what room this is?

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. (*Happily, moved almost to tears:*) It's the nursery!

VARYA. My hands are so cold they're numb. (*To LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA:*) We've kept your rooms exactly as you left them, mamachka, white and mauve.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Oh, my nursery, how beautiful you are, how dear! ...I slept here when I was a little girl... (*She weeps.*) ...and I feel like a little girl all over again.

(She kisses GAYEV, VARYA, and then GAYEV again.)

Varya hasn't changed a bit, has she? Still like a little nun...And I haven't forgotten Dunyasha...

(She kisses DUNYASHA.)

GAYEV. That train was two hours late. Incredible! Such incompetence!

CHARLOTTA. *(To PISHCHIK:)* This dog has acquired a taste for nuts.

PISHCHIK. Can you imagine!?

(Everyone goes out, except ANYA and DUNYASHA.)

DUNYASHA. You've been gone so long...

(She helps ANYA off with her hat and coat.)

ANYA. I haven't slept for four days...and I'm chilled to the bone.

DUNYASHA. When you went away it was Lent, remember? We had frost and snow, but it's so nice now! Oh, my dearest!

(DUNYASHA laughs and kisses ANYA.)

I've missed you so much, you're my best friend in all the world...and I have a surprise for you, right this minute, it can't wait...

ANYA. *(Apathetically:)* Here we go again...

DUNYASHA. Just after Easter, Yepikhodov...the clerk!...proposed to me.

ANYA. That's all you ever think about... *(She tries to fix her hair.)*
...I've lost all my hairpins... *(She's so tired she begins to sway.)*

DUNYASHA. But I don't know what to... I can't think straight. He loves me, adores me!

ANYA. *(Looking off into her room; tenderly:)* My own little room, my windows, everything just the way I left it. I'm really home! When I wake up tomorrow, I'll run out into the orchard... I hope I can fall asleep! I never closed my eyes the whole time we were on the train, I had so much to worry about.

DUNYASHA. Pyotr Sergeych is here. He came the day before yesterday.

ANYA. *(Happily:)* Petya!

DUNYASHA. He's staying in the bathhouse—that's what he wanted—so he won't be in anybody's way, he said. *(She looks at her pocket watch.)* I ought to wake him, but Varvara Mikhailovna told me not to. "Don't you dare," she said.

(VARYA comes in, with a bunch of keys attached to her belt.)

VARYA. Bring us some coffee, Dunyasha, quickly...Mamachka wants coffee.

DUNYASHA. All right. *(She goes out.)*

VARYA. You're here, you're finally here. Thank God! You're home again.

(She hugs and kisses ANYA.)

Our darling has come back to us! Our little princess!

ANYA. What I've been through.

VARYA. I can imagine!

ANYA. We left during Holy Week. It was so cold. And Charlotta—she talked the whole way, and she kept doing those magic tricks. Why did she have to go with me?

VARYA. You could hardly go alone, my darling, you're only seventeen!

ANYA. When we finally got to Paris, it was cold, it was snowing. My French is terrible. Mama lived on the fifth floor. We had to walk up. There were so many people there—Frenchmen, ladies, an old French priest with his little book...and they were all smoking. It was awful. I felt so sorry for mama, I put my arms around her and held her head against me, I held her and held her. She was crying, and she kept kissing me, over and over...

VARYA. *(Fighting back tears:)* Stop, stop...

ANYA. She had already sold her dacha near Menton, and she had nothing left, nothing at all. I had nothing, either, not a kopeck. I don't know how we made it home. And she still doesn't understand! At every station restaurant, she ordered the most expensive dishes, and she always gave each waiter a whole ruble. Charlotta was just as bad. And that Yasha—what nerve! He ordered whatever they did. Disgusting. She can't get along without him, you know, so we had to bring him with us...

VARYA. I saw him, the rascal.

ANYA. Well, what's happening here? Did you pay the interest?

VARYA. With what?

ANYA. Oh, dear, oh, dear...

VARYA. The estate is to be sold in August...

ANYA. Oh, no...

(LOPAKHIN appears in the doorway and moos at them.)

LOPAKHIN. Moo—oo—oo—oo! (*He leaves.*)

VARYA. (*Fighting back tears:*) I'd like to smack him... (*She shakes her fist after him.*)

(*ANYA puts her arms around VARYA.*)

ANYA. Has he proposed, Varya?

(*VARYA shakes her head.*)

But he loves you... What are you waiting for? Why don't you work things out?

VARYA. What is there to work out. He's too busy, he doesn't have time for me...he hardly notices me. And I don't care, anyway. Except that it's hard for me to be around him... Everyone keeps talking about our wedding, and congratulating us, but there's nothing to it, it's not real, it's like a dream. (*Changing the subject:*) Oh, look, you have a brooch in the shape of a little bee.

ANYA. (*Sadly:*) Mama bought it for me. (*She goes off to her room, speaking with excitement, in a girlish voice:*) Guess what I did, in Paris. I went up in a balloon!

VARYA. Our darling is home again! Our little princess is home!

(*DUNYASHA returns with a pot and begins preparing the coffee. VARYA moves to ANYA's door and speaks to her.*)

I'm so busy, my darling, taking care of the house all day long, but the whole time there's only one thing I think about, one thing I dream about. For you to marry a rich man. That would bring such peace to my heart. If you did, I would go on a pilgrimage, first to a convent... then to Kiev...Moscow, all the holy places...walking all the way... what joy!

ANYA. Listen! The birds are singing in the cherry trees. What time is it?

VARYA. It must be after two. It's time for bed, my angel. (*She walks into Anya's room.*) What joy that would be!

(*YASHA comes in with a lap robe and a small traveling bag.*)

YASHA. (*With an affectation of refinement:*) Ah... Might it be possible to pass through here without unduly disturbing anyone?

DUNYASHA. Oh, Yasha, I can hardly recognize you. You've changed so much since you went abroad.

YASHA. Hmm... Do I know you?

DUNYASHA. When you went away, I was only this high... *(She holds her hand a distance from the floor.)* I'm Dunyasha, Fyodor Kozoyedov's daughter. Don't you remember me?

YASHA. Hmm... What a little peach!

(He glances around the room, then embraces her. She screams and drops a saucer. He goes off quickly.)

VARYA. *(Appearing in the doorway of ANYA's room; in a disapproving voice:)* What's wrong?

DUNYASHA. *(Almost in tears:)* I broke a saucer...

VARYA. Oh, well, that's good luck.

ANYA. *(Coming out of her room:)* We must tell mother that Petya's here...

VARYA. I left strict instructions not to wake him.

ANYA. *(Pensively:)* Can you believe it?...it's already been six years since father died...and a month after, Grisha drowned in the river. Such a darling boy. He was only seven. Mama couldn't bear it. She ran away, ran away from her life here, and never looked back... *(She shudders.)* Oh, I understand, and I don't blame her. I wish I could make her see that.

(Pause.)

Petya Trofimov was Grisha's tutor. I'm afraid he'll bring back too many memories...

(FEERS enters, wearing a jacket and white vest.)

FEERS. *(Crossing toward the coffee pot; anxiously:)* The mistress will take her coffee here... *(He puts on white gloves.)* Is it ready? *(Reprimanding DUNYASHA:)* Well, now! ...And where is the cream?

DUNYASHA. Oh, dear! *(She leaves.)*

FEERS. *(Fussing around the coffee service.)* Ah, you...you poor excuse for a child of God!... *(He mutters to himself.)* She's home from Paris... The master used to go to Paris, too, once upon a time... By coach... *(He laughs to himself.)*

VARYA. Feers... What are you talking about?

FEERS. What's that? What can I do for you? *(Happily:)* My mistress is home again! I've lived to see the day! Now I can die... *(He weeps with joy.)*

(LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA, GAYEV, LOPAKHIN, and SEMYONOV-PISHCHIK enter. SEMYONOV-PISHCHIK is

wearing a fine poddyovka, a light overcoat with a narrow waist and numerous pleats, and sharovary, very wide Cossack trousers, with the legs tucked into his boots. GAYEV, miming with his hands and body, plays an imaginary game of billiards.)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. What was it, now? Remind me... Yellow ball in the corner pocket! Bank shot in the side pocket!

GAYEV. Straight shot in the corner pocket! Oh, dear sister, they used to tuck us in bed in this very room, and now, believe it or not, I'm fifty-one...

LOPAKHIN. Yes, time flies.

GAYEV. Huh!

LOPAKHIN. Time, I said. It flies.

GAYEV. It smells of patchouli in here.

ANYA. I'm going to bed. Goodnight, mama. *(She kisses her mother.)*

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. My own little angel, my darling! *(She kisses her daughter's hands.)* Aren't you glad to be home? I can hardly believe we're here.

ANYA. Goodnight, uncle.

GAYEV. God bless you. *(He kisses her face and hands.)* Oh, how you remind me of your mother! *(To his sister:)* Look, Lyuba, here you are—you were exactly like this, at her age.

(ANYA shakes hands with LOPAKHIN and PISHCHIK and goes out, closing the door behind her.)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. She's ready to drop.

PISHCHIK. Well, she's come a long and weary way.

VARYA. *(To LOPAKHIN and PISHCHIK:)* Gentlemen, it's after two. Long past our bedtime.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. *(Laughing:)* You haven't changed a bit, Varya.

(She pulls VARYA to her and kisses her.)

I'll have some coffee first, and then we'll say goodnight.

(FEERS places a little pillow under her feet.)

Thank you, my dear. I've grown so fond of coffee, I drink it night and day. Thank you, you dear old man.

(She kisses FEERS.)

VARYA. I'll make sure they've brought in all the luggage... (*She leaves.*)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Am I really home? (*She laughs.*) I feel like jumping up and down and waving my arms around. (*She puts her hands over her eyes.*) I must be dreaming! As God is my witness, I love this country with all my heart. On the train, I kept looking out the window, but I could hardly see anything through my tears. (*She is deeply moved.*) I should finish my coffee. Thank you, Feers, thank you, you dear old man. I'm so happy you're still alive.

FEERS. The day before yesterday.

GAYEV. Deaf as a post.

LOPAKHIN. I have to go now. I have to be on the train to Kharkov, a little before five. Isn't that a shame? All I want to do is stay here and look at you, and talk to you...you haven't changed, you're as lovely as you always were.

PISHCHIK. (*Breathing fast, with excitement.*) She's better!...and in the latest Paris fashions... If I'm not careful, I'll soon put my wagon in a ditch over her, all four wheels...

LOPAKHIN. Your brother...forgive me, I should say "Leonid Andreyich"...looks down on me. He thinks I'm only a wily muzhik who got rich by taking advantage of the other muzhiks, but I don't mind. He can think what he likes. All I care about is what you think: I want you to believe in me the way you used to, and look at me with kindness and sympathy, as you always did. My God, my father was your father's serf, and your grandfather's before that—they owned him—but you, you lifted me up, all those years ago, and made it possible for me to go forward, to put the past behind me, you alone, and I love you now as if you were a member of my own family... more, even.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. I can't sit still any longer, I just can't. (*She jumps up and walks around in great agitation.*) I'm so happy I could die...Go ahead, laugh if you like, I know how silly I am... My dear old bookcase... (*She kisses the bookcase.*) ...My little table.

GAYEV. Nanny died, you know, poor old nanny—while you were gone.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. (*Sitting down and taking a sip of coffee:*) Yes, may she rest in peace. They wrote me.

GAYEV. Anastasy, too. And Petrushka...you remember, cross-eyed Petrushka...he deserted us. He works in town now, for the chief of

police. (*He takes a little box of fruit drops out of his pocket and pops one in his mouth.*)

PISHCHIK. My daughter Dashenka...sends her regards...

LOPAKHIN. I have something to tell you, something that should make you feel better. (*He looks at his watch.*) I have to go, so there's no time now to talk about it...but I want to tell you, at least. You already know that the cherry orchard has to be sold to pay off the mortgage. The auction is set for August 22nd. But don't worry, dear lady, put your heart at rest: I have a solution... Don't say anything until I finish! Here's my proposal. This estate is only about twenty versts from town, and the town now has a railway station. If you divide the cherry orchard and all the land down to the river into building lots and then lease those lots for summer dachas, you could clear a minimum of twenty-five thousand rubles a year.

GAYEV. Pardon me, but what utter nonsense!

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. I don't quite follow you, Yermolay Alekseyich.

LOPAKHIN. Every lot would be a little over two and two-thirds acres, and summer people would gladly rent them for twenty-five rubles a year. Start putting out the word now, and—I guarantee it—you won't have anything left by autumn. They'll gobble them up. So, congratulations. You're saved. The location is ideal, the river is deep here. You'll have to make a few improvements, of course, fix things up a little...knock down the old buildings, this house, for example, which isn't worth anything any more, clear away the old cherry orchard...

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Clear away the cherry orchard? Pardon me, my dear, you don't know what you're saying. If there's a single thing that's interesting, or even remarkable, in this whole district, it's our cherry orchard.

LOPAKHIN. The only thing remarkable about it is its size. The trees produce cherries only every other year, and when they do, you don't know what to do with them, you never sell any.

GAYEV. This orchard is even mentioned in *Andreyevsky's Encyclopedia*.

LOPAKHIN. (*Glancing at his watch:*) Well, we'd better think of something else pretty soon and do something about it, because the cherry orchard and the entire estate are to be sold at auction on August 22nd. So make up your minds! There's no other solution, I promise you. None.

FEERS. In the old days, oh, forty, fifty years ago, they used to dry cherries, and soak cherries, and pickle cherries, and make cherry jam, and then they...

GAYEV. That's enough, Feers.

FEERS. And then they sent the dried cherries to Moscow and Khar-kov, by the cartload. There was plenty of money then! And those dried cherries were soft and sweet, fragrant, and full of juice... They knew just how to do it.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. How did they do it?

FEERS. Nobody remembers. They all forgot.

PISHCHIK. (*To LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA:*) So what was Paris like? What did you do there? Did you eat frogs?

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Crocodiles.

PISHCHIK. Can you imagine!?

LOPAKHIN. A few years ago, the only people you ever saw in the villages, besides the people who lived there, I mean, were a few country gentlemen and their families, but now there are all these summer people. Every town, even the smallest, is now surrounded by their dachas. Summer people! And in the next twenty years, their number will multiply. Now, of course, all they want to do is sit on their terraces and drink tea, but one day, sooner or later, they're bound to wake up, and they'll begin to cultivate their lots, and then your cherry orchard will flourish again, in joy and plenty, and all its old glory...

GAYEV. (*Furiously:*) What utter nonsense!

(*VARYA and YASHA come in.*)

VARYA. Two telegrams came for you, mamachka. (*She finds the right key on her chain and opens the old bookcase, her keys jingling.*) Here they are.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. They're from Paris. (*She tears them in half without reading them.*) I'm finished with Paris...

GAYEV. Guess how old this bookcase is, Lyuba? Just last week I happened to pull out the bottom drawer, and there was the date, burned in with an iron brand. This bookcase was made exactly one hundred years ago. Isn't that something? We could be celebrating its jubilee. It's only an object, I know, inanimate, but, after all, it is a bookcase.

PISHCHIK. (*Astonished:*) A hundred years... Can you imagine!?

GAYEV. Yes...it's a treasure. (*Running his hands over it:*) Dear...venerable...bookcase! Allow me to celebrate with admiration and praise your gracious presence, which has for more than a hundred years served the glorious ideals of Justice and Virtue. Your silent voice, your mute but clarion call to arms...to productive labor...has never faltered, not in all these hundred years, and you have given us all, all the members of this family in generation after generation... (*His feelings well up in him:*) ...courage, you have inspired us with the faith that a brighter day will dawn, and you have nurtured in us an abiding love of goodness as well as a deep sense of social responsibility.

(*Pause.*)

LOPAKHIN. Right...

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Oh, Lyonya, you haven't changed a bit.

GAYEV. (*Slightly embarrassed:*) Carom off the yellow ball to the corner pocket! Straight shot to the side pocket!

LOPAKHIN. Well, it's time for me to go.

YASHA. (*Offering LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA her pill box:*) You should take your pills...

PISHCHIK. Pills? Don't take them, my dear one...All medicines are useless, neither good nor bad...Here, gracious lady, let me have them... (*He takes the pill box, dumps the pills into his hand, blows on them, and swallows them all down with a gulp of kvass.*) There!

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. You must be crazy!

PISHCHIK. All gone.

LOPAKHIN. What a hog!

(*They all laugh.*)

FEERS. Half a bucket of pickles, too, at the Easter Feast, just wolfed them down... (*He mutters on to himself.*)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. What's he saying?

VARYA. He's been mumbling like that for years now. We're used to it.

YASHA. He's just showing his age.

(*CHARLOTTA enters, in a white dress, tightly laced, looking very thin, with a lorgnette tucked into her belt.*)

LOPAKHIN. Ah, Charlotta Ivanovna, forgive me, I haven't greeted you yet.

(*Just as LOPAKHIN is about to kiss her hand, CHARLOTTA pulls it away.*)

CHARLOTTA. If I give you my hand, you'll be wanting an elbow, then a shoulder...

LOPAKHIN. This is not my day.

(They all laugh.)

Well then, Charlotta Ivanovna, show us one of your tricks!

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Oh, yes, Charlotta, do!

CHARLOTTA. Not a chance. I'm going to bed. *(She leaves.)*

LOPAKHIN. I have to go. I'll be back in about three weeks. Good-bye for now. *(He kisses LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA's hand. To GAYEV:)* Good-bye. *(He kisses PISHCHIK.)* Good-bye. *(He shakes hands with VARYA, FEERS, and YASHA.)* But I hate to go. *(To LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA:)* If you change your mind about the dachas, let me know, and I'll get you a loan for fifty thousand or so. Think it over very carefully.

VARYA. *(Angrily:)* Go, if you're going!

LOPAKHIN. All right, I'm going... *(He leaves.)*

GAYEV. How common. Oh, *pardon...* he's Varya's intended, her jolly bridegroom.

VARYA. Stop it, Uncle, you don't know anything about it.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. But it's all right, Varya, it's fine. I give you my blessing. He's a good man.

PISHCHIK. Better than good...he's the best of men...my Dashenka...she says that he...well, she says all sorts of things. *(He falls asleep, snores, and immediately awakens.)* By the way, gracious lady, can you lend me...two-hundred and forty rubles by tomorrow? ...The interest on my mortgage is due...

VARYA. *(Frightened:)* No! She doesn't have it!

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. I really don't.

PISHCHIK. Oh, well, it'll turn up. *(He laughs.)* I never lose hope. The moment I think all is lost and there's no way out, then, out of the blue, somebody passes by and builds a railroad across my land, and they pay me for it. Something else will turn up, too, if not today, then tomorrow... Maybe Dashenka will win two hundred thousand rubles in the lottery...she has a ticket.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. There. I've finished my coffee. It's time for bed.

FEERS. (*Admonishing GAYEV as he brushes him off with a clothes brush:*) Look at you, you put on the wrong trousers again. What am I going to do with you?

VARYA. (*Softly:*) Anya's asleep. (*She quietly opens the window.*) The sun is up, and the chill is gone. Look, mamachka, look at the trees! Aren't they glorious? Oh! The air is so fresh! And listen to the starlings!

GAYEV. (*Opening another window:*) The orchard is blooming, all dressed in white. And there's the lane, Lyuba! Remember the long lane running through the trees, straight as a bow string, and how it glows in the moonlight? You remember, don't you? You haven't forgotten?

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. (*Looking out the window at the orchard:*) The days of my childhood, those sweet and innocent days! I slept here, in this nursery. Every night the last thing I saw before I closed my eyes was this orchard, and every morning I woke up happy. It's still the same, it hasn't changed at all. (*She laughs with joy.*) All in white blossoms, everywhere white! Oh, my orchard! After every stormy autumn, every cruel winter, you come back, young again, full of joy, and it's clear that the angels of heaven watch over you... If only I could lay down the heavy burden I carry in my heart and leave the past behind me!

GAYEV. Yes, and now they're selling the orchard to pay our debts. It doesn't seem possible.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Look, there's mother, dressed in white, walking in the orchard. (*She laughs with joy.*) There she is! There!

GAYEV. Where?

VARYA. God love you, mamachka.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. No, there's no one there, it was only my imagination. See, off to the right, by the path to the gazebo, there's a tree, a white tree bending down, and it looks like a woman...

(*TROFIMOV enters, in a worn student uniform and glasses.*)

What a glorious orchard! With the white of the blossoms and the blue of the sky...

TROFIMOV. Lyubov Andreyevna!

(*LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA turns toward him.*)

I just want to say hello, we can talk tomorrow. (*He kisses her hand warmly.*) I had strict instructions to wait till morning, but I couldn't keep away...

(LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA looks at him in some bewilderment.)

VARYA. (*Trying not to cry:*) It's Petya Trofimov...

TROFIMOV. Petya Trofimov, Grisha's tutor... Have I changed so much?

(LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA embraces him and begins to weep quietly.)

GAYEV. (*Embarrassed:*) All right, Lyuba, now, now.

VARYA. (*Weeping:*) I warned you, Petya, didn't I? You should have waited.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Grisha...my poor little boy... Grisha... my son...

VARYA. What can we do, mamachka? It was God's will.

TROFIMOV. (*Tenderly, also weeping:*) Don't, don't...

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. (*Weeping quietly:*) My boy is gone, drowned... Why, dear friend? Tell me why. (*More quietly:*) Anya's asleep in the next room, I don't want to wake her...But what has happened to you, Petya? How you've changed. You look so much older.

TROFIMOV. An old woman on the train today called me a "raggedy mister."

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. You were still a boy then, a bright young student. But now you're losing your hair and wearing glasses. You're not still a student, are you?

TROFIMOV. I'll probably be one for the rest of my life.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. (*Kissing GAYEV and VARYA:*) Well, it's time for bed... You've aged, too, Leonid.

PISHCHIK. (*Following her:*) Time for bed, is it? ...Oh!...and my gout is flaring up. I'd better stay the night...and remember, first thing in the morning, Lyubov Andreyevna, heart of my heart...two-hundred and forty rubles...

GAYEV. There he goes again.

PISHCHIK. Two-hundred and forty rubles...for the interest on my mortgage.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. I don't have any money, my dear.

PISHCHIK. I'll pay you back, my little dove...it's nothing, a trifle...

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Oh, all right. Leonid will give it to you... Go on, Leonid, give it to him.

GAYEV. Me? Good idea! Just hold your pockets open.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. How can we say no? Go on, give it to him...he needs it...he'll pay us back.

(LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA, TROFIMOV, PISHCHIK, and FEERS go out. GAYEV, VARYA, and YASHA remain.)

GAYEV. My sister throws her money away, she always has, she always will. (To YASHA:) Phew! Don't stand so close, fellow. Have you been out with the chickens!

YASHA. (*Smiling ironically:*) Ah, Leonid Andreyich...you haven't changed a bit.

GAYEV. Huh! (To VARYA:) What did he say?

VARYA. (To YASHA:) Your mother is here. She walked over from the village yesterday, and she's been sitting in the servants' quarters ever since, waiting to see you.

YASHA. Oh, how ridiculous.

VARYA. Shame on you!

YASHA. What next? Why couldn't she come tomorrow? (*He goes out.*)

VARYA. Mamachka hasn't changed at all. If we didn't stop her, she'd give everything away.

GAYEV. Yes, she would...

(*Pause.*)

When the doctors propose too many remedies, that means the disease is probably incurable. I worry night and day, I rack my brains, and I come up with one remedy after another—which means I still don't have one. I could come into an inheritance, that would be nice. Or—we could find a rich husband for Anya, how about that? Or—I could rush off to Yaroslavl and try my luck with our old aunt, the countess. That would be even better. She's rich, you know, oh, yes, rolling in money.

VARYA. (*Weeping:*) If only God would help us.

GAYEV. Don't whine! The countess may be rich, but she doesn't like us...because my sister, you see, had the audacity to marry a lawyer instead of another count...

(ANYA appears in the doorway.)

Yes, my sister neglected to marry a nobleman, and her subsequent behavior can hardly be described as proper. She's kind and generous, she's charming, she's a wonderful person, I love her with all

my heart, but no matter how you try to ignore it, you have to admit that she's not an altogether respectable woman. No, she's...she's not above reproach. And she doesn't hide it, she can't—she reveals it in every little move she makes.

VARYA. (*Whispering:*) Anya's in the doorway.

GAYEV. Huh!

(*Pause.*)

Uhh! How peculiar...I seem to have something in my right eye... these old eyes of mine, they're not as good as they used to be. Anyway, on Thursday, when I was down at the District Court...

(*ANYA comes in.*)

VARYA. Why aren't you in bed, Anya?

ANYA. I can't sleep.

GAYEV. My little darling... (*He kisses her face and hands.*) ...My baby... (*With profound emotion:*) ...I don't think of you as my niece, you're more than that, my angel, my everything. You are, you are!...

ANYA. Yes, uncle, I know. And I love you, too, and respect you, we all do...but, uncle dear, you cannot let yourself go on like that, you just can't. What have you been saying about my mama? Your own sister? What makes you say such things?

GAYEV. Yes, yes... (*He takes her hand and hides his face in it.*) You're right, it's terrible! Oh, good Lord! God forgive me! And a little while ago I made a speech to the bookcase...how stupid! But I didn't know it was stupid until I stopped.

VARYA. It's true, dear uncle, you can't go on like this. Please. Keep quiet.

ANYA. If you'd only learn to keep quiet, you'd have more peace and quiet yourself.

GAYEV. I'll keep quiet. (*He kisses their hands.*) I won't say a word. Oh, but this is important. On Thursday, when I was down at the District Court, we all started talking, about this and that, you know, one thing and another, and it turns out there may be a chance that I can secure a loan with a promissory note, enough to pay the interest!

VARYA. If only God would help us!

GAYEV. I'm going back on Tuesday. I'll find out more about it. (*To VARYA:*) Don't whine. (*To ANYA:*) Your mama will have to talk to Lopakhin. He can't refuse her, of course... And as soon as you feel up to it, you'll go to Yaroslavl to see the countess you call granny.

If we approach this problem from three different angles, we can't fail to find a solution. We'll pay that interest, no doubt about it. (*He pops a fruit drop in his mouth.*) I swear on my honor, or anything you like, this estate will not be sold! (*With excitement:*) I swear it on my life! Here's my hand. Call me a scoundrel, a man without a shred of honor, if I allow this estate to be put up for auction! I swear it on my very soul!

ANYA. (*Calm again; happily:*) You're so good, uncle, and so smart! (*She hugs him.*) I feel much better! I'm not afraid any more! I'm happy!

(*FEERS comes in.*)

FEERS. (*Reproachfully:*) Oh, Leonid Andreyich, shame on you! Don't you know God sees you? Why aren't you in bed?

GAYEV. I'm going, I'm on my way. Go on, Feers, go to bed. It's all right, I can...I'll undress myself, I can manage. Well, then, children, nighty-night...We can go over all this again tomorrow, but now it's time for bed. (*He kisses ANYA and VARYA.*) I'm a man of the Eighties, you know...no one has much good to say about the Eighties nowadays, but I think I can state, without fear of contradiction, that I've paid dearly for what I believe in. No wonder the muzhiks love me. You just have to get to know them! You have to know how to...

ANYA. Oh, uncle! There you go again!

VARYA. Uncle dear, be quiet.

FEERS. (*Angrily:*) Leonid Andreyich!

GAYEV. All right, I'm going... Off to bed. Yellow ball, double bank to the side pocket! Straight shot to the...

(*He goes out. FEERS totters along after him.*)

ANYA. I feel so much better now. I don't want to go to Yaroslavl, I don't like that granny, but I feel better anyway. Thanks to uncle. (*She sits.*)

VARYA. It's time for bed. Let's go. Oh...there was something unpleasant that happened while you were away. The older servants, Yefimushka, Poly, Yevstigney, and Karp, too, I suppose—they're the only ones left in the old quarters now—anyway, they began letting in strangers, passers-by, giving them shelter for the night. I knew it, but I looked the other way. Then the rumor went around that I gave orders to feed them all nothing but peas, because I'm so stingy. I'm sure Yevstigney was behind it...All right, I thought, if that's the way you want it, I'll show you. So I sent for him... (*She yawns:*) He came... "Yevstigney, how could you? ...What a blockhead you are!"... (*She looks at ANYA:*) Anyichka?...

(Pause.)

She's asleep!

(She takes ANYA's arm and helps her get up.)

Nighty-night, my darling. Come along.

(She starts to lead ANYA out.)

She's fallen asleep! Come on...

(From the far side of the orchard comes the sound of a shepherd's pipe. As VARYA and ANYA go, TROFIMOV enters, crossing the stage, but stops when he sees them.)

Shh!... She's asleep...asleep on her feet. Come along, my darling.

ANYA. *(Softly, half asleep:)* I'm so sleepy...little bells, little bells... Oh, uncle...all my dear ones...mama...uncle...

VARYA. Come along, my darling, let's go...

(They go into ANYA's room.)

TROFIMOV. *(With feeling:)* My sunlight! My springtime!

End of Act I

ACT II

(A meadow with an old chapel, long-abandoned, no longer entirely perpendicular. Near it, a well; some large stone slabs which apparently once served as tombstones; an old bench. In the background, a road leads to Gayev's estate. Off to the side, where the poplars cast their long shadows, the cherry orchard begins. There are telegraph poles in the distance, and, on the far horizon, the faintest outline of the town, which can only be seen on the clearest days.)

(Not long before sunset. CHARLOTTA, YASHA, and DUNYASHA, all lost in thought, are sitting on the bench. YEPIKHODOV stands nearby, playing a guitar. CHARLOTTA, who wears a man's cap, peaked and weather-beaten, has swung a rifle down from her shoulder and is adjusting the strap.)

CHARLOTTA. *(Pensively.)* I'm a person without papers. Nothing official. I don't even know how old I am. I always think of myself as young. When I was a little girl, I went around with my mother and father to all the country fairs, where they gave performances. They were very good. I was a performer, too: my specialty was the *salto mortale*—tumbling through the air—but I could do all sorts of things. But they died, my mama and papa, and a German lady took me in. She was the one who saw to it that I had an education. That was lucky. When I grew up I found work as a governess. But where I come from and who I really am—I have no idea...I wonder who they were, my parents. Maybe they weren't even married...I don't know. *(She takes a cucumber out of her pocket and begins eating it.)* I don't know anything.

(Pause.)

I wish I had someone to talk to. That would be nice. But there's no one...no one at all.

YEPIKHODOV. *(Playing and singing:)*

“GLADLY I'D GIVE UP ALL PLEASURE,
SPURNING MY FRIEND AND MY FOE...”

Oh, how I love the mandolin!

DUNYASHA. That's not a mandolin, it's a guitar. *(She takes out a little mirror and powders her nose.)*

YEPIKHODOV. To a lovesick madman, it's a mandolin...

“IF I COULD WIN MY HEART'S TREASURE:
LOVE! LET ME REAP AS I SOW!”

(YASHA joins in the song.)

CHARLOTTA. They can't carry a tune, these people... Ach! Like hyenas.

DUNYASHA. (*To YASHA:*) How wonderful it must be to go abroad.

YASHA. Well, sure. It's great. (*He yawns, then lights up a cigar.*)

YEPIKHODOV. No doubt about it. Abroad, every single thing long ago achieved its perfect consumption.

YASHA. You can say that again.

YEPIKHODOV. I'm a cultivated man, you know—always reading, all sorts of deep and important books, but I have no idea where it is all leading me, or even which way my own personal inclinations actually incline, i.e., not to put too fine a point on it, should I go on living or should I blow my brains out? I never go anywhere without a revolver, just in case. See?

(He shows them his revolver.)

CHARLOTTA. There, that should do it. (*She slings the rifle over her shoulder.*) I'm going now. You're a clever man, Yepikhodov, and positively terrifying. Women must throw themselves at you. Eeeeh! (*She starts to leave.*) Around here, even the educated people are stupid, so I have no one to talk to...I'm alone, all alone, I have nobody...and who I am, and what I'm here for, nobody knows... (*She strolls off, in no particular hurry.*)

YEPIKHODOV. To speak precisely and stick to the subject at hand, I must tell you—and I don't want to make too much of this—that Fate has no more pity on me than a storm has on a little ship. You don't believe me? All right, then why would I wake up, as I did this morning, and find an enormous spider, like this... (*He uses both hands to demonstrate the size:*) ...sitting on my chest? And why, when I toss down some kvass to quench my thirst, do I discover something completely inappropriate at the bottom of the glass, to wit, a cockroach?

(Pause.)

History of Civilization in England? Have you read Buckle?

(Pause.)

Pardon me, Avdotya Fyodorovna, might I repose upon you for a brief chat...

DUNYASHA. Go ahead.

YEPIKHODOV. I would prefer if we could do it in private, just the two of us... (*He sighs.*)

DUNYASHA. (*Embarrassed:*) All right. But would you fetch my little cape first? ...It should be hanging beside the wardrobe... There's a chill in the air...

YEPIKHODOV. Of course... I'll fetch it... And now I have a pretty good idea what I should do with my revolver... *(He exits, strumming his guitar.)*

YASHA. The Walking Accident! What a moron. Don't quote me. *(He yawns.)*

DUNYASHA. I hope he doesn't shoot himself.

(Pause.)

I'm such a bundle of nerves. All I do is fret. They brought me into the house when I was a little girl, it's the only life I know. Look at my hands: white as white can be, just like a lady's. This is how I've grown up—sensitive, delicate, refined—and fearful, I'm afraid of everything... Oh, Yasha, if you deceive me, with my nerves the way they are, I don't know what will happen.

YASHA. What a little peach! *(He kisses her.)* But you're right, a girl must always be on guard. I can't stand to see a girl let herself go.

DUNYASHA. I'm so in love with you. You're smart, you can talk about anything.

(Pause.)

YASHA. *(Yawning:)* Sure...and here's the way I look at it: a girl in love is a girl in trouble.

(Pause.)

But a good cigar in the open air—that's heaven!... *(He listens:)* Listen...here they come...

(Impulsively, DUNYASHA embraces him.)

Go home now, as if you're on your way back from bathing in the river. No, that way. If they catch us here, they'll think we had a rendez-vous. I hate that sort of thing.

DUNYASHA. *(Coughing slightly:)* Your cigar gave me a headache...

(She leaves. YASHA sits beside the chapel. LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA, GAYEV, and LOPAKHIN enter.)

LOPAKHIN. But you have to, you have to decide, one way or the other—time is running out. Yes or no: either you'll lease the land for summer dachas, or you won't. Just one word: yes or no? One word!

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Who has been smoking such awful cigars?... *(She sits.)*

GAYEV. Everything is so much more convenient since they built the railroad. *(He sits.)* We popped into town for lunch and we're back

already...Yellow ball in the side pocket! I think I'll go in and have a game...

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. You can do that later on.

LOPAKHIN. Yes or no! (*Begging her:*) Decide!

GAYEV. (*Yawning:*) Huh!...

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. (*Looking in her handbag:*) I had plenty of money yesterday, but there's hardly any left. Varya is doing her best to economize, bless her heart. All those thin milk soups—in the kitchen, all they get is peas. And I throw my money away. (*Her purse slips out of her hands and gold coins scatter in every direction. Irritated:*) There, you see?...

YASHA. Allow me... (*He gathers up the coins.*)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Thank you, Yasha. Why did I go into town for lunch? ...To that dreadful restaurant, with that music, and those tablecloths that smell like soap... Why did you drink so much, Lyonya, and eat so much? And talk so much—on and on? And it was all so inappropriate...on and on about the Seventies and the Decadents. And to whom? The waiters! Telling waiters about the Decadents.

LOPAKHIN. Right.

GAYEV. (*With a wave of his hand:*) I'm incorrigible, I can't deny it... (*Irritably, to YASHA:*) Why are you always underfoot?...

YASHA. (*Laughing:*) When I hear your voice, I laugh—I can't help it.

GAYEV. (*To his sister:*) That does it! Either he goes, or I go...

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Go away, Yasha, go on...

YASHA. (*Handing LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA her purse:*) I'm going. (*He barely suppresses his laughter:*) I'm gone... (*He leaves.*)

LOPAKHIN. There's somebody who wants to buy your estate. A man called Dyeriganov. He's very rich. They say he's coming to the auction himself.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Where did you hear this?

LOPAKHIN. In town.

GAYEV. Our aunt in Yaroslavl has promised to send us something, although when, and how much, we have no idea...

LOPAKHIN. How much do you think? A hundred thousand? Two hundred?

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Oh, well...more like ten, I suppose, or fifteen, and we'll be grateful for that.

LOPAKHIN. Forgive me, but are you capable of being serious, even for a moment? You are without a doubt the least businesslike people I've ever met. I tell you as plainly as I can that your estate is about to be sold, and I might as well be speaking some other language.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. What can we do about it? Tell us what we should do.

LOPAKHIN. I tell you every day. Every single day, over and over. The cherry orchard, and all the rest of your land, must be divided into lots and leased out for summer dachas, and it has to be done now, right away, as soon as possible. The auction is set, the day is almost here. That's a fact—you've got to accept it! And once you do, once you make up your mind to the dachas, you'll have all the money you need. You'll be saved.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Dachas, summer people—forgive me, but it's all so common.

GAYEV. I couldn't agree with you more.

LOPAKHIN. I don't know whether to cry or scream. Or keel over! I can't stand it! You're killing me! (*To GAYEV:*) You old hen!

GAYEV. Huh!

LOPAKHIN. Hen! (*He starts to leave.*)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. (*Frightened:*) No, don't go. Please, my dear, stay, stay. We'll think of something!

LOPAKHIN. There's nothing else to think of!

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Please don't go. I don't know why, but it's so much gloomier when you're not here...

(*Pause.*)

I have a feeling that something terrible is about to happen, as if the house is going to fall down on our heads.

GAYEV. (*Lost in thought:*) Bank shot to the corner pocket... Carom to the side pocket...

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. We are paying for our sins...

LOPAKHIN. Sins?... What sins?...

GAYEV. (*Popping a fruit drop in his mouth:*) They say I gobbled up my entire fortune in fruit drops... (*He laughs.*)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. So many sins...I wasted all my money, threw it away like a woman possessed. I married a man who brought me nothing but debts. He killed himself with champagne—drank himself to death—and then, to my everlasting sorrow, I fell in love again, and I held nothing back, I gave myself again, and just as I did—my first punishment came, it fell like a thunderbolt—my little boy drowned...right here, in the river. So I ran away, far away, for good I thought—I never meant to come back, never wanted to see this river again...I was mad with grief, I closed my eyes, I tried to shut everything out—but he came after me...thinking only of himself, of course, without pity or mercy...I bought a villa near Menton, for his sake, because he fell ill there, and for three years I nursed him, night and day. I had no rest. He wore me out, body and soul—he sucked the life out of me. Last year the villa was sold for debts. We moved to Paris, and that's where he robbed me, cast me aside and left me for another. I tried to poison myself...oh, how stupid, shameful...and then suddenly I felt a longing to see my country again, my Russia, and my little girl... (*She wipes away her tears.*) Forgive me, dear Father in Heaven! Have mercy on me! Don't punish me any more! (*She takes a telegram from her pocket.*) This came today, from Paris. He's sorry, he wants me to come back... (*She tears up the telegram.*) Is that music? (*She listens.*)

GAYEV. It's our band. You remember. Our famous Jewish band: four fiddles, a flute, and a double bass.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Are they still together? We should have a party and get them to play.

LOPAKHIN. (*Listening:*) I don't hear anything... (*Singing to himself:*)
FOR A FEE, THE GERMANS CAN
FRENCHIFY A RUSSIAN.

(*He laughs.*) That's from the show I saw last night...it was so funny.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. It probably wasn't a bit funny. You should think less about shows and more about the kind of life you're living. You lead such dull lives around here, and you have nothing to talk about.

LOPAKHIN. You're right, I'll admit it. Life is stupid here...

(*Pause.*)

My papa was stupid, a stupid muzhik. He didn't know anything, and he never taught me anything. He just beat me with a stick, when he was drunk. And now I'm stupid, too, a stupid muzhik just like my father was. I never learned anything, and my handwriting is so terrible I'm ashamed of it—I write like a pig.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. What you need is a wife, my friend.

LOPAKHIN. Yes...it's true.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. You should marry our Varya. She's a good girl.

LOPAKHIN. She is.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. She comes from the village, too, you know, and she's a good worker, she never stops, but the main thing is that she loves you, and you like her too, you always have.

LOPAKHIN. Well, I don't see why not...she's a good girl.

(Pause.)

GAYEV. I've been offered a place in the bank, at six thousand a year... Did I tell you?

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. In the bank? You stay where you belong...

(FEERS enters, carrying an overcoat.)

FEERS. *(To GAYEV:)* Put your coat on, please. It's damp out here.

GAYEV. *(Putting on the coat:)* You're a pest, that's what you are.

FEERS. Yes, yes...and you marched off this morning without a word. *(He looks GAYEV over.)*

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Oh, Feers, you've gotten so old!

FEERS. What's that? What can I do for you?

LOPAKHIN. She says you've grown old!

FEERS. Well, I've lived a long time. They found me a wife even before your dear papasha came into this world. That's how old I am... *(He laughs.)* I was already head footman when the Emancipation came. Emancipation—I had no use for it. I stayed with the master...

(Pause.)

Oh, how happy they all were, happy as happy could be, but what they had to be happy about, nobody knew.

LOPAKHIN. Right. Those were the good old days, weren't they? When flogging was still in style.

FEERS. *(Not hearing:)* Yes, indeed. The people took care of their masters, and the masters took care of their people, but now it's all higgledy-piggledy, nobody knows what to do any more.

GAYEV. That's enough, Feers. I'm going into town tomorrow. I'm supposed to speak with a certain General—they've promised to introduce us—and he's apparently just the man to make us a loan if I sign a note with my personal guarantee.

LOPAKHIN. Nothing will come of it. When the interest is due, you won't be able to pay it. Period.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. He's imagining things. There isn't any General.

(TROFIMOV, ANYA, and VARYA enter.)

GAYEV. Here come the girls.

VARYA. Oh, here's mama.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. (*Tenderly:*) Come, my darlings...come to me... (*She embraces ANYA and VARYA:*) If you only knew how much I love you. Here, sit, sit with me...there we are.

(*They sit.*)

LOPAKHIN. If you want to find our eternal student, look for the ladies.

TROFIMOV. Mind your own business.

LOPAKHIN. He'll be fifty years old before we know it, but he's still a student.

TROFIMOV. You think that's funny? It's stupid.

LOPAKHIN. Oh, don't take everything so seriously. What's wrong with you?

TROFIMOV. Leave me alone.

LOPAKHIN. (*Laughing:*) You don't like me much, do you?

TROFIMOV. I'll tell you exactly what I think of you, Yermolay Alekseyich. You're a wealthy man, you'll soon be a millionaire...and if the wild beast that devours everything in its path is a part of nature's plan, then so are you.

(*Everyone laughs.*)

VARYA. That's enough, Petya. Tell us about the planets.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. No, let's pick up where we left off yesterday.

TROFIMOV. Where?

GAYEV. We were talking about pride.

TROFIMOV. We talked about that all day long, but we never came to any conclusion. You took the position that man has some sort of transcendental right to be proud of himself. Maybe that's true, but if we can just talk about it calmly for a moment, without making speeches, what does man have to be proud of? Why should he be

proud when he is physiologically imperfect and, almost without exception, crude, ignorant, and miserable? We have to stop all this preening, and admiring ourselves so much, and get to work.

GAYEV. What difference does it make? We all come to the same end.

TROFIMOV. Do we? What does that mean, I wonder—"come to the same end"? What if we have a hundred different senses, not just the five we know about, and only those five are mortal, with the other ninety-five remaining very much alive.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Oh, Petya, how clever you are!...

LOPAKHIN. (*Ironically:*) Oh, yes!

TROFIMOV. As mankind advances, man grows ever more intelligent and capable. What is beyond us today may be within our grasp tomorrow, but we must be willing to work, to put ourselves heart and soul at the service of those who seek the truth. But it's hard to find anybody in all Russia who does any real work. Those with education, most of them, aren't seeking anything, as far I can tell—they don't do anything, and, at this point, aren't even capable of doing anything. They call themselves the intelligentsia, but they look down on their servants, they treat the muzhiks like animals, they've stopped learning, they read almost nothing, they achieve nothing. They can talk a little bit about science, but they don't know a thing about art. And they're so proud of themselves: they make a great show of how serious and sincere they are, and how deeply engaged they are with all the major questions of the day, and they philosophize, while the real workers go to bed hungry, and sleep without pillows thirty or forty to a room, with bedbugs everywhere, and foul odors, and perpetual damp, and every sort of degradation...and it's perfectly clear that all our lofty conversations are only diversions that keep us from doing anything about real problems. We talk a lot about day nurseries, for example, but where are they? And reading rooms, where are they? Only in our novels, not in our lives. What we have instead are mud and vulgarity and Asiatic backwardness...I don't trust all these serious faces, and I don't like them. I don't like these lofty conversations, either. It would be better for us to keep still!

LOPAKHIN. I get up around four o'clock every morning and work until dark. I have a lot of responsibility, for other people's money as well as my own, and don't you think I know the sort of people I have to deal with? If you do any sort of business, you soon discover how few good, honest men, there are. Some nights, when I can't get to sleep, I lie there thinking: "Dear Lord, you have surrounded us with such majestic forests, such immense prairies, such boundless horizons, that we really ought to be giants..."

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. You think we want giants? ...Let them stay in their fairy tales, where they belong. If we saw giants, they would only frighten us.

(Upstage, YEPIKHODOV crosses, playing his guitar.)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. *(Her thoughts are somewhere else:)* There goes Yepikhodov...

ANYA. *(Her thoughts, too, are somewhere else:)* There goes Yepikhodov...

GAYEV. Ladies and gentlemen, the sun has set.

TROFIMOV. Yes.

GAYEV. *(Not loud, but declaiming:)* Oh, Nature, glorious Nature, glowing with Light Eternal, beautiful but indifferent Mother, compounded of Life and Death, Fount of Creation, Source of Destruction...

VARYA. *(Pleading:)* Uncle!

ANYA. Oh, uncle, there you go again!

TROFIMOV. I'd stick to banking the yellow ball into the side pocket, if I were you.

GAYEV. I'm dumb. Dumb.

(They all sit, lost in thought. Silence, except for the mumbling of FEERS. And suddenly there's a far, far sound, as if from high above—as of a string breaking and dying mournfully away.)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. What was that?

LOPAKHIN. I don't know. It sounded like a hoist breaking in a mine far away, and the bucket falling back into the pit. But far, far away.

GAYEV. It might have been some kind of bird...like a heron.

TROFIMOV. Or an owl...

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. *(Shuddering:)* I don't know why, but I have a feeling that something terrible is about to happen.

(Pause.)

FEERS. This is how it was right before the great misfortune: the owl cried and the samovar bubbled and hummed.

GAYEV. What misfortune?

FEERS. The Emancipation.

(Pause.)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Come on, let's go, we'd better go in now. It's getting dark. *(To ANYA:)* You have tears in your eyes, my darling. What's wrong? *(She embraces her.)*

ANYA. Nothing, mama, it's nothing.

TROFIMOV. Someone's coming.

(A PASSER-BY appears, in an overcoat and a worn white forage cap. He's a little drunk.)

PASSER-BY. Forgive me for intruding, but I'm trying to get to the railway station. Am I on the right track?

GAYEV. Yes, indeed. Just follow the road.

PASSER-BY. I thank you, kind sir, from the bottom of my heart. *(He coughs.)* What a glorious day... *(He declaims:)* "My weary and suffering brother, rejoice and rest...and here by the Volga, racked with groans, you will work..." *(To VARYA:)* Mademoiselle, can you spare thirty kopecks for a hungry Russian?..

(VARYA cries out, frightened.)

LOPAKHIN. *(Angrily:)* Oh, now, you go too far, and there's a right way and a wrong way to do it!

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. *(Bewildered:)* Wait, wait...let me see... *(She rummages in her purse.)* Oh, dear, I don't have any silver...here, take this...

PASSER-BY. I thank you, from the bottom of my heart. *(He goes off.)*

(Laughter.)

VARYA. *(Frightened:)* I want to go now...Yes, I'm going... Oh, mamachka, we can hardly feed our people, and you gave him a gold piece.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. What are you going to do with me? Wasn't that foolish? As soon as we get home, I'll turn everything over to you. Yermolay Alekseyich, I'll need another loan!..

LOPAKHIN. Of course.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Let's go, my dears, it's time. By the way, Varya, we've put our heads together, and we have found you a match. I wish you every happiness.

VARYA. *(On the verge of tears:)* Oh, mama, this is nothing to joke about.

LOPAKHIN. "The fair Ofooliya! Get thee to a nunnery..."

GAYEV. My hands are shaking...I haven't played billiards in a long time.

LOPAKHIN. "Ofooliya! In thy orisons be all my sins remembered!"

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Let's go. It's almost time for dinner.

VARYA. That man frightened me. My heart is racing.

LOPAKHIN. A reminder, ladies and gentlemen: on the 22nd of August the cherry orchard will be sold. Remember that! ...Remember!...

(Everyone leaves, except TROFIMOV and ANYA.)

ANYA. *(Laughing:)* Thank you, dear passer-by, thank you, thank you, for chasing Varya away. At last we're alone.

TROFIMOV. Varya thinks we are in imminent danger of falling in love, so she can't let us out of her sight. With her limited perspective, she can't begin to understand that we're above all that. Love! The very purpose and meaning of our lives is to avoid such superficial and transitory illusions, which can only stand in the way of our progress toward freedom and happiness. Onward! We're marching toward the bright star that blazes before us, and nothing can stop us. Onward, my friends! Don't fall behind!

ANYA. *(Clasping her hands:)* How eloquent you are!

(Pause.)

What a glorious day!

TROFIMOV. Yes, the weather is wonderful.

ANYA. What have you done to me, Petya? I used to love the cherry orchard, but I don't any more. Why don't I? I used to love it with all my heart. I thought it was the best place in the world.

TROFIMOV. All Russia is our orchard. The world is great and glorious, and full of wonderful places.

(Pause.)

Just think about it, Anya: your grandfather, and his father before him, and all your ancestors, were the owners of other living human beings, and all those ghosts are staring at you now...don't you see them?...from every tree in the orchard, from every leaf and branch... and they're speaking too, Anya, don't you hear them? Owning other men changes people, as it has changed all of you, not only those who came before, but those who live now, too, so that your mother, and your uncle, and you yourself, don't realize how much in debt you are, that you live at the expense of others, that you owe everything you have to the labor of the poor, the people you don't even allow inside your house, not past the front hall... We're very backward, we Russians, at least two hundred years behind the times. We wander in darkness. We don't know what to think about the past. We phi-

losophize, complain about how bored we are, drown our sorrows in vodka. But there's a simple remedy for all our ills. If we want to live in the present, we have to atone for the past, so that we can put it behind us, once and for all—and the only way we can atone is through our suffering, and our ceaseless, unremitting labor. Oh, Anya, please open your heart to what I'm telling you.

ANYA. The house we live in hasn't been a real home to us for a long time. I will leave it, I promise you.

TROFIMOV. If you have the keys hanging at your belt, throw them down the well and go. Be as free as the wind.

ANYA. (*With delight:*) Oh, how beautiful!

TROFIMOV. Believe me, Anya, believe what I'm telling you! I'm not even thirty yet, I'm still young, still a student, but I've been through so much! I'll be sick again, as soon as winter comes, I'm often hungry, afraid, I'm poor as a beggar—and oh, where haven't I wandered, driven along by Fate! And yet I have such a strong feeling, always, every minute, day and night, a feeling I can't explain, that happiness is coming, Anya, I can almost see it...

ANYA. The moon is rising.

(*YEPIKHODOV strums the same sad melody on his guitar. The moon rises. Somewhere beyond the poplars, VARYA is looking for ANYA.*)

VARYA. (*Off:*) Anya! Where are you?

TROFIMOV. Yes, the moon is rising.

(*Pause.*)

Here comes happiness, closer and closer, here it comes. I can almost hear the footsteps. And if we don't get to see it, or if we fail to recognize it when it does come, that's all right, too. Others will!

VARYA. (*Off:*) Anya! Where are you?

TROFIMOV. Here she comes. (*Angrily:*) How stupid!

ANYA. Never mind. Let's go down to the river. It's nice there.

TROFIMOV. Let's go.

(*ANYA and TROFIMOV go off.*)

VARYA. (*Off:*) Anya! Anya!

End of Act II

ACT III

(The drawing room, divided by an arch from the ballroom behind it. The chandelier is lit. Offstage, on the landing, the Jewish band mentioned in Act II is playing a quadrille. In the ballroom, the couples are dancing the grand-rond. It is evening.)

PISHCHIK. *(Off:) Promenade à une paire!*

(The dancing pairs promenade into the drawing room in this order: PISHCHIK and CHARLOTTA; TROFIMOV and LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA; ANYA and the MAN FROM THE POST OFFICE; VARYA and the STATIONMASTER, etc. As she dances, VARYA is weeping quietly, brushing away her tears. DUNYASHA and her partner are the last couple to appear. The dancers circle through the drawing room and back up to the ballroom.)

PISHCHIK. *(Shouting:) Grand-rond, balancez!... Les cavaliers à genoux et remerciez vos dames!*

(FEERS, in a tailcoat, passes through with a bottle of seltzer on a tray. PISHCHIK and TROFIMOV stroll back down into the drawing room.)

PISHCHIK. My trouble is I've got too much blood for my own good. I've already had two strokes, you know, and dancing is hard on me—but when you run with the pack, even if you can't bark any more, you have to wag your tail. The truth is I'm as healthy as a horse. As a matter of fact, my late father, what a joker he was—may the Kingdom of Heaven be his—he used to say that the Semyonov-Pishchiks, all of us, were descended in a direct line from the Emperor Caligula's horse, that's right, the one he appointed to the Senate... *(He sits.)* My real trouble is money! And you know what they say: a hungry dog only dreams about dinner... *(He dozes off, but wakes up with a snort.)* Me, too... That's all I can think about: money...

TROFIMOV. Now that you mention it, there is something horsey about your physique.

PISHCHIK. Why not?...the horse is a noble beast...you can always sell a horse...

(From the adjoining room we hear the sounds of a billiards game. VARYA appears under the ballroom arch.)

TROFIMOV. *(Teasing her:) Madame Lopakhina! Madame Lopakhina!...*

VARYA. *(Angrily:) Raggedy mister!*

TROFIMOV. Yes, I'm raggedy...and proud of it!

VARYA. *(To herself, in anguish:) How will we pay the musicians? (She exits.)*

TROFIMOV. (*To PISHCHIK:*) You've spent your whole life scrambling to pay your interest. What if you'd put all that energy into something else? You could have turned the world upside down.

PISHCHIK. Nietzsche...a philosopher...the greatest, most famous, oh, a real genius...he says it's perfectly all right to print your own money. It's right there in one of his books.

TROFIMOV. You've read Nietzsche?

PISHCHIK. Well...my Dashenka told me. And I'm so desperate, I may have to try it—print myself some...The day after tomorrow I've got to hand over three hundred and ten rubles...and all I have so far is a hundred and thirty... (*He pats his pocket. With alarm:*) Where is it? It's gone! (*On the verge of tears:*) My money's gone! (*Happily:*) Oh, here it is, it slipped down in the lining... Oh, that scared me, I'm sweating...

(LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA and CHARLOTTA enter, LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA humming along as the band plays a lezginka.)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Where is Lyonya? Why isn't he back yet? Offer the musicians some tea, Dunyasha...

TROFIMOV. They probably didn't even hold the auction.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. What a terrible day to bring in musicians, what an awful time for a ball... Oh, well... (*She sits and hums along again, softly.*)

CHARLOTTA. (*Holding out a deck of cards to PISHCHIK:*) Here, pick a card...any card you like.

PISHCHIK. I've got one.

CHARLOTTA. Good. Now take the deck and shuffle it. Good. And now, my dear Pishchik, hand it over. *Ein, zwei, drei!* Look in your pocket...

PISHCHIK. (*Taking a card out of his side pocket:*) The eight of spades!... but that's it, that's my card! (*Stupefied:*) Can you imagine?!

CHARLOTTA. (*Holding the deck flat on her palm. To TROFIMOV:*) Quick: what card is on top?

TROFIMOV. Hmm? The queen of spades.

CHARLOTTA. Right! (*To PISHCHIK:*) Now what's on top?

PISHCHIK. The ace of hearts.

CHARLOTTA. Right!... (*She slaps her free hand over the deck; it disappears.*) Ahhh, what lovely weather we're having!

(An eerie female voice floats up, as if from under the floorboards: "Oh, yes, dear lady, the weather is perfect.")

My angel! You're perfect yourself!

(Voice: "Oh, dear lady, that's just how I feel about you.")

STATIONMASTER. *(Clapping his hands:)* A lady ventriloquist—bravo!

PISHCHIK. *(In amazement:)* Can you imagine!? Charlotta Ivanovna, you're a wonder...I think I'm in love with you...

CHARLOTTA. In love? *(She shrugs.)* What do you know about love? "*Guter Mensch—aber schlechter Musikant.*"

TROFIMOV. *(Slapping PISHCHIK on the back:)* Poor old nag...

CHARLOTTA. Attention, please. I have one more trick. *(She picks up a throw from one of the chairs.)* What a lovely shawl. I think I'll sell it... *(She shakes it out.)* Shawl for sale! Who wants a shawl?

PISHCHIK. *(In amazement:)* Can you imagine!?

CHARLOTTA. *Ein, zwei, drei!*

(She whisks it away to reveal ANYA, who curtsies, runs to her mother, hugs her, and then runs out through the ballroom. General delight.)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. *(Applauding:)* Bravo, bravo!...

CHARLOTTA. One more time! *Ein, zwei, drei!*

(She shakes it out, then whisks it away to reveal VARYA, who bows.)

PISHCHIK. *(In amazement:)* Can you imagine!?

CHARLOTTA. That's all! *(She throws it over PISHCHIK, curtsies, and runs out through the ballroom.)*

PISHCHIK. *(Rushing after her:)* Oh, you devil...Isn't she something? She's really something, isn't she?

(He goes out.)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Leonid's not back yet. Where can he be? It must be over by now, and either the estate has been sold, or they canceled the auction. Why keep us in suspense like this!

VARYA. *(Trying to calm her:)* Uncle has purchased the estate, I'm sure of it.

TROFIMOV. *(With irony:)* Of course he has.

VARYA. Granny sent him an authorization to buy it in her name and transfer the mortgage to her. She did it for Anya. God is merciful. I'm sure that uncle has bought the estate.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Our great-aunt sent us fifteen thousand rubles to buy the estate—in her own name, of course, because she doesn't trust us—and that's not even enough to pay the interest. (*She covers her face with her hands.*) My fate is being decided today, my whole life...

TROFIMOV. (*Teasing VARYA:*) *Madame* Lopakhina!

VARYA. (*Angrily:*) Eternal student! Who's been expelled twice already.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Oh, Varya, why are you so angry! When he says *Madame* Lopakhina, he's only teasing. Who cares? If you want to marry Lopakhin, marry him. He's a good man, nice-looking. But if you don't want to, you don't have to. No one is forcing you, my dear...

VARYA. This is no laughing matter, mamachka, not for me. Oh, of course he's a good man, and I like him.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Then marry him. What are you waiting for!

VARYA. Oh, mamachka I can't propose to him, can I? For two years now everyone has been talking to me about this, everyone but him. He either avoids the subject or makes little jokes about it. I'm not surprised. Every day he gets richer. He's a busy man, and he doesn't have time for me. Oh, if only I had some money of my own, even a little, a hundred rubles, I would go away, far away, and leave all this behind me. I'd enter a convent.

TROFIMOV. Oh, what ecstasy!

VARYA. (*To TROFIMOV:*) Students try so hard to be clever! (*Gently and tearfully:*) And you've lost your looks, Petya. You don't look young any more! (*To LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA, having regained her composure:*) All I can do is work, mama. Otherwise I couldn't bear it. I have to keep busy, every minute of the day.

(*YASHA enters.*)

YASHA. (*Barely able to contain his laughter:*) Yepikhodov just broke one of the billiard cues!... (*He goes off.*)

VARYA. Yepikhodov? What is he doing here? And who told him he could play billiards? I just can't understand these people! (*She goes out.*)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Don't tease her, Petya. Can't you see she's unhappy?

TROFIMOV. She's a meddling busybody, and she should mind her own business. She's been pestering us all summer. She's so afraid that Anya and I will fall in love. What business is that of hers? And besides, I've never given her any reason to think that I would be guilty of such trivial behavior. We're above love!

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Really? ...Then I must be below it. (*In great agitation:*) Where's Leonid? Why isn't he back yet? If I only knew: has the estate been sold, or not? It doesn't seem real. It's so impossible, such a calamity, I can't even think about it. My mind wanders. I feel like screaming...I'm afraid I'm going to make a fool of myself. Help me, Petya, talk to me, say something...

TROFIMOV. What difference does it make? Whether it was sold today or not, it's finished, and has been for a long time. You can't go back. The path has grown over behind you. Try to be calm, and look at things clearly. Open your eyes. For once in your life, be brave enough to face the truth.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. What truth? For you, everything is so clear—this is true, that's false—but not for me. I feel like I'm wandering in the dark, as if I've gone blind. You're unafraid, you have an answer for everything, but tell me, my dear, isn't that because you're young and you've never suffered? You face the future with confidence, but isn't that because you don't see or even expect any obstacles on the road ahead, because you see the world with the eyes of a child, and life—real life—is still hidden from you? You're braver than we are, I know that, more straightforward and serious, but try to put yourself in my place for a moment and see if you can't feel a little touch of compassion for me. Don't I deserve some? I was born here, you know. My father and mother lived here, and my grandfather, and I love this house. Without the cherry orchard, my life would have no meaning at all, and if it has to be sold, then sell me, too, sell me with it... (*She embraces TROFIMOV and kisses him on the forehead.*) My little boy was drowned here, don't forget. (*She weeps.*) Oh, my dear, can't you find a little pity in your heart for me?

TROFIMOV. You have my utmost sympathy, you know that.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. That's not what you should have said. No, not like that... (*She pulls out a handkerchief and a telegram falls to the floor.*) I'm so unhappy. You can't imagine what an awful day this has been. There's so much noise and confusion... My heart is racing, every sound makes me jump. Look, I'm trembling. But I can't walk away, either. When I'm alone it's worse, the silence is terrible. Don't judge me, Petya... I love you like a son... I would be happy if you married Anya, I would, but you must apply yourself, my dear, you must finish your degree. You don't take responsibility for anything,

you just let yourself be tossed about by Fate. It's so strange...but it's true, isn't it? Isn't it? And you have to do something about your beard, too...get it to grow... (*She laughs.*) It makes you look so silly!

TROFIMOV. (*Picking up the telegram:*) I'm not interested in cultivating my looks.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. That's from Paris. He sends me a telegram every day now. He's sick again, my barbarian... He wants me to forgive him, to come back to him, he begs me, and that's what I should do, I should go to him. Don't look at me like that, Petya. What else can I do, my dear? He's sick, lonely, unhappy, and who is there to take care of him, to keep him out of mischief, to see that he takes his medicine at the right time? And why should I try to hide it, or deny it? I love him, I know that now, I love him, love him...He's a millstone around my neck, and he's taking me straight to the bottom, but I love my millstone, I can't live without him. (*She squeezes TROFIMOV's hand.*) Don't think badly of me, Petya, and don't say anything, don't...

TROFIMOV. (*With great emotion:*) Forgive me, please, but I can't be silent: this man robbed you, he took everything you had!

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. No, no—don't say that... (*She covers her ears.*)

TROFIMOV. He's a monster! You're the only one who doesn't see it! He's nothing, a nobody!...

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. (*Angry, but in control:*) And you're twenty-six years old, maybe twenty-seven, but you're still a boy!

TROFIMOV. What does this have to do with me?

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Because you're old enough to be a man, and to understand something about love. You ought to be in love yourself...Why aren't you? (*Angrily:*) You ought to be! And it's not virtue that holds you back, not at all, it's because you're an insufferable little prude, a crackpot, a freak...

TROFIMOV. (*Horrified:*) What...what are you saying?

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. "I'm above love!" No, you're not, you're just what Feers calls a "poor excuse for a child of God." Imagine not having a mistress, at your age!

TROFIMOV. (*Horrified:*) I can't believe this! What are you saying?! (*He walks quickly toward the ballroom, pressing his hands to his head.*) Horrible...I can't...I'm leaving... (*He goes off but comes back immediately.*) You'll never see me again! (*He goes into the ballroom.*)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. (*Calling after him:*) Wait, Petya! You silly boy, I was teasing you! Petya!

(There is the sound of someone running down the stairs, and then falling. ANYA and VARYA scream, but the screams turn quickly to laughter.)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. What is it? What happened?

ANYA. (*Running in, laughing:*) Petya fell down the stairs! (*She runs off.*)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. What a strange young man... (*She follows Anya off.*)

(In the ballroom, the STATIONMASTER steps forward and begins to recite.)

STATIONMASTER. "The Fallen Woman," by Alexey Konstantinovich Tolstoy:

I sing of a sinner who fell from grace
But found it again, in the mercy of Christ,
Without a word, when He looked upon her...

(The guests pause to listen, but the STATIONMASTER is able to recite only a few lines before the band strikes up a waltz. He breaks off abruptly, and all begin to dance. TROFIMOV, ANYA, VARYA, and LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA come in from the landing.)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Oh, my Petya, my sweet, innocent boy... forgive me...dance with me...

(LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA and TROFIMOV begin to dance. ANYA and VARYA dance together. FEERS comes into the drawing room from a door at the side and leans his cane against the wall by the door. YASHA follows him and stands watching the dancers.)

YASHA. What's wrong, grandpa?

FEERS. I'm not feeling well... In the old days, we had generals at our balls, and barons and admirals. Now we have the Stationmaster and the man from the Post Office, and they think they're doing us a big favor by coming. I'm feeling a little frail tonight...When the old grandfather was master here, he made us all take sealing-wax for whatever ailed us, and I've taken a dose of sealing-wax ever since, every day of my life for the last twenty years—longer, maybe. Maybe that's why I'm still alive.

YASHA. Boring, grandpa, boring. (*He yawns.*) You've lived a long time now—why not call it a day?

FEERS. Ah, you...poor excuse for a child of God! (*He mutters to himself.*)

(TROFIMOV and LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA dance into view in the ballroom and continue into the drawing room.)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. *Merci!* And now I need to sit down for a moment. (*She sits.*) I'm tired.

(ANYA comes in.)

ANYA. (*Agitated:*) A man in the kitchen said the cherry orchard has been sold.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Who bought it?

ANYA. He didn't say. He's gone.

(TROFIMOV begins dancing with ANYA. They move up into the ballroom.)

YASHA. Just some old man, jabbering away. They didn't know him.

FEERS. Where in the world is Leonid Andreyich? Where can he be? And that coat he went off in? Much too light for this time of year. He'll catch a cold. Oh, he's so green, that boy!

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. I can't bear it! Go, Yasha, find out who bought it.

YASHA. That old man left a long time ago. (*He laughs.*)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. (*Annoyed:*) What are you laughing at? What makes you so happy?

YASHA. Yepikhodov. He's a riot. What a moron. The Walking Accident.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Oh, Feers, what will become of you if the estate is sold? Where will you go?

FEERS. Wherever you tell me, that's where I'll go.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Are you all right? You don't look well. You should be in bed...

FEERS. Oh, of course... (*With a little smile.*) I'll trot off to bed, and then—who'll do the serving? Who'll see that everything is done right? There's nobody but me.

YASHA. Lyubov Andreyevna, I'm throwing myself on your mercy. If you go back to Paris, take me with you! You can't leave me here, you just can't! (*He looks around and lowers his voice.*) I don't have to tell you—you can see for yourself...this country is not even civilized, the people are barbarians, with absolutely no sense of right and wrong,

of what they should and shouldn't do, and it's so-o-o-o-o boring! The food they give us is hardly even edible, and worst of all, every time I turn around there comes old Feers again, muttering to himself God knows what. Please, please, take me with you!

(PISHCHIK *comes in.*)

PISHCHIK. My beautiful lady, please allow me to beg you for a little, tiny...waltz.

(LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA *takes his arm.*)

And no matter what you say, you bewitching creature, I'm going to pry a hundred and eighty little, tiny rubles out of you, too... yes, I am... (*He begins to dance:*) One hundred and eighty little, tiny rubles...

(LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA *and PISHCHIK dance into the ballroom.*)

YASHA. (*Singing softly:*)

"Can you not feel my heart's unruly passion..."

(*In the ballroom, someone in a costume—gray top hat and checked trousers—is gesticulating and jumping around. Shouts of "Bravo, Charlotta Ivanovna!"*)

DUNYASHA. (*Stops dancing and steps into the drawing room to powder her face:*) The reason I'm dancing, you know, is because the young mistress told me to. We have too many gentlemen and not enough ladies. But dancing always does this to me, Feers Nikolayevich, it makes my head spin and my heart race. And just now the man from the Post Office said something that took my breath away.

(*The music stops.*)

FEERS. What might that have been?

DUNYASHA. "You're like a flower in bloom," he told me.

YASHA. (*Yawning:*) How stupid... (*He goes off.*)

DUNYASHA. A flower in bloom... I have a sensitive soul, I love it when people say tender things to me.

FEERS. There's no hope for you.

(YEPIKHODOV *enters.*)

YEPIKHODOV. Whenever you see me, Avdotya Fyodorovna, you look as if you were suddenly confronted by some sort of insect. (*He sighs.*) Ah, life, life!

DUNYASHA. What do you want?

YEPIKHODOV. And why not? Maybe you're right—well undubitably. (*He sighs again.*) Although, if we look at it from a different angle, if you'll allow me to put it this way, and please excuse my candor, you have yourself driven me into this mentality... Oh, I know my lot in life. Every day something bad happens to me, and I'm used to it, I greet my destiny with a smile, but you did make me a promise, you know, and although I...

DUNYASHA. Please, we'll talk later. But right now I need to be alone. With my dreams. (*She plays with her fan.*)

YEPIKHODOV. Something bad, every single day, and yet—though I have to say it myself—I'm smiling. I'm always smiling, sometimes I even laugh.

(*VARYA comes down from the ballroom.*)

VARYA. Are you still here, Semyon? You don't belong here. Leave us, Dunyasha.

(*DUNYASHA goes off quickly. To YEPIKHODOV:*)

First, you treat yourself to a game of billiards and somehow manage to break a cue, and then I see you parading around in the drawing room, as if you were one of the guests.

YEPIKHODOV. Why are you, if you'll forgive the expression, raking me over the coals?

VARYA. I'm not raking you, I'm just telling you. All you ever do is walk around, instead of whatever it is you're supposed to be doing. I don't know why we even have a clerk.

YEPIKHODOV. (*Wounded:*) Whether I walk around or work, whether I'm allowed to partake in a few modest refreshments or lift a cue in a little game of billiards, these are matters I'll happily leave to my superiors, whose business it is.

VARYA. What? (*Suddenly furious:*) How dare you speak to me like that! None of my business—is that what you're saying? Get out! You get out of here! Right this minute!

YEPIKHODOV. (*Quailing before her:*) I must implore you to keep a civil tongue in your head.

VARYA. (*Losing control:*) Now! Now! Get out of here! Go!

(*YEPIKHODOV walks toward the door. VARYA follows him.*)

You Walking Accident! Get out! Don't let me ever catch you in here again!

(*YEPIKHODOV goes out.*)

YEPIKHODOV. (*Off:*) I'm afraid I'm going to be forced to lodge a complaint.

VARYA. Oh, ho! You're not coming back again, are you? (*She grabs up the cane Feers left by the door.*) Come on, come on, I'll show you... Yes? You're coming? Then take this!...

(*She swings as LOPAKHIN enters.*)

LOPAKHIN. Thanks a lot.

VARYA. (*Still angry, but with a trace of amusement:*) Sorry!

LOPAKHIN. That's all right. I always like a warm reception! Thanks.

VARYA. Don't mention it. (*She moves away, then turns back and asks sincerely:*) I didn't hurt you, did I?

LOPAKHIN. No, no. But I'll probably have a big bump.

GUESTS. (*In the ballroom:*)

—There's Lopakhin!

—Yermolay Alekseyich!

PISHCHIK. We're all eyes, we're all ears...

(*He and LOPAKHIN exchange kisses.*)

Oh, ho! Is that cognac I smell, dear boy, heart of my heart? Well, why not?—we're having a party here, too.

(*LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA enters.*)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Is that you, Yermolay Alekseyich? What took you so long? And where's Leonid?

LOPAKHIN. Leonid Andreyich came back with me. He's here...

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. (*Agitated:*) Well? What happened? Did the auction take place? Tell me!

LOPAKHIN. (*Embarrassed, reluctant to reveal his happiness:*) Yes. It was all over by four o'clock...but we missed our train—and the next one didn't come till nine-thirty. (*He sighs deeply.*) Whoa!—I'm a little dizzy.

(*GAYEV enters. In his right hand he carries some packages. With his left he wipes away tears.*)

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. What happened, Lyonya? Well? (*Impatiently; deeply agitated:*) Tell me, for God's sake...

GAYEV. (*Waving his hand, as if to wave away the question; to FEERS, tearfully:*) Here, take all this... I brought some anchovies from town, and some good Kerch herring... I haven't had a bite all day...what an ordeal!

(Through the open door of the billiard room we hear a game in progress.)

YASHA. *(Off:)* Seven, eighteen!

(GAYEV's expression changes. He is no longer weeping.)

GAYEV. I'm so tired. Help me, Feers, I need to change.

(GAYEV goes off through the ballroom. FEERS follows.)

PISHCHIK. So, what happened at the auction? Tell us!

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Is it sold? Did they sell the cherry orchard?

LOPAKHIN. They did.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Who bought it?

LOPAKHIN. I did.

(Pause. LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA is crushed by the news. She would fall if she didn't have the armchair and table to lean on. VARYA takes the keys from her belt, drops them on the floor, and goes out.)

I bought it myself! Wait a moment, ladies and gentlemen, a moment, please, I'm a little dizzy, I can't talk... *(He laughs.)* When we got to the auction, Dyeriganov was already there. He began the bidding at thirty thousand—thirty thousand over and above the mortgage—and Leonid Andreyich only had fifteen. Suddenly, everything was clear to me. I bid forty thousand. Dyeriganov, forty-five. I bid fifty-five. He kept going, in jumps of five, but each time I raised him ten... That's how it ended. When I bid ninety thousand rubles above the mortgage, it was over. The cherry orchard was mine! Mine! *(He roars with laughter.)* Oh, my God, the cherry orchard—it's mine! Am I drunk? Dreaming? Have I lost my mind?... *(He begins to stamp his feet in a few rough dance steps.)* Don't laugh at me! If only my father could see me now, and his father, if they could rise up from their graves and see how little Yermolay, that poor little battered boy who could barely read and write and ran around in the snow without any shoes, how that same little Yermolay has just bought an estate the like of which cannot be found in all the world. The estate on which his father and his grandfather were serfs, were not even allowed in the kitchen — it's mine. I must be dreaming, it can't be true, it's all in my head... a false creation of my feverish brain... *(He picks up Varya's keys. Smiling tenderly:)* She threw down her keys. To show that she's no longer mistress here... *(He jingles the keys.)* Oh, well...never mind.

(Offstage, the musicians begin tuning up.)

Play, musicians! Give us some music! Come on, everybody, come and see Yermolay Lopakhin take an ax to the cherry orchard, watch as the trees come tumbling down! We're going to build dachas now, so many dachas, and our children and our children's children will have a new life here, a new kind of life...Music! Play!

(The band plays. LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA, who has sunk into the armchair, weeps inconsolably.)

(Reproaching her:) Why, why didn't you listen? Oh, Lyubov Andreyevna, you poor, dear, good lady, it's too late now. *(Weeping:)* Oh, if it could only be done quickly—if this muddled, unhappy world of ours was already changed.

(PISHCHIK takes LOPAKHIN by the arm and speaks softly.)

PISHCHIK. She's crying. Come into the ballroom. Let her alone. Come, come...

(PISHCHIK leads LOPAKHIN toward the ballroom.)

LOPAKHIN. Hey—what's going on in there? Keep together, musicians! Play your best! Let everything be just the way I want it! *(Ironically, mocking himself:)* The new owner is coming! The new owner of the cherry orchard is coming! *(He bumps into a small table and nearly knocks over the candelabra.)* That's all right, I can pay for it—for anything!

(He goes off with PISHCHIK. LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA is left alone, curled into the armchair, weeping bitterly. The music plays softly. ANYA and TROFIMOV come in quickly. TROFIMOV waits at the entrance to the drawing room, as ANYA crosses to her mother and kneels before her.)

ANYA. Mama!...Oh, mama, don't cry. Dear, kind, beautiful mama. I love you, mama... God bless you. The cherry orchard has been sold and we've lost it, it's true, we have, but don't cry, mama, you still have your life before you, you still have your sweet nature and your innocent heart...Let's go, mama dear, let's go, we'll go together!... We'll plant a new orchard even more beautiful than this one, and when you see it blooming, everything will be clear to you, oh, so clear, and happiness, true happiness, so deep and peaceful, will flow down on you like the rays of the setting sun, and enter your soul, and then, mama, then you will smile again! Come, my dear one! Let's go!...

End of Act III

ACT IV

(The nursery, as in Act I. No curtains on the windows, no pictures on the walls. What little furniture remains has been stacked in a corner, as if to be sold. The house feels abandoned. Various boxes, suitcases, et cetera, are piled along the back wall and by the door leading to the hall. The voices of VARYA and ANYA can be heard through the open door at stage left. LOPAKHIN stands waiting. YASHA holds a tray of glasses filled with champagne. YEPIKHODOV is in the hall, tying up a large box. From outside, in front of the house, a hum of voices is heard: the muzhiks have come to say good-bye.)

GAYEV. *(Off:)* Thank you, good people, we thank you kindly.

YASHA. The people have come to say good-bye. I know they mean well, Yermoloy Alekseyich, but if you ask me, they're not too bright.

(The offstage voices fade away. LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA and GAYEV enter from the hall. She's not crying, but her face is pale, her lips are quivering, and she is unable to speak.)

GAYEV. Oh, Lyuba, you gave them your purse. You have to stop all that—stop it!

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. What else could I do? I had to!

(They go out.)

LOPAKHIN. *(Following them to the doorway:)* Have some champagne. Please, before you go. I forgot to bring any from town, and all I could get at the station restaurant is this one bottle. But please, join me!

(Pause.)

What's the matter with everybody? ...Nobody wants any champagne? *(He walks away from the door.)* If I'd known that—I wouldn't have bothered. Fine, I won't have any, either.

(YASHA sets the tray down carefully on a chair.)

Go ahead, Yasha, help yourself.

YASHA. Welcome home, whether you're going or staying. Cheers. *(He drinks:)* Just between you and me, this is not champagne.

LOPAKHIN. It's eight rubles a bottle.

(Pause.)

It's cold in here!

YASHA. They didn't light the stoves, since we're all leaving. *(He laughs.)*

LOPAKHIN. Why are you laughing?

YASHA. Because I'm happy.

LOPAKHIN. It's October already, but it's as mild and sunny as a summer day. Good weather for building. (*He looks at his watch, then at the door.*) Listen, everybody, pay attention: the train departs in forty-seven minutes! That means we have to leave here exactly twenty minutes from now. Get ready.

(*TROFIMOV enters, in an overcoat.*)

TROFIMOV. It's time to go, isn't it? They've brought up the carriages. But where, oh, where are my galoshes? Nowhere. (*Calling through the doorway:*) Anya, I can't find my galoshes! They're not here!

LOPAKHIN. I'm going to Kharkov, you know, so we'll be on the same train. I'm spending the winter there. I've been loafing around here for so long I'm exhausted. I can't live like this—I have to work! I don't know what to do with my hands any more—they just dangle there at the ends of my wrists, as if they belonged to somebody else.

TROFIMOV. Well, we're all leaving, so you can get right back to your life of useful toil.

LOPAKHIN. Have some champagne.

TROFIMOV. No, thanks.

LOPAKHIN. You're off to Moscow?

TROFIMOV. That's right. I'll get them settled in town, then tomorrow I'll be on my way.

LOPAKHIN. Well...I'm sure you haven't missed anything. Those professors wouldn't dare start without you.

TROFIMOV. Very funny.

LOPAKHIN. How long have you been at the University now? How many years?

TROFIMOV. You need a new joke. That one's old and stale. (*He searches for his galoshes.*) You know, we'll probably never see each other again, so let me give you some advice, as a parting gift: don't saw the air so much! Whenever you talk, you start waving your arms around—that's a terrible habit. Don't do it. And your grand scheme of building dachas so that summer people can put down roots and all become masters of their little estates, that's as silly as waving your arms around... Even so, my friend, I like you, I can't help it. You have slender, delicate fingers, like an artist, and you have a gentle, sensitive soul...

LOPAKHIN. (*Embracing TROFIMOV:*) Good-bye, my dear. Thank you, thanks for everything. Wait a minute—do you need any money? Let me give you a little something for the road.

TROFIMOV. What would I do with it? I don't need it.

LOPAKHIN. But you don't have any!

TROFIMOV. Yes, I do, right here in my pocket—I've just been paid for a translation. Thanks anyway. (*With some anxiety:*) What I do need are my galoshes.

VARYA. (*From the other room:*) Here, take the filthy things!

(*VARYA throws a pair of rubber galoshes into the room.*)

TROFIMOV. Varya! What's wrong with you? Wait a minute...these aren't my galoshes!

LOPAKHIN. I planted nearly three thousand acres of poppies last spring, and I made forty thousand rubles when I sold them. When they bloomed, they were so beautiful—my poppies—like a painting! What I'm saying is that I cleared a good forty thousand. So if I feel like offering you a small loan, I can afford it. Don't stand on ceremony with me. I'm a muzhik, I don't beat around the bush...

TROFIMOV. Your father was a muzhik, mine was a pharmacist. What's that got to do with anything?

(*LOPAKHIN takes out his wallet.*)

Stop, stop... If you offered me two hundred thousand rubles, I wouldn't take it. I'm a free man, and money, which all the rest of you value so highly and hold so dear—all of you, rich men and beggars alike—means no more to me than feathers in the wind. I don't need anything from you. I'm self-sufficient. I can walk right by you with my head held high. Mankind is moving forward, seeking the ultimate truth, the most universal happiness that can be achieved on earth, and I am in the vanguard!

LOPAKHIN. Will you get there?

TROFIMOV. Yes, I will.

(*Pause.*)

Or I'll show others the way.

(*In the distance, the sound of an ax striking a tree.*)

LOPAKHIN. All right, dear heart. Good-bye, it's time to go. We never let down our guard, we never reach out to each other, and life is slipping away. Sometimes, when I'm hard at work, when I haven't stopped for a long time, I begin to see things more clearly—I begin

to feel that I might have been put on this earth for a reason. But there are so many people in this land of ours, so many, little brother, who don't feel that, who don't have any idea what they're here for. Oh, well, so what? The world goes around anyway, whether they do or not. I hear that Leonid Andreyich has a job at the bank, at six thousand a year...he'll never keep it, though, he's too lazy...

ANYA. (*Appearing in the doorway:*) Mama asks if you can please not chop down the orchard until she's gone.

TROFIMOV. Oh, yes, really—I'm surprised at you... (*He goes out through the hall.*)

LOPAKHIN. Of course, I'll stop them right this minute...what morons! (*He goes out after TROFIMOV.*)

ANYA. Did they take Feers to the hospital?

YASHA. I told them to, this morning. I'm sure they did.

(*YEPIKHODOV begins to cross the room.*)

ANYA. Semyon Panteleyich, please see that Feers was taken to the hospital.

YASHA. (*Offended:*) I told Yegor this morning. Why ask the same thing over and over?

YEPIKHODOV. Poor old Feers. If you ask me, he's reached the outer limit of his longitude and can't be patched up any more. He ought to think about joining his ancestors. And I envy him, I do. (*He picks up a heavy suitcase and sets it down on a flimsy hatbox, crushing it.*) Well, of course...why not?...perfect! (*He crosses toward the hall door.*)

YASHA. (*Mockingly:*) The Walking Accident!

YEPIKHODOV. (*As he goes out:*) It could happen to anybody.

VARYA. (*Through Anya's doorway:*) Did they take Feers to the hospital?

ANYA. They did.

VARYA. But they left without the note—the note for the doctor!

ANYA. We'll send someone after them... (*She goes off.*)

VARYA. (*Off:*) Where's Yasha? His mother is here to say good-bye.

YASHA. (*With a disparaging wave of his hand:*) Oh, what next?

(*DUNYASHA has all this while busied herself with the luggage. Now that YASHA is alone, she approaches him.*)

DUNYASHA. You won't even look at me, Yasha. And you're going away...leaving me behind... (*Weeping, she throws her arms around his neck.*)

YASHA. Why make such a fuss about it? (*He drinks a glass of champagne:*) Six days from now, I'll be in Paris. We'll board the express tomorrow, take off, and disappear! I can hardly believe it. *Vive la France!* ...This is no life for me, I can't stand it...that's just the way it is. I've had enough barbaric backwardness now to last me the rest of my life. Enough! (*He drinks another glass of champagne.*) Why cry? Bad girls cry. Good girls have nothing to cry about.

DUNYASHA. (*Looking in her little mirror and powdering her nose:*) Write to me from Paris. Oh, Yasha, how I loved you! And remember, Yasha—I have very delicate feelings!

YASHA. Somebody's coming. (*Humming softly, he busies himself with a suitcase.*)

(LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA, GAYEV, ANYA, and CHARLOTTA all come in.)

GAYEV. We have to be on our way. It's almost time. (*Looking at YASHA:*) Who's been eating herring?

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. We have about ten more minutes before we have to get in the carriages... (*She glances around the room.*) Good-bye, old house, dear old grandfather house. Winter will pass, spring will come again, and you won't be here, they're going to knock you down. These old walls have seen so much! (*She embraces ANYA and kisses her.*) You're radiant, my darling, your eyes are sparkling like diamonds. Are you happy? Are you very, very happy?

ANYA. Yes, mama, happy! A new life is beginning!

GAYEV. (*Cheerfully:*) It's true, things are looking up. Before the cherry orchard was sold, we were always fretting, we were in a stew, but once it happened, when everything was settled once and for all, we grew calm again, our spirits lifted...And now I have a place at the bank, yes, I'm a financier...yellow ball in the side pocket...and you too, Lyuba, whatever you say, I can see there's a weight off your shoulders, too.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Yes, I feel better.

(*Those around her help her put on her hat and coat.*)

I can sleep again. All right, it's time. You can take out my things now, Yasha. (*To ANYA:*) We'll see each other soon, my little one... I'm going back to Paris. I'll live on the money that granny in Yaroslavl sent us—long live granny!—but it won't last long, I'm afraid.

ANYA. You'll come back soon, mama...you will, won't you? I'll study hard and pass my exams, and then I'll find work, I'll be able to help you. And we'll read together, mama, all sorts of things...we

will, won't we? *(She kisses her mother's hands.)* We'll read together on long autumn evenings, so many books, and a new world—a wonderful world—will lie before us... *(Dreamily:)* Oh, mama, come back soon...

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. I will, my darling, I'll come back.

(She hugs ANYA. LOPAKHIN comes in. CHARLOTTA is singing to herself.)

GAYEV. Charlotta must be happy, too—she's singing!

(CHARLOTTA picks up a bundle that looks like a swaddled infant.)

CHARLOTTA. Shh...shh...baby, baby... *(We hear a baby crying: "Wah! Wah!")* Hush, hush, my darling, my dear little boy. *(“Wah! Wah!”)* Oh, you're breaking my heart! *(She throws down the bundle.)* I need a job. Can't you find me something? What am I going to do?

LOPAKHIN. I'll find you something, Charlotta Ivanovna. Don't worry.

GAYEV. Everyone is leaving us. Even Varya... Nobody needs us any more.

CHARLOTTA. I have to go somewhere. I can't go to town, what would I do there? Where would I live?... *(Singing to herself again:)* What will be, will be.

(PISHCHIK comes in.)

LOPAKHIN. Ah! Nature's masterpiece!...

PISHCHIK. *(Trying to catch his breath:)* Whoa, let me catch my breath. I'm dropping in my tracks... Oh, my esteemed, my most respected friends... Water, give me some water...

GAYEV. You're looking for money, I suppose. How nice to see you! But I'll remove myself from all temptation... *(He leaves.)*

PISHCHIK. Oh, most beautiful of ladies...I haven't seen you in such a long time... *(To LOPAKHIN:)* Ah, you're here? ...Good, I'm looking for you, too...Such a visionary, what a brain! ...Here... Here it is. Take it. *(He gives LOPAKHIN money.)* That's four hundred rubles... I still owe you eight hundred and forty...

LOPAKHIN. *(Lifting his hands, astonished:)* Am I dreaming? ...Where did you get all this?

PISHCHIK. Wait, wait... I'm so hot...the most amazing thing has happened. Englishmen! Out of the blue, a bunch of Englishmen suddenly appeared! They found some kind of white clay on my land... *(To LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA:)* Here—four hundred rubles for you, too...you gorgeous creature...you wonder of wonders... *(He*

gives LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA money.) I'll bring you the rest later on. *(He drinks his water.)* Just now, on the train, I heard a young man say that somebody...some philosopher, one of the best, said that everybody should jump off the roof..."Jump!" he said, "There's no problem that jumping doesn't solve." *(In amazement:)* Can you imagine!? Water!...

LOPAKHIN. What are you talking about? What Englishmen?

PISHCHIK. I gave them a lease to the land with the white clay in it, for twenty-four years...and now, forgive me... I can't stay, I'm rushing around... I have to see Znoykov...and Kardamonov... Oh, I owe everybody... *(He drinks.)* To your good health, one and all... I'll be back on Thursday...

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. We'll be gone. We're moving to town, right away, and I'm going abroad tomorrow.

PISHCHIK. What? *(Alarmed:)* Moving to town? Oh, that's why the furniture...and all the suitcases...well, it can't be helped... *(He is deeply moved:)* Can't be helped...very smart, those Englishmen... well, it can't be helped... I wish you every happiness...God keep you... Can't be helped... All good things come to an end... *(He kisses LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA's hand.)* And if one day word reaches you that I've come to the end of my journey, spare a thought...for this old horse, and say: "There once lived such-and-such a man...Semyonov-Pishchik...May the Kingdom of Heaven be his"... What a beautiful day... Yes... *(He leaves, overcome with emotion, but immediately returns. From the doorway:)* Dashenka sends her regards! *(He leaves.)*

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. We can go now. But there are two things I still need to take care of. First, Feers is not well. *(She glances at her watch:)* We have five minutes...

ANYA. They sent Feers to the hospital, mama. Yasha took care of it this morning.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. My other concern is Varya. She's used to getting up early and working hard all day. Now that she has nothing to do, she's like a fish out of water. She's grown thin and pale, poor dear, and she can't stop crying...

(Pause.)

As you know, Yermolay Alekseyich, it's been my fondest dream... to see her marry you, and I thought every sign pointed to your marriage.

(LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA whispers to ANYA, who signals to CHARLOTTA, and they leave.)

She loves you, you're fond of her. What is keeping you apart? I don't understand it.

LOPAKHIN. To tell you the truth, I don't, either. It's a mystery... If it's not too late, I'll talk to her...I'll do it right now and get it over with! But I'd better do it before you go. Otherwise, I'm afraid, it might not happen.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. Good. It should only take a minute. Let me get her...

LOPAKHIN. We've already got champagne. (*He looks at the empty glasses:*) But it's all gone, somebody drank it.

(*YASHA clears his throat.*)

Guzzled it down.

LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA. All right, then! We'll give you some privacy...Yasha, *allez!* I'll call her... (*Through the door.*) Varya, stop whatever you're doing and come in here. Right away!

(*LYUBOV ANDREYEVNA goes out with YASHA.*)

LOPAKHIN. (*Glancing at his watch:*) Right...

(*Pause. Through the door we hear whispering and muffled laughter. Finally, VARYA comes in.*)

VARYA. (*Looking through the luggage:*) Where in the world, I wonder...? Where can it be?...

LOPAKHIN. What are you looking for?

VARYA. I know I packed it, but where?

(*Pause.*)

LOPAKHIN. Where is it that you're going, Varvara Mikhailovna?

VARYA. Hmm? Oh, to the Ragulins... They've asked me to help, you know, look after things...like a housekeeper.

LOPAKHIN. They're in Yashnevo? That's not far, only about seventy versts.

(*Pause.*)

Well, life in this house is over now...

VARYA. (*Still looking for something:*) Where can it be?... Is it in the trunk?... Yes, that's right, life in this house is over now...now and forever...

**THIS PLAY IS
NOT OVER!**

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